Unit 05: Caldecott Medal and the Theodore Seuss Geisel Award

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **4 sessions**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

First grade students will be introduced to the Caldecott Award, which recognizes outstanding illustration in children's literature, and the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award, which honors the most distinguished books for beginning readers. Both awards are presented annually by the American Library Association. Throughout this unit, students will explore a wide variety of high-quality literature and develop personal connections to books while discovering the characteristics of award-winning stories.

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 Date: July 2026

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.

Information Literacy: This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

Information Literacy for Elementary Educators

LA.RL.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
	Print Concepts
L.RF.1.1	Demonstrate mastery of the organization and basic features of print (including those listed under L.RF.K.1); recognize and understand the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g.,

	first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).
LA.RL.1.2	Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
LA.RL.1.3	Describe characters, settings, and major event(s) in a story, using key details.
LA.RL.1.5	Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
LA.RL.1.6	Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.
LA.RL.1.7	Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
LA.RL.1.9	Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
LA.RL.1.10	With prompting and support, read and comprehend stories and poetry at grade level text complexity or above.
LA.RI.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
LA.RI.1.6	Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
LA.RI.1.7	Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
LA.RI.1.8	Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text and explain the application of this information with prompting as needed.
L.WF.1.3.H	Elaborate a simple subject or simple predicate, in response to questions who, what, where, when, how, or why.
L.KL.1.1	With prompting and support, develop knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
L.VL.1.2	Ask and answer questions to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 1 reading and content.
L.VI.1.3	With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
RL.CR.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a literary text (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
RI.CR.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in an informational text (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
RL.CI.1.2	Determine central message and retell a sequence of events in literary texts (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
RI.CI.1.2	Determine main topic and retell a series of key details in informational texts (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).
RL.IT.1.3	Describe characters, settings, and major event(s) in a story, using key details.
LA.W.1.8	With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
RI.IT.1.3	Describe relationships among pieces of information (e.g., sequence of events, steps in a process, cause-effect and compare-contrast relationships) within a text.
RL.TS.1.4	With prompting and support, explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information recognizing organization and features of literary texts (e.g., follows a story line, chronology of events, interprets illustrations) while drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.
RI.TS.1.4	With prompting and support, explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, identifying various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text while drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

RL.PP.1.5	Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.
RL.MF.1.6	With prompting and support, use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
LA.SL.1.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
RI.MF.1.6	With prompting and support, use text features (e.g., diagrams, tables, animations) to describe key ideas.
RI.AA.1.7	Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text and explain how that information is applied, with prompting as needed.
RL.CT.1.8	Identify similarities in and differences between two literary texts on the same topic (e.g., characters, experiences, illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).
RI.CT.1.8	Identify similarities in and differences between two informational texts on the same topic (e.g., characters, experiences, illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).
LA.SL.1.2	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
SL.PE.1.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
SL.PE.1.1.A	Follow agreed-upon norms for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
SL.PE.1.1.B	Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
SL.PE.1.1.C	Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
I	Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.
I.A	Learners display curiosity and initiative by:
I.A.1	Formulating questions about a personal interest or a curricular topic.
I.A.2	Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.
I.B.3	Generating products that illustrate learning
CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
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.
TECH.8.1.2	Educational Technology: All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.
TECH.8.1.2.D	Digital Citizenship: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior.

Essential Questions

- How can exploring many different books help me discover what I enjoy reading?
- How do authors and illustrators develop their own unique styles?
- How do authors and illustrators work together to tell a story?
- How do illustrations help readers understand and enjoy a story?
- What makes a book worthy of an award?
- Why is reading important for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- Appreciating award winning books for their unique artistic crafts and accessibilities.
- How to ask and answer questions related to the text to discuss author's purpose and crafts.
- Identifying a certain author/illustrator's style.
- Identifying titles of popular award winning books.
- The author and illustrator work together to create an award winning book.
- There are many different types of awards that a book can win.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative, summative and benchmark 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 media is evidenced through benchmark assessments as part of the media specialist's Student Growth Objective (SGO). 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: Respond and evaluate the use of illustrations to support text.
- Formative: Respond to literature with retellings, predictions, discussions.
- Formative: Students will develop and state an opinion regarding a piece of literature.
- Formative: Students will recognize authors/illustrators unique styles.
- Summative/Benchmark/Alternative: Display knowledge of the importance of the Caldecott/Theodore Seuss Geisel Award.
- Summative/Benchmark/Alternative: Students compare a book in print and another format (ebook/video).

- Summative/Benchmark/Alternative: Students will be able to recognize and differentiate among award-winning books including but not limited to Theodore Seuss Geisel Award and Caldecott Award.

Learning Plan

Media Specialists at the elementary level design their own unique lesson plans in order to incorporate the essential questions provided in this unit.

Media Specialists at the elementary level design their own unique lesson plans in order to incorporate the essential questions provided in this unit. The order in which this information is presented is dependent upon the variables specific to each elementary school community. For example, students may be called to the carpet for a lesson followed by guided practice, then independent practice. After the lesson, students will check out books. Library Media time ends with an electronic story so that the media specialist can assist and model proper checkout procedures with students.

Each year Media Specialists will gather the books awarded the Caldecott Award and the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award and read those award winning books to students. In addition, these lessons may also include readings and discussions on past award winners.

First Grade students will be introduced to the Caldecott Award, an award given annually to children book illustrators by the American Library Association and the Theodore Seuss Geisel Award, also given annually by the ALA for a book young readers can read independently. Students will also experience a wide variety of literature in this unit and develop a personal connection to literature by the end of the unit. Suggested activites are listed below for this unit:

Key Vocabulary:

- Award: A prize or other mark of recognition given in honor of an achievement.
- Randolph Caldecott: A British illustrator for whom the Caldecott Award is named after.
- Illustrator: an artist who makes illustrations.
- Illustration: a visual explanation of a text, concept or process.
- Author: Someone who writes the words in a book.

Suggested Teaching Progression

Week 1: Authors, Illustrators, and Award-Winning Books

- Introduce the Caldecott Medal and Theodor Seuss Geisel Award.
- Discuss how authors and illustrators use words and pictures to tell stories.
- Explore examples of award-winning books and notice what makes them special.
- Read an award-winning picture book aloud.
- Continue with the usual book hunt and checkout procedure.

Week 2: The Craft of Illustrators

- Review the Caldecott Medal and what it recognizes.
- Explore Caldecott books and notice how illustrators use color, details, perspective, and expression to enhance a story.
- Read a Caldecott-winning or Honor book aloud.
- Students share how the illustrations helped them understand or enjoy the story.

- Continue with the usual book hunt and checkout procedure.

Week 3: The Craft of Authors

- Review the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award and what it recognizes.
- Explore Geisel Award books and notice how authors use words, repetition, characters, and storytelling to engage beginning readers.
- Read a Geisel Award-winning or Honor book aloud.
- Discuss what makes the book a great choice for young readers.
- Continue with the usual book hunt and checkout procedure.

Week 4: Discovering Our Reading Preferences

- Compare Caldecott and Geisel Award books.
- Discuss how authors and illustrators make choices that impact readers.
- Students explore award-winning books and share a favorite, explaining why they enjoyed it.
- Encourage students to continue discovering books by favorite authors and illustrators.
- Continue with the usual book hunt and checkout procedure.

- Compare books students have read.
- Differentiate among award-winning books including but not limited to Theodore Seuss Geisel and Caldecott titles.
- Explanation of the Caldecott Medal and Theodore Seuss Geisel Award.
- Introduce key vocabulary: author, illustrator, illustrations, publisher, copyright date, ebook, audiobook, and award.
- Mini lessons may include: Reading an award winning book, learning the criteria used to select an award winner, and critiquing books and deciding which deserve an award.
- Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the unit.
- Share an opinion of a previously read book and create a book award.
- Share books in various formats including print and digital by favorite authors and illustrators.
- Utilize relevant fiction and nonfiction books, audiobooks, ebooks, and related videos.
- Utilize the library media center collection of award winning books.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of 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.

Suggested Supplemental Resources:

Select this link to view the first grade Google Folder under media in the Grades K-5 folder.

(Please see the Google Folder for slideshows made on each award winning book by the media specialists)

Past and Present ALA PDF (as of July 2026)

- Age appropriate websites including ebooks
- Author websites
- Computer technology (Ipads/Laptops)
- Interactive board technology
- Media specialist produced interactive materials/presentations/visual aids
- Ongoing collaboration with teachers regarding units taught within the classroom
- Presentation software
- Quality LMC collection of print and nonprint relevant resources

Suggested Strategies for Accommodations and Modifications

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.