

# Unit 6: Social Issues Book Clubs - Applying Analytical Lenses across Literature and Informational Texts

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

## Unit Overview

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This unit's purpose is to teach readers to compose meaning as they read. It teaches students that there may be more than one meaning to a text, and readers construct their own meaning based on prior knowledge, understandings, and experiences. This unit is described in Chapter 18 and 23 of *The Art of Teaching Reading* by Lucy Calkins. You may want to have students in clubs or partnerships for this unit of study.

## Standards

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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.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
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.

## Essential Questions

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- How can I apply an analytical lens as I read across both literature and information texts?
- How can I read texts—literature, information texts and texts related to current events, too-- with a lens that lets me see the issues that are hiding in those texts?
- How can I notice how different authors and different texts approach an issue differently?
- How can I become more complex in my thinking because I read? How can I become more aware, and help others to become more aware too? How can I go through life, seeing more in the texts that I read?

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

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- author's have their own craft and approach an issue differently
- readers infer and interpret texts
- readers pay close attention to moments where characters experience strong emotions or where characters make critical choices
- readers read texts to find the issues hiding in texts
- readers use an analytical lens as they read across both literature and informational text
- reading is much more than finding out what characters do or what happens in a story

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

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- compare and contrast stories in the same genre
- Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described
- discuss social issues identified in various texts
- identify author's purpose
- identify symbols in a text and think about the meaning the symbols play in the story
- inference and interpret texts
- recognize and explore author's craft
- think about how issues in a text are part of bigger patterns and traditions

## **Teaching Points and Suggested Activities**

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*This unit is described in Chapter 18 and 23 of The Art of Teaching Reading by Lucy Caulkins.*

### **Teaching Points**

- teach students that powerful readers know that reading is much more than finding out what characters do or what happens in stories. We know that stories are about ideas and those ideas have to the power to teach us life lessons. We may, therefore, reconsider stories we've lived or read, and rethink them in terms of the lessons or ideas they suggest. We keep in mind that good stories are about more than one idea. There may be many possible meanings of a story.
- teach students that as a reader, it is especially worth paying attention to moments where characters experience strong emotions or where characters make critical choices. These are the places where we as readers may learn significant lessons.
- teach students that as readers, we revise our original ideas as the story develops. We expect to back up our ideas with evidence from the text, and we mark, collect, and ponder moments in the text that support our ideas.
- teach students that just as stories are about more than one idea, ideas live in more than one story. We can find the same idea across different texts--stories, nonfiction and even our life stories. Readers begin to compare texts that share similar themes, recalling texts we've already read, and remaining alert to new texts, both literary and nonfiction that seem to deal with similar ideas, issues, or themes.
- teach students that readers realize that while stories may share the same theme, there are still many differences between stories that are worth studying. One difference we may focus on, is setting – differences in the time and place where stories happen. Readers understand that these differences affect the meaning.
- teach students that as readers begin to compare texts, we often need to develop some systems to help us recall the texts we've read. Sometimes making charts that list the titles, issues or themes, and characters, helps us to quickly recall texts so that we can move to analyzing them. This supports us as we revisit important parts of a text we've read before and place these parts against ones we are reading now. We think across these parts by noting what's similar, what's different and how this affects our ideas.
- teach students that just as we may analyze the differences in the settings of stories that are linked by theme, powerful readers often analyze the differences in characters as well. We may pay attention to their backgrounds, relationships, pressures, perspectives, and how they respond to trouble. We study how those characteristics affect our ideas about the themes.

- teach students that just as we can compare how different characters respond to trouble in thematically-linked texts, we can compare ourselves to the characters we are studying. Doing this highlights a powerful truth that just as characters in literature often change in response to trouble, we too can change in response to our reading. That is, we can allow the characters in our stories to change how we think, feel and act in the world.
- teach students that as we read, we try to process what is happening in the story, at the same time as we ask ourselves: ‘what is this story starting to be about?’ And then we keep adding in new information, and having new insights, as we read.
- teach students that powerful readers allow the texts we read to affect us in powerful ways. We pay attention to the objects that repeat in our texts, working to understand the deeper significance these objects may hold. We understand that physical objects may act as symbols for themes and ideas.
- teach students that another part of the text that is often symbolic, is the title. Readers often think and talk about the potential meanings of titles. We do this work part way through our reading, and as we finish a text.
- teach students that readers know that in good stories, details matter. We read with a special alertness to the details of our texts. We work to figure out the possible meanings of perplexing or unexplained details.
- teach students that readers also pay special attention to repetition – to lines or scenes that feel parallel. Usually there will be significance in those repeated moments, and readers think, talk and write about their potential meaning.
- teach students that readers analyze character's perspectives and points of view as a way to find deeper meanings in texts. One way they might do this is to think about the significance of characters' perspectives on the possible meanings of a story. Readers might ask themselves, "How does the story go because this character is telling it? Would it go differently if a different character was telling the story?"

## 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**

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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](http://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](http://www.readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/running-records)

Spelling Inventory

[www.readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/spelling-assessments](http://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**

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- 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:

- anticipate that a story might have more than one plotline, timeline, and point of view and track shifts in time or perspective
- continue to develop theories about main and minor characters, thinking about how they are affected by elements such as the plot, setting, issues, and conflicts
- question stories and think about social issues and stereotypes
- preview a text to see how it is organized and what challenges it presents
- understand that structure may change across a text
- seek out extra information as the concepts read become more complex
- when reading nonfiction use voice to add meaning
- accumulate technical vocabulary from nonfiction and keep glossaries to incorporate new terms into speaking and writing
- determine several important main ideas from a text and evaluate which is most significant
- organize learning into topics and subtopics and keep track of major ideas each individual author contributes
- become aware that sometimes one text contradicts another and consider the differences in opinion

## **Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction**

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### *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**

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### **Mentor Texts**

Bullying

Blubber by Judy Blume

How to Eat Fried Worms by Thomas Rockwell

Jake Drake, Bully Buster by Andrew Clements

The Janitor's Boy by Andrew Clements

Max Quigley, Technically Not a Bully by James Roy

The PS Brothers by Maribeth Boelts

Wonder by RJ Polacio

Courage and Honor

Catwings by Ursula LeGuin

Felita by Nicholasa Mohr

Fourth Grade Rats by Jerry Spinelli

The Hundred Penny Box by Sharon Bell Mathis

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

The Real Boy by Anne Ursu

Speak Up, Spike! by Franzeska Ewart

There's A Boy in the Girl's Bathroom by Louis Sachar

The Thing About Georgie by Lisa Graff

Impact on the World

14 Cows for America by Carmen Deedy

Brothers in Hope by Mary Williams

Harvesting Hope by Kathleen Krull

Hound Dog True by Linda Urban

The Jacket by Andrew Clements

Judy Moody Saves the World by Megan McDonald

The Lucky Stone by Lucille Clifton

Fitting In

Bystander by James Preller



The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes

A Mouse Called Wolf by Dick King-Smith

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper

Rules by Cynthia Lord

Ringer by Jerry Spinelli

Overcoming Obstacles

Clementine, Friend of the Week by Sara Pennypacker

Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Clearly

How to Steal a Dog by Barbara O'Connor

The Mighty Miss Malone by Christopher Paul Curtis

Forgiveness

Fame and Glory in Freedom, Georgia by Barbara O'Connor

The Great Unexpected by Sharon Creech

I Am Not Joey Pigza by Jack Gantos

J.T. by Jane Wagner

Growing Up

Claudia and Mean Janine by Ann M. Martin

Dexter the Tough by Maragret Peterson Haddix

Donuthead by Sue Stauffacher

Herbie Jones by Suzy Kline

Junebug by Alice Mead

Piper Reed, Navy Brat by Kimberly Willis Holt

The Report Card by Andrew Clements

Superfudge by Judy Blume

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing by Judy Blume

Divorce and Changing Families

The Boy on the Porch by Sharon Creech

Flora and Ulysses by Kate DiCamillo

Go Fish by Mary Stolz

Lexie by Audrey Couloubis

The White Giraffe by Lauren St. John

## 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](http://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

