

4th Reading Workshop Unit 1 Interpreting Characters (Weeks 7-12)

Content Area: **Template**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Full Year**
Length: **9 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit 1 Interpreting Characters

This first unit in the year aims to launch students back into what matters most: for students to be nose-in-the-book readers. This year you pass the responsibility for book selection onto your children, helping each child create a short stack of books “in waiting.” You’ll not only remind children to choose books they can read with comprehension and fluency, you’ll also set them up to take responsibility for keeping track of the reading that they each do. Children are to be challenged to read a text with deep engagement and intensity. Although you will see the results of this instruction across the year in your classroom, the far-reaching impact of your teaching in this unit will show itself again and again in the independent decisions your children make as readers, long after they have left you.

Nothing can get your students reading with deeper engagement and rapt attention and without dozing and drifting more than a character study. The heart of any good story is the character. Long after our students leave us, the thing that will bind us together forever are the characters who disappointed us, whom we cried over, and whom we rooted for. You will rally students’ enthusiasm for building big ideas that are grounded in the books they read by telling them that this year is not going to be like other years. This year, students will build substantial ideas that are grounded in evidence, not lightweight ideas. To do this, readers need to read deeply and with conscious intent. You want to tap into your students’ knowledge of how to read intensely in ways that build on what they already know and rally them for the year ahead. Many of your students will enter fourth grade only reading to grasp the sweep of a story, so one of your first messages will be that as they move into more complex texts, they’ll find the details in those texts matter.

Children will be taught to read intensely to grow ideas about their characters. This unit stands on the shoulders of the third-grade Character Studies unit. In third grade, students pay attention to what characters say and do, recognizing how this gives them windows into character traits. In third grade, they learn that what a character does or says in one part of a story will often connect with what happens in another part. Things tie together in a story, often in a cause-and-effect relationship, and readers can ask, “Why did this happen?” Often, readers need help to connect earlier parts of the story to explain a subsequent turn of events.

Across Bend I, you’ll induct children into the structures, routines, and habits of a richly literate reading workshop. You will be putting the onus on students to choose books that are “within reach,” for keeping records of the volume of reading that they do, and to engage deeply and intensely with their books by creating mental movies as they read. Students will also be able to retell a story chronologically or to summarize by reaching back to select information that fits.

Then, in Bend II, there is an emphasis on growing significant, text-based ideas about characters. Here the

focus will shift to help readers think in more complex ways about characters by drawing evidence-based conclusions, tweaking their ideas so they are grounded in the text and defensible. You will also teach them that the details authors emphasize are not accidental. Simply asking, “Why might the author have included these details?” can help readers grow significant ideas about the text.

Then, in Bend III, you’ll shift your students’ focus from studying characters to building interpretations. You will teach them to connect ideas for form interpretations that are supported across a whole text, conveying to students that there is no one-and-only correct way to interpret literature. Children will also be taught to find meaning in recurring images, objects, and details, adding richness and depth to their interpretations.

From “An Orientation to Unit,” pages vi-xv, in *Interpreting Characters: The Heart of the Story*.

SEL Competencies

SEL.PK-12.1	Self-Awareness
SEL.PK-12.1.1	Recognize one’s feelings and thoughts
SEL.PK-12.1.2	Recognize the impact of one’s feelings and thoughts on one’s own behavior
SEL.PK-12.1.3	Recognize one’s personal traits, strengths, and limitations
SEL.PK-12.1.4	Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges
SEL.PK-12.2	Self-Management
SEL.PK-12.2.1	Understand and practice strategies for managing one’s own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
SEL.PK-12.2.2	Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals
SEL.PK-12.2.3	Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one’s goals
SEL.PK-12.3	Social Awareness
SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others
SEL.PK-12.3.2	Demonstrate awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others’ cultural backgrounds
SEL.PK-12.3.3	Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ
SEL.PK-12.3.4	Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings
SEL.PK-12.4	Responsible Decision-Making
SEL.PK-12.4.1	Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills
SEL.PK-12.4.2	Identify the consequences associated with one’s actions in order to make constructive choices
SEL.PK-12.4.3	Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions
SEL.PK-12.5	Relationship Skills
SEL.PK-12.5.1	Establish and maintain healthy relationships

SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
SEL.PK-12.5.3	Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure
SEL.PK-12.5.4	Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways
SEL.PK-12.5.5	Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

Essential Questions

How do readers establish a reading life?

How do readers think deeply about characters?

How do readers build interpretations?

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
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.
CRP.K-12.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP.K-12.CRP5.1	Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.

CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.

Pre-Assessments

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark and Reading Records

Common Lit

[Interpreting Characters Pre-Assessment](#)

[Interpreting Characters Pre-Assessment Sample Responses](#)

[Interpreting Characters Pre-Assessment Rubric](#)

Modifications and/or Accommodations

Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)

English Language Learners

Native language support: The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

Adjusted Speech: The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

Visuals: The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students

better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

Front-Loading Vocabulary: The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

Special Education Students

Chunking: The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

Checking for Understanding: It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

Extra time: The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

Oral Reading: The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

Timers: The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

Students with 504 Plans

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Gifted & Talented Strategies

Extensions/Enrichments: Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with

extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

Modify/Change Activities: Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

Students at Risk of School Failure

Directions or Instructions: Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

Peer Support: Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for clarification before going to you.

Alternate or Modified Assignments: Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

Increase One to One Time: When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

Contracts: It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

Hands On: As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

Tests/Assessments: Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

Seating: Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

Instructional Plan

[Interpreting Characters: The Heart of The Story](#)

[Interpreting Characters CAR](#)

[Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive](#)

Reading Life

WALTS

We are learning to take responsibility for reading lots of within-reach books.

We are learning to use partners and learning progressions to lift the level of their work.

I Can Statements

I can read lots of books on my level.

I can read with stamina.

I can use learning progressions to meet the expectations of 4th Grade.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Talk Between and Across

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Whole class reading

Independent reading

Group work

Video Analysis

Questioning

Cooperative Learning

Formative Assessments

Entrance/Exit slips

Reading checks/quizzes

Student conferences

Class discussions

Observation

Turn and talks

Active reading logs/journals

Open Ended Question

Instructional Materials and Resources

Heinemann Resources

Jeniffer Servallo Texts and Resources

Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading

Scholastic Resources

BrainPop

Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive

Thinking Deeply About Characters

WALTS

We are learning to develop significant ideas about characters.

We are learning to use academic language when growing complex ideas about characters.

We are learning to ground our ideas in evidence.

I Can Statements

I can develop ideas about characters in my reading.

I can use precise language when I read and write about characters.

I can use text evidence to support my ideas about characters.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Talk Between and Across

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Whole class reading

Independent reading

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Building Interpretations

WALTS

We are learning to look beyond characters to build interpretations.

We are learning to develop a method for crystallizing central interpretations.

I Can Statements

I can pay attention to story elements to build interpretations

I can consider major life issues when interpreting character.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Talk Between and Across

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Whole class reading

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Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive

Integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Climate Change; Informational and Media Literacy

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.WF	Foundational Skills: Writing Language Sentence Composition (Grammar, Syntax, and Punctuation)
ELA.L.WF.5.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade four foundational skills.
ELA.L.WF.5.2.A	Avoid fragments, run-ons and rambling sentences, and comma splices.
ELA.L.WF.5.2.B	Maintain consistency in verb tense; place phrases and clauses; choose between adjectives and adverbs.
ELA.L.WF.5.2.D	Distinguish between frequently confused words.
ELA.L.WF.5.2.E	Use idiomatic language and choose words for effect; use punctuation for meaning and effect.
ELA.L.WF.5.2.F	Use punctuation to separate items in a series; use commas in a series of phrases or clauses.
ELA.L.WF.5.2.G	Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence; use a comma to set off the words yes and no (e.g., Yes, thank you), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., It's true, isn't it?), and to indicate direct address (e.g., Is that you, Emma?).
ELA.L.WF.5.2.H	Spell grade appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.
ELA.L.KL.5.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
ELA.L.KL.5.1.A	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
ELA.L.KL.5.1.B	Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
ELA.L.KL.5.1.C	Compare and contrast the varieties of English (e.g., dialects, registers) used in stories, dramas, or poems.
ELA.L.VL.5.2.C	Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
ELA.L.VI.5.3	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
ELA.W.NW.5.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
ELA.W.NW.5.3.A	Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
ELA.W.NW.5.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
ELA.W.NW.5.3.C	Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
ELA.W.NW.5.3.D	Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

ELA.W.NW.5.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
ELA.W.WP.5.4	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
ELA.W.WP.5.4.A	Consider audience, purpose, and intent before writing.
ELA.W.WP.5.4.B	Plan appropriately to use specialized, topic-specific language appropriate for the audience, purpose and subject matter.
ELA.W.WP.5.4.C	Consider writing as a process, including self-evaluation, revision and editing.
ELA.W.WP.5.4.D	With adult and peer feedback, and digital or print tools such as a dictionary, thesaurus, and/or spell checker, evaluate whether the writing achieved its goal and make changes in content or form as necessary.
ELA.W.WP.5.4.E	After initial drafting, expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, audience, and style.
ELA.W.RW.5.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
ELA.SL.PE.5.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
ELA.SL.PE.5.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.5.1.B	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
ELA.SL.PE.5.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
ELA.SL.PE.5.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

Integration of Career Readiness. Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.5.CI	Creativity and Innovation
TECH.9.4.5.CI.1	Use appropriate communication technologies to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives about a local and/or global climate change issue and deliberate about possible solutions (e.g., W.4.6, 3.MD.B.3,7.1.NM.IPERS.6).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.2	Investigate a persistent local or global issue, such as climate change, and collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives to improve upon current actions designed to address the issue (e.g., 6.3.5.CivicsPD.3, W.5.7).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.3	Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one's thinking about a topic of curiosity (e.g., 8.2.5.ED.2, 1.5.5.CR1a).
TECH.9.4.5.CT	Critical Thinking and Problem-solving
TECH.9.4.5.CT.1	Identify and gather relevant data that will aid in the problem-solving process (e.g., 2.1.5.EH.4, 4-ESS3-1, 6.3.5.CivicsPD.2).
TECH.9.4.5.GCA	Global and Cultural Awareness
TECH.9.4.5.IML	Information and Media Literacy
	Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.
	Curiosity and a willingness to try new ideas (intellectual risk-taking) contributes to the development of creativity and innovation skills.

Collaborating digitally as a team can often develop a better artifact than an individual working alone.

Different digital tools have different purposes.

Intellectual property rights exist to protect the original works of individuals. It is allowable to use other people's ideas in one's own work provided that proper credit is given to the original source.

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.3-5.IC

Impacts of Computing

CS.3-5.ITH

Interaction of Technology and Humans

Data can be organized, displayed, and presented to highlight relationships.

Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSLs for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math

ELA.L.RF.4.3

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words; 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.

History, Culture, and Perspectives: Understanding Perspectives

SOC.6.1.5.HistoryUP.1

Describe the reasons various groups, voluntarily and involuntarily, immigrated to New Jersey and America, and cite evidence from multiple perspectives to describe the challenges they encountered.

Effective conflict resolution is possible when evidence, diverse perspectives, and intended/unintended consequences are considered.