

Critical Concepts 6.4B *Watsons Go to Birmingham* Lesson Plans

Skill Focus: CC 6.4B – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.

Vocabulary Focus: Figurative, connotative, Context clues, Domain-specific, General academic

December Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in literary texts.
- Use context clues to infer the meaning of figurative or connotative language.
- Classify vocabulary as figurative or connotative.
- Use academic vocabulary when discussing word meanings in context.

Texts: *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*

Graphic Organizer: Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 6.4A pages 49-53

**This Critical Concept has 4 different types of graphic organizers, pages 45-61, that can be used, you can choose to differentiate from the lesson plan and use any of the 3 organizers.

I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

Text Focus: Chapter 1 – Kenny describing Byron

Think Aloud Example (Modeling Graphic Organizer)

Word/Phrase: "Byron acted like he was king of Clark Elementary."

Type: General

Context Clues: "Nobody messed with Byron," "he always had his collar up," "walked like he owned the place."

Determined Meaning: The phrase means Byron had an overconfident or dominant attitude at school.

Figurative or Connotative: Figurative (This is not literal—he's not an actual king but is being compared to one to show he's powerful and popular.)

Teacher Think Aloud:

"Hmm, Kenny says Byron 'acted like he was king.' That's not meant literally—Byron isn't royalty. I see that it's comparing Byron's attitude to that of a king. He seems confident and maybe a bit arrogant. That's a *figurative* use of language. I'll jot that down."

We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)

Text Focus: Chapter 4 – The Brown Bomber

Class Discussion/Guided Graphic Organizer Completion

Word/Phrase: “The Brown Bomber was the most famous car in Flint.”

Type: Domain-Specific (related to the Watson family)

Context Clues: “It had rust spots,” “Dad polished it every weekend,” “Byron bragged about it.”

Determined Meaning: A family car that has sentimental and symbolic value.

Figurative or Connotative: Connotative (evokes pride, tradition, and family identity)

Discussion Prompts:

- What emotions or ideas are connected to the term “Brown Bomber”?
- Why might the author have chosen that name?

You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)

Text Focus: Chapter 6 – Momma’s warning about fire

Students will work in pairs to locate a figurative or connotative phrase from the chapter, fill in the graphic organizer, and share their reasoning with a peer group.

Example Student Response:

Word/Phrase: “If that house ever caught fire, she’d go up like a piece of paper.”

Type: General

Context Clues: “Momma said it was so dry,” “She warned Byron about matches.”

Determined Meaning: The house is extremely flammable.

Figurative or Connotative: Figurative (a simile comparing burning quickly to paper)

You Do Independently (Wrap-Up or Homework)

Text Focus: Chapter 12 – The family’s arrival in Birmingham

Students independently find and analyze one example of figurative or connotative language from the chapter.

Example Prompt:

“Find a phrase or sentence that includes figurative or connotative meaning. Use the 6.4B graphic organizer to analyze how the word is used and what meaning it conveys.”

Writing Prompt

The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963 uses figurative and connotative language to help the reader better understand the characters and setting. Choose one example of figurative or connotative language from the novel. In a well-developed paragraph, explain

what it means, how the author uses context to make its meaning clear, and what it reveals about the story or character.