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

Second-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.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.2.3	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges using key details.

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.2.7	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.2.10	Read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, at grade level text complexity or above with scaffolding as needed.
LA.RI.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.RI.2.6	Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
LA.RI.2.7	Explain how specific illustrations and images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.
LA.RI.2.8	Describe and identify the logical connections of how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.
LA.W.2.8	Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
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.2.2	Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
RL.CR.2.1	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of key details in a literary text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
RI.CR.2.1	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of key details in an informational text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
RL.CI.2.2	Recount a text in oral and written form and determine central message (in literary texts, e.g., fables and folktales from diverse cultures).
RI.CI.2.2	Recount a text in oral and written form and determine main topic (in multi-paragraph informational text, focusing on specific paragraphs).
RL.IT.2.3	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges using key details within a text.
RI.IT.2.3	Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in a sequence within a text.
RL.TS.2.4	Describe the overall structure of a text, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action, identifying how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
RI.TS.2.4	Describe the overall structure of a text and effectively use various text features (e.g., graphs, charts, images, captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information.
RL.PP.2.5	Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
RI.PP.2.5	Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author seeks to explore, answer, explain, or describe.
RL.MF.2.6	With prompting and support, use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
RI.MF.2.6	Explain how specific illustrations and images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.
RI.AA.2.7	Describe and identify the logical connections of how reasons support specific points the

	author makes in a text.
RL.CT.2.8	Compare and contrast literary versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.
RI.CT.2.8	Compare and contrast two informational versions of the same idea or topic by different authors or authors from different cultures.
SL.PE.2.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
SL.PE.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).
SL.PE.2.1.B	Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their explicit comments to the remarks of others.
SL.PE.2.1.C	Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
SL.II.2.2	Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
SL.ES.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.
SL.PI.2.4	Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
SL.UM.2.5	Use multimedia; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
SL.AS.2.6	Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.
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/Student 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 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 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: Display knowledge of the importance of the Caldecott.
- 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: Students will be able to recognize and differentiate among award-winning books including but not limited to the Caldecott Award.

- SummativeBenchmark/Alternative: Students compare a book in print and another format (ebook/video).

Learning Plan

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

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 or students going to a makerspace station.

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.

Second Grade students will learn further about the Caldecott Award, an award given annually to children book illustrators by the American Library Association. Students will also learn about 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.

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 Learning Plan:

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 create meaning and engage readers.
- Explore examples of award-winning books and identify characteristics that make them stand out.
- 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 discuss how illustrators use color, details, perspective, expression, and artistic style to enhance a story.
- Read a Caldecott Medal or Honor book aloud.

- Students discuss how the illustrations contribute to the mood, meaning, or enjoyment of 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 discuss how authors use word choice, repetition, rhythm, characters, and storytelling techniques to engage beginning readers.
- Read a Geisel Award-winning or Honor book aloud.
- Students identify author choices that make the book enjoyable and accessible for readers.
- Continue with the usual book hunt and checkout procedure.

Week 4: Developing Our Reader Identity

- Compare Caldecott and Geisel Award books and discuss how authors and illustrators make intentional choices to connect with readers.
- Explore award-winning books and identify personal preferences in books, authors, and illustrators.
- Students share a favorite book and explain what they enjoyed about the author's or illustrator's craft.
- Encourage students to continue exploring books by favorite creators and discovering new ones.
- Continue with the usual book hunt and checkout procedure.

- 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.
- Give opportunities for students to recommend books to peers.
- Introduce key vocabulary: author, illustrator, illustrations, publisher, copyright date, ebook, audiobook, award, nonfiction.
- Mini lessons may include: Reading award winning books, learning the criteria for specific awards, using the criteria, and decide which books will receive a medal.
- Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the unit.
- Share an opinion of a previously read book and create a book award.
- Utilize relevant fiction and nonfiction books, audiobooks, ebooks, and related videos.
- Utilize the library media center collection.

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:

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.

Select this link to view the second 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)

Past winners popular with Second Grade Students:

- The Three Pigs (Wiesner)
- Creepy Carrots (Reynolds)
- Interrupting Chicken (Stein)
- Sam and Dave Dig A Hole (Barnett)
- Snowflake Bentley (Martin)
- Caldecott Google Slides - Officer Buckle and Gloria
- Caldecott Google Slides - This is Not My Hat
- Caldecott Google Slides - Beekle
- Geisel Google Slides - 2020 Geisel Award
- Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Winners
- Randolph Caldecott Medal Winners

- Age appropriate websites including ebooks
- Author websites
- Computer technology (Ipads/Chromebooks/Tablets)
- Interactive board technology
- Media specialist produced interactive materials/presentations/visual aids
- Ongoing collaboration with teachers regarding units taught within the classroom
- Presentation software
- Quality library media center 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.