



WRITING CRAFT AND ELABORATION IN
COWBOY CHRISTMAS
 BY ROB SANDERS

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Use these writing crafts and elaboration strategies as the basis for Writers Workshop lessons with your students!

WRITING CRAFT	ELABORATION STRATEGY	PAGE (Begin counting with the title page)	EXCERPT
Words for Said		3	whined, sniveled
Purposeful Dialogue		3	“Three days till Christmas,” . . . range,” sniveled Dub.
Specific/Proper Nouns		4	Christmas, Dwight, Darryl, Santy Claus, Dub, Cookie
Purposeful Repetition		4	“No presents . . . No stockings . . . No Santy.”
Words for Said		4-5	added, groaned, called
Vivid Verbs		5	hunkered down, doled out
Golden Thread		5 (repeated on 9, 13, 24)	‘round the campfire
	Anecdote	6	“When I was . . . silver spurs.”
Word Choice: Colloquialism		6	knee-high to a grasshopper
Simile		6	icicles as shiny as silver spurs.
Words for Said		6	shouted, whooped,
Vivid Verbs		7	lassoed, hauled, corralled,

			admire
Sentence Variety: Dash to Add Details		7	. . . find—a cactus.
Literary devices: Coining a Word		7	hay-cicles
Purposeful Dialogue		8	“Ain’t much . . . said Cookie.
Words for Said		8	admitted, cracked, groaned
Word Choice: Colloquialism		8	Ain’t, Downright, cain’t
Alliteration		9	roped, wrestled, wrangled
Transitions		9	The next day, That night
Strong Nouns		9	cowboys, steers, longhorns, strays
	Anecdote	10	“Every Christmas,” . . . sprinkles.”
Words for Said		10	muttered, offered, hooted
Attributes: Texture/Composition		10	sticky frosting, sugary sprinkles
	How to/Step-by-step	11	Darryl . . . sugar-molasses-bean cookies.
Vivid Verbs		11	mixed, rolled, fried, frosted, added, sampled
Hyphenated Word		11	sugar-molasses-bean cookies
Attributes: Texture/Composition		11	fried them to a crisp, sticky molasses, charred sugar-molasses-bean cookies
Words for Said		12	gulped, fussed, ordered
Transitions		13	The next day . . . That night
Alliteration		13	headed, high-country,

			herded, haggled
Strong Nouns		13	high country, bovines, misfits
Vivid Verbs		13	headed, herded, haggled, moped
	Anecdote	14	“I remember,” said Dub . . . horses.”
Words for Said		14	murmured, yelped, warned, added
Strong Nouns		14	hay wagon, Santy’s sleigh, reindeer costumes
Vivid Verbs		14	stitched, dishing up
Vivid Verbs		15	lashed, tied, dangled, took a gander
Strong Nouns		15	twigs, herd’s heads, bandannas, cowbells
Purposeful Dialogue		16-17	“Those heifers . . . my day off.”
Strong Nouns		16-17	Heifers, Santy’s reindeer, wranglers
Vivid Verbs		18	drove, grumbled, griped, whimpered, mending, minding, rounded up, moseyed
Transitions		18	On Christmas morning, Near sunset
Sensory Details		20	hear jinglin’ bells, smell something mighty fine, see somethin’ glowin’
Voice		20-21	“Hey! Do y’all . . . picture postcard!
Alliteration		21	pretty as a picture postcard

Words for Said		22-23	cackled, called, crowed
Sentence Variety: List Separated with Commas		23	. . . chowed down . . . 'round the tree.
Alliteration		23	Christmas campfire, cowboys, chowed, carols and jingle, jangle
Transitions		23	By the light of the Christmas campfire . . . Later
Ellipses as a Transition		23-24	Later, after Santa had disappeared with a jingle and jangle . . . Cookie
Vivid Verbs		24	galloped, drawled, settled, yawned, stretched, stuck, moaned
Purposeful Repetition		25	"Could be," said Cookie. "Could be."

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