

Critical Concepts 6.3B Literary Lesson Plans

Watsons Go to Birmingham Writing Connection

Skill Focus: CC 6.3B – Analyze how a particular **episode** in a story or drama helps move the **plot forward**, reveals aspects of a **character**, or contributes to the **resolution**.

Vocabulary:

- **Episode** – an incident or event that is part of a larger sequence
- **Plot** – the sequence of events in a story
- **Unfold** – to gradually be revealed or developed
- **Resolution** – the conclusion or solving of a conflict in the story

November Lesson Objective: Students will analyze how episodes in literary texts help the plot unfold, affect character responses, and lead to changes in character as the story moves toward the resolution.

Fiction Texts for November (text selections are suggestion only, teachers can change the text to fit their classroom needs, if choosing another text it should come from the Educational Epiphany Curriculum)

- “*The Light Princess*”
- “*Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*”
- “*The Willow-Wren and the Bear*”
- “*How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin*”

Graphic Organizer: Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 6.2B pages 21-24

I Do – Teacher Model

Text: *The Light Princess*

1. Display the graphic organizer.
2. Read a selected **episode** aloud from *The Light Princess* (e.g., the episode where she falls into the lake and cannot float).
3. Fill in:
 - **Episode:** The princess falls into the lake, unable to float due to her curse.
 - **Character Response:** She is confused but oddly thrilled.
 - **Character Change:** She begins to feel emotionally connected to her world.
4. Think aloud how this event **unfolds the plot** and shifts the princess from detached to engaged.

Teacher Think-Aloud Examples:

"As I read this scene, I notice something important is happening. The princess, who used to float through life—literally and emotionally—is now experiencing fear for the first time. That tells me she's starting to change."

"Why is this episode important to the plot? Well, before this, the princess was emotionless and light in both body and spirit. But now, because she sinks, she starts feeling grounded, maybe even connected to the world. This moment makes me think the plot is starting to shift—maybe toward her learning or growing emotionally."

"Let me write in this last column: *Change in character as the plot moves toward the resolution*. I think this is where she begins her journey toward empathy. She might not be 'light' forever—this could be the author's way of showing us she's going to grow."

"If I had to explain how this episode helps move the plot forward, I'd say it's the first step toward her becoming a real, fully-feeling person. The plot can't reach its resolution until the princess changes, and this event is what starts that change."

We Do – Guided Practice**Text: Old Sultan**

1. Read aloud or assign a key episode (e.g., the moment Sultan overhears the farmer plotting to kill him).
2. Complete the organizer together:
 - Identify the **episode**, the **character's response** (Sultan becomes scared but plans to save himself), and the **change in character** (gains courage, becomes clever).
3. Discuss how this helps the plot develop and move toward the resolution.

You Do with Pairs – Collaborative Practice – Text: Anne of Green Gables

1. Students work in pairs using a different excerpt from *Anne of Green Gables* (e.g., when Anne breaks her slate over Gilbert's head).
2. Pairs complete the three columns:
 - Episode that helps plot unfold
 - Character's response
 - Change in character
3. Share out a few group responses.

Discussion Questions:

- What do we learn about a character by how they respond to a challenge or conflict?
- How do small episodes reveal larger themes or traits?
- How does this process help us predict the resolution?

You Do Independently – Individual Practice – Text: Section of Watsons Go To Birmingham

1. Students read a new excerpt individually.
2. Complete the graphic organizer independently.
3. Collect for assessment.

Discussion/Wrap-Up:

- What do we learn about characters **through their responses** to events?
- How do authors use a **series of episodes** to build toward a resolution?
- Why is it important to notice changes in characters?

Writing Prompt: Plot, Episode, and Character Change in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*

In *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, Kenny experiences many important episodes that shape him as a person. Choose **one key episode** from the novel that helps the **plot unfold** and causes **Kenny to respond or change** in a significant way.

Write a well-developed response that:

- Describes the **episode** and how it fits into the overall **plot**
- Explains **Kenny's response** to the episode
- Analyzes how **Kenny changes** as the story moves toward the **resolution**
- Uses **text evidence** (a quote or paraphrase) to support your thinking

Student Support Prompts:

- What happened during the church bombing or the trip to the South that really affected Kenny?
- How did he act before that episode? How did he act after?
- What does this change show about his character?

Example Sentence Starters:

- One major episode that helps the plot unfold is when...
- In response to this event, Kenny...
- This shows that Kenny is beginning to...
- By the resolution of the novel, Kenny has changed because...