

Pattern One: Copycat Story

FAQ: What is a copycat story?

Answer:

A copycat story happens when one character wants to:

- a) be friends with another character
- b) admires another character
- c) acquire a skill another character has
- d) survive in a new setting
- e) frame another character for a crime

and so he imitates him or his actions.

Copying continues until the copycat experiences a disaster.

Disasters will be either:

- *wrecking or breaking something
- *getting hurt
- *getting stuck or getting an object stuck
- *embarrassment when nothing happens or the wrong thing happens
- *misinterpreting instructions (Amelia Bedelia by Peggy Parish)

This disaster will cause the copycat to stop copying.

Copycat books you might know:

1. Stephanie's Ponytail by Robert Munsch
2. The Chick and the Duckling by Mirra Ginsburg
3. Emma's Eggs by Margriet Ruurs
4. The Hat by Jan Brett
5. Little Lumpty by Miko Imai
6. Ruby the Copycat by Peggy Rathman
7. Charlotte's Web Ch. 9 "Wilbur's Boast" by E.B. White
8. Coyote by Gerald McDermott
9. The Happy Hedgehog by Marcus Pfister
10. The Copy Crocs by David Bedford
11. The Pedlar's Caps traditional
12. Frog is Frog by Max Velthuijs
13. If Only I had a Green Nose by Max Lucado
14. Keeper of the Swamp by Ann Garrett

FAQ's About the Copycat Story Pattern/Plot

FAQ: Is this pattern a complete story plot?

Answer: This plot stands alone as a complete story just like a finished piece of art. It can also be used as the subplot of circle, switch and transformation.

FAQ: What kind of characters work well with this plot?

Answer: This plot works best if the characters are very different from each other or if they have at least one very different ability.

FAQ: Is a copycat story like a retelling?

Answer: No, it is not. Copycat stories are about characters who mimic the actions, appearances, behaviours or abilities of another character for the purpose of acquiring a friendship or a skill. Think about Stephanie's Ponytail by Robert Munsch. In that book, everyone is copying Stephanie's hairdo. The story is not retelling an existing story, it is creating a new one.

FAQ: What is a retelling?

Answer: Retellings take existing stories and share them again in a new author's words or use the strategies of: changing the sex of the main character, flipping the protagonist to the antagonist, changing the setting, or changing all the characters to animals. An example would be Cinderella Penguin by Janet Perlman.

1st Copycat Story Pattern

1. Setting
2. Encounter (interesting meeting between the Leader and Copycat)
3. Motive: They want to be friends.
4. First Activity friends do in which Copycat imitates Leader and has success.
5. Second Activity friends do in which Copycat imitates Leader and has success.
6. Third Activity friends do in which Copycat imitates Leader, but has a disaster.
7. End: Copycat gets help from the Leader, but stops copying.

Literature: Chick and Duckling by Mirra Ginsburg

2nd Copycat Story Pattern

1. Setting
2. Encounter (interesting meeting between the Leader and Copycat)
3. Motive: Copycat wants to acquire a new skill that the Leader has.
4. Copycat attempts skill and has a disaster.
5. Copycat attempts skill a second time and has a different disaster.
6. Copycat attempts skill a third time, has success, and doesn't need to copy any longer. He has achieved a new skill or ability.

Literature: Keeper of the Swamp by Ann Garrett