# Unit 5: Meeting Characters and Learning Lessons, A Study of Story Elements

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

In this unit children will experience the power of story as they learn about empathy, imagination, envisionment, and prediction. Readers will track the events of a story, paying attention to the shifts in setting and the story events the characters experience. They will read longer and more complex texts and be able to determine importance when retelling key details in sequence. Children will study characters and relationships, learning all they can about their likes and dislikes, what they do and say. They will be able to infer how the characters are feeling, and they will practice reading fluently, reading in a way that reflects how the character is feeling and bringing him to life. Children will also dig deeper and be able to pull out life lessons from the stories they read. They will recommend favorite books to others, passing along life lessons.

Assessments will be conducted throughout the year using Teacher's College Running Records. In addition, Fundations, Level 1, Wilson Language Basics, (2012, Wilson Language Training Corporation) will systematically and comprehensively instruct students in phonemic awareness and word study, which includes both phonetic and high frequency sight words. This instruction will contribute greatly to fluency, vocabulary development, and the applications of strategies for understanding text. All are necessary for the successful development of reading comprehension.

## Standards

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| LA.RL.1.1 | Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. |
| LA.RL.1.2 | Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson. |
| LA.RL.1.3 | Describe characters, settings, and major event(s) in a story, using key details. |
| LA.RL.1.7 | Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events. |
| LA.RL.1.9 | Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories. |
| LA.RL.1.10 | With prompting and support, read and comprehend stories and poetry at grade level text complexity or above. |
| LA.RF.1.4 | Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. |
| LA.SL.1.2 | Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. |
| LA.SL.1.4 | Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly. |
| LA.SL.1.5 | Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings. |

## Essential Questions

- How do readers get to know characters in the books they read?
- How do readers find out about how characters feel?
- How do readers determine what characters have learned in the books they read?
- How do readers understand the central message or life lesson in the books they read?

## Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Readers compare and contrast books by asking ,"What's the same? What's different?"
- Readers know that when books take you on reading adventures, you almost become the character, changing your voice to show what the character is feeling.
- Readers mark important parts in their books to retell and retain the story.
- Readers notice the lessons in their books by paying attention to what the character learns when a problem gets solved.
- Readers understand the importance of rereading to notice new details in their stories.
- Readers use what is happening in the story to predict what will come next.
- Readers who know books have strong opinions, and they share their opinions with others.
- To get to know a character better, readers pay attention to the relationships in the story.

## Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- Compare and contrast books by asking, "What's the same? What's different?"
- Change their voice to show what a character is feeling in the book they are reading.
- Mark important parts in their books in order to be able to retell and retain the story.
- Notice the lessons in their books by paying attention to what the character learns when a problem gets solved.
- Pay attention to the relationships in the story to get to know a character better.
- Share their opinions with others about the books they are reading.
- Understand the importance of rereading and to notice new details in their stories.
- Use what is happening in the story to predict what will come next.

## Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

### Preparation for the Unit

Organize the classroom library to include a variety of fiction books across students' just right reading levels that feature engaging characters. These may include books on Levels I/J with characters such as Mr. Putter and Tabby, Henry and Mudge, Little Critter, Houndsley and Catina, Fly Guy, Iris and Walter, and George and Matilda. Consider possible small groups and gather books to use during minilessons, small group work, read-

alouds, and shared reading.

**The following teaching points and activities are adapted from *Units of Study for Teaching Reading Grade 1* (Calkins et al., 2015) and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and/or emphasize based on their students' needs.**

**Teaching Points**

- Remind children to take a sneak peek in their books before they get ready for each new reading adventure.
- Teach readers to use what is happening in the story to predict what will come next.
- Encourage children to mark important parts in their books to retell and retain the story.
- Remind children of the importance of rereading, teaching them to reread to notice new details in their stories.
- Teach children that when readers reread, they notice how parts of the story go together. You might notice that the same kinds of things happen again and again, or the way the trouble starts and ends.
- Remind students that characters are the most important ingredient in any story, and that when readers go on reading adventures, they pay attention to details to learn all they can about the characters they meet along the way.
- Teach children that to get to know a character better, it helps to pay attention to the relationships in the story.
- Teach children that readers reread not only to see new things about the story, but to learn more about the characters as well.
- Teach children that when books take you on reading adventures, you don't just follow the character. You practically become the character. You can change your voice to show what the character is feeling and bring the character to life.
- Teach children that readers can expect that a character's feelings will change across the story and that they'll need to adapt their reading voices to show these changes.
- Teach children that authors leave clues in their stories that help readers know how to read so they can bring the characters to life.
- Remind children that readers reread to see new details, and to learn about the characters, but they also reread to make their voices smoother. You can reread to smooth out the bumpy parts and to show the big feelings in each part. Rereading can help you perform your books.
- Teach readers to notice the lessons in their books by paying attention to what the character learns when a problem gets solved.
- Teach children that readers think about life lessons all the time-even before they start a new book-and they use those thoughts to read differently, thinking right from the start about what lesson the book might teach.
- Teach children that readers compare and contrast books by asking, "What's the same? What's different?"
- Teach children that as readers compare books, they think about categories and begin to group stories that teach similar lessons.
- Teach children that readers who know books well have strong opinions. And readers don't keep those opinions to themselves.
- Teach children that just as rereading helps to make their reading voices smoother, rehearsing helps to make their speaking voices smoother.

**Activities to Support Teaching Points**

- Create and refer to anchor charts.

- Study pages from exemplar reader's notebooks.
- Provide and present mentor texts as models.
- Teach the *Work of Readers* Charts.
- Teach children strategies for holding onto text. For example, use Post-its and graphic organizers.
- Model (Talk Aloud) the strategies good readers use.
- Model, provide, and use a reader's notebook.
- Tap, sketch, or jot across a story as a way of retaining information and details.
- Study book introductions and endings.
- Practice creating mental movies as you read.
- Investigate figurative language and descriptive vocabulary and how authors use them.
- Turn and Talk the dialogue in a story to bring the characters' feelings alive.
- Set mini-reading goals for engagement, print work, fluency, comprehension, and/or conversation.
- Provide checklists and reading progressions to assess and develop on-going reading goals.
- Scaffold skills with strategies. For example, use Post-its to identify key elements of a chapter.
- Write long about reading.
- Practice alternating the speed a text is read to reflect tone and mood.
- Plan to celebrate the conclusion of classroom reading projects.
- Use technology in the reading classroom; for example, use digital journals.

## Assessments

Assessment in this unit takes three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. There are downloadable, digital versions of the assessment tools available through the online resources at; www.readingandwritingproject.org/resources. Teachers may also develop their own rubrics and assessments in order to include more specific elements of knowledge and skills listed in this unit summary.

Student self-assessment and peer assessment should take place whenever possible--again, in all three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Removing the traditional emphasis on teacher assessment enables students to take more initiative and become self-directed.

On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of a conference. Conferences, both small group and one-to-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice and/or assistance, and ultimately, to support growth.

### Diagnostic Assessments

Running Records

www.readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/running-records

Spelling Inventory

www.readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/spelling-assessments

Individual beginning of the year "How's It Going?" conferences

**Formative Assessments**

Teacher-student conferences including: individual, small group, strategy group, and guided reading

Daily observation of students' participation during the active engagement segment of each mini-lesson.

Students' conversation with partners during Turn and Talk segment of mini-lessons.

Reading logs, Reader's Notebooks, Writing About Reading evidence (Post-its, journal entries, writing long about reading, for example)

**Summative Assessment**

Teacher-student conferences

Running Records

Spelling Assessments

Reading logs, Reader's Notebooks, and other evidence of students improving skills

## Activities to Differentiate Instruction

The design of reading workshop allows for individualized instruction and independent growth for every child. At the heart of differentiation in Reader's Workshop is data and the analysis of data. Through the usage of monitoring student progress during independent reading, analysis of formal and informal running records, and other assessments such as high-frequency word lists and spelling inventories, teachers should be able to delineate which students are in need of additional supports, in what areas those supports should be targeted at, and which students are ready to be pushed further in their reading work.

Some methods to use to support struggling readers as well as advanced readers:

- Provide leveled books appropriate for all reading levels
- Provide support as needed through conferencing
- Provide support as needed through strategy groups
- Provide support as needed through guided reading groups
- Provide modified and/or alternate grade level checklists and rubrics to scaffold or stretch learning
- Scaffold or stretch learning through the use of various strategies
- Provide appropriate reading partners
- Utilize charts to provide a visual reminder for students throughout the mini-lesson.
    - Add drawings and visuals to charts
    - Provide individualized copies of teaching charts
    - Depending on the concept, the chart may be most effective to visually break the concept into parts and touch each part during a demonstration
- For students needing more support at the end of the mini-lesson, keep them at the rug for an extra minute after dispersing the rest of the class and clarify the main topic of the mini-lesson or work one-on-one with them to start their reading
- Set reading goals for students and follow-up with the reading goals after an appropriate amount of time.
- Create group and one-on-one conferencing calendars to ensure that students are being met with on a regular basis and working toward individualized goals
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen

- Assign roles to partners (Partner 1/Partner 2) to help scaffold which student should speak first and avoid one partner dominating the conversation and the other partner becoming a passive listener
    - For ELL students, creating a triad instead of partnership may be beneficial
- Provide students access to RAZ Kids which will provide students more reading options for leveled texts, access to technology, and the ability to have books read to them while they follow along or for students to record their reading

Supports for ELL students:

- Provide consistent teaching structures
- Use consistent teaching language
- Offer plentiful opportunities for reading practice
- Provide access to a broad variety of texts
- Use assessment to provide extra support
- Support students in the preproduction and early production stages of learning English
- Use visual examples in your teaching
- Modify our mini-lessons to be as concise as possible
- Provide extra ?active engagement? time in mini-lessons for extra practice
- Provide readers with topic-based text sets
- Provide opportunities for listening and learning the social language of the reading workshop
- Provide opportunities to read in both their home language and in English
- Plan instruction with the ELL teacher
- Extend the language ELLs are producing through questioning
- Provide explicit instruction in tenses, pronoun references, and connectives
- Support students in building vocabulary using their own reading as the context
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen

In order to support this differentiation work, teachers may want to consult the following materials:

- Units of Study books at lower or higher levels for teaching strategies that are appropriate to the support needed.
- The Reading Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo
- If. . . Then. .. Curriculum book for alternate units or teaching points to support the individual reading levels.
- A Guide to the Reading Workshop (Primary Grades) chapter 14 for more in-depth information on differentiation

## Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

*Writing Workshop*

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- utilize read alouds and independent reading as mentor texts
- apply spelling strategies
- identify areas of spelling needs
- apply grammar skills
- identify areas in need of addressing (spelling, grammar, mechanics)
- expand written vocabulary from read alouds and independent reading
- model sentence and paragraph structure after mentor texts

*Content Areas: Science, Social Studies, Health*

- read just right books in the content areas
- use mentor texts to deliver Social Studies content
- compare content area ideas and issues to what our characters deal with in our read alouds and mentor texts
- apply reading skills and strategies to the reading we do in the content areas

*Study Skills*

- use graphic organizers to support reading
- use checklists and rubrics to monitor progress
- use Venn diagrams and t-charts to gather, compare, and contrast events
- use highlighters, note cards, post-its, and other tools to keep track of story events, details, and ideas
- keep a log and notebook

*The Arts*

- analyze illustrations in books for details
- compare illustrations to other forms of art
- illustrate a passage that was just read to show details, ideas, and lessons
- act out a scene from a book to better visualize how a character feels

## Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

**Resources**

*Units of Study for Teaching Reading:*

- *Building Good Reading Habits;* Lucy Calkins and Elizabeth Dunford Franco
- *Learning About the World, Reading Nonfiction*; Lucy Calkins and Amanda Hartman
- *Readers Have Big Jobs to Do, Fluency, Phonics, and Comprehension;* Lucy Calkins, Elizabeth Dunford Franco, Havilah Jespersen, Lindsay Barton
- *Meeting Characters and Learning Lessons, A Study of Story Elements;* Lucy Calkins and Elizabeth Dunford Franco
- *A Guide to the Reading Workshop,Primary Grades*; Lucy Calkins
- *Reading Pathways, Grades K-2, Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions*; Lucy Calkins
- *If...Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grades K-2*; Lucy Calkins; Julia Mooney; and Colleagues From the TCRWP
- *Online Resources for Teaching Writing*; Lucy Calkins
- website: www.readingandwritingproject.org/resources

*The Art of Teaching Reading;* Lucy Calkins

*The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*; Jennifer Serravallo

*Leveled Books, K-8: Matching Texts to Readers for Effective Teaching*; Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

*Reading Miscue Inventory: From Evaluation to Instruction*; Yetta M. Goodman

*Miscue Analysis Made Easy: Building on Student Strengths*; Sandra Wilde

*Around the Reading Workshop in 180 Days*; Frank Serafini

*The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*; Donalyn Miller

*Mindsets and Moves: Strategies That Help Readers Take Charge*; Gravity Goldberg

*Smarter Charts*; Marjorie Martinelli

*Genre Study: Teaching with Fiction and Nonfiction Books;* I.C. Fountas and G.S. Pinnell

*Guided Reading, Good First Teaching for All Children;* I.C. Fountas and G.S. Pinnell

**Read Aloud and Mentor Texts**

*Upstairs Mouse, Downstairs Mole;* Wong Herbert Yee

*Chrysanthemum;* Kevin Henkes

*A Chair for My Mother;* Vera B. Williams

"Chums;" Arthur Guiterman (poem)

*George and Martha One More Time;* James Marshall

*Lilly's Purple Purse;* Kevin Henkes

*Iris and Walter and the Field Trip;* Elissa Haden Guest

*Mr. Putter and Tabby Drop the Ball;* Cynthia Rylant

*Henry and Mudge series;* Cynthia Rylant

*Little Critter;* Mercer Mayer

*Fly Guy* series; Ted Arnold

*Little Bear* series; Else Holmelund Minarik

*Elephant and* Piggie series; Mo Willems

*Biscuit* series; Alyssa Satin Capucilli

*Mrs. Wishy Washy;* Joy Cowley

*Peter's Chair;* Ezra Jack Keats

*Leonardo and the Terrible Monster;* Mo Willems

**Books from Reading Street**

*Mama's Birthday Present;* Carmen Tafolla

*Out of the Ocean;* Debra Frasier

*Cinderella;* Teresa R. Roberts

*Anarosa;* Luc Sanchez

*Peter's Chair;* Ezra Jack Keats

*Henry and Mudge and Mrs. Hopper's House;* Cynthia Rylant

## 21st Century Skills

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| CRP.K-12.CRP2.1 | Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation. |
| CRP.K-12.CRP4.1 | Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome. |
| CRP.K-12.CRP12.1 | Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings. |