Unit 5: Narrative Reading: Solving the Mystery Before the Detective: Inference Book Clubs

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **7-8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, a major goal is to support students as they work to increase volume and stamina in reading. The third graders will be reading mysteries; stories that have been written for children with a clear, coherent through-line in a fast-moving plot. These books will have readers of all abilities turning pages! Lessons on the mystery genre will be paired with lessons on reading faster and longer. Another major goal will be to focus on student engagement. Working within a book club structure, offering book introductions, the support (and friendly peer pressure) and encouragement of a small focus group, and student set goals will provide the motivation necessary to capture all readers. Even parents can lend a hand, reading and talking about the club books at home as another way to motivate the overall goal of getting our students to want to read, read, read.

Phonics and word study instruction will continue with the use of *Fundations*, Level 3, (2012, Wilson Language Training Corporation). The basic skills developed in Levels K-2 are built upon in Level 3 where students progress further into the study of word structure with a focus on advanced spelling rules and morphology. 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

LA.RL.3.1	Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
LA.RL.3.3	Describe the characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the plot.
LA.RL.3.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.
LA.RL.3.5	Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
LA.RL.3.6	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
LA.RL.3.9	Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) the central message/theme, lesson, and/or moral, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).
LA.RL.3.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.
LA.RF.3.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words.
LA.RF.3.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
LA.SL.3.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

LA.SL.3.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
LA.SL.3.1.B	Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
LA.SL.3.1.C	Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
LA.SL.3.1.D	Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
LA.SL.3.6	Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.
LA.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.3.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.3.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went looking for them).

Essential Questions

How do mystery readers read for clues?

How does reading a book series change a reader's expectations as they read subsequent books in the series?

How do mystery readers learn life lessons from the books they read?

How do readers tackle unfamiliar vocabulary?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- identifying the main problem will help them hold onto the story.
- mystery readers use the vocabulary of mysteries (i.e. detective, sleuth, witness) in their club discussions.
- new characters will be introduced in each book of a series.
- paying attention to a character's actions will help them grow ideas about characters.
- paying attention to clues will help them step into the shoes of the detective.
- the characters' choices can provide clues to their beliefs and morals.
- the setting of a mystery is an important clue in the mystery.
- they must slow down their reading and pay attention to the choices that characters make.

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

- compare characters and the lessons they learn within and across stories.
- create theories about the characters and plot; then test their theory to see if it holds true
- describe how characters solve their problems and the lessons they learn.
- read with fluency and high volume.
- support their theories with details from the story.
- track characters across the book.
- use clues to make predictions and envision how the story will go.
- use strategies and skills to tackle complex texts and hard words, for example talking out what you are thinking as you read with others.

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from the *Solving the Mystery before the Detective: Inference, Close Reading, Synthesis, and Prediction (Grade 3)* unit of the If... Then... Curriculum, part of the *Units of Study for Teaching Reading (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

- Teach students that mystery readers start their books wondering, "What's the mystery?" They read the first few pages trying to identify the main problem as well as who the main detective is. Then, they read deeper into the book, paying attention to the clues the main detective finds.
- Teach students that mystery readers often step into the main detective's shoes, almost solving the mystery alongside this character. They try to see whatever the main detective might be seeing, consider all the clues, and keep guessing solutions, almost as if they themselves were the main detective.
- Teach students that mystery readers read for clues. They gather and think about all of the information that is in the story and consider why it is important. This helps them talk about possibilities for how the story may go.
- Teach students that mystery readers read with suspicion. They make a list of suspects as they read, and each time a new character enters the story, they consider whether or not this new character should be on their list. One strategy is to think about the little details in the story that point to whether a character should be on the list of suspects or not.
- Coach students to read longer and stronger. One strategy while reading mysteries is to make a prediction about what is going to happen next, and then see if the prediction happens. In this way readers gobble up pages without even noticing the time going by.
- Teach students to examine how a text's illustrations contribute to the meaning of a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).
- Teach students that clubs need to set reading goals so that all the members are reading at the same pace and are reading to discuss the same amount. Once a club has set a goal, it's important for the group to assess the goal. One strategy is to ask each other questions like; "Did that feel like the right amount? Could we read more next time? Did we finish what we said we would?" Then, based on this discussion, the club members can establish their next set of goals.
- Teach students that mystery readers sometimes retrace their steps by rereading a portion of the story in

order to study the information the author has given them to solve the mystery.

- Coach students to apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Coach students to "look around" as a reader. Pay attention to where the story is taking place and what is being described. Don't ever overlook details; sometimes it is just those tiny details, the portrait that no longer hangs in the hallway for example, that can lead a sharp sleuth (a.k.a. the reader) to some important answers.
- Teach students that mystery readers, like detectives, rethink everything. As they read deeper into the book, they consider old clues in the light of new information. Often, they revise their predictions because the story shows them a new clue they hadn't noticed previously.
- Coach students to distinguish their own perspective of the story from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
- Coach students to take on the vocabulary, the "lingo" of the detective when they think about the book, write about the book, and discuss the book with other club members. For example, readers can refer to the detective as a "sleuth" and use the word "witness" to refer to characters in the story who provide the detective with clues.
- Teach students that sometimes a mystery reader sees more than the main detective does. We almost want to share the information we have with the main detective. It’s at moments such as these that mystery readers become detectives themselves and almost lose themselves in the story.
- Teach students that although mystery readers can often identify false clues, sometimes the author tricks us. We consider the specific false clues that threw us off course and consider what the author did to trick us. These false clues are called a red herring and one strategy is to pay attention to parts of the story that seem almost too easy to figure out.
- Remind students that although they may want to read lightning fast while reading a mystery, readers still need to check on their understanding of the story as they go along. One strategy readers use is to use Post-its to keep track of some aspect of the story as they read.
- Teach children that readers use their knowledge of language and conventions when writing and speaking about reading.
- Coach students that when a mystery is part of a series, they can expect to see the story go in a certain way with each book in the series. This can help a reader "get into" the story a lot faster, and begin gathering clues a lot faster too.
- Teach students that when readers begin a new book in a mystery series they are expecting to see familiar faces and places. This can help them envision what is happening and they may find themselves stepping into the shoes of the detective even earlier in their reading.
- Teach students that mysteries that come in a series will often follow a familiar pattern, a formula, that can make reading subsequent books in a series feel very comfortable. This added level of comfort will add to the reader's enjoyment of the book and will often make them want to read more and more.
- Coach students that by the time readers get to the third and fourth book in a series, they will have come to know the main detective’s habits and strengths and can then better predict how this character will think or behave or how they will solve the mystery.
- Teach students that the main detective in a mystery often has a sidekick and/or friend who helps them solve the mystery. Mystery readers note whether or not the sidekick changes in a book or across books, for example does the sidekick begin to take on any of the traits of the detective?
- Teach students that just like the detectives in the mysteries they are reading, readers can get help trying to solve the mystery in the book. One strategy for trying to solve a mystery or puzzle it out is to discuss the book with others, making predictions and growing theories together about what might be going to happen.
- Coach students to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from non literal language.
- Coach students that readers can learn a lot by studying the choices that characters in books make. Characters in books make small choices that define who they are as a character. Thinking about those choices, and their outcomes, can guide the choices that readers make in their own lives.

- Teach students that mysteries teach readers valuable lessons about life. As readers, when we solve a mystery, we often learn something new about human nature. For example we might find out that even if a bad decision was made for good reasons, it is often still a bad decision.
- Coach students to take their sleuthing skills with them out into the real world. Mystery readers become trained to look for clues and details in their real lives that tell them more than someone else might see.

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 by using 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 using 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 digital journals

Assessments

Assessment in this unit takes three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. The resource *Reading Pathways, Grades 3-5*, provides reading progressions, performance assessments, rubrics, tools for collecting data, a system for conducting running records, There are also 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

Challenge gifted students to incorporate more complex reading techniques based on the 4th grade Reading Learning Progressions:

- base predictions on how stories tend to go, explaining reasons for predictions
- pay attention to structure while reading, note sequence words that may indicate a back-story or gaps in time between scenes.
- read complex sentences correctly by paying attention to punctuation
- talk about the big ideas/themes that a story teaches
- support ideas with details from several parts of a text and discuss how the details actually do support

those ideas

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
- create mysteries that deal with historical, geographical, or local settings and/or characters

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:

- *A Guide to the Reading Workshop, Intermediate Grades*; Lucy Calkins
- *Reading Pathways, Grades 3-5, Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions*; Lucy Calkins
- *If...Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grades 3-5*; 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

Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3-6; Irene C Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

Smarter Charts; Marjorie Martinelli

Some Suggested Mystery Series

Cam Jansen series by David A. Adler (J,L)

Nate the Great series by Marjorie W. Sharmat (K)

Bones series by David A. Adler (J,K)

Encyclopedia Brown series by Donald J. Sobol (P)

Calendar Mysteries series by Ron Roy (M)

The Boxcar Children series by Gertrude Chandler Warner (O)

Geronimo Stilton series by Geronimo Stilton (O)

Bunnicula series by James Howe (Q)

Hank the Cowdog series by John Erickson (P,Q)

Some Suggested Read Aloud Novels

Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library; Chris Grabenstein

Grandpa's Teeth; Rod Clement (M)

Piggins; Jane Yolen (M)

Time Stops for No Mouse; Micheal Hoeye (T)

A Series of Unfortunate Events, The Bad Beginning; Lemony Snickett (V)