

Roland Who?

Have you ever wondered about the authors of the books you read? Who are they? How did they become authors? Are any of the characters in their novels similar to people they actually knew? Did any of the events in their stories ever happen to them or to members of their families? How do they get their ideas?

Roland Smith is a relatively new author of young adult novels, but he has been a writer for years. He has also been a field biologist for 21 years and has worked with red wolves, otters, and other endangered or exotic animals. Don't you wonder if he has ever seen a Sasquatch?

Look over the biographical information on his website. He has a wonderful site with pictures of himself and his family. Just go to www.rolandsmith.com! Most of the book jackets covering Roland's books also have information. How about developing some "thick" questions that Roland can answer when you e-mail? As a class, try to develop four or five really great questions that ask about things not found on the book jackets, or the website. This author likes to hear from his readers and will reply as soon as he possibly can. Remember, send only four or five great questions from the class; we all want Roland to have time to write more Sasquatch stories.

"Thick" Questions compared to "Thin" Questions

"What are some of the enjoyable parts of becoming an author? some of the annoying parts?" This is an example of a "thick" question. When the author replies, there will be more information shared.

"Do you like being a writer?" This is a "thin" question because the author can simply give a "yes" or a "no" answer; you get very little information.

"How did you become a writer?" "Thick" question with lots of shared information.

"When did you become a writer?" "Thin" question with a brief answer.

PRACTICE writing a few "thick" questions.

The Mark of Character

There are many characters in *Sasquatch*. Some characters even have two names or an alias. Use the bookmark to record the **outside** and **inside** character traits for each of the characters listed. Look for **direct** and **indirect** character clues as you read *Sasquatch*. There are examples below to help you get started.

Outside character traits are those traits that describe a character's appearance. Characters could be: tall or short, old or young, beautiful or ugly; they could have brown hair and blue eyes, or green hair and four eyes.

Inside character traits are those traits that describe a character's personality or values. Characters could be: good or evil, rich or poor, smart or silly, strong or weak; they could have the determination of a goat, or the curiosity of a cat.

Examples:

Dylan Hickock is fourteen, so the reader knows he is young, a teenager. On page 7 of the novel, we learn that Dylan's dad and Dylan make a deal to clean the house, cook, etc. so Dylan's mother can go back to school and earn her doctoral degree. These events show how loving and caring Dylan is with his family. These are **indirect** character clues.

Joe West is the president of Bigfoot International. Page 15 **directly** tells the reader about Joe's appearance. "He had long black hair pulled back into a ponytail, and a shaggy beard that hung down over his broad chest. He was at least six feet four and wore jeans and a flannel shirt with a down vest over it. He had to weigh well over three hundred pounds." From this description the reader knows that Joe West is a tall, overweight mountain man.

HINT: Sometimes authors do not share with their readers exactly what a character looks like. Try to picture a character whose **outside traits** are not shared. Then record what you think the character might look like and be prepared to share **why**.

Can You Draw What I Say?

One of the marks of a great writer is how he/she describes and uses details to tell the story. Have you ever read a book and felt as if you were right next to the major character, or as if you were the major character? This is probably because the author used rich and vivid descriptions. The author was so good at using details about the characters, settings, and events that you could picture most everything as if you were really there.

Roland Smith is a master at writing details. Just reread page 18, paragraphs 5-9 which describes the appearance of a Sasquatch. This description and others should help you picture exactly what a Sasquatch might look like if you should meet one in the volcanic mountains of the Northwest.

Directions:

Once you have a partner, reread page 18 and pages 28-30, 50, and 51. Take notes about some of the descriptions of the Sasquatch; for example, shapes, sizes, and colors. Decide which partner will draw the Sasquatch. The person drawing may not look back at the book or at any notes, but must rely on his/her partner's descriptions to complete the drawing.

Materials:

It is always fun to use butcher paper or roll paper to make a life-size model. You could also use poster board or a smaller piece of white drawing paper. Crayons are perfect for smudging the colors together, but a simple drawing pencil can create effective shades, too. If you are uncertain how you want to draw the Sasquatch, ask your teacher to help you. Don't worry about what everyone else is doing; just create your own Sasquatch. Variety is more fun! Perhaps someone will even create a 3-D Sasquatch. Think about it!

Authors Have Style

The difference between the way one author writes and the way another writes is called **style**. Roland Smith has a unique style. As you read *Sasquatch*, try to keep a list of the items of style you notice. Record any of these items that make this novel different from others you have read. After you believe you have created a complete list, use the list to write a style summary explaining Mr. Smith's unique writing style. Below are a few examples of **style**.

Chapters

Some authors like to use short chapters and have a clever title for each chapter. I enjoy titles that help the reader predict the general theme of the chapter. A few authors never even give the chapter a number or a title.

Details

Many authors like to use rich details, and may take a whole page just to describe a character. It might take an author an entire page to describe the road and adjacent scenery so that the reader has exactly the picture the author wishes to share.

Genre or Type

A few authors enjoy writing any type of genre or book. They will write a few historical fiction novels and then switch to mysteries or contemporary fiction for variety. Others always write in the same genre; they like fantasies, or science fiction, or romances, and almost never write any other type of book.

Format

Other authors set up their novels in different ways to make them more unique. They format the novel to include prologues and/or epilogues, charts and/or maps. Some add illustrations. I enjoy novels in which the author uses poetry within a storyline or uses an italicized section for emphasis or to show importance. Some authors include a recurring character, setting, or object to enlarge an event, to help readers predict the plot, or to encourage readers to continue reading.

Research

Some novels require that authors do in-depth research about their characters, settings, and events before they begin the storyline. Obviously, historical fiction writers must know about history, and science fiction authors must know some facts about science. You can usually tell if the author has really "dug deep" and presented accurate information.

Unsolved Mysterious Phenomena

A great deal of research went into *Sasquatch*. Page 27 shares just a few facts about each of the Sasquatch legends. Use the method below to research an unsolved mysterious phenomenon. You could search for information about flying saucers, alien encounters, the Loch Ness Monster, or the Abominable Snowman. You could even look for more information about Sasquatch. What do **you** want to know?

Research Requirements

- ? 1. Complete the first two sections of a KWL sheet.
- ? 2. Share your questions with a peer. Record any questions you think will help in your research.
- ? 3. Select five or six vocabulary words that will help you as you search the internet or printed text.
- ? 4. Skim and scan information from the internet or printed text. Locate headings, pictures, marginal captions, tables, and charts.
- ? 5. Eliminate any materials that do not directly answer your questions or provide interesting and important information.
- ? 6. Record, in **alphabetical** order, the titles of resources which you think will be helpful.
- ? 7. Summarize by rereading small parts of information, a paragraph or two at a time. Without looking back at the text, try to record from memory the most important and interesting facts; use note cards or an information journal. Now, refer back to your notes or text and check for spelling, important phrases you want to quote, and facts you missed. Repeat until you have all the information reviewed. (It is good to take a break after a few of these recording sessions.)
- ? 8. Copy or print any graphics that help illustrate a main idea or section of your research.
- ? 9. Decide how you will disseminate your findings; you could:
 - a) write a report
 - b) perform a speech
 - c) create a display
 - d) design a captioned collage or mural
 - e) write and share an informational puppet show
 - f) create a learning center
 - g) give an interview
 - h) create a crossword puzzle to accompany a fact sheet
 - i) design a knowledge box with important information and items
 - j) invent your own method for sharing your findings

In the News

Dylan and his father attend a very important Bigfoot International meeting where pictures of the supposed Sasquatch are shown. They later attend another meeting in which Dr. Flagg shares his expert opinion regarding the Sasquatch and the possibility of an upcoming expedition. After reading pages 1-46, write two different news releases about the Sasquatch sighting.

One news release should be written for a reputable newspaper like The Chicago Tribune or The Washington Post, and another news release for a tabloid such as the National Enquirer or Star. Use the steps below to create your **reputable story** *first*.

Steps for writing a complete news release:

1. Organize the story by filling in some of the facts that are shared in Chapters 1 and 3; use the blanks at the bottom of this page.
2. Create a lead sentence. A lead sentence is one that gets the reader's attention and generates questions.
Example: *"I would never forgive her, not as long as I lived."
"He would never be the same after that day; nothing would be the same."
"It was about midnight when the door opened and he walked in."*
3. Combine the facts in the order you took them to create sentences for the news story. Add more details if necessary at the end.
Hint: A news release is supposed to be short and to the point!
4. Develop a headline. Headlines are usually a few words, and they should draw the reader's attention to the facts of the story. Many times, important or interesting words from the story are included. All words in a headline are usually capitalized and in bold print.
5. To prepare your tabloid story, rewrite the article using exaggeration and innuendo. Make the story "explode off" the page so grocery shoppers will want to buy the paper. Remember, the crazier your ideas and the more you suggest or imply them to be truth, the better your tabloid news story will sell.

Who: _____

When and _____

Where:

What: _____

Why and How: _____

Additional Details: _____

Sasquatch Q and A

Welcome to Sasquatch Q and A! You will participate in a game of knowledge and chance. Practice your skills by **finding the questions** to these five answers. Next, you create five answers and the questions. Practice the game again with a partner by sharing your work. Don't keep score yet; this is just for practice. Later, your class will be playing **Sasquatch Q and A**.

Examples:

A – Portland University

Q – Where does Dylan's mother go to college?

A – Five months

Q – How long will Dylan's mother be in Egypt?

Now you try; good luck!

Hint: Question ideas can be found on pages 1-32.
(There may be a few different questions for each answer.)

1. A – A hunting trip

Q - _____

2. A – Bigfoot International

Q - _____

3. A - The Himalayan Mountains

Q - _____

4. A – “brand new four-wheel drive pickup truck . . . it was red”

Q - _____

5. A – The stories in the newspaper are too depressing and oversimplified.

Q - _____

Now, write five of your own questions, then practice with a partner.