Unit 2 Reading: Analyzing Characters and Story Elements

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **4-6 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This particular unit focuses on the exploration of the narrative fiction with a close of character, character change, character decisions, and the development of theme . Over the course of the unit, students will analyze techniques of characterization. Students will strengthen their inference skills by examining characters' words and action. Students will also learn to be readers who pay attention to the impact of the setting on a text. They will look for signposts in texts to identify significant moments and elements.

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. In this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision date: July 2023

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.

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with race and ethnicity and disabilities.

LA.RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RL.6.3	Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

LA.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RL.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
LA.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
LA.RL.6.7	Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
LA.L.6.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.6.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.6.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions

- How can readers think critically about the complexity of characters and the lessons they learn throughout the novel?
- How do characters' motivation, realizations, and subsequent changes lead readers to theme?
- When and why do authors use direct versus indirect characterization?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- developing strategies to improve comprehension and reading level.
- expressing ideas clearly and support with text evidence.
- how stories go--understand plot.
- how to assess their responses to text and consider how to strengthen their responses
- how to build a positive relationship with reading and set goals.
- how to determine how the theme is developed through the characters and plot.
- how to develop strategies to improve comprehension and reading level.
- how to discover how characters may change throughout the novel
- how to express ideas clearly and support with text evidence.
- how to identify character traits and use text evidence
- how to identify the conflicts characters face and how they resolve them
- how to make connections to the character’s motivations and insights and their own lives.
- how to recognize how authors use description and figurative language to develop characters and plot.
- how to reflect on their reading and consider what hinders and/or helps their reading.
- how to understand how details suggest a character’s strengths and flaws
- identifying internal and external character traits

- inferring indirect characterization--that is, understanding aspects of characters that are implied, not directly stated.
- tracing how setting impacts the mood of the story and, as a result, theme.
- when details suggest the reader may need to revise his/her thinking about a character and/or the plot

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 benchmark assessments. Follow up diagnostic assessments may be 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
- One-to-one reading conferences and accompanying conferring notes
- Peer conferences/Partner Reading Time
- Large and Small-Group Discussion
- Whole group mini-lessons (model reading strategies)
- Accountable Talk
- Turn and talks
- Reading Responses on Post-its/Stop and Jots
- Reading Responses in Journals/Notebooks
- Interactive Read Aloud Reading responses, written and oral (Thinkaloud and Close Reading)
- Exit tickets or Do Nows
- Engagement Observations
- Reading Logs and Reading Surveys
- Envision and prediction post-it notes/Board
- Monitor Stamina, Volume, and Fluency through rubrics
- Read increasingly complex text by monitoring student self-selection of leveled text
- Small Group Strategy Reading group work
- Knowledge of domain-specific vocabulary
- Grade-Level Engagement Rubric for Verbal and Non-Verbal Participation

Summative Assessments including Alternative Assessments:

- Reading Notebooks using grade-level text questions
- Running Records

- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: Reading learning progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project: rubrics with student samples
- Vocabulary/Word Study Assessments
- Performance- and project-based learning
- Personalized, student-designed assessments

Benchmark Assessments

- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, grades 3-8, Levels L-Z, Heinemann
- Complete Comprehension, Independent Reading Assessment, fiction, Jennifer Serravallo, Heinemann
- iReady Screener and Diagnostic Assessment
- Benchmark Grade-Level Reading and Writing Assessments aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards
- New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)

Learning Plan

The Middle School Language Arts/Literacy program encompasses reading literature and informational text, speaking and listening and enhancing language skills (spelling, grammar, and vocabulary). The understandings and skills of each strand of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards are not isolated, but integrated, interactive, and embedded in all subject areas across the curriculum. Teachers may engage in two whole-class, closely-studied community readings per year, not to exceed four weeks each.

Reading instruction is literature-based and follows a balanced literacy approach through a number of strategies and techniques in Reading Workshop. These include read-alouds/alongs, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, and partnership or book club discussions. Reading Workshop provides students with the necessary tools to communicate orally, read and comprehend print, and write with clarity and purpose for a variety of audiences. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader. Students will select from authentic literature at their independent and instructional reading levels.

Lessons should follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses ‘think alouds’ 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.)

Please refer to the Middle School ELA, Grade 6 Folder for specific lessons and materials for Word Study.

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

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For this particular unit, teachers should...

- Prepare materials for discussion, writing, and synthesis
- Select mentor texts for modeling
- Prepare for conferences with students
- Prepare materials for review of signposts
- Create formative and summative assessments

- Academic terms may include the following: analyze, synthesize, reflection, motivation, traits, characteristics, metacognitive, inference, visualize, envision, determine, compare/contrast.
- Centers (see pp. 38-39) in unit*
- Checklists (see p. 19) in unit*
- Comprehension Checks
- Conference Notes
- Discuss small moment stories and leads(supporting writing workshop) Model how to talk about books in ways that support comprehension and engagement Model thinking – see examples on pp. 14, 15, 28,31 Conduct whole class conversations about books to grow partnership conversations (adding to another's ideas or asks another child to say more) Model listening and talking behaviors in large group and small group conversations about texts.
- During Shared Reading expose students to the following: Comprehension strategies through addressing the following concepts: • Context clues • Reread while thinking "Does this make sense? Sound right? Look right?" • Stopping and checking: "What's going on?", "What's happening

here?” • Summarizing • After reading: predicting

- Identifying story elements: • Problems and solutions • Point of view and perspective • Details about the characters and how they change • Developing theories about characters • Lessons and themes that may be developing • Author’s craft • Using textual evidence to support ideas about theories
- Interactive read-alouds (think alouds and close reading)
- Literary elements may include the following: character, plot, setting, problem/solution/resolution, secondary characters, protagonist/antagonist, external/internal conflict, point of view (first person, third person), narrator, scene, theme, central idea, genre, drama, narrative, stanza
- Poetry terms may include the following: figurative language: simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, theme
- Post-its/jots with evidence
- Reading logs
- Short stories that focus on characterization – • “Mrs. Flowers” excerpt from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou, • “The Moustache” by Robert Cormier • Guys Write for Guys Read edited by Scieszka, Ed. • All the stories in the character section from Spotlight on Literary Elements from Scholastic • See more suggestions under Read Aloud
- Teacher observations
- Vocabulary strategies such as using context clues; identifying prefixes, roots, suffixes; analyzing syntax including grammatical structures and parts of speech, creating word walls, to name a few.
- Vocabulary Words will be culled from mentor texts and independent reading.
- Whole group mini-lessons (model reading strategies)

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of 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.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved Core Book List while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources.

Please reference the materials in this Middle School ELA, grade 6 folder under "reading."

- A Deep Study of Character, Mary Ehrenworth (Heinemann)
- Copy reading logs
- Decide on anchor charts –(see pp. 5, 15, 18, 23, 25, and 29) in TCRWP Unit
- Excerpts from novels such as “Moving Still” from The Circuit by Francisco Jimenez, “The Dogs Could Teach Me” from Woodsong by Gary Paulsen
- Falling in Love with Close Reading, Lehman and Roberts

- Gather Read-aloud texts for mentor/modeling
- http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/books-strong-characters
- Investigating Characterization: Author-Study Book Clubs, Mary Ehrenworth, Katy Wischow (Heinemann)
- Kylene Beers blog- http://kylenebeers.com/blog/2012/05/15/lifetime-reading-and-series-books
- Notice and Note, Beers and Probst
- Organize and establish a varied and leveled library: -See pp. 6 and 34 in Unit 2 of TC binder book and series suggestions -www.whatshouldireadnext.com -www.librarything.com
- Poems from The Poetry Friday Anthology, Love that Dog and Hate that Cat by Susan Creech,
- Post-its
- See appendix in Unit 1 on p. 25-26 in Reading TC binder (for more independent reading book
- Whole class novels: The Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson, Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff, The Cay by Theodore Taylor, Inside Out and Back Again by Thannha Lai
- www.readingandwritingproject.com

Strategies for Accommodation and Modification

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 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
- Create packet of suggested ways to “Talk and Share About Books” to allow for independence.
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Questioning techniques – QAR (Question-Answer Relationships) Right There, Think and Search, Author and You, On My Own – (50 Instruction Routines to Develop Content Literacy – Pearson Publishing 2011) Inclusion Strategy Book
- Mark text with a highlighter

- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide a distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Use digital ebooks, technology, audio and video version of printed text
- Differentiate roles in discussion groups
- Access speech to text function on computer

Possible 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 speciifc strategies to teach students below benchmark levels.

Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the reader.

Adhere to all modifications and accomodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.