

Unit 03 Reading: Getting to Know Characters

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will read early chapter books whose characters display distinct traits, feelings, and wants, and whose storylines introduce and then resolve some sort of trouble. Meanwhile, the number of pages children must now synthesize is longer, the vocabulary they encounter more complex, and the expectation that they will comprehend and make meaning of their books with increasing independence high. Your main role will be to support children as they work hard to infer about characters and dig deep into their stories. Essential to this unit, then, is instruction in concrete skills and strategies for “reading” characters to grow ideas about them. As students work inside of early chapter books, you will also support them in accumulating story, linking chapters and dealing with any difficulty they encounter (just as you’ve done in past units of study).

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision: June 2021

Pacing Guide

Please refer to this Language Arts [Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 2;](#)

For Word Study, see [Cranford Word Work Scope and Sequence](#) and [Phonemic Awareness Scope and Sequence](#)

A sample K-5 Literacy Schedule Across a Week is accessible in instructional materials section of the [Grades K-5 folder](#).

Instructional Reading Level Benchmark: L

Guided Reading and Small-Group work can provide small group instruction for **Level L** language and literary features:

- New vocabulary in fiction texts (largely unexplained) expand meaning of a word by connecting it to other words
- Multiple characters to understand and follow development

- Various ways of showing characters' attributes (description, dialogue, thoughts, others' perspectives)
- Setting important to understanding plot
- Wide variety in showing dialogue, both assigned and unassigned
- Complex plots with numerous episodes and time passing
- Plots building toward problem resolution
- Texts with multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors and dialogue
- use of expressive language in dialogue
- Infer character traits, feelings, and motivations from what a characters say, think, or do and what others say or think about them
- Recognize and understand traits in complex characters that change
- Infer reasons for character change
- Use some academic language to talk about literary features (beginning, problem, message, chapter)

For students reading below or above grade level expectations, please reference The Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum: A Tool for Assessment, Planning and Teaching to target skills for additional reading levels.

Standards

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/ levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

These mandates maybe hit through the selection of choice literacy:

Amistad Commission

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

Asian American and Pacific Islander History Law

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

New Jersey Diversity and Inclusion Law

In accordance with New Jersey’s Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including:

<ADD WHICH APPLY TO THE UNIT FOLLOWING THE COLON AND SEPARATED BY COMMAS>
economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance.

- LA.RF.2.3.A Know spelling-sound correspondences for common vowel teams.
- LA.RF.2.3.B Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.
- LA.RF.2.3.C Decode words with common prefixes and suffixes.
- LA.RF.2.3.D Identify words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences.
- LA.RF.2.3.E Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
- LA.RF.2.4.A Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
- LA.RF.2.4.B Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
- LA.RF.2.4.C Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- LA.RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- LA.RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message/theme, lesson, or moral.
- LA.RL.2.4 Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.
- LA.RL.2.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action identifying how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
- LA.RL.2.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
- LA.RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- LA.RL.2.8 (Not applicable to literature)
- LA.RL.2.9 Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.
- LA.SL.2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- LA.SL.2.1.A 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.2.1.B Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their explicit comments to the remarks of others.
- LA.SL.2.1.C Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
- LA.SL.2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- LA.SL.2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

Essential Questions

- How do I use everything I know about reading to read books that teach me information and ideas?
- How can I be a thoughtful fiction reader who thinks carefully about characters and their stories, asking and answering questions, drawing on strategies when books (and characters, too) are hard to understand, and considering what an author intends for me to learn through a character's journey?
- What are things I can do before, during and after reading a book to be a thoughtful reader of characters and stories.
- How can I draw on strategies I know and am learning to continue getting to know characters even when it's hard to do so?
- How can I use my best inquiry skills to consider the question: "How do characters change and grow?" How can my classmates and I draw on our answers to this question to consider what lessons an author intended for the characters to learn – and then to connect these to our own lives?
- How can we get to know the characters' wants and troubles by tracking them through a book?
- How can we think about the character's traits and examples from a story to prove that a character is acting a certain kind of way?
- How can readers find deeper meaning through the changes go through from beginning to end, as well as what the character learned in the story and how it connects to their own life?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- How to ask and answer who, what, where, when, why and how to show their understanding of the key details within the text
 - How to prepare for conversations
 - To read with intonation and fluency based on the mood and tone of the story
 - How to retell across longer text
 - How to track characters wants and troubles throughout a book
 - When and why a character changes
 - Characters have feelings in the beginning, middle and end of any book
 - The difference between character traits and feelings
 - Readers talk to their partners to find deeper meanings in their books
 - How to use characters response to challenges in order to predict
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- Identifying character traits
 - Envisioning
 - Inferring
 - Empathizing
 - Analyzing characters
 - Comparing/contrasting
 - Developing theories
 - Retelling
 - Using text evidence
 - Building theories about their characters
 - Thinking across books
 - Evaluating confusing parts and identifying strategies to comprehend

- Identifying clues that help readers understand the setting/action
- Accountable talk

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative Assessments*

- Responses to Essential Questions
- Post-It notes telling each time the text gives them new information about the character
- One-to-one reading conferences and accompanying conferring notes
- Peer conferences
- Turn and talks
- Read Aloud/Shared Reading responses, written and oral
- Post-it notes to tally the number of times the book is read
- Exit tickets or do nows
- Engagement Observations
- Accountable Talk--Knee Talking, Sharing out
- Post-it Board
- Monitor Stamina and Fluency through rubrics
- Read increasingly complex text by monitoring student self-selection of leveled text
- Guiding Reading Group work
- Stop and Jot
- Stop and Sketch of thinking throughout unit
- Small Group Strategy Reading group work
- Reading partners can introduce another set of reading partners to a special main character, the challenge that character faced, and how he or she worked through it.

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting 2 characters

- Create a new scene in a book involving the main character from the story.
- Write a journal entry in your reading notebook comparing two characters. You can compare traits, feelings, changes, lessons learned, or how they both faced a similar problem and solved that problem. Remind students they need to discuss both characters and how they are the same then give text evidence to support it (rubric).
- Give Unit 3: Character post-assessment (level L)--Those Shoes.
- Readers can dress up and act as a favorite character, giving a brief presentation on the big lessons the character learned.
- Readers can create a simple timeline of a favorite character that shows how he or she approaches challenges and learns from them and retell the story.
- Reading Conferences
- Running Records
- Reading Logs
- Reading Responses
- Word Study Assessments
- Performance- and project-based learning
- Personalized, student-designed assessments
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Reading learning progressions
- Use teacher/student-created rubrics
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: rubrics with student samples
- Standards-based reporting system and report card

(Middle of Year) Benchmark Assessments

- Heggerty Mid Year Phonemic Awareness Assessment
- Cranford Public Schools Sight Word Assessment
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment, recorded three times per year
- Screener: Dynamic Indicator of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Mid Year
- Diagnostic: Phonological Assessment Profile by Linguistics (PAPL) Diagnostic Assessment, as needed
- iReady Screener and Diagnostic Assessment #2
- Mid year Whole Group Spelling Inventory

*Consult A Guide to Reading Workshop, Primary Grades Chapter 6 for more ideas.

Learning Plan

Primary reading instruction for the Cranford Public Schools embraces a centrist approach, employing both structured and balanced literacy practices to both decode *and* comprehend print.

To teach decoding, reading instruction follows a structured literacy approach through an number of multi sensory strategies and research-used techniques. Daily word work emphasizing phonics and phonemic awareness uses a multisensory approach to instruction. Decodable and controlled texts are used. For Word

Study, please refer to the [Cranford Scope and Sequence](#).

To teach comprehension, reading instruction is literature and informational text-based and follows a balanced literacy approach through a number of strategies and techniques in Reading Workshop. These include interactive read-alouds, mini lessons, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, and partnership discussions. Students will select from authentic literature at their independent reading levels. Teachers will focus on the needed skills and behaviors identified on the Continuum at each student's instructional reading level. Grade level indicators are outlined above. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader.

During reading workshop, teachers follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses "think aloud" when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point
- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point. (See end of section for closure ideas.)

For teaching purposes, see attached template for structure of a Reading Workshop lesson. (Change the red font to match your teaching point). Click [here](#).)

Please see the Cranford Public School [Grades K-5 Google Folder](#) for instructional materials to identify teaching points and design strategy lessons for those above or below grade level reading. The bends below provide detailed teaching points and lesson ideas.

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Studying Characters Before, During, and After Reading

(Suggestions: Choose 5 points in this bend, Teach 2-3 points per week)

Readers get their minds ready to read. They preview the text to get a sense of how it will go. Readers think carefully about the characters in their books by paying attention to their wants and problem. We can do this by looking at the title and blurb on the back of the book and asking, "What kind of problem will my character face?" or "What does my character want?" Then, as you read the book, you will be adding new information

about the setting and characters life expecting that soon, a problem will show up.

Readers will get to know the characters in their books by paying close attention to what characters say and do, then think about what these things teach us about the characters.

Readers use the text and pictures, looking for characters actions, dialogue, and body language, to understand the character.

Readers pay attention to character feelings by noticing what characters say, do, and how they act.

Readers think about what the character really wants (as the story unfolds).

Readers ask questions about how and why a character behaves or responds to situations. Sometimes it's helpful to jot these questions down and hang onto them as you read, pausing from time to time to think about possible answers to those questions.

Readers remember the habits and strategies that they already know will support them in doing strong reading work. As they read, they should be pausing often to understand the story, retelling as they go, and jotting post-its to capture their thinking.

Readers make predictions about where the story is headed.

Readers expect a character to change across a story and they read ready to catch the changes and jot these on Post-its. Then they can look at Post-its from the beginning, middle and end of the book and think, "Hmmm...what's different now?"

Readers have a "toolbox" to help them figure out tricky words.

Readers stop and think as they read. When they are reading fiction stories, there are several important moments to stop and think.

These include:

- at the end of a chapter

- when a character has a problem
- when a character meets a new character
- when a character resolves the problem
- when a character learns a lesson

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Getting to Know Characters—Even When It’s Hard!
(Suggestions: Choose 5 points in this bend, Teach 2-3 points per week)

Readers have ways to understand characters even when they do something surprising or confusing. Readers can “listen” closely to a character’s tone of voice, noticing how he/she says something to grow a better understanding of the surprising behavior.

- Readers think of characters like people in real life.
- Readers know that getting to know characters, like people is hard work.
- Readers pay careful attention to confusing or hard parts of a story and ask themselves, “That’s surprising! What does that really mean?”

Readers have ways to understand characters even when they do something surprising or confusing.

Readers can “listen” closely to a character’s tone of voice, noticing how he/she says something to grow a better understanding of the surprising behavior.

Readers know to look closely at parts when a character does something that seems out of character and try to figure out what exactly is going on. Readers often flag those spots where the character isn't acting like him/herself with a post-it to share with a partner-then they can work together to make sense of the character.

- Readers plan to talk with their partners about their surprising or confusing parts.

Readers pay close attention to how the characters traits play a part in driving the character’s actions.

- Readers think about how they would have behaved if they were in the character’s shoes to understand the character better.

Readers can use more than one trait word to describe a character by thinking about different patterns in the character's actions, words, and thoughts.

Sometimes words or phrases don’t mean exactly what they say. When you notice this you can stop and think, ‘Hey! That doesn’t make sense! Maybe it means something else... what could it really mean?’

- Readers pay careful attention to confusing words or phrases and stop to figure out what the word or phrase means something else.
- Readers know that words can have more than one meaning.

- Readers know that idioms are phrases that mean something else.
- Readers know that similes and metaphors, figures of speech that compare two things that are not alike.
- Readers can stop and look up the meaning of a word or phrase in reference books to gain understanding.

Suggested Teaching Points and Lessons: Conducting an Inquiry: How do characters change and grow?

(Suggestions: Choose 5 points in this bend, Teach 2-3 points per week)

Readers notice things about their characters. Often times a book does not tell readers exactly how the character feels or what the character thinks, so readers have to figure it out for themselves, using all the information they have about the character.

Readers realize that sometimes it's not the main character who changes and grows and learns--sometimes it's the people around the character who change. Good readers pay attention to all the characters.

Readers know that they are reading longer books, with more to think about at the end of the book. Often, it's at the very end of the book that everything comes together. It's helpful to pause and think about when the character changed (beginning, middle, or end?)

Readers can figure out the lesson in a book by noticing how the characters treat each other and giving advice. They think "what would I tell the character to do?" The advice that they give is often a lesson, or big idea, they can take away from the story.

Readers can grow their thinking by comparing and contrasting characters in different stories.

When readers are done with a book, they can compare the characters in that book to the characters in other books. They might think, 'Do I know any other characters that had similar problems?' or 'Did this character change in the same way as any other characters I know?'

- Readers use sophisticated or precise vocabulary to describe a character's feelings/traits.
- Readers can grow their thinking by comparing and contrasting characters from different stories..

When readers are done with a book, they can compare the characters in that book to the characters in other books. They might think, 'Do I know any other characters that had similar problems?' or 'Did this character change in the same way as any other characters I know?'

- Readers think about how characters deal with problems in books.
- Readers use sophisticated or precise vocabulary to describe a character's feelings/traits.
- Readers can grow their thinking by comparing and contrasting characters from different stories.

When readers are done with a book, they can compare the characters in that book to the characters in other books. They might think, ‘Do I know any other characters that had similar problems?’ or ‘Did this character change in the same way as any other characters I know?’

- Readers notice if their characters change and grow in their book. Readers think about why characters change and what causes them to change. Readers watch closely for character changes within and across books.
- Readers use sophisticated or precise vocabulary to describe a character’s feelings/traits.
- Readers put all of their thinking together about characters and think about what they have learned.
- Readers can grow their thinking by comparing and contrasting characters from different stories...
- Readers consider how the ways in which characters change and grow can help students reflect on their own lives.

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate varied, leveled instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available. Classrooms will house rich and diverse classroom libraries of both classic and contemporary works.

Core materials used in all classrooms include the following:

- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment System, 2nd Edition, System 1.
- Fountas and Pinnell Classroom System, Shared Reading.
- Fountas and Pinnell Classroom System, Guided Reading.
- Fountas and Pinnell Classroom System, Read Aloud.
- Heggerty: Phonemic Awareness.
- Cranford Word Study Program.

For Fountas & Pinnell classroom shared reading and interactive read aloud books that link to each unit, please see [the FPC and Units of Study Crosswalk](#).

Possible intervention materials including resources from FCRR and West Virginia may be found in the [Pathways to Intervention](#) document. Teachers can access the blue Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) kits for striving readers.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved [Core Book List](#) while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources. Classrooms house rich and diverse libraries with both classic and contemporary works to support a wide range of student interest and readiness.

Supplemental Instructional Materials

MENTOR TEXTS:

Frog and Toad by Arnold Lobel

Henry and Mudge and the Tall Tree House by Cynthia Rylant

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

Julius, The Baby of the World by Kevin Henkes

Noisy Nora by Rosemary Wells

Pinky and Rex by James Howe

My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother by Patricia Polacco

Dancing in the Wings by Debbie Allen

Flora and Ulysses by Kate DiCamillo

Heinemann website: <https://www.heinemann.com/extracreditclub/home.aspx> for anchor charts, unit resources, and other online resources (username: deacon@cranfordschools.org, password: Hillside125)

[Anchor Charts](#)

Teacher Resources

- Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Lucy Calkins with Colleagues from the Reading and Writing Project, Grade 2 Heinemann, 2013.
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Reading Units of Study, Grade 2, 2014-2015.
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Kit
- Teachers College Reading Assessment Kits for Grades K-2, Lee and Low Books
- Word Study Scope and Sequence using multisensory approach to word work
- The Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum: A Tool for Assessment, Planning and Teaching
- The Reading Strategies Book, Jennifer Serravallo
- The Literacy Teacher's Playbook, K-2, Jennifer Serravallo
- Conferring with Readers, Jennifer Serravallo and Gravity Goldberg
- Teaching Reading in Small Groups, Jennifer Serravallo
- Cranford Public School [K-5 Google Folder](#) for instructional materials
- For lessons for word work, see [Florida Center for Reading Research](#)
- [Anchor Charts](#)
- Heinemann website: <https://www.heinemann.com/extracreditclub/home.aspx> for anchor charts, unit resources, and other online materials. (Consult with building principal or literacy team for access).

Possible Break down of Reader's workshop

Mini Lesson	5-7 minutes
Independent fiction reading (conferences and small group instruction simultaneously)	15 minutes
partnership time (conferences and small group instruction simultaneously)	5-10 minutes
Share	3-5 minutes

Possible Weekly Reading Block Breakdown

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Mini Lesson#1	Interactive Read Aloud (IRA) day 1 or Shared Reading (SR) day 1	IRA day 2 or SR day 2	IRA day 3 or SR day 3 or mini lesson #2	mini lesson #2 or #3

Suggested Strategies for Modifications and Accommodations

[Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here](#) for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

The structure of reading workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each reader:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The framework for teaching includes much demonstrating/modeling and opportunities for small-group and individual support/guidance.
- Reading workshop emphasizes varied teaching approaches including, but not limited to, use of manipulatives, pre-teaching, and graphic organizers.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- Students will select from authentic literature at their independent and instructional reading levels.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader.

Possible accommodations during reading workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Have a designated reader for difficult content
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to complete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks

- Hands-on activities
- Follow a routine/schedule and make visual for students
- Alternate quiet and active time
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Large print textbooks
- Reading Viewers/Overlays (different sizes/colors)
- Additional time to reread
- Limit reading amount
- Review of directions and immediate feedback
- Student restates information
- Student provides oral responses
- Concrete examples
- Support auditory presentations with visuals (Strategies to Habits organizer)
- Space for movement or breaks
- Extra visual and verbal cues and prompts (Decoding Strategies Bookmark, Comprehension Strategies Bookmark)
- Preferential seating/choice seating
- Reduction of distractions (Reading folders with resources/labels)
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide a distinct steps in a process; eliminate unnecessary steps, as needed.

Additional modifications to content during reading workshop include, but are not limited to:

- The teacher will refer to the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum: A Tool for Assessment, Planning and Teaching to target specific strategies to teach students below benchmark levels.
- Refer to the [Strategies for Striving Students](#) and [Pathways to Intervention](#) documents in the [Grades K-5 folder](#) for specific appropriate interventions.
- Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.
- Consult with Cranford Problem Solving Team (CPST) at your school, as needed.
- Refer to the If...Then...Curriculum:Assessment based instruction, Grades K-2 book.