Unit 6 - Readers Get to Know Characters

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
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Unit Overview

This unit uses children's natural inclination towards imitation and role-playing by inviting them to do this same sort of pretending with their characters. It focuses on comprehension skills such as inferring, activating prior knowledge, and synthesizing deeper understandings of characters by making connections and empathizing with a characters situations, experiences, and relationships. Children will be using their books to help them figure out how to act like the characters in those books. And, in the process of acting out their books, by being the characters in those books, readers will also come to know the characters (and perhaps themselves) better. Remember that even in low-level books, with what appears to be very undeveloped characters, children could learn to use illustrations, what's happening in the story and any relevant background knowledge to help them know their characters better. Teachers will want to gather their character books into various baskets and use shared reading and your read-aloud to scaffold this reading work.

The unit will capitalize on student reading knowledge including knowledge of letter-sound correspondence, comprehension, and fluency. Assessments will be conducted in this unit and throughout the year using Teacher's College Running Records. In addition, Fundations, Level K, 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.

Standards

LA.RL.K.1	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
LA.RL.K.2	With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
LA.RL.K.3	With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
LA.RL.K.4	Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
LA.RL.K.5	Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).
LA.RL.K.7	With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
LA.RL.K.9	With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
LA.RL.K.10	Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
LA.RF.K.1	Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
LA.RF.K.2	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

LA.RF.K.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words.
LA.RF.K.4	Read emergent text with one-to-one correspondence to develop fluency and comprehension skills.
LA.SL.K.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
LA.SL.K.2	Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

Essential Questions

How do readers get to know the characters in their book?

How can readers get to know their characters so that they may pretend to be them?

How can readers perform books in book clubs?

How can I read and reread my books to get ready to share them with an audience?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Readers can work together in book clubs to perform their books.
- Readers get to know their characters so well that they can pretend to be them.
- Readers have strategies to get to know their characters really well.
- Readers reread their books to make the characters and stories come to life.

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

- Identify main characters in text
- Perform as a character by using similar behavior and speech
- Point out how a character changes in a story
- Recognize feelings that literary characters feel

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from Units of Study for Teaching Reading Grade K (Calkins et al., 2015) and If...Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grades K-2; Lucy Calkins; Julia Mooney; and Colleagues From the TCRWP and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and/or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Bend I: Readers have strategies for getting to know a character

- Readers revisit book walks to help us get to know our stories really well. This will help us get to know our characters really well. We can pick up our book and look at the cover and title to get ready to read. Then you can look closely at each picture and look for different characters. We can ask ourselves, " Does the title tell me anything about the character?".
- Readers learn to name and identify their characters. After we look closely at the book pictures, we can try and find important characters. We can do this by asking ourselves, " Is there a character or a few characters that may be showing up on almost every page?". Then we know these are the characters in the story that are important.
- When you are taking your book walk, readers think about where the story is taking place. Look closely at the pictures and see if there are any hints about where the book is. Then you can ask yourself of the setting helps you to understand the character better.
- When you are taking your book walk looking at the pictures, readers pay close attention to the facial expressions, body language, and gestures to help you get to know how your character may be feeling. While you are reading your book, make sure to be including these details in your storytelling. You may state the feeling and then why the character is feeling that way. You may also say what you think the character may be thinking. You can add a post it speech bubble to help you hold your thoughts.
- Readers also pay close attention to ending of the book to help learn about our characters. Since we know that books often have a twist at the end, you can ask yourself, " How might the character feel now?" or " what might the character be thinking now?".
- Readers have to think about how all the things we are learning about our characters go together from the cover, title, and book walk. After we have finished our book walks, we can tell our partners all that we have learned about our character and what happened to our character. We can ask ourselves, " Did my character change at all during the story? How did he/she change?".

Bend II: Readers Can Work with Partners to Pretend We Are Characters in Our Books

- Readers use what they have learned about their characters to pretend to be the characters in mini plays. You and your partner will pick characters in a book and as you read the book, think about how the character is feeling and match your voice and body gestures to the feeling as you read, pay special attention to any changes that may be happening.
- Often, characters are not talking the whole book. The non talking parts are read by a narrator. When you come to a non talking part in your book, the narrator can also use what is happening in the story to the character and use expressive voices and dramatic gestures to read their parts.
- If there is only narration is the words and no character voices, you will use the pictures to help you imagine what the character might say on each page. You can use post its to help you remember what you think the character might be saying.

Bend III: Readers Perform Books in Reading Clubs to Become Experts About Characters and Stories

- Sometimes in reading we can get into reading clubs and try some reading work about characters. Today you will be placed in a reading club about a character for you to read, study, and get to know really well.
- The big secret to becoming a character expert is to know the story of the character really well. To do this, you will read your books, reread the books a few times. Reread to make the book sound smooth.
- Readers study the pictures to make sure you have discovered all that there is to know and really study what your character says and does and try some of it out so that you can make the character your own.
- When trying to act and sound like your characters, you may need to try a few ways. In partnerships, you will try out a few ways and then decide on a particular way that best matches the clues the text provides. Look at what's is happening and the characters facial expressions and gestures to help you

make this decision.
- To show how well we really know our characters, we can make our mini performances longer. You can think about your character at the end of the book and imagine what might happen next based on what you know about your character. Talk with your partners about why your guess is a good one, showing spots in the book to support your thoughts, and try out a few added parts together.

Bend IV: Giving the Gift of Reading

- Readers can give the gift of reading! You can think about the people you love and which stories they would love to hear from you. You can decide what you will perform, how you will perform it and who will be your audience.
- Children are in book clubs but they each create their own "gift performance"
- Readers have to make decisions about their final performance such as which text you will perform? Once you have chosen that, will your perform the exact words from the text or perform and interpretation?
- Revisiting our books in our clubs and trying to perform it in different ways for getting feedback.
- Readers rehearse and then think about what they want to work on so their performance is even better next time. Some examples are; sounding more like your character, using more gestures and expressions, speaking loudly, rereading to memorize some parts.

Bend V: Celebration

- Perform to class, other classes, parents, etc. This can be done in a class celebration or students can bring the "gift performance" home

Suggested Activities

- Create and refer to anchor charts.
- Provide and present mentor texts as models.
- Teach the *Work of Readers* Charts.
- Model (Talk Aloud) the strategies good readers use.
- Study book pictures
- 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.
- 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 storytelling videos

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

Technology

Create podcasts retelling favorite books

Library

Practice using other media (magazines, newspapers)

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

The Art of Teaching Reading; Lucy Calkins

The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers; Jennifer Serravallo (This book is wonderful for targeted instruction and conferencing goals)

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

Mentor Texts/ Read Alouds

Frog and Toad are Friends (and other books) - Lobel

Franklin Series - Paulette Bourgeois

McDuff Series - Rosemary Wells

Harry Series - Gene Zion

Max Series - Rosemary Wells

Puppy Mudge - Cynthia Rylant

Biscuit series - Alyssa Satin Capucilli

Mrs. Wishy Washy - Joy Cowley

Elephant and Piggy books - Mo Willems

Huggles books - Joy Cowley

Mittens books- Lola Schaefer

21st Century Skills

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.