

Unit 1- Interpretation Book Clubs: Analyzing Themes

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

Unit Overview

This unit goes for the gold, teaching students the best of what it means to read literature and conveying that this is a time for intellectual independence. In the first part of the unit, you'll teach students strategies to lift the level of their writing about reading. You'll remind them to draw on a repertoire of ways for reading closely, alert to how story elements interact and details that seem to represent big ideas. Students read through the lens of tentative ideas and questions to help them develop evidenced-based theories. Then, each reading club will work with a novel that has nuanced characters and multiple subplots. You'll ask, "What might this book really be about?" After students name the most important thing a text teaches, you'll prompt them to think of others, considering more than one overarching theme and weighing which details best support each theme and which theme is most important in a story. You'll teach students to read analytically and notice how different authors develop the same theme and to compare and contrast texts that develop a similar theme. When students step back from a text and think, "How does this part contribute to the whole text?" or "Why might the author have done this?" the payoff is immense, both in reading and in their own writing.

Standards

LA.5.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.3.a	Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4.a	Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4.b	Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4.c	Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2	Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3	Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4	Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.5	Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.6	Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7	Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.8	Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.9	Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.5	Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.6	Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.7	Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.9	Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4–5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4	Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.5	Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Essential Questions

- How might an author set up a story in a specific way to highlight a particular theme?
- What does it mean to write well about reading?
- How does the narrator's voice effect the perspective of a story?
- How do book clubs change the way we read a story?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Authors improve their writing about reading by revising their work
- Authors use characters to change the perspective of their story
- Book clubs elevate the level of reading, thinking, and conversations about books
- Readers analyze a literary text by studying the author's goals
- Readers can debate different viewpoints of a story and support it with evidence to persuade the other person
- Readers use different lenses as they revisit a text in order to gain new ideas and insights
- Readers who write about their reading are extra alert, seeing more in their books
- Reading with others helps people to notice more about a story
- Sophisticated readers always consider the theme as they read, comparing and contrasting themes across different texts
- To become a better reader you need to read more complex novels and think in more complex ways

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

- compare and contrast the ways themes are developed across texts
- explain how themes change in a story, allowing for new ideas and new interpretation
- read interpretively by using ideas as lenses, finding and weighing evidence, and settling on the most significant theme
- set goals to strengthen their talk about books
- think and write analytically about reading
- work together in book clubs to identify the themes in various texts

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points are adapted from the *Interpretation Book Clubs; Analyzing Theme* unit; *Grade 5*; part of the *Units of Study for Teaching Reading* by Lucy Calkins and Colleagues from the Reading and Writing Project. These serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Teaching Points

- teach students that they can have a growth spurt as readers if they work with resolve toward ambitious, specific goals to become strong readers
- guide students through an inquiry to explore and establish what it means to write well about reading
- teach children that readers who write about their reading are extra alert, seeing more in their books
- teach students that once readers find an idea worth developing, they revisit the text with that idea as a lens, rereading particular passages that inform the idea, mining them for new insights
- teach students to consider the perspective a story is being told from and the effect the narrator's voice has on the way the story is being told
- teach children that to think analytically, a person often thinks about how a subject or text is structured and divides sections into parts, then selects, ranks, and compares. This kind of analytical thinking often yields new insight.

- remind children that when people aim to improve their writing about reading, they revise their work, relying on examples of what constitutes powerful writing about reading
- remind students that as readers sharpen their reading and thinking skills, they are able to see more significance in a text and to trust that they notice things for a reason
- teach students that to think thematically, readers sometimes name the problem that a character faces, and then think about the lessons the character may learn or what the author may want readers to know
- teach students that when people read with others, they end up seeing more than they would have seen on their own
- teach students that readers link ideas together to build larger theories or interpretations, aiming to uncover a larger truth or lesson
- remind students that readers wear their interpretations like a pair of glasses, reading on in the text with their ideas in mind, gathering evidence and deepening their theories
- teach students that readers can debate differing viewpoints on a provocative question about a book they have both read. In a debate, each reader supports his or her side with evidence to persuade the other person
- guide students through an inquiry to explore how an effective book club elevates the level of its reading, thinking, and conversations about books
- teach students that sophisticated readers consider universal themes as they read, comparing and contrasting those themes across different texts
- teach students that when readers think that texts seem to support the same theme, they often look again and may find the texts actually convey slightly different messages
- teach students that one way readers think about a theme in more complex ways is to consider how different characters connect to and represent that theme, and also how some characters may work against a theme
- teach students that readers think about the choices that authors make (and the ones they don't) as a way to come to new insights about texts
- teach students that one way readers analyze a literary text is to study the author's goals and how he or she achieves them in specific parts of the text
- invite your students to participate in a literary salon as a fun way to show off their new, sophisticated thoughts about literature

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 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

- 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 individualized copies of teaching charts
- 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

Challenge gifted students to:

- preview the book, paying attention to information from the cover and the first chapter/prologue to orient the reader to the story's characters, conflicts, and possible themes
- use what the reader knows about the genre and author to build expectations for the characters, setting, plot, and theme
- anticipate that a story might have more than one plotline, timeline, and point of view and track shifts in time or perspective
- notice when the narrator is connected to one or more characters' inner thoughts (3rd person narrative)
- notice when the author has made the narrator unreliable or limited in his or her point of view (1st person narrative)

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 a Reading Life* by Lucy Calkins and Kathleen Tolan
- *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