Short Stories

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

Unit Overview

Students are introduced to short stories, recognizing that they are brief works of fiction. They will realize that not two stories are identical, but that they all share some common elements.

Gifted classes in English Language Arts have an approach to literature and reading that differs from that of regular classes in the following ways:

- Gifted classes naturally engage in critical thought even beyond the already high standard of regular classes, and teachers add special emphasis to the critical-thinking components of the standard scoring rubrics.
- Gifted classes include a wider array of related topics and cross-curricular connections when exploring meaning in what they read.
- Gifted classes include opportunities for students to engage in peer instruction, placing the teacher at times in the role of facilitator. This capitalizes on the strong intrinsic motivation of the gifted child.
- Gifted classes require from all students more initiative and independence, while incorporating structured group activities to provide synthesis from and integration of individual efforts.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5	Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6	Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.7	Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.9	Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including

	describing how the material is rendered new.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.a	Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.b	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.c	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.d	Establish and maintain a formal style.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1.e	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.a	Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.b	Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.c	Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1.d	Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4.a	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4.b	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4.c	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4.d	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5.a	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., verbal irony, puns) in context.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions

What role do reading strategies play in reading comprehension?

What applicability does literature have to real life?

How can being a good reader improve one's life in other areas?

How do literary devices enhance one's understanding of a story?

How do the authors one reads engage one as a reader and what can one learn from them?

Application of Knowledge and Skills...

Students will know that...

Students will know

- how to determine the literary elements of author's purpose and theme
- how to identify the plot of a short story
- how to identify point of view and setting in a short story
- the types of conflict and how to identify them and their resolution
- how to identify, prove, and explain character traits
- how to identify and explain theme(s) in a short story
- new vocabulary words

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- the types of conflict and how to identify them and their resolution

Students will be skilled at...

Students will be able to

- present information to the class orally
- graph the plot of a short story
- identify and explain point of view and setting in a short story
- define internal and external conflict and identify them and their resolutions in a short story
- identify, prove, and explain character traits
- identify and explain theme(s) in a short story
- expand vocabulary by defining and studying new vocabulary words selected from a short story
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- identify, prove, and explain character traits
- present information to the class orally

Assessments

Big Question Discussion
Diagnostic: Other oral assessments

Students are introduced to the Big Question (Does every conflict have a winner) and engage in a discussion to assess the ideas they already have.

Critical Thinking Questions
Formative: Instructional/Assessment Focus

Students answer comprehension questions about each story. While the questions assess knowledge of the text, they are also centered around a reading skill such as making predictions or fact and opinion.

Vocabulary Warm Ups
Diagnostic: Instructional/Assessment Focus

Students complete vocabulary warm-ups to tap prior knowledge of both academic and story vocabulary.

SelectionTests
Summative: Written Test

Students are tested on their comprehension of the story read and discussed in class. Open-ended questions are

included.

Essay Response to Open Ended Questions
Formative: Extended Essay

Students respond to open-ended questions with thoughtful, thorough, elaborate essays that demonstrate basic comprehension, critical thinking, advanced writing skills, and adherence to formal writing guidelines.

Unit Project
Summative: Personal Project

Students complete a project that embodies all of the skills learned over the course of the unit. Students present their projects to the class.

Literature Circles
Formative: Other oral assessments

Students participate weekly in Literature Circles in order to discuss questions, insights, and literary elements. Students use their Reading Exploration Sheets to keep track of what they wish to contribute, but they must take care that their discussion is not a mere recitation of what is on their sheets. The discussion must be dynamic and energetic.

At times, students consult each other regarding strategies for writing essays connected with the reading. This is acceptable so long as the discussion does not become little more than a Writing Workshop conference.

Some teachers may desire more structure for Literature Circles in their classes. If so, they can assign the following roles to each student: master of ceremonies, literary term wizard, vocabulary czar, summarizer, and passage picker.

Committee Presentations
Formative: Other oral assessments

Teachers may choose to apply an enrichment component to this unit, grouping students in committees, with each committee charged with jobs like the following:

Vocabulary committee—compose, in consultation with the teacher and with suggestions from classmates, vocabulary lists and preparation sheets that will assist students in preparing for tests. The words come directly from the text that they are reading.

Literary elements committee—prepare biweekly presentations on literary devices at work in the text they are reading.

Plot and character analysis committee—prepare biweekly presentations that provide analysis of characters and plot.

Connections committee—prepare biweekly presentations that illustrate connections between the text they are reading and other content areas.

Assessment Instruments:
Students self-assessments of their own work in committees

Teacher assessment of students's overall work in preparation and presentation

Peer assessments of committee presentations

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- Committee Presentations
- Connections committee—prepare biweekly presentations that illustrate connections between the text they are reading and other content areas.
- Critical Thinking Questions
- Diagnostic: Instructional/Assessment Focus
- Diagnostic: Other oral assessments
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- Literature Circles
- Peer assessments of committee presentations
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- Students are introduced to the Big Question (Does every conflict have a winner) and engage in a discussion to assess the ideas they already have.
- Students are tested on their comprehension of the story read and discussed in class. Open-ended questions are included.
- Students complete a project that embodies all of the skills learned over the course of the unit. Students present their projects to the class.
- Students complete vocabulary warm-ups to tap prior knowledge of both academic and story vocabulary.
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demonstrate basic comprehension, critical thinking, advanced writing skills, and adherence to formal writing guidelines.

- Summative: Personal Project
- Summative: Written Test
- Teacher assessment of students's overall work in preparation and presentation
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- Vocabulary Warm Ups

Activities

Possible classroom activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Daily review of essential questions

Classroom reading, note-taking, discussion

Independent reading and note-taking

Deep inquiry into vocabulary, literary devices, social/cultural influences, and plot elements in the novel

Literature Circle discussions between small groups of peers

Essay responses to open-ended questions with peer conferences to assist with composition and editing

Investigation of cross-curricular connections

Committee presentations on concepts and topics related to the reading with self-assessment and peer review of presentations

Enrichment lessons and activities on advanced literary concepts and cross-curricular connections presented by the teacher

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Leveled short stories

Leveled Selection Tests

Reader's Notebook: Adapted Version

Hear It! Audio CD

See It! Video DVD

Leveled Vocabulary Warm Ups

Leveled Selection Support

Leveled Skills Development

Teacher-constructed notes

Peer-review of essays, paired note-taking sessions, and Literature Circle discussions all enable students of different conceptual perspectives to combine resources.

Structured activities between peers (Literature Circles, paired note-taking sessions) activate the social element of learning.

Discussion(auditory), notes and handouts (visual), and online investigation of Internet resources (kinesthetic) allow for a variety of induction modes.

Emphasis of historical, cultural, literary, political, and social influences in a work of nonfiction will allow students' individual preferences and interests to enhance their processing of the story. Enrichment instruction on these topics may take the form of individual student investigations, committee presentations (using the Literature Symposium model), and/or supplementary lessons provided by the teacher.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Social Studies Connections:

- The Middle East
- Social mores of Japan
- California Gold Rush

Science Connections:

- Man vs. Machine
- Ecosystems and survival
- Experimenting with IQ capacities

For additional cross-curricular connections, teachers (or the Connections Committee, for teachers who set up Literature Symposium Committees) may wish to include investigations of various cross-curricular topics that come up in connection with the texts covered this year.

Resources

Pearson Literature Anthology

Reader's Notebook

Adapted Reader's Notebook

Teacher's Manual

Teacher's Unit Resource Manuals

Selection Tests

Open-Book Tests

Unit Tests

Benchmark Tests

Pearson ExamView Test Bank CD-ROM