4th Grade ELA-Reading Curriculum

Course Description:
In fourth grade, students will delve into complex texts and see significance in details. Students study the complexity of characters and explore themes while developing skills such as inference and interpretation. Students will delve into nonfiction topics while developing their skills in cross-text synthesis, practicing close reading, comparing and contrasting, and evaluating sources to determine credibility. Students take on the challenge of researching history as they study multiple points of view, support a position with reasons and evidence, tackle complex texts, and learn strategies for using new domain-specific words. In this work, students practice reading analytically, synthesizing complicated narratives, comparing and contrasting themes, and incorporating nonfiction research into their reading.

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**Unit 1: Getting to Know Yourself as a Reader**

**Subject:** Reader’s Workshop

**Grade:** 4th

**Name of Unit:** Getting to Know Yourself as a Reader

**Length of Unit:** 4 weeks, August—First week of September

**Overview of Unit:** In this unit, students will learn how to author their reading lives by becoming a classroom community of readers. Students will also obtain the identity of being a reader by setting goals, creating a life that revolves around shared books, and developing a sense of personal agency in their reading lives.

**Getting Ready for the Unit:**

- Gather a variety of high interest texts for students that will get them excited about reading
  - Popular Books List
- Read Lucy Calkins’ Following Characters unit—Bend 1 only
- Go over classroom system for checking out books (e.g. traditional check-out, book shopping, etc.)
- Refer to BrightSpace Unit 1 for necessary anchor charts

**Pre-Assessment (given prior to starting the unit):**

- Reading Interest-A-Lyzer by Donalyn Miller and Joseph S. Renzulli
Based on information obtained in this assessment, provide students one book as a “book gift” from your classroom or school library. This helps them to see that you value who they are as a reader and want to make sure they have the resources to be successful.

Read-Aloud Considerations:
- The Tiger Rising by Kate DiCamillo
- Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Patterson

Essential Questions:
1. How can I use my interests and awareness of pitfalls as a reader to help me select texts that will help me read lots and lots?
2. How do I set goals for myself as a reader that will help me grow and inspire my passions?
3. How do I share my love of reading with my classmates? How do I share my thinking about reading with others?

Enduring Understanding/Big Ideas:
1. Living a reading life means that I have a self-awareness of my interests and pitfalls as a reader. I can select texts that will continue to grow and inspire my passions.
2. In order to grow myself as a reader, I need to be able to seek challenges and set goals to open new windows of knowledge.
3. Reading is a social experience that is meant to be shared with others. The more I share and discuss my love of and thinking about reading, the stronger our classroom reading culture becomes.

Priority Standards for unit:
- RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text
- SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
SL.4.1.A Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
SL.4.1.B Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
SL.4.1.C Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
SL.4.1.D Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Supporting Standards for unit:
- RL.4.2 determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
- SL.4.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace
- L.4.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
  - L.4.4.A Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - L.4.4.B Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., telegraph, photograph, autograph).
  - L.4.4.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.
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Unit Vocabulary:

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Engaging Experience 1
Teaching Point: “Readers, today we are going to build our Reading Workshop expectations so that we become a community of readers. It’s important for us to know and value who we are as not only a classroom of readers, but also as individuals. In order to do this we are going to come to some agreements on ways we’ll make our classroom a learning and reading space for everyone.”

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.1, SL.4.1

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this** is by creating an anchor chart of reading non-negotiables. It can be a T-chart with one side labeled “Student” and one side labeled “Teacher”.
  - Student: quiet, reads in bubble space, gets started right away, reads the whole time, and stays in one spot.
  - Teacher: confers individually with students, meets with book groups.
- Transitions: After creating the anchor chart of reading non-negotiables, discuss your expectations for transitions. This is a great time for students to practice transitions like coming to the area and sitting next to their partner, turning and talking to a partner, going off to read independently, etc.
- Stamina: As you send students off to practice the agreed upon procedures, you should work to begin building independent reading stamina. Start at 3-5 minutes and challenge students to add 2-5 minutes to their stamina a day. You can track this goal on a graph in order for students to keep momentum around reading longer and physically being able to see the growth. It’s important for students and teachers to remember that if the group expectations are broken during the “Practice and Application” component, you join back together as a class, talk about it, and try that minute increment again. You should not move up your minute goal until the previous one has been reached by all students committing to the classroom agreement made as a community of readers.
- Start a “Good Readers…” anchor chart. Add the first bullet: value each other as readers.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember

**Webb’s DOK:** 1

### Engaging Experience 2

**Teaching Point:** “Readers don’t just read books; we build reading lives, ‘author’ reading lives, in which reading matters. For each one of us, it is always ‘My Life’ by me. And each one of us has choices. We can make lives for ourselves in which reading is the pits, or we can makes lives for ourselves in which reading is the best that it can be. Today, I want to teach you that to build powerful, wonderful reading lives, we need to reflect on our reading and then make wise changes so reading becomes the best it can be for each of us.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.1, SL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this** is by creating a timeline of your reading life, sharing with students when reading has been the pits and when it has been great. Share with them explicitly what makes it great for you and what makes it awful. This will help them think about their reading lives in order to formulate meaningful goals. Highlight the power of reflection for this specific element in their life.

- Hand out book logs for students (see sample [here](#)). Let them know this will be another tool that will help them author their reading lives. It will tell the story of who they are as a reader, allowing you to be a better reading teacher for them.

- Add to “Good Readers…” anchor chart--choose books we love, adding them to our book log

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember

**Webb’s DOK:** 1

### Engaging Experience 3

**Teaching Point:** “Today I want to teach you that people who take care of themselves--as athletes, as musicians, and as readers, too--know that it is important to sometimes stop and say, ‘From this moment on, I’m going to…’and then we name our hopes, our promises, our New Year’s resolutions. After that, we make sure our important resolution changes how we live in the
future, so that our resolution will come true. Readers do that, too. We stop, we promise, and we look forward, saying, ‘From now on, I….’”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** is to review with students that resolutions should be important and realistic. Thinking about an important goal, I need to show students how I can’t have ten important things, but only one or two. That’s what makes it important. To help them think about a realistic goal you might give the example goal of writing down everything I ever read. Then you can think aloud with them about how you read texts and newspapers and magazine articles and books, and keeping track of all that is too much. So, if I want this to be a realistic goal, I’m just going to track the books I read. Decide on a goal for yourself based on your reflection of your reading life from yesterday, thinking aloud with students about how you made sure it was important and realistic.

- Remind students once again of their book log. As they begin to add books and notice more specifically who they are as a reader, let them know this will also be a powerful goal-setting tool.

- Add to “Good Readers…” anchor chart: Take charge of our reading lives.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember

**Webb’s DOK:** 1

**Engaging Experience 4**

**Teaching Point:** Readers, yesterday we learned about making reading resolutions for ourselves. It is important as readers who are authoring their own reading lives to set both long-term and short-term goals for ourselves. Maybe right now we are working on reading a certain number of pages during reading or paying more attention to descriptions as we read, but we also have to have goals for what we want to accomplish in reading this year. We need to find ways to motivate ourselves to read lots and lots of books--more than we have ever read before.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.1
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way to do this** is to model your own short-term and long-term goals as a reader and how you are recording your progress with those goals.

- **Another way to do this** is to challenge your students to the 40-Book Challenge from Donalyn Miller’s *The Book Whisperer*. Make sure you stress with students that the goal isn’t to obsessively focus on 40 books exactly but to use that number as a goal for reading the most books they’ve ever read in their lives. For some students this will end up being less than 40 books and for some students this will be far more than 40 books. Also discuss the expectation in the 40 Book Challenge of reading a wide variety of books from different genres. Decide as a class how you will keep track of the books each student reads and how to track progress. Consider as a teacher modeling your own 40-Book Challenge reading, showing students that you too are a reader with long-term goals.

- **Bloom’s Levels**: Remember; Apply

Webb’s DOK: 1; 3

**Engaging Experience 5**

**Teaching Point:** “Today, I want to teach you that reading researchers have found that all of us—you and me both—need tons and tons of high-success reading to grow as readers. We need lots of time to read when we are not fussing over hard words, when we are not stopping and starting again, and when we don’t need to furrow our foreheads. We need lots of mind-on-the-story reading. Today, I want to teach you how to recognize the kinds of books that are at your own personal level—ones you can read smoothly, with accuracy and comprehension.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** is to develop an anchor chart with a T-chart labeled “Too Hard/Just Right”. Have a student model reading a “too hard” book in front of the class and notice behaviors together that make a book too hard. Remember, choose a student who feels comfortable in front of others and understands the purpose of this lesson so as not to embarrass them. If you feel more comfortable, you can model this. Fill in the “too hard” side with signals that this book was not a good fit (e.g. don’t understand, read slowly, no expression, keep getting stuck). After that move into a “just right” book and fill in that
side of the anchor chart (e.g. understand, find it funny or infuriating, know most the words, read fast and smooth, read with expression, notice punctuation).

- Add to “Good Readers…” anchor chart: choose books that are just right

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember  
**Webb’s DOK:** 1

**Engaging Experience 6**

**Teaching Point:** “Today I want to teach you that you are the boss of your reading life. You get to make the decisions about when a book is or is not working for you. And sometimes that means we have to abandon a book if it is not making reading the best it can be for you.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**  
Priority: RL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**  
- **One way to do this** is to go back to the anchor chart you created when you were reflecting on when reading had been great for you and when it had been the pits. Look at those moments when it was the pits and think aloud with students about when it would have been okay to abandon a book. Create an anchor chart as a class that could include the following points:
  - too easy
  - too difficult
  - boring--not interesting or going anywhere
  - not interested in the genre
  - too long before the action begins
  - expected something different from this author
  - not connecting with the characters
  - too confusing
  - found a book I’m more excited about

- Add to “Good Readers…” anchor chart: Know when a book is not working

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember  
**Webb’s DOK:** 1

**Engaging Experience 7**

**Teaching Point:** “Today I want to teach you that readers create a buzz about books we love so that those books will be exciting, not strange to others. To do this, it helps to talk about the sort
of readers who will like a book, to summarize the book (without giving too much away), to read
a little bit aloud to others, and above all, to tell them why the book is special.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- Priority: RL.4.1, SL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** is to book talk a book that you love, modeling for students how to
  buzz. Make sure you have a student in mind who you want to recommend it to and ask
  them questions about who they are as a reader, so students see explicitly how to do this
  part as well. Have them notice things that you did when talking about your book, so that
  you can create a reference anchor chart together for the class. The anchor chart could
  include the following points:

  - Think about a person who wants a book recommendation
  - Think about that person’s reading life—you may have to ask some questions
  - Choose a book for that person, remember the books you know (use book log if
    needed)
  - Tell the person why you think this book might be a perfect fit.
  - Summarize a bit of the story, highlighting the parts that reader will like.
  - Read aloud a tiny excerpt that reveals something exciting about the book.
  - Talk about why the book is irresistible.

- Remind students that our book boxes should be filled with books we love reading and
  want to read next, and this is one way to help us do that.

- Refer back to “Good Readers…” anchor chart and add: share their books with a reading
  community

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember, Apply

**Webb’s DOK:** 1; 3/4

**Engaging Experience 8**

**Teaching Point:** “Today, I want to teach you strategies to help us read a text closely and mark
those moments in a text that speak to us. As readers, we pay attention to the parts of a book we
love, wonder about, show us a character in a deeper way, have difficult words, shock or surprise
us, make us laugh, provide great details. Reading a text closely helps us recognize these
moments to ensure we continue to read ourselves awake.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.1

Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way to do this** is to read aloud an excerpt from your mentor text. Create an anchor chart together of the different ways students can mark their text to show those moments (annotation codes, color-coding, etc.) Using your mentor text, show students how you annotate the moments that speak to you, modeling in the process how to read a text closely--meaning that you are reading with purpose and stopping at those moments that you have a reaction to the text to think aloud about those.
- Some questions you could use to model close reading for this lesson are as follows:
  - Why did the character say what he/she said?
  - How does the character’s actions affect the story?
  - Am I learning more about this character and does this cause me to change my mind about them?
  - What does this character really want (motivation)?
  - What is the setting right now? How can I describe what I am visualizing?
- While you stop and consider these questions, thinking aloud about them, also feel free to mark any other moments in the text that speak to you to model how to use the annotation system you set up.
- Add to “Good Readers…” anchor chart: Notice moments that speak to us and remember characters’ names and setting

Bloom’s Levels: Remember, Apply
Webb’s DOK: 1, 3, 4

**Engaging Experience 9**

**Teaching Point:** Today I want to teach you that in a reading community like ours, it’s important that we learn how to talk--and listen--to each other as we share our ideas about our reading. Whether we are having a discussion as a class, as a book club, or with a partner, it’s important to listen and think about what others say, to respond politely to what others say, and to be able to express our own thoughts clearly.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**
Priority: SL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
● **One way to do this** is to model a discussion with another student or students about reading. Using the content of your read-aloud might be a good idea, so students would be able to follow the content of the conversation better. Draw attention to the fact that only one person speaks at a time, listeners look at the speaker as they listen, and the conversation follows naturally from what the person before said.

● **Another way to do this** is to explicitly set up your expectations for Accountable Talk, drafting a set of agreed-upon rules for partnership work and group and class discussions (SL.4.1.b). These might include:
  ○ Listen well--eye contact, nodding, gestures
  ○ Ask follow-up questions: Can you say more? Why is that?
  ○ Take notes on the important things you learn from your partner.

● **Another way to do this** is to create an anchor chart for the acronym SLANT.
  ○ **S**it up
  ○ **L**ook at the person talking
  ○ **A**ct like you care
  ○ **N**od your head
  ○ **T**ake turns talking

**Engaging Experience 10**

**Teaching Point:** “Today I want to teach you that having a reading companion makes all the difference in the world. Reading friendships start with people getting to know each other--as readers. We pay attention to each other’s reading histories, reading interests, reading hopes, and by doing so we can support another reader’s efforts to author a reading life.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- Priority: SL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instruction:**

- **One way to do this** is to model a reading partnership with another teacher or student, asking questions to help you get to know each other as readers. These could include:
  ○ Can we look over your log and talk about how much you are reading at school and home? Are there times when you read more or less? Why do you think that happens?
When you find books that are perfect for you, what do those books tend to be like? What should I know about the books in your life?

What are your goals for yourself as a reader? What are you doing to meet them?

If you think back over your life as a reader, what have the big turning point moments been for you? Can you tell me more about one turning point? How did your reading change during that moment? What did you realize about yourself as a reader?

Who has helped you as a reader? What did that person do that was helpful?

**Bloom’s Levels:** Apply; Create

**Webb’s DOK:** 2/3

**Engaging Experience 11**

**Teaching Point:** “You know what, readers? I’m realizing now that reading a book is a lot like going to the movies. A lot of the fun part comes after reading time is over, when you get to talk about what you’ve read.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.1, SL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** is to model for students (once again in your partnership with a teacher or student) how to share an experience about your life. Share with students that you talk about your reading the same way, excited and highlighting the good parts. Remind them of the rules you made two days ago for discussion regarding accountable talk and being a good listener. Then send student partners to each of the four corners of the room to practice sharing an experience from their life, then sharing about the book they are currently reading. The other students will observe and take notes as to what they are doing. Students then share what they noticed—both the partnerships and those observing.

**Bloom’s Levels:** apply/create

**Webb’s DOK:** 2/3

**Engaging Experience 12**

**Teaching Point:** “Readers, today I am going to teach you how to write about your thinking as you read. Yesterday we shared our thinking with our partners by discussing and talking about our ideas. Today it’s time to grow ourselves as readers, showing our thinking by writing as well.”
**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**
- Priority: RL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
- **One way to do this** is to model in your own reading how to use post-its to show thinking in your book and how to stop and jot in your reading notebook. There may be other responses you will incorporate throughout the year, but for today focus only on these two, as they are the most common. This would also be a good opportunity to revisit the work you did with annotation, reminding students this is a way to show their thinking as well. You will provide students a Reading Life Portfolio (possibly a folder and reader’s notebook) and have them add the work of the day into it. If they use post-its to show their thinking or annotate the text, those can stay in the book. Let readers know that their Reading Life Portfolio is a place for them to keep their reading “stuff”—reading logs, notes, tools, etc.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember; Apply

**Webb’s DOK:** 1; 3

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**Engaging Experience 13**

**Teaching Point:** Readers, it’s so important to make sure we keep ourselves focused in our books and excited by what we read. It’s also important to make sure we’re understanding what we’re reading. Understanding is more than just saying the words in your head. Understanding is seeing in your head what is going on, hearing it, even tasting or smelling it!

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**
- Priority: RL.4.1, SL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
- **One way to do this** is to choose a text for shared reading. You could copy a passage from your read-aloud text or use another short text. Model reading and then stopping to share what you are seeing in your mind. Allow students to practice sharing the images in their minds with their reading partners. Discuss the fact that it’s not important for us to see things exactly the same unless something is described explicitly in the text. Ask students if they have ever read a book and then seen the movie. Discuss how sometimes the characters in the movie look differently than how you visualized them for yourself while reading. Continue reading through the text together, stopping to also note other sensory images you create as a reader, such as smelling, tasting, or hearing details in your mind.
**Bloom’s Levels:** Apply, Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 2-3  

**Engaging Experience 14**

**Teaching Point:** Readers, today I want to talk to you about words. Learning new words from reading is one of the many great treasures reading brings us. Paying attention to new words is also important to make sure we are understanding what we read.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons  

**Standards Addressed** Priority: RL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** is to choose a passage from your read-aloud or another source that has several words students are not likely to know, and make a copy for each student. Ask students to read to themselves and to circle any words they are not sure of the meaning of. Note students’ markings. Choose two to three of the words you see a number of students circling and model using context clues strategies to figure out the words.
  - Try reading around the words to get a sense of what is going on. Is there a synonym that might make sense? Can this help you understand the word in question?
  - What is the word’s job? Is it describing something (adjective), showing action (verb), naming something (noun), etc.
  - What is the mood of the sentence or paragraph? Is it positive or negative? Scary? Funny? Can this help you figure out the meaning?
  - Does the word have any parts that can help you figure it out (prefixes, suffixes, root word)?
  - Sometimes it’s worth looking it up. Model how to use a print or online dictionary to define the word. After reading the definition, reread the word in its context and think about how it is being used.

- Let students know that using context clues strategies to figure out the meaning of a word in the sentence is important for reading, but going one step further and trying to “collect” the word will help them to increase their vocabularies, which will make them better readers and writers in the future. Show students how to collect new words in a list in their reader’s notebooks or use a model, such as the Frayer Model to collect new words.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Apply  
**Webb’s DOK:** 2
## Engaging Scenario

**Situation:** creating a reading toolkit for the year  
**Challenge:** choosing from an array of tools that will make you a successful reader as an individual and in a group or partnership.  
**Specific Role:** Analyzing the array of tools presented, choosing and organizing those in a meaningful way to ensure the student has taken the initial steps in authoring their reading life.  
**Audience:** Student, student partnerships, reading groups  
**Product or performance:** Reading tool kit

As a culmination of this unit, students will create a reading toolkit that will hold the tools and resources they need to be successful readers across the year. They can collect these in their Reading Life Portfolio, an organizational bin at their table, a baggie, etc.

**Items that should be available for students to collect for their reading toolkit:**
- accountable talk question stems  
- reading partnership discussion starters  
- reading strategies bookmarks  
- annotation codes bookmark  
- context clues strategies  
- ways to record new words  
- post-its  
- paper  
- book logs  
- book recommendation forms  
- “How to Buzz About Books” chart picture  
- “How to Pick Just Right Books” form  
- Goal-setting sheets

Also, you can give students their Reader’s Notebooks on this day as a celebration that they now know all they need to author their own reading life! As you hand them out, allow them to go write their first experience as a reader in 3rd grade to get excited about filling that notebook!
Unit 2: Following Characters into Meaning

Subject: Reading
Grade: 4
Name of Unit: Following Characters into Meaning
Length of Unit: approximately 5 weeks (2nd week of September - 2nd week of October)
Overview of Unit: Readers focus on developing ideas about characters and their motivations. This unit pays attention to student stamina, choosing books, and setting goals as readers.

In this unit readers will be focusing on strengthening their abilities to make interpretations of texts. This is a unit which teaches students to read with inference and interpretation, developing text-based theories about characters, supporting those theories with evidence from the text, and viewing characters and their motivations through a different lens. Students will consider big-life issues that relate to many stories and determine how these issues affect the message of the stories they are reading. Your students have already done some of this thinking in prior years, and you’ll want to help them transfer these skills even as they learn new ones.

In Topic 1 (Bend I) of the unit readers will read to envision, predict and infer about characters. During these lessons students will move forward asking themselves how they can get lost in the world of the story and while doing that get to know the characters so well that they get lost in their world.

In Topic 2 (Bend II) of the unit readers will build theories about characters. During these lessons students will focus on reading to develop precise, defendable, grounded ideas about characters within and across books.

In Topic 3 (Bend III) of this unit readers will work to study characters and build interpretations. Students will focus on finding recurring images, objects and details and demonstrate how they support or contribute to the overall theme of the text.

Getting Ready for the Unit:

- Read through Lucy Calkins’ 2013-2014 Unit 1 (Bends II and III).
- Start a read-aloud book several days before beginning reading lessons for Interpreting Characters (books are suggested above).
- Gather multiple titles of appropriate grade-level fiction books with strong characters and themes.
- Make sure that you taught students how to write SMART goals.
- You may choose to teach this unit through book clubs if you feel that your class is ready for this at this time. If you choose to do this, you will want to select texts for your book clubs that revolve around books with strong main characters. If you are wanting to introduce book clubs, you would want to introduce this idea by Experience #6.
- Familiarize yourself with the structure of book clubs within your workshop classroom by reading over the following pd resource:
  
  Read Chapter 11: Practical Help with Book Clubs from the Lucy Calkins: *A Guide to the Reading Workshop*, pgs. 104-112. It can also be found on the following link on Brightspace:
  https://learn.parkhill.k12.mo.us/d2l/le/content/37061/Home

Pre-Assessment:

- Using a grade-level appropriate text (ex., *Thank You Mr. Faulker*, *The Lemonade Club*, *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother*) perform a read-aloud. After reading the text to your class, have students record their thinking about the main character. Ask them to use any evidence from the text to support their ideas. Collect these notes and use this information to direct your unit, based on what your students need in order to better understand characters.

Read-Aloud Considerations:

During your read-aloud, ask students questions that encourage them to think deeply about character motivations and how the characters are interacting in the text.

- Have you seen the characters show a behavior or a side of themselves that was unexpected? What was happening in the story that explains why the character behaved that way?
- “Let’s think about what’s going on here. Turn and talk to your neighbor about what you think (so and so) is thinking right now.”
- Describe some of the characters’ inner thoughts. What does this tell you about who they are on the inside?
- Describe some of the characters’ choices and actions. What does this tell you about how they want others to view them?
- How do the character’s actions help determine the theme?
- How do the character’s actions help support the theme?
- What phrases, words or images are repeated throughout the text? What do you think the author is trying to help us understand about the character or theme?
- Which sentence from the story explains how it could be that___________ (inference about a character’s actions)?
- Which sentence from the story explains why ______?
- Read these sentences from the story. Based on these sentences, with which statement would ____ (one of the characters) most likely agree?

Suggested Texts:
Possible Read-Alouds
The Tiger Rising by Kate DiCamillo
Wonder by R.J. Palacio
Because of Mr. Terupt by Rob Buyea
Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Patterson
Pecan Pie Baby by Jacqueline Woodson (From Trade Book Collection)
The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Poetry That Analyzes Characters
On Turning 10
Salvador Late and Early

Possible Book Club Books:
- Among the Hidden by: Margaret Peterson Haddix
- Because of Winn- Dixie by: Kate DiCamillo
- Earthquake Terror by: Peg Kehret
- Loser by: Jerry Spinelli
- *A Dog’s Life* by: Ann M. Martin
- *Poppy* by: Avi

**Essential Questions:**
1. How can I read to understand the many layers of a character?
2. How can I use the plot to help me understand characters? How can I use a character’s changes to help me understand the plot? How are plot and characters related?
3. How do I determine the lesson(s) characters are learning in a story? How does this help me to determine the theme of a story?
4. How do discussions and listening to others about books help me to become a better reader?

**Enduring Understandings/Big Ideas:**
1. Like me, characters have many layers that make up who they are. As readers, we collect evidence (internal/external) to support our knowledge of each layer.
2. Characters grow and change throughout a text. As a reader I need to track and monitor these shifts in order to enhance my understanding of the plot.
3. As a reader I need to zoom in on my characters’ motivations and struggles to identify the life lessons I am learning beside them.
4. My understanding of text is enhanced when I build my thinking off of others’ thinking. I must be open to others’ views to see that texts can be interpreted in more than one way.

**Priority Standards for unit:**
- RL.4.2 **Determine** theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- RL.4.3 **Describe** in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. character’s thoughts, words or actions).
- SL.4.1 **Engage** effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and **expressing** their own clearly.

**Supporting Standards for unit:**
- RL.4.1: **Refer** to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
• RL.4.9: **Compare and contrast** the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths and traditional literature from different cultures.

• SL.4.1a-d **Engage** effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and **expressing** their own clearly.
  a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
  b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
  c. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
  d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Unwrapped Concepts (Students need to know)</th>
<th>Unwrapped Skills (Students need to be able to do)</th>
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<tr>
<td>RL.4.2</td>
<td>theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text</td>
<td>Determine</td>
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<tr>
<td>RL.4.2</td>
<td>theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text</td>
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<tr>
<td>RL.4.3</td>
<td>character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text ● (e.g. character’s thoughts, words or actions)</td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>SL.4.1</td>
<td>collaborative discussions (e.g., one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and text on others ideas</td>
<td>Engage In</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL.4.1</td>
<td>personal ideas as they relate to text and others’ ideas clearly.</td>
<td>Building</td>
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Unit Vocabulary:

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<td>Determine</td>
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Topic 1: Envision, Predict, Infer Characters

Engaging Experience 1
Teaching Point: Reading Alongside Characters - Readers read alongside their characters so closely that they can begin describing them, using evidence to support their thinking.

Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini-lessons

Standards Addressed:
Priority: RL.4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions
At this point in your read-aloud texts you will want to start having your students focus on zooming in deeply on the main character(s).
● **One way to do this is to** choose a powerful scene based on where you are currently in your text. Ask them the following questions to start describing the character:
  o What is their personality like? What examples in the text support your thinking?
  o How do they act? What trait(s) could we give to that character to describe their actions?
  o What clues is the author giving us based on how the character feels about ________?
  o What is the character feeling/thinking internally? What traits could we use to describe them on the inside?
  o How does the character act externally? What traits could we use to describe how they want to portray themselves on the outside?
  o Does the character act differently on the outside compared to their thinking or feelings on the inside? If so why might there be this conflict?

You will want to create an Anchor T-Chart with your class with two columns titled Internal and External. You will want to model using specific traits and text evidence that supports what you are modeling and creating with your class.

*Note: Stress the importance of using specific, higher level traits (Ex. There is a big difference between a character who is mean versus a character who is manipulative).

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Evaluate, Create
**Webb’s DOK:** 3, 4

**Engaging Experience 2**

**Teaching Point:** As readers we must understand that characters’ choices, actions, and feelings all stem from their motivation. It is their motivation that guides the plot of the story.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed:**

**Priority:** RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions**

● **One way you can show this is** using your Read-Aloud/Mentor Text, refer back to your anchor chart of traits and evidence from the previous day. Work together and scaffold your thinking out loud. Deep down what does the main character really want/desire? This is called the motivation. Pull out with your students the main motivation of the main character from the read-aloud or mentor text. Next model how to assess the accuracy of your thinking by referring back to the character’s actions, personality, and traits to see if that supports the motivation you’ve chosen. Talk to students about checking to see if the
evidence supports the motivation we have selected. If it doesn’t, then we need to go back and revise our thinking.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Evaluate, Create  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3, 4  

**Engaging Experience 3**  
**Teaching Point:** Developing Significant Ideas: Using the Story Arc to Notice Important Details about Characters - “Readers pay special attention to details that reveal characters’ desires, the obstacles they encounter, and their struggles to overcome them, in order to best understand both characters and the story.”  
**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons  
**Standards Addressed**  
**Priority:** RL.4.3  
**Detailed Description/Instructions**  
- **One way to do this** is to use a familiar mentor text/read-aloud. Model how stories follow a common story arc. Have students help as you map the familiar story on a story arc anchor chart. After completing the chart, go back and pull out details that helped you to understand the character’s desires, obstacles and struggles. Map these details on the arc to show how the events are connected and help to develop an understanding of the character.
- **Another way to do this** is to read a trade book that pays special attention to how a character changes over time. Throughout the story model for students how your thoughts about the character grow and change as you read and learn more. Stop mid-way through reading and mark details you learn about the character, as well as ways you see them change on a story arc.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3  

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**Topic 2: Developing Theories about Characters**  

**Engaging Experience 4**  
**Teaching Point:** Simple to Complex: Developing Theories about Characters
“Readers must understand that like people, characters are complex. They have many layers that make up their overall identity of who they are as a person.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions**

- **One way to do this** is to hook your students by having them describe their own layers. Have students describe different emotions that they feel, or thoughts and choices they make in different situations. Then explain that like all people, characters are also complex. As readers we need to analyze these complexities in order to develop theories about who they are overall as a person. Pull up your Traits and Evidence anchor chart from Engaging Experience 1. Re-read the evidence we have collected so far. Model how to come up with one theory based on this evidence. Then have students work with you to come up with another theory (Note: The language in the theories at first doesn’t have to be as specific as our expectations would normally be, because in Experience 5 they will be learning how to refine their original theories by using precise academic language).

- **Another way to do this** is to create a four-box anchor chart for one character. Your boxes should be labeled beginning, middle 1, middle 2, and end. Inside each box they will have space for evidence (details) and a theory at the bottom of the box. As your read-aloud progresses, you will be adding to these components about your character and revising theories in the beginning, middle, and end of your read-aloud. This is helpful in highlighting how characters grow and change over time. It is also helpful to emphasize the importance of continuing to revise our theories about characters as we get to know them more deeply in a novel.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 5**

**Teaching Point:** Improving Theories by Reaching for Precise Academic Language - “Readers’ ideas about characters can become more precise, insightful, and sophisticated when readers reach for exact, precise, true language that captures those ideas.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL 4.3
**Detailed Description/Instructions**

- **One way to do this** is to revisit a theory that was created during Engaging Experience 4. Choose a theory that uses more general vocabulary. For example, in an original theory you may have used the terms “happy,” “sad,” and “scared.” Model thinking aloud more precise words that could be used to describe the character. Let this be a lesson in synonyms for your students.

- **Another way to do this** is to think about specific vocabulary, as it relates to figurative language by using similes and metaphors. Pull similes and metaphors from a text that has some strong models to use if needed. If students need to start by using those examples, let them. For instance, from *Tiger Rising*, “Rob is as closed up as a suitcase or a caged bird,” but then allow students time to think about what other objects they could compare him to that are closed. Or if students are using a different adjective to describe Rob, have them think about comparisons they could make to that adjective.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Describe  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 6**

**Teaching Point:** Finding Complications in Characters - In this session, you’ll continue the ideas from Engaging Experience 4, teaching students that readers recognize that characters are complex and layered and may seem one way in some relationships or settings and another way in a different context. Readers look for text evidence that shows this complexity in order to build solid ideas about characters and books.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

**Priority:** RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions**

- **One way to do this** is to model your thinking for your students, highlighting specific moments from a previously shared mentor text/read-aloud, where a character shows different sides of their personality to different people (ex., In *Wonder*, August’s mom talks to August about how nice Julian seems. August does not agree with this statement. August has seen Julian show a different side of his personality that helps the reader understand August’s point of view). You will model for readers how actions relate to your theory.

  ○ How do the actions we are reading about support my theory?
○ Does information we have learned make me think I need to revise my theory about this character?
○ Do we want/need to start a new theory altogether about this character?

● Another way to do this might be to read a trade book, (ex. My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother). As you read, share with students traits, actions and quotes that establish how you feel about a character. As you see the character show a different side of themselves, stop to share with students how the character’s words, actions and thoughts helped you to revise your thoughts about this character and change your understanding of this character. Point out that readers read expecting to be surprised, knowing that they will sometimes have to revise their predictions—or grow new ones—based on new information they learn as they read on. Ask questions such as:
  ○ “What does this character really want? Is this different than what I initially thought about this character?”
  ○ “Why might the author have had the character do this? How did it change my understanding of the story?”

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 7
Teaching Point: It is common for readers to have a different perspective on a text. Readers can debate differing viewpoints on a provocative question about a book they have both read. In debate, each reader supports his or her side with evidence in order to persuade the other person.
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
  Priority: SL.4.1
Detailed Description/Instructions
○ One way you can do this is by: selecting a thought-provoking statement or question that goes with a larger idea from your read-aloud text. Then select a student, who through whole-group discussion, you know has a strong opinion about this statement or question. Prepare the student ahead of time with the question or statement you want them to debate with you. Make sure they have a day in advance to collect their evidence for their stance. As the teacher, take the opposite side. For example, if you chose to read Wonder, you may argue over the statement that everyone is born with an equal chance for success in life. Or if you chose Because of Mr. Terupt then maybe you debate over whether or not Mr. Terupt was at fault for not setting up enough boundaries with his students.
● Carry out your debate with the rest of the class with clear evidence to support both arguments. Have students pay attention to the elements that make a debate strong. Have a discussion tying in these important components of a quality debate with your class, emphasizing places they might not have identified on their own.

Bloom’s Levels: Create
Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 8
Teaching Point: Grounding Evidence Back in the Text - In this session, you’ll teach that strong readers defend and critique ideas by quoting specific words, sentences, and passages from the text that provides evidence for their ideas.
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL 4.2, RL.4.3
Detailed Description/Instructions
● One way to do this is to pick out a specific academic word to describe a character from the read-aloud/mentor text. Share this word with the class. Ask students if they can think of specific events, actions, or words from the story that “prove” that your word is accurate. Provide students with several examples from the text that support your word. Use a variety of types of evidence so that students are able to see how this information fits together.
● Another way to do this is to read a wordless book to students. Reading books with little to no words (Ex. The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, Flotsam, The Stranger) allows readers to make specific inferences based on specific visual clues from the text. As you share the pictures from this text with your students, you will stop to ask questions about information students add to your thinking. Examples of questions that will encourage connecting thoughts to text evidence:
  ○ “What in the text makes you say that?”
  ○ “I thought that too because...”
  ○ “I thought something different because...”
  ○ “Can you show me the part in the story where you got that idea?”
  ○ “How do you know?”

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3
Engaging Experience 9

Teaching Point: Looking Through Many Lenses at Not Just a Scene, but at the Whole Story. In this lesson, students will learn that readers who read interpretively pay attention to parts that stick out. They think about how a particular part might fit with other parts, remembering to think across the whole book. Readers think, “If I were getting to know someone and these were my observations of them, how would I think about them?” They then use those answers to create a solid theory.

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.2, RL.4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions

● One way to do this is to gather your own jottings, whether they be post-its, anchor charts, or notes you have made in your own reader’s notebook during the unit to help students see how their separate ideas can come together around one new theory.

Example Jottings:

1. In the poem “The Giving Tree” early we read, “And the boy loved the tree....very much. And the tree was happy.”
2. When the poem says, “‘I am too big to climb and play’ said the boy. ‘I want to buy things and have fun,’” is this the beginning of the end of their connection, or just a spot where their connection changes?
3. In the story the boy comes to the tree over and over again, and the tree offers all she has.
4. At the end of the poem it says, “‘Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest.’ And the boy did. And the tree was happy.” The boys is just sitting on the tree. This is all the tree has left.

New theory: When the tree has things to give the boy, she is not always happy that he goes away to use the things she has given him. The tree is happier when she and the boy are together, even if that means they are just sitting.

● Another way to do this is by modeling how readers stop and think about the events and characters in their story and how they are connected, as well as what these connections tell us about the characters and the story as a whole. Create a Smart Board Document that has these questions:
Engaging Experience 10

Teaching Point: Looking Beyond Characters: Studying other Elements of the Story - Readers must begin to look more globally than just at what is happening to a character. We must be thinking about the larger, universal lesson that we can be learning alongside the character that the author is trying to teach us (Theme).

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL.4.2

Detailed Description/Instructions

- One way to do this is to use your read-aloud to pull out the problems that the character has struggled with, or the repetition of an idea that continues to resurface in the text. Highlight these places and model these questions to guide the drafting of the theme:

  - What idea keeps reoccurring in the text?
  - What is the author trying to teach us about this idea?
  - How is the character struggling with or working through a central conflict?
  - What universal lesson is the author trying to teach us about life based on the character's journey?

Model how to pull out one theme from your read-aloud. Explicitly model your thinking and the evidence in the text that supports your decision. Make sure to stress the importance of pulling out a universal message that everyone can relate to. Readers should
avoid using the characters and a detail that is extremely specific to the text when creating their theme.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 11**

**Teaching Point:** Connecting Thoughts to Build Interpretations - “Readers push themselves to have deeper thoughts and build interpretations about a story by looking across their cumulative thinking, finding patterns and making connections.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

*Priority:* RL.4.2, RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions**

- **One way to do this** is to remind students of the tools you can focus in on to pull out the theme (looking at the problems characters face, looking at a reoccurring thought or idea, finding symbols, thinking about what the author is trying to teach us as we learn alongside the character). Pull up the theme you used in your lesson from the day before. Re-read it with the class. Tell students that today we will be looking at recurring patterns that we see multiple characters struggling with or thinking about. These characters may have different perspectives on the same idea and issue. The teacher will model how to pull out these different struggles/viewpoints that characters are going through and how they revolve around a central idea. Ask students what lesson the author is trying to teach the character and in turn teach us as the readers? Draft a new theme that also fits in with another book you have read with the students. Make sure to explicitly point out how themes are universal and are supported by multiple pieces of evidence from the text.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 12**

**Teaching Point:** A Method for Crystallizing Central Interpretations - In this session, you’ll teach children that when readers develop a central interpretation of a book, they consider big life-issues that relate to many people and stories, choosing one that pertains to that particular book, and then figuring out what the book is saying about that issue.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**
**Priority:** RL.4.2, RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions**

- **One way to do this** is to start by talking to students about identifying a central problem in a story. Identifying these central problems allows readers to focus in on the big life-issue the text addresses. Using a Trade Book or poem that has already been shared with the class, identify the big life-issue being addressed in this text. From here model a discussion of how that event might relate to the theme(s) of the story. Identify what the events that address these big life-issues in this text teach us about these issues. As you are guiding this model, create a SMART Board Document that shares these questions:
  - What is the character’s central problem in this scene/book? How does that relate to the theme(s) of the story?
  - Which of the details about ___________ seem most important to the reader’s understanding of him or her? How do those details convey themes?
  - Which detail in this scene best helps to show a theme of this story?
  - What are some big life issues this story addresses?

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

**Engaging Experience 13**

**Teaching Point:** Finding Symbolism in Recurring Images and Objects - As readers we should pay attention to repeated images and objects because they often represent a larger idea or message.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions**

- **One way to do this** is to engage students in a group discussion by having them think of well-known objects that they know stand for or represent something else. Have students talk to one another and share their thinking with you. Tell students that an object or image that represents a larger idea or message is called symbolism. Pull out one object or image that is referenced multiple times in your read-aloud text. Ask students in one word or phrase what they think that image or object represents.
  - Examples:
Because of Mr. Terupt- Object: Snowball  Represents: mistakes, taking things too far, pain
Wonder- Object: The astronaut helmet  Represents: masking insecurities, hiding, shielding flaws

- Then model taking this concept deeper by explicitly pulling out what lesson (theme) the author is trying to teach us through the symbolism.
- Going back to the Wonder example, what is the author trying to teach us about insecurities? You could say the author is trying to teach us that we shouldn’t hide our insecurities because someone will always like you for who you are. You could also say that our insecurities/ flaws are what make us unique and they should be celebrated not kept hidden.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 14
Teaching Point: Celebrations as Readers - In this session, you will celebrate the teaching and learning that have happened across the unit. Students will have the opportunity to share out the ideas that they have learned during this unit.
Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
  Priority: SL.4.1, RL 4.2, RL 4.3
Detailed Description/Instructions
- One way to do this is to have students contribute to a chart with post-it notes titled, “What we must think about when we think about characters.” Encourage students to list terms, questions and ideas that support what they have learned in this unit. Create an Anchor Chart that collects these ideas in an orderly way to display in the room.
- The next day continue with the idea of celebrating the teaching and learning that have happened across the unit focused on determining theme. Have students contribute to a second chart with post-it notes titled, “What we must think about when determining a theme of a story.” Also discuss why determining theme help us as readers fully comprehend a story. Create an Anchor Chart that collects these ideas in an orderly way to display in the room.
Bloom’s Levels: Evaluate, Create
Webb’s DOK: 3, 4
Engaging Scenario

**Engaging Scenario**

*Have students create a story arc that tells about the journey that the character in the book they are reading went through during the course of the story.*

*Story Arc Should Include:*
- *Pulling out dialogue*
- *Figurative Language*
- *Character Choices*
- *Feelings to support their theories*
- *At the bottom students should write 2 theories they have about this character*
Unit 3: Historical Fiction Book Clubs

Subject: Reading  
Grade: 4  
Name of Unit: Historical Fiction Book Clubs  
Length of Unit: 5 Weeks (3rd and 4th week of October - November)

Overview of Unit:  
Historical fiction offers us the opportunity to be lifted out of our ordinary lives and imagine lives of great adventure and heroism. Historical fiction also creates an opportunity for you to teach your students to tackle complex texts through close reading in the company of friends. Historical fiction takes place in a time and place the reader has never experienced. The characters engage in experiences and social issues that help students to understand a time in our history more deeply. The goal for this unit is for students to emerge from this unit as knowledgeable readers who have new confidence in tackling complicated literature.

The main goal for Topic 1 (Bend I) is for readers to be able to fully grasp the elements of the Historical Fiction Genre. The lessons in Topic One center around identifying and describing characters on a deeper level. Emphasis is placed on synthesizing the elements of the plot, and understanding how the setting plays a key role in historical fiction texts. Students will be using the events in character’s lives in order to help them understand the events in history.

The main focus for Topic 2 (Bend II) is for readers to begin pulling out interpretations and themes from the text. From these themes they will be identifying big ideas. Furthermore they will be revising their big ideas as they collect evidence to support their thinking. Readers will be making connections between their novel and the historical events from the time period.

The main focus for Topic 3 (Bend III) is for readers to view characters through different lenses, by interpreting motivations, shifts in power, and actions from another character’s perspective. As readers they will express the lessons that they should learn alongside the character. Lastly, students will be comparing and contrasting their interpretations and big ideas across multiple texts.

Getting Ready for the Unit:  
- Read through Lucy Calkins Historical Fiction Book Clubs Bends I, II, and III.  
- Start read-aloud several days before beginning reading lessons for Historical Fiction Book Clubs.
• Gather multiple titles of appropriate historical fiction books for book clubs. This should be done in advance, and it is recommended that you give your students time to review a variety of options and choose their own book club book. It may take some time to collect books for the historical fiction book clubs. Utilize classroom libraries, school libraries, and book from Mid-Continent Public Library. Please refer to text recommendations below to help you in this process.

• Remember not to put a reader in a book that he or she cannot read or doesn’t want to read just so that the reader can “be in the unit.”

• Be particularly thoughtful of the needs of your struggling readers. Even more than others, these students need to be reading a lot, and they need to read books that they find fascinating. So first, look at your book choices and do everything possible to gather many titles at various levels. You will also need to do some good book talks about the books that you have available, so you can lure your children to them. We included some “time travel” books such as Magic Treehouse, to make available more lower-level books for students. The American Girl historical fiction novels, with their accompanying nonfiction texts, are also good choices.

• It would be helpful to find primary sources and educational sites for the historical time period for each novel. This will allow students to layer their understanding of the factual information from history to make connections to and have a deeper understanding of their historical fiction text.

• Early in this unit you are developing students’ understandings of historical fiction reading. Use your student conferring during this time to develop an understanding of students’ interests in history. This information will be helpful when trying to determine which books to use for student book clubs.

Pre-Assessment (given prior to starting the unit):

• Using a grade level appropriate text (ex., Baseball Saved Us, Pepe the Lamplighter, How Many Days to America, Uncle Jed’s Barber Shop, Going West) perform a read-aloud from a historical fiction picture book. After reading the text to your class, have students
record their thinking about how the setting is influencing the character(s) and the plot. Then have them describe the lesson they should be learning alongside the character(s).

**Read-Aloud Considerations:**
During read-aloud, ask students questions that encourage them to think deeply about character motivations and how the characters are interacting within the text.

- Have you seen the characters show a behavior or a side of themselves that was unexpected? What was happening in the story that explains why the character behaved that way?
- “Let’s think about what’s going on here. Turn and talk to your neighbor about what you think (so and so) is thinking right now.”
- Describe some of the characters’ inner thoughts? What does this tell you about who they are on the inside?
- Describe some of the characters’ choices and actions? What does this tell you about how they want others to view them?
- Who has the power in this scene? How do you know?
- How do the character’s actions help support the theme?
- What phrases, words or images are repeated throughout the text? What do you think the author was trying to help the reader understand about the character or theme?
- What can you infer the phrase __________ means?
- Describe what you think __________ is alluding to.
- Which sentence from the story explains why ______?
- Turn and talk about the setting using specific details from your text.
- How is the setting influencing the plot and the choices the characters are making?
- Turn and talk about what big ideas are shown in your text. What connections can you make to the big ideas from your story to our read-aloud?
- What are you learning about the _________ (time period) that you did not know before?

**Suggested Read-Aloud Texts:**

_Trouble Don’t Last_ by Shelley Pearsall

_The Witch of Blackbird Pond_ by Elizabeth George Speare
The **Breadwinner** by Deborah Ellis

**Number the Stars** by Lois Lowry

**Historical Fiction Book Club Suggestions:**

**Historical Fiction Books by Level from TCRWP**

- *I Survived the Attacks of September 11th*, by Lauren Tarshis
- *Breaking Stalin’s Nose*, by Eugene Yelchin
- *Hannah* by Gloria Whelan
- *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowery
- *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O’Dell
- *Bud not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- *Al Capone Does My Shirts* by Gennifer Choldenko
- *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams Garcia

**More Historical Fiction Titles**

**Essential Questions:**

1. Why is it important to pay attention to how themes appear across texts?
2. How do discussions about books help me to become a better reader?
3. How can I develop a deeper understanding of characters and the setting by learning about a specific time period?
4. Why must I infer the thoughts, emotions and struggles individuals endured during a specific time in history?

**Enduring Understanding/Big Ideas:**

1. Authors choose specific settings in history to tell us stories. As readers, we need to research elements of the time period/culture to better understand the behaviors and motivations behind the characters in the text.
2. By evaluating and annotating historical fiction characters’ emotions, actions, struggles, and motivations, we can infer what real individuals from that time period went through.

3. As a reader, I can pull out the big ideas that the text revolves around. It is through reading multiple texts and having discussions with others that I can see how the same theme is developed differently.

Priority Standards for unit:
- RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. character’s thoughts, words or actions)
- RL.4.9: Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths and traditional literature from different culture.

Supporting Standards for unit:
- SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
- L4.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- RF.4.4c: c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Unwrapped Concepts (Students need to know)</th>
<th>Unwrapped Skills (Students need to be able to do)</th>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels</th>
<th>Webb's DOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL.4.1</td>
<td>Refer to details and examples in a text. What it says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.4.3</td>
<td>character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. character’s thoughts, words or actions)</td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL.4.9</td>
<td>Treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil)</td>
<td>Compare and contrast</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Compare and contrast</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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### Topic 1: Exploring the Qualities of Historical Fiction

#### Engaging Experience 1
**Teaching Point:** Looking at Details that Build the World of a Story - Readers pay special attention to passages that tell about daily life. When reading we must think about where the story is happening and when the story is happening. These details can reveal a great deal about the world in which the story is set.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**
*Priority:* RL.4.1, RL.4.3,

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
- **One way to do this is to** use the mentor text, Number the Stars, Trouble Don’t Last or another strong historical fiction text to model thinking aloud to students about what kind of place this is—are people kind to each other or do they mistrust each other? Is it on the brink of change? In the midst of war? What is the mood? Why would the author have created this mood?
- **Another way to do this is to** explain how the setting plays a vital role in historical fiction. As readers we need to immerse ourselves in the time period and the climate that our story is set in. Model for students how you are using explicit details to draw an image of the setting you are visualizing. Then beneath that, model differences from our culture now that stick out from your read-aloud text. For example, if you’re reading Trouble...
Don’t Last you should be pulling out the master/slave dynamics that are being exposed from the beginning.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3

**Engaging Experience 2**
**Teaching Point:** Collaborating to Comprehend Complex Texts - Readers I want to also teach you that it’s important, in any club, to take care of relationships within that club. We do that by making sure that we’re creating work where each member will feel a part of something important, and each member will always feel supported by the group. Today we are going to be creating expectations and modeling how to have quality book club discussions.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**
Priority: RL.4.1, RL

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
- **One way to do this would be to** create an anchor chart, “Playing Your Part in Deep Club Talk” with students to create a list of ways to hold each other accountable to relevant discussion and respectful collaboration. Read a portion of Number the Stars and select a two-to-three students to help you model a collaborative, in-depth book club discussion based on the elements outlined on the anchor chart.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Evaluate, Create
Webb’s DOK: 3, 4

**Engaging Experience 3**
**Teaching Point:** Synthesizing Story Elements - At the start of books, there is so much information flying past us, that as readers we need to spend our time catching up on the important stuff and sorting it so that we began to grasp the who, what, where, when, and why of a book. Readers organize the important details from the setting, characters, and events from the plot, to make sense of a text.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**
Priority: RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
- **One way to do this might be to** demonstrate for students how you document the characters, setting, and events of the story by listing all this information out on chart
paper with an organizational structure. Letting readers know that it’s important to take notes, whether they be mental or on paper, on key characters, setting, and moments that happen early on in historical fiction or any complex text. Doing so helps us make sense of the book and gives us information to hold on to as we read.

- **Another way to do** this would be to introduce the idea that readers keep note on a mental bulletin board, tacking up new information as they read a text. Model for students how you would do this while reading a historical fiction text.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 4**  
**Teaching Point:** Holding on when Time Jumps Back and Forth - When skilled readers read any complex story, and especially when we read historical fiction, we are aware time is one of the elements in the story that is often complex. Specifically, we are aware that the spotlight of the story is not continually on the here and now. Sometimes the story flashes back to events that have already occurred, earlier in the story or even before the story began.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson  
**Standards Addressed**  
- **Priority:** RL.4.1, RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**  
- **One way to do this would be to** let students know that strong readers depend on many tools from their toolbox to help them become proficient readers, such as taking notes, making lists, rereading, and talking with partners. Highlight note-taking and rereading, since the others have been addressed in previous lessons. Using your mentor text, reread a short section that was particularly complex to understand. Go to the following link and pick two to three questions of the ten provided to ask yourself and model thinking aloud about as you reread: [http://www.weareteachers.com/hot-topics/topics-in-education/understanding-close-reading-download-our-infographic-now](http://www.weareteachers.com/hot-topics/topics-in-education/understanding-close-reading-download-our-infographic-now).

Use close reading strategies during this lesson.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 5**  
**Teaching Point:** Unfolding Characters While Unfolding History - In historical fiction, there are many timelines. There is the main character’s timeline—a timeline that is a personal narrative or
plotline—and there is a historical timeline of the big historical events. The two timelines are entwined. This is also true of life itself. The events in the main character’s life—in your life and mine—occur alongside, and are affected by, an unfolding timeline of world events. To understand a character, a person, we have to get to know not only the person’s personal timeline but also the historical timeline that winds in and out of the personal timeline.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

**Priority:** RL.4.1, RL.4.3

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this would be to** remind readers that they have many strategies in their “toolbox” to help them as readers. Particularly when working with historical fiction we find that timelines, graphic organizers, and lists of characters can be important tools to aid in our comprehension. Let students know that today the focus will be on creating timelines.
  - Let students know that it is beneficial for readers to create a timeline of historical events, as well as a timeline of major events for the main character.
  - Model drafting a timeline of major events about a character from a historical fiction text.
  - Model drafting a timeline of major events from the historical time period of the text.
  - To help students create a timeline of events for their particular historical time period you might choose to take them to [www.history.com](http://www.history.com) or their Social Studies text to aid in this endeavor.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 6**

**Teaching Point:** Thinking as Someone Else - Readers try to understand the decisions that characters make, and we do this in part by keeping in mind that the character’s behavior is shaped by what is happening in the world in which the character lives, that is, by the historical context. And here’s the thing: when different characters respond differently to one event, it is helpful for readers to think about this, asking, “Why?” Usually when different characters act differently, this reflects the fact that each of those characters plays a different role in the world and therefore is shaped differently by the times.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way to do this would be to** read a chapter of a mentor text, thinking aloud about the point of view of the characters in that section, how they might be different or similar, and how that helps give you insight into how they are reacting to certain situations. Let students know that readers try to understand the decisions characters make, and do this by keeping in mind that the character’s behavior is shaped by what is happening within the world in which the character lives. When different characters react differently to an event, it’s helpful for readers to ask “Why?”

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3

**Engaging Experience 7**

**Teaching Point:** Scrutinizing Not Skipping Descriptions - Sometimes we come to places in a story where the action slows down, where there is more description than action. Readers, trust the author. Be loyal, stay side by side, rather than running ahead alone. Probably the author inserted these details so that you could better imagine this place. In good books, readers can trust that we’ll learn something important through these descriptive passages.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.1, RL.4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way you can show this** is by identifying the passages that really slow down in your read-aloud and model how you can get a better sense of the setting and tone of the story from those moments. Use close reading strategies as you model this.
- **Another way you can show this** is by pulling out how you look for moments when different characters are going through something difficult, how they are reacting in similar and different ways, and what we might learn about a bigger issue or theme from that scene.
  - Show students the importance of revisiting these scenes, rereading them, and letting them linger to help them uncover new understandings.

Bloom’s Levels: Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 3
Engaging Experience 8

Teaching Point: Authoring Our Own Responses to Texts - Readers realize that characters grow by understanding more and becoming more aware of who they are. As characters grow, they notice different things. This is true for readers as well as characters. As readers, we bring our own maturity and life experience to what we read and that shapes what becomes important to us in the story.

Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL.4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way to do this is to** use a passage from a historical fiction text that shows emotion and discuss with students that as characters grow in stories, or over time, they will see more. This is true for readers and people as well. When we read novels, and specifically when we study texts really closely, we are looking at… (hold up a giant question mark). We are looking at…something. And here is the thing. Share with students that no one can tell you, as a reader, what to look at, what to notice, what to think. Remind students that one reader and another will tend to notice similar things about what is happening in the story—about the plot. But each reader brings his or her own meaning to the story, and to do that, we let different parts reverberate in our lives. Each of us is the author of our own reading.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand

Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 9

Teaching Point: Making Significance - Readers sometimes press the pause button, lingering to ponder what we’ve read, and to let a bigger idea begin to grow in our minds. For each reader, there will be passages in a book that seem to be written in bold font, parts that call out to that reader as being important. Often these are passages that reference back to earlier sections in the book and that seem laden with meaning, and we read those passages extra attentively, letting them nudge us to think.
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL4.1

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way to do this would be to** use a personal anecdote to remind children of the importance of pausing to experience life, instead of rushing through it with blinders on. Connect to students’ reading lives by reminding them it’s important to hit the pause button to think deeply about a text. Reflect on a time in your read-aloud where you stopped to think about the text and gained new meaning.

- **Another way to do this would be to** remind students of times when in the read-aloud or even in class, the situation demanded that we all listen with wider eyes, leaning in to make sure we heard and understood it all. (Relate back to a mentor text from the “Following Characters” unit).
  - Read a section of your read-aloud that is coated in significance and deeper meaning. Ask children to signal when the author seems to have almost written the text in bold print, and then ask them to stop and jot their thinking.
  - Coach children into writing and thinking about the passage by asking, “How does this one passage connect with earlier ones and with the whole message of the book?”
  - Continue reading and model this work a couple more times. Do your own jotting in your reader’s workshop notebook and share your thoughts with students as well as hearing theirs.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand

Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 10

Teaching Point: Seeing Big Ideas in Small Details (Symbolism) - Readers can pull out the big ideas that are shown through symbolism of concrete objects. It is important to be able to pull out the supporting details that represent the symbolism in stories.

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL.4.1, RL.4.2

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this is by** offering students examples of how big ideas from other read-alouds from the year are captured in concrete specifics. (If you have read Tiger
Rising in the “Following Characters” unit you can refer to the cage, suitcase, tiger or rash. The suitcase so full of pain it can’t be closed, or the tiger caged in the woods like Rob is caged in loneliness, etc.) Have students think about big ideas that are lodged in concrete details or objects in your current read-aloud. After your class picks an object, ask them the following questions:
  o What does this object represent?
  o What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
  o What larger lesson should we be learning from this big idea?

Bloom’s Levels: Remember, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 1, 3

Engaging Experience 11
Teaching Point: Refining/Collecting Evidence for your Big Idea - Once readers have paused to think deeply about a book, and developed an idea that seems true, from that point on, readers must collect evidence that supports their big idea to test the validity and strength of their big idea.

Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
  Priority: RL.4.1, RL.4.3
  Detailed Description/Instructions:
  o One way you can do this is to pull up a theme you have already modeled and discussed and begin modeling how to collect evidence and details from the text that supports your theme. Make an anchor chart of this for your students. Also discuss that if it becomes difficult to collect a variety of evidence for our theme, then we need to refine or alter our theme, realizing that it is not supported by the text.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 2, 3

Engaging Experience 12
Teaching Point: Widening the Horizons of Our Thinking - Often books include more than one theme, and as readers we need to have conversations with our book club book to be open to different perspectives of new themes that are represented in the text. We also need to be open to revising our initial ideas as we listen to others’ ideas.

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
**Priority:** RL.4.1, RL.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this is to** model for students a time when you had interpreted what the text was really saying, found support for that interpretation, and then revised that initial idea.
  - Relate this to a journey of thought. Lucy Calkins uses the movie, *Up*, to talk about how she went in with one idea of what it would be about (a man solved his problem by going on a wonderful adventure) because she had researched it, but after seeing the movie she refined her original idea to “a man who escapes from his sadness.” She reiterates as she watched the movie she looked for ideas that would support that.
  - She then models a conversation she had with her sister who had also seen the movie and did not agree with her original idea. At first she was annoyed, but then listened to what her sister said only to learn about how she had focused on the relationship he developed with the boy. Together they refined both of their ideas into “a man moving on from this sadness by opening himself up and caring for someone else.”
  - Name what you did in a way that is transferable to books, by helping students to see that sometime we outgrow an idea, even if we are really attached to it and love it. And the best way to do that is by being in conversations with others who think differently than us and can help us to see new perspectives.

- **Another way you can do this is to** think of a recent event the whole class has experienced and focus on speaking and listening in ways that create an environment for sharing.
  - Have students think of one thing that was interesting to them in that experience. Have them turn and talk to the people in their book clubs to discuss their ideas about that experience.
  - Convene students to remind them that for a book club to go well, the members in it have to take care of it. One way we can do that is through collaborative conversation. So, we should not be switching trains of thought every time someone has a new idea. Our thoughts need to continually be tied back to the work we are doing. Stay in your groups and begin doing this same work around your books with your book club.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze, Understand, Evaluate, Create

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3, 4
Topic 3: Viewing Characters from Different Lenses

Engaging Experience 13

Teaching Point: Strengthening our Empathy for Quiet Characters - Although it is natural to understand the perspective of the main character, as readers it is important to consider other perspectives of minor characters to gain new insights.

Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini-lessons

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL.4.1, RL.4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- One way you can do this is by modeling from your read-aloud or a mentor text that has a strong depiction of character perspective. (For example, Number the Stars, is written from Annemarie’s perspective.)
  
  o Stretch students to think about the text from the perspective of a minor character. Read aloud a passage and have students interpret it from this perspective. Tell students we don’t really know what or how the other character thinks, but we are going to imagine or infer this based on the text... (If using Number the Stars, you could use the perspective of Uncle Henrik. In this story you could use the passage of Annemarie and Uncle Henrik in the barn where he’s milking the cow and Annemarie has just found out she’s been lied to).
  
  o Stop and model your thinking aloud as you read through the passage so students have an explicit understanding of the situation.
  
  o Tell students this process has helped you get closer to what the story was really about. At first you thought it was just about one thing, but now by looking at it through the perspective of someone else you must think of the other storyline. (In Number the Stars the theme appears to be bravery and having the courage to help a friend, but now you also realize that by looking at this book through the lens of an adult it’s also about having to lie to protect kids from knowing how dangerous life is or can become.)

Bloom’s Levels: Create

Webb’s DOK: 3
Engaging Experience 14
Teaching Point: Seeing Power in its Many Forms - Readers, looking at our books with the lens of power leads to all sorts of new thinking. When we investigate who has power, what form power takes (how you see it), and how power changes, that helps us find huge meanings in books.

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
  Priority: RL4.1, RL4.3

Detailed Description/Instructions:
  ● One way to do this is by relating this to reading by asking students to consider the following questions in a text as you read aloud (intentionally choose passages that show power and give students time to stop and jot as you read them in order to answer the questions):
    1) Who has the power in this place—who is in charge?
    2) What are the obvious or explicit signs of power? (anchor chart)
       Summarize the work, adding these two questions to also consider (add to chart)
    3) What kinds of power exist?
    4) Where do you see power hiding?
       *Note. Enlighten students to the fact that power is not always bad
  ● Another way to do this is to use the questions above to create a power flow chart summarizing a powerful scene where the power may shift. The arrows in the flow chart highlight the power shifts. Use details from the text to support your thinking. (If you are using Trouble Don’t Last, the scenes from the Widow Woman, and the River Man chapters are great to use for this work.)

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 15
Teaching Point: Sparking Nonfiction against Fiction to Ignite Ideas - Readers turn to nonfiction to spark new ideas about our historical fiction novels. The information we are learning from nonfiction sources can help ignite our thinking in new ways around our fiction stories.

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
  Priority: RL.4.1, RL.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this is to** provide students a fact sheet pertaining to the topic of your read-aloud. (The fact sheet should include pictures and actual facts.) Have them pair this information with the read-aloud text, inviting them to talk about the two, recognizing points that sparked interest or ignited new thinking. Convene the group back together and have students share out conversation they had.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

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**Engaging Experience 16**

**Teaching Point:** Finding Themes through Different Text—It is important when we read to think about people, places, and events—and also about big ideas. When you have thought about a big idea in one story, sometimes that thinking helps you find a similar big idea in another story.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this is** to ask each club to agree upon a big idea that their book represents, working to say that idea in just a sentence or two. Coach them so that the students word their ideas in ways that will pertain across books (relate these ideas to snowballs that can be tossed from book to book).
  - Once readers have finished, have book clubs share out. Start with one book club and tell the others that if their interpretation fits with their book as well, they need to reach their hands in the air to grab it down and apply it to their book too.
  - As each group shares their ideas, allow the other groups to talk and share how it applies to their text too. Then let the next group share.
  - Send home the message that this is not a coincidence that the authors just happened upon…this transference of ideas across books. This happens and works because the ideas that apply to books are the ideas that also apply to real life. When this happens it is called a universal theme or idea.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 3
**Engaging Experience 17**

**Teaching Point:** Finding Allusions - People who share a common background allude to their shared background knowledge all the time. Sometimes characters might allude to their thoughts, feelings, and emotions and that’s when we need to interpret figurative language closely to infer the thoughts, and feelings of characters. Authors use specific words and phrases to better understand information from the text.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL.4.1

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this is to provide** examples of literary allusions that your students will easily recognize, setting children up to notice what you are doing. *(Number the Stars* can be connected to *The Tiger Rising* by Katherine Patterson or *Butterfly* by Patricia Polacco). Then model explicitly for students how to interpret and decode what the character is really feeling or thinking.

  Note: *Trouble Don’t Last* has a wealth of figurative language phrases for readers to infer and interpret the feelings and emotions of characters. (Ex. 1. *My tongue felt as if it had turned to ashes.* 2. *My heart roared in my ears.* 3. *The snake around my neck squeezed tighter.*)

**Bloom's Levels:** Remember, Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 1, 3

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**Engaging Experience 18**

**Teaching Point:** Making a Mark on History - When characters face critical moments of choice, a character must decide how he or she wants to respond. As readers we need to remember that it’s not just the people around that person who are affected by the choices the character makes. We can be as well. We can learn from characters in books, just as we learn from people in our lives, and we can especially learn from the moments of choice that characters face and how this impacts history.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL.4.1, RL.4.3
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this is to** tell your students that parts of the story where characters face critical moments of choice might be written in bold. Not that the words aren’t actually in bold but that the author’s voice as a writer is.
  - Reveal your “Characters Make Choices” chart and model a critical choice that the main character in your read-aloud has made. Have students consider how these actions and choices might affect history, while also considering the consequences and risks of their choices.
  - Read aloud in a text to model this thinking with the actions and choices of characters in the book.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 19**

**Teaching Point:** Celebrating Historical Fiction with the Engaging Scenario  
**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**  
**Priority:** RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**  
Refer to the Engaging Scenario below.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Remember, Analyze, Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 1, 2, 3

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**Engaging Scenario**

Reading aloud a historical fiction book that falls within the higher end of the 4-5 complexity band, perhaps at a level R or S. *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco or *Gleam and Glow* by Eve Bunting would fit this expectation. As you read a section of that text, plan for places where you will prompt children to stop and jot. You’ll likely want to create prompts that assess skills such as inferring about character, interpreting, and discerning setting—for example time period—from a text. For instance, you might stop and ask:
What ideas are you beginning to have about this person?
What might this character be teaching you?
What lessons are you learning?
What are some of the big ideas you think are in this text?
What is a theme of this text? Is that a theme you saw in your book club book?

Encourage students to stop and jot, including evidence from the text to support their ideas. Collect these stop and jot notes.
Unit 4: High Interest Informational Text Sets

Subject: Reading
Grade: 4
Name of Unit: High Interest Informational Texts
Length of Unit: 7 weeks (last week of November — third week of January)

Overview of Unit:
This main focus of this unit is for students to be able to understand the underlying structures of informational (nonfiction) texts in order to understand the text. This unit will address students’ abilities to determine the main idea of a text and summarize the text, including how key details support the main idea. In addition to work on determining main idea, this unit places a strong emphasis on supporting students’ abilities to make inferences and grow ideas, always grounding their ideas in text evidence. The unit will also work to support students in how to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words they encounter in informational text. If you are able to gather any texts on the same high interest topics (wolves, sharks, baseball, and so on), then students can not only compare and contrast the information learned from these texts but also integrate what they have learned in order to speak and write knowledgeably.

In Topic 1 (Bend I) students will closely read informational texts—focusing in on determining main idea and key details, summarizing to share information with others, and text structure.
In Topic 2 (Bend II) students will work in comparing and contrasting information from different texts to understand the differences in focus as well as integrate the information in order to speak and write knowledgeably on the topic.
In Topic 3 (Bend III), students will begin revisiting strategies that will prepare them for reading for research. They will analyze primary and secondary sources, and be able to make decisions on the benefits of using each type of source. Also they will increase their level of note taking for research. Lastly they will look more holistically at the big picture in order to interpret authors’ opinions, emotions, and perspectives of text.

Getting Ready for the Unit:
Here are some tips to help you get ready to teach this unit:

- Gather high interest informational texts (print and digital). The Mid-Continent Library can help you add to the books you are able to gather from your classroom and school libraries. The Mid-Continen...
levels for you. You can make requests via their webpage. At the bottom under Services, there is a Teacher Assistance option.

- Choose your read-alouds.
- Group some of your texts into topic sets.

It is impossible to overstate the value of ascertaining the interests of your students, especially of those whose engagement in reading is at risk, and of making sure that you provision students with magazines and books that are engaging. In addition to high interest books, here are some other suggestions of kinds of texts to engage your readers:

- Digital sites magazines (Cobblestone, Scholastic News, Sports Illustrated for Kids, ASK, National Geographic for Kids, Discover Kids, Storyworks, and Super Science. Super Science subscribers have access to video clips on the website that can be paired with the cover article for that month)
- Audio informational texts in your listening center (A listening center with audio books will support students in continuing to develop their fluency and vocabulary and help them to meet Foundational Skills Standards in Reading (RF 4.4). This will be especially helpful for your ELL students and speech and language students, as these recordings provide models for fluent reading of nonfiction texts.
- Audio books also give students the opportunity to access topics and text levels that they may not have otherwise read on their own. You’ll want students to be listening to the audio books at the same time as they are following along with a print version.

A word of advice: Especially if you do not have enough just-right texts for students to maintain their volume of reading during this unit, we strongly suggest that you reserve time every day (at least fifteen to twenty minutes in school and more time at home) for students to continue reading literature at their levels. And, in any case, be sure readers continue to maintain their reading logs so that you monitor the total volume of reading they do during this unit (as you have been doing all along). You should be expecting that readers are reading what you decide is an appropriate number of chapter books each week—probably anywhere from one to four, more for the readers who are reading lower level and therefore shorter books. That volume of fiction reading will be in addition to the reading they do of informational texts. You may question this, thinking that every minute of a reader’s time should go toward reading informational texts, but most literate people read a balance of fiction and informational texts. Also, as you are accountable for your students’ results on the MAP, keep in mind that at least until now, there is a tremendous alignment between the level of text complexity that a child can read and his or her results on high
stakes tests. The single most important way to accelerate students’ progress up the ladder of text complexity is to be sure they are reading a high volume of texts they can read with high levels of comprehension and engagement.

**Choose Your Read-Alouds**
To mirror the work your students are doing, you will want to choose read-alouds on high interest nonfiction topics. We are suggesting *Wolves*, a gorgeous, complex expository text about wolves by Seymour Simon. At Lexile level 970L (Guided Reading Level P), it will satisfy anyone who is sensitive about Lexile levels. If you do not choose this book you will need to choose a nonfiction text without headings. We also suggest that you read aloud parts of a narrative nonfiction text to show students a text that contains more than one text structure. One that we suggest is *Face to Face with Wolves* by Jim and Judy Brandenburg (Lexile 970L). This hybrid text has many parts that are told in narrative structure. Jim Brandenburg is a wildlife photographer who has observed wolves for years. He recounts what it is like to live near them and study them. *Face to Face with Wolves* has many similarities in focus and information to Seymour Simon’s book, making them a strong pairing. Students will be able to consider choices of text structure. In this unit the book, *Dolphins* by Seymour Simon, is also referenced. This is simply a suggestion. This suggestion is based on the fact that this text is a great example of a compare and contrast text structure and also contains a few pages that show the problem/solution text structure. Also, in Topic 2 the books *The Split History of Westward Expansion* and *The Story of America: Westward Expansion* are referenced and could be used just for the lesson or for read alouds as well.

**Group Some of your Texts into Topic Sets**
As students are reading and experimenting with taking notes, have students look for topics that interest them. Encourage students to have their nonfiction reading focus around the same idea or general concept. If it is possible for you to do so, you will want to gather multiple texts on at least a few of the subjects that interest students, so that you can develop their skills at synthesizing information learned from more than one text that addresses the same topic. Start your students with easier books on a topic and moving them to more complex texts on the same topic (see the information earlier about utilizing the Mid-Continent Libraries to aid in this task).
Pre-Assessment (given prior to starting the unit):
Read aloud to students a nonfiction passage. Ask students to take notes about the main idea and details included in the reading. Collect students’ notes. Use this information to drive instruction. Ask students if they can identify and explain the text structure (compare and contrast, chronological, problem/solution, cause and effect, or description).

Read-Aloud Considerations:
During read-aloud, ask students questions that encourage them to think deeply about the information in the text and how the author is presenting it.

- Based on this heading, what do you think this page is mostly about?
- I think the author included this picture/caption/graph because _________.
- I think the main thing the author wants me to understand about this topic is _________.
- What does the author mean when he/she says “__________”? 
- Which detail from the text best supports the idea that______?
- Based on the text, which is most likely true about _________?

Suggested Texts:
*Face to Face with Wolves* by Jim Brandenburg
*Wolves* by Seymour Simon
*Who Settled the West?* By Bobbie Kalman
*Dolphins* by Seymour Simon

Essential Questions:
1. How can I read nonfiction informational text in order to learn things I am curious about?
2. How can identifying and understanding text structure help me to pull out the main ideas and supporting details from the text?
3. How can I organize my learning life so I can research to learn, synthesize across texts, and teach others what I am learning?
4. How can I begin to look at how different authors present different information, including noticing the facts and perspectives they include or exclude?
5. How can I think about how an author’s treatment of the subject sways readers’ thinking about topics?
6. How can I use what I am learning from different sources about a topic to grow my own theories about the information I’m learning?
Enduring Understanding/Big Ideas:
1. When we read nonfiction informational text, we uncover the answers to the questions we are curious about.
2. Authors organize their writing based on a specific structure. Knowledge of these structures helps me to uncover the author’s main points.
3. To be able to share information I have learned with others, I have to have a deep understanding from a variety of texts. I must be able to see the connections across texts in order to present well rounded information to others.
4. As a researcher, I need to be able to synthesize the author’s main points in order to grow my own theories about the information I’m learning.

Priority Standards for unit:
- RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- RI.4.5 Describe the overall structure (e.g. chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- RI.4.9: Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Supporting Standards for unit:
- RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.
- RI.4.6 Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.
- RI.4.7: Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- RI.4.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Unwrapped Concepts (Students need to know)</th>
<th>Unwrapped Skills (Students need to be able to do)</th>
<th>Webb’s DOK</th>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels</th>
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<td>RI.4.2</td>
<td>the main idea of a text</td>
<td>Determine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understand</td>
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<td>the text</td>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understand</td>
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<tr>
<td>RI.4.5</td>
<td>the overall structure (e.g. chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.</td>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
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<td>RI.4.9</td>
<td>information from two texts on the same topic</td>
<td>Integrate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
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<td></td>
<td>about the subject knowledgeably</td>
<td>Write</td>
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<td>Create</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about the subject knowledgeably</td>
<td>Speak</td>
<td>3</td>
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Unit Vocabulary:

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<th>Academic Cross-Curricular Words</th>
<th>Content/Domain Specific</th>
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<td>Compare and Contrast, Sequence, Problem and Solution, Cause and Effect, Description, Main Idea, Details, Narrative Non-fiction, Captions, Bold Words, Table of Contents, Glossary, Index, pictures, charts, graphs, Titles, Headings</td>
<td></td>
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**Topic 1: Summarizing with Structure in Mind**

**Engaging Experience 1**

**Teaching Point:** Investigating our Informational Reading Lives—“Readers today we are going to explore who we are when we read informational nonfiction. Are we readers who like to explore topics we already feel like we are experts on? Or are we readers who like to explore new topics that interest us, but we know little about? Knowing the answers to these questions will help us keep our energy high in our reading during this unit.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RI.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this is to** have bins set out of high interest informational texts for your students to explore and gather texts from, so have a couple of those pulled up to the carpet for modeling purposes.
  - As you look at and through texts, model thinking aloud what you do and do not like about the texts, choosing those that will interest you:
    - Highlight text features here to start giving them exposure to some of that vocabulary
    - Discuss topic choices
    - Authors/series
  - End your modeling with explaining which texts you have selected and why.
● **Another way you can do this is to** make a T-chart for your students that is titled Investigating Informational Nonfiction. Label the two columns “Topics I am an expert on,” and “Topics I am Interested in Learning About.” Model for students how to brainstorm topics that you are knowledgeable about and record them on your T-Chart on the Smart board or anchor chart. Then model how you might have some ideas of topics you know you are interested in as a reader, and begin recording them in the other column. Next model how you can add to the “Topics I am Interested In” by previewing different informational texts from book bins. Explicitly model how you use the text features to help you make your decisions, and model your self-talk of your thinking out loud. Add more book titles to the second column.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 2

**Engaging Experience 2**  
**Teaching Point:** Text Previewing Strategies - Informational text readers read with energy, with power. One way that informational text readers do this is that we rev up our minds for reading. Even before we shift it into ‘go’ and read a sentence or a paragraph of the text, we read the title, subtitles, look over chunks of the text and think, ‘I think this book is mostly about… and it might start with… , and then it will also tell...’

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson  
**Standards Addressed:**  
**Priority:** RI.4.2, RI.4.5  
**Detailed Description/Instructions:**  
**One way to do this would be** to use an informational text with plenty of nonfiction text features to show students how you go about using those text features to preview the text before you read it.

You could also use a text like, *Wolves* by Seymour Simon, which does not have headings or labels, to show students how you go about previewing this type of informational text before you read it. Model for students how you will “rev” up to read this book, thinking aloud about if you will read about the typical information found in animal texts—eating habits, body, predators, habitat, etc.

- Using the document camera, highlight for students that this text does not have any headings, so you’ll want to pay attention to the words in italics and photographs to make sense of the content. Highlight that your previous thinking of wolves is
that they are scary and are the “bad guys” in a lot of fairy tales, but this text seems to be showing them playing, running, sleeping. What might that mean?

- Provide students the following phrases to use as they talk about how they are previewing the text:
  - “This heading says ____________, so I think this page is mostly about ____________.”
  - “I looked at this (picture, caption, graph) and saw ____________, and then this (picture, caption, graph) and saw _____________. If I put them together I think it will be about ____________.”

- Model how to scan across a page, part-by-part, and point to aspects you are paying particular attention to with your finger.

Bloom’s Levels: Remember, Understand, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 1, 2

Engaging Experiences 3-5
Teaching Point: Using Boxes and Bullets to Identify the Main Idea and Key Details - Informational text readers read with a pencil. We use a pencil to help us pay attention to the main ideas- to note the way those ideas are developed, and to make those thoughts and ideas visible.
Suggested Length of Time: 3-4 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
  Priority: RI.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:
  - One way to do this would be to read a text and demonstrate for students how you read a chunk of text and summarize that using your hand as a graphic organizer for boxes-and-bullets (main idea in your palm and key details on your fingers).
    - Start by reading just the first paragraph and thinking aloud with students about what the main idea or “box” might be and then what key details would support it, listing them across your fingers.
  - An additional way to do this would be to apply the boxes and bullets method to a different paragraph from the same text. During this lesson, emphasis would be put on finding the details and determining a main idea based on what the details teach.
  - Another way to do this would be to find a chapter from an informational text and zoom in on one paragraph, and model how to pull out key facts from the paragraph. Then model for students how to look at the details and come up with an overall main idea statement. This section is mostly about _____________. Make sure to have students explain
the main idea as more than just one word. Make sure students understand the difference between the topic (wolves) and the main idea (wolves are social animals).

During lesson 3 and 4 you may want to choose a text that has subheadings, showing students how subheadings help us to know the specific details we are looking for.

Note: You will continue this same work over the next 2-3 days. If students struggled with this today, you will want to choose another text and go through this again as a class, but with more independence each time. If your students seemed to grasp this concept quickly, have them continue working in their own informational texts to continue doing this work. Additionally, you will want to have students set reading goals on one of these days so that you can spend a few days meeting with them about these goals and looking at their summarizing work during conferring time.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 2

Engaging Experience 6
Teaching Point: Categorizing Information to see the Bigger Picture - Today I’m going to teach you that reading informational text is like taking a course in which a person is told a whole lot of new and detailed information. Instead of trying to memorize all that information, it helps to create larger categories to organize that information. That way, as we read, we sort the little bits of information into the larger categories, creating a boxes-and-bullets outline that matches the text. It’s almost as if, as we read, we write headings for the texts that don’t have any.

Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RI.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this** is use Seymour Simon’s book *Wolves*, model for students how to determine larger categories as you read and then sort the little bits into the categories. Tell students to keep in mind the essential question, “What is the one big thing that this text is teaching me and how do all other details connect to this?”

- **Another way is to read** part of the text and model thinking about how you might determine the main idea and the key details that support it, summarizing the first parts of the text which have no headings. You’ll also want to transfer this to a boxes-and-bullets
Engaging Experience 7
Teaching Point: Synthesizing our Learning to Teach it to Others - Reading informational nonfiction is like taking a course in that subject or topic. It’s no fun to keep that learning to ourselves. We want to share it, and others want to learn from us!
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
   Priority: RI.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:
   • One way to do this would be to organize students into groups of two or three. Show students an anchor chart that outlines what they should consider when talking with their partners:
     o Pointing out details in pictures or diagrams that highlight what they’re saying
     o Linking previous learning to new information by going back and forth between pictures that build on one another, explaining how they are connected.
     o Using gestures in their explanations and using their voices to emphasize important points.
     o Use domain-specific vocabulary important to their topic.
     o Act out what they learned and invite their partner to join in.
   Demonstrate what each of these might look like so students have a concrete understanding of what each bullet means.
   • Another way to do this is to have students practice teaching each other during read-aloud. For example read the text Wolves by Seymour Simon. Have students stop and talk to a classmate about howling. Ask students to give details of how wolves howl, why they howl and when they howl.

Engaging Experience 8
Teaching Point: Using conversation prompts to teach others — Conversation prompts help us to share information we have learned with others.
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
Priority: RI.4.2

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way to do this is to** model how conversations help students share what they have learned about their topic. Consider using the conversation prompts listed below to guide students in this work. Model how to use these conversation prompts to help teach your students what you as a reader have been learning.
  - Conversation prompts:
    - “That fits with what I’m learning because…”
    - “That’s different from what I read because…”
    - “What you just said is making me realize that…”
    - “Now, I’m starting to have a new idea…”
    - “This is helping me understand why…”
    - “Now, I’m wondering…”

- **Another way to do this is to** go back to a common text you took notes on together as a class and look at those notes, modeling how to synthesize all the information you have written, including your own thoughts, and show students how to talk to others about their material in a way that shows synthesis, while also summarizing around the main idea.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 2

Engaging Experience 9-10

Teaching Point: Analyzing text structure to understand the author’s purpose — Authors deliberately use different types of structures to connect the ideas, events, and concepts in their texts. Paying attention to what structures they have chosen to use can help readers to figure out what the author is trying to tell them.

Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini-lessons

Standards Addressed
Priority: RI.4.5

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way to do this** would be to show a passage from Seymour Simon’s book *Dolphins*, which gives a very clear example of a compare and contrast structure.
  - Start by reading the section on how dolphins and porpoises are similar and different, stopping to show students how to notice key terms that signal compare and contrast—“just like” or “different than”.

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Another way to do this is in a second lesson, use the last two pages of Seymour Simons’ book *Dolphins* to show a clear example of a problem/solution text structure. With this addition to the compare and contrast lesson, you can help students understand that there is more than one text structure that informational text authors can use and that sometimes authors even use more than one structure in a book. Discuss why an author might choose more than one structure to share the information they want to share.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 4

### Engaging Experience 11

**Teaching Point:** Orienting Ourselves to Text Structure — When readers analyze a text for structure, we often see many different types. Yesterday we focused on the compare and contrast structure, but today and over the next few days we are going to open our minds to many different ways that authors organize informational text.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 3-4 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

**Priority:** RI.4.5

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

**One way to show this is** to have an anchor chart showing the following common text structures with examples or titles that follow these structures: (It will be helpful to have students have their own personal organizer).

- **Comparison:** “Just like…”, “Different than…”, “Alike…”, “Both…”
- **Cause and Effect:** “As a result…”, “Because of…”, “This brought about…”, “The effect of this was…”, “This changed…”, “Therefore…”
- **Problem/Solution:** “Threat…”, “Challenge…”, “Obstacle…”, “Problem…”, “Resolution…”, “Overcame…”
- **Chronological:** “First…”, “Second…”, “Afterward…”, “Next…”, “Years later…”

You may want to revisit previous shorter texts you’ve used and have students determine what organizational structures they see within these texts.

**Another way to do this is to** use a structure organizer as a tool and model for students how you focus on the content of an informational text to identify the text structure. Point out specifically the evidence from the text that supports your justification. It will also be helpful to pull out and highlight key words to help in your justification. Some resources
you may find helpful are a text structure work mat, signal word chart, reference sheet, and practice passages 1 and practice passages 2.

Bloom’s Levels: Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 2

**Topic 2: Comparing and Contrasting to Integrate Information**

**Engaging Experience 12**

**Teaching Point:** Comparing and Contrasting Information Across Multiple Texts - After readers have read multiple sources on a topic, it is helpful to compare and contrast those sources, noticing how the texts portray the topics in similar ways and how the texts are different. Then you will want to try to figure out why the authors may have made different craft decisions, thinking, “Does this relate to central ideas they are trying to get across?”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**
- Priority: RI.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this** to model with two different texts that cover the same topic but give the information in a different way.

*The Split History of Westward Expansion* and *The Story of America: Westward Expansion* would be a good two good resources to use for this. You may want to talk to students during this lesson about skimming and scanning a text for the desired information if there is not a title or subtitle that explicitly states the topic they are looking for. Have your notes prepared on each of the sections you are going to have them read and allow them time to see that the information around the same event does not match. Have them compare and contrast what is the same and what is different.

An idea for students to apply this work is to have discussions to compare and contrast their own findings in small groups or with partners. Coach their discussions as you hear them talking to ensure they are looking at the information at more than just a surface level. Here is a list of conversational prompts that you may use:

- “This source says, but this source (does not say/also says)…”
“This source conflicts with what the other source said by…”
“This source builds on what the other source said by…”
“What information is in this account that is not in the other account?”
“What major points is each author making? What are the key details each author is including?”

Bloom’s Levels: Analyze, Create
Webb’s DOK: 4

Engaging Experience 13
Teaching Point: Comparing and Contrasting Across Texts to Deepen Our Understanding -
Readers, as you push yourself into harder texts it is going to be important to compare and contrast the information you have gotten from all sources in your research. We need to compare the information in order to determine the lessons and knowledge we should be taking with us. I want to teach you that researchers push themselves to draw on all they have learned from anywhere about the topic they are researching, and they read across texts, thinking, ‘How are the lesson I am learning from these different texts the same and different?’

Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed
Priority: RI.4.9

Detailed Description/Instructions:

● **One way to do this** would be to pair a text you have read together as a class with a photo that relates to it. Using the thought prompts from Engaging Experience 12 (below), say aloud or write your thinking to show how you are comparing the information you have pulled from the text to what you are able to tell in the picture. Discuss the fact that both a text and a picture can be considered research sources when the picture is studied carefully for clues.
  ○ “This source says, but this source (does not say/also says)…”
  ○ “This source conflicts with what the other source said by…”
  ○ “This source builds on what the other source said by…”
  ○ “What information is in this account that is not in the other account?”
  ○ “What major points is each author making? What are the key details each author is including?”

● **Another way to do this** would be during your informational text read-aloud time, give students another short text on the same topic and involve students in making cross-text comparisons and contrasts between the text you are reading aloud and the one in front of them, analyzing the different and similar points the author of the read aloud and the
author of their text made. Can they integrate the information from both texts to build a more complete understanding of the topic? Are there points that seem at odds with each other? Do the two sources of information cause them to have more questions to research? Model how you would record the information from both sources and then how that experience with comparing and contrasting across texts leads you to the next step of either recording new understanding of the topic or doing more research to answer a particular question that arose.

Bloom’s Levels: Create
Webb’s DOK: 4

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**Topic 3: Navigating Through Research**

**Engaging Experience 14**

**Teaching Point:** Raising the level of note-taking by adding quotes - Readers can quote from our notes and other texts, as well as share the facts and ideas documented in their research. Creating notecards can serve as powerful tools when we want to challenge or extend someone else’s thinking.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

  Priority: RI.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** would be to use an anchor chart. With notes you have collected throughout this unit, model how students can begin to collect similar notes together and give them labels. Model sharing your notes and ideas with the class. Guide them to record specific quotes and facts from your research. Share ways that they can extend and/or challenge your ideas.
  - Make sure you have your notes on notecards and categories predetermined in your head before you begin this lesson.
  - Make sure you have specific quotes from the text you pulled out to share. Also, have some ideas for challenging you own work.
  - Note: This may be a good time to revisit your expectations for what a quality notecard should look like. This practice will help students when they begin researching for their Westward Expansion topic in the writing unit, Bringing History to Life.
Engaging Experience 15
Teaching Point: Researchers understand the difference between Primary and Secondary Sources and the benefits and limitations of each.
Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
  Priority: RI.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:
  ● One way to do this would be to explain that a primary source is a document or artifact that came from the original time period. These sources offer an inside view of the experience or time period in history. Then you will want to gather both primary and secondary sources that go with the topic you are modeling. Have your students help you make decisions on which sources are primary sources. Once you have narrowed down the primary sources choose two of them to explicitly model the benefits of information that those sources provide. Begin creating an anchor chart titled Understanding Primary Sources. This could include the definition, and example, and then a plus/delta chart below that names the benefits and limitations of primary sources.
  ● Another way to do this could be to explain that secondary sources were created later by someone who did not experience first-hand or participate in the events of the time period. Secondary sources are generally scholarly books and articles. Then you can refer back to the sources from the previous day that you and your students identified as not being primary sources and model the analysis of the content and benefits of these secondary sources. You could make another anchor chart for Understanding Secondary Sources. This could include the definition, an example, and then a plus/delta chart below that names the benefits and limitations of secondary sources.

Bloom’s Levels: Create
Webb’s DOK: 4

Engaging Experience 16
Teaching Point: Using notes to grow ideas about text - Readers push themselves to incorporate and compare a variety of sources in order to better understand the big picture.
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
  Priority: RI.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this** is by explaining that informational readers and researchers often need to compare a variety of sources to understand opposing sides and have a more consistent portrayal of what really happened. Review a primary source that you pulled from a previous lesson, review the information it is portraying. Then compare it to a secondary source that discusses similar information. Use inquiry to guide students on which source would be best to use for your research. Highlight that as researchers we have to be very careful of bias that can come from primary sources. It is best to have a balance of both primary and secondary sources in your research, but your choices for when to use which type need to be intentional.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze, Evaluate

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 17**

**Teaching Point:** Using Close Reading Strategies to Determine the Emotion and Opinion of a Text - Readers don’t just think about the information in a text, they also figure out the point of view of the author of that text and how he/she might be wanting you to think a certain way about a topic by paying close attention to the author’s emotion and opinion.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RI.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this will be to** model for students how to pull sentences or chunks of text that use words to give clues as to the author’s point of view and opinion. Highlight the words that help you determine this. Now you will give students a set of statements or a chunk of text, and allow students to pull sentences or text parts that use words to give clues as to the author’s point of view and opinion. Have students highlight the words that help you determine this.
  - Encourage them to infer the author’s point of view
  - Encourage them to discuss words or phrases that clue the reader into the author’s opinion

- **Another way to do this** might be to provide examples with two paragraphs around the same event by two different authors. Encourage students to continue to infer the author’s point of view, and find words or phrases that clue the reader into the author’s opinion. Have students compare and contrast how the author wrote about the event, denoting their point of view and opinion.
Engaging Experience 18
Teaching Point: Using Primary Source Documents to Understand Point of View - “Readers, another way we can think about point of view is to get first-hand accounts of events that happened during this time and compare it with the second-hand accounts we have read about in our readings. Today we are going to use primary source documents in order to think about point of view from a first person account as opposed to a third person account.”
Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RI.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:
- One way to do this is to read through the primary source document together, and model your thinking around the point of view of the author of the piece.
  - Again, pay attention to word choice used and who is providing the account of what happened, including their relationship to the event
  - Discuss how this would affect their point of view and description of the account.
Note: Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) has many primary source documents available for Westward Expansion
Bloom’s Levels: Evaluate, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 19
Teaching Point: Using Text Features and Structures to Understand Point of View and Purpose - Some texts like to begin with a story, a letter, a diary entry, or a mini-biography and then move into expository structures. When a text is structured this way, boxes-and-bullets often don’t work. So instead we want to treat these elements like photographs or quotes, asking, ‘What is this letter or story teaching me? How does it fit with what I’ve been learning?’”
Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RI.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:
- One way to do this would be to show students a nonfiction section that includes a variety of text features and models how to synthesize all the information on the page.
Model for readers how to stop at the end of a text to reflect on what they have learned. Demonstrate this process by thinking aloud about the following questions:
  ○ What do I know now that I didn’t know before reading this text/book?
  ○ How is my thinking different from reading this text?

● Another way to do this is to show students the following samples of your two mentor texts and ask students to analyze the different structures used by each author, and also the differences they notice between the first- and second-hand accounts in the context of the author’s point of view (make sure to highlight any bias that may exist in one account or the other).

_Face to Face with Wolves, Jim and Judy Brandenburg p. 6_
“When I arrived on Ellesmere Island, just west of Greenland, I saw my first pack of seven white arctic wolves. I followed them as they headed toward an iceberg. The leader of the pack was the first to see me. He looked at me without fear, letting me know there was no way I would sneak up on him.”

_Wolves, Seymour Simon p. 19_
Wolves live in packs, but that is just a name for a family of wolves. Packs are usually made up of a leader male and female wolf and their young along with some close relatives. An average wolf pack has five to eight wolves, but packs can have as few as two or three, or as many as twenty-five wolves.

Bloom’s Levels: Evaluate, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 3

**Post Assessment**

Read aloud to students a nonfiction passage. Ask students to take notes about the main idea and details included in the reading. Collect students’ notes. Use this information to drive instruction. Ask students if they can identify and explain the text structure (compare and contrast, chronological, problem/solution, cause and effect, or description).
Engaging Scenario

At the end of the unit have students collect the notes they have taken, and the information that they have gathered during the unit. Ask students to develop a visual representation (Infographic, Graphic Organizer, etc.) using the notes they have taken to show how these notes support the theory they have developed.
This unit is a chance for you to reflect on and respond to the needs of the students. It is not intended to be taught in its entirety in a sequential order. These Teaching Points could be a whole group lesson, small group lesson or individual conference.

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<td>If your students are struggling with...</td>
<td>If your students are struggling with...</td>
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<td>● Selecting books that are readable for them</td>
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<td>● Attending to the reading in another genre (ex, non-fiction, fantasy,</td>
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<td>poetry, etc.)</td>
<td>● Recognizing books they will enjoy reading</td>
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<td>● Sticking with one book over an extended period of time</td>
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<td>If your students are struggling with...</td>
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<td>If your students are struggling with...</td>
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<td>● Finding others who like to read what they do</td>
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### Tracking Reading Growth

If your students are struggling with...
- Setting authentic reading goals
- Expecting the best of themselves during reading
- Using their reading time well
- Reflection
- Reading different genre or breaking out of a series

### Variety and Text Choice

If your students are struggling with...
- Reading the same genre repeatedly
- Being “stuck” in a series
- Having variety in either the type of text or the level of difficulty

### Modeling a Passion for Reading

If your students are struggling with...
- Having a reading identity

### Stamina

*Note: If students are having trouble focusing on reading for an extended period of time, take some time to reflect on the amount of time students have to practice each day. The more students practice, the more they enjoy and develop confidence in reading and the more likely they are to read in their free time. Students who are struggling with stamina may, in fact, need more time to practice.*

**Teaching Point:** Readers, I want to teach you that the best way to become a stronger reader is to read. Only we are in charge of how our reading goes.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** have a discussion about “real reading” and “fake reading.” Model the differences between these two in your discussion. Show what it looks like to be disengaged, distracted, or unfocused with your reading. Name what you did. Now, change your body and mind to show what it looks like to be focused and engaged. Stop and jot-- what are the differences between the two? What will students plan to do to ensure that they are practicing “real reading?” It might be helpful to share your own reading habits. For example, it might be harder for you to stay focused on nonfiction, so you have to push yourself to concentrate for an extended period of time with this genre.
• **Another way to do this** is to set timed goals for students. Start small, asking for students to read for a short period of time, maybe just a few minutes initially. As students are reading, resist formal conferences, and monitor the focus level of students. If you are seeing students become distracted or disengaged, stop the time and reconvene as a class. Use this as a teaching point, rather than a punishment. What happened? What can we do when we try again? What caused us to get distracted? Then, make time to start again the next day, gradually extending the time when students successfully read without becoming distracted. You might track this time as a class, trying to extend the time more and more each day.

• **Another way to do this** is to set page goals at the start of a chunk of reading time. Students might look back at their reading log and think, “how many pages can I read before becoming distracted?” Have students use sticky notes to mark places where they can take a short break, and reflect upon whether they were focused and engaged. At first, it might just be a couple pages, but then students can gradually extend the page numbers as their stamina increases.

• **Another way to do this** is to have students determine their reading rate. Readers need to monitor how fast we read -- sometimes we read too fast, sometimes too slow, and sometimes at the perfect pace. We can check this by checking our page per minute (ppm) rate and paying attention to how much we are stopping to check our comprehension. Then, we can set goals; do we need to read faster or slower? Do we need to jot more often or less often? To do this, set a time for 10 minutes, and have students note the page they start on. At the end of 10 minutes have them track how many pages they read in that time period. Then, they can reflect on this amount. Is it reasonable? How long would it take me to finish the book I am currently reading based on my ppm rate? Does that goal seem attainable?

• **Another way to do this** is to track your stamina on a stamina chart. This strategy might help students to visualize their reading capabilities. Don’t let this tracking be something that is tracked because we have to ‘muscle through’ it, but rather, that reading is enjoyable. Comparing this tracking to your own tracking of fitness, or running for example, can allow students to see that although reading is hard work, it is worthwhile to set goals for ourselves.

• **Another way to do this** is to have students decide what they want to work on and what they want to pay attention to as they read. Have students set stopping points, and decide what they’ll do when they stop. Place sticky notes in your book that will serve as a reminder to stop and practice the work you’ll do that connects to your goal. The following prompts give students an idea of what to focus on:
  ○ What’s your goal?
○ How often do you think you need to stop? What are your plans when you do stop?
○ When you stop, what will you do? Jot? Stop and think? Stop and sketch? What will that look like?
○ Think about how often you’ll need to stop to stay focused?
○ Let’s look at how this book is organized. Now think about your goal? Where do you think it makes sense to stop?

● Another way to do this is to realize that sometimes, part of being engaged is just deciding to be. If you approach a book or genre thinking, “this isn’t for me,” then it’s like you're switching your brain off from the start. Instead, try to read it like the words are beautiful or what you're learning about is interesting. Notice how your attention changes.

### Selecting Books

**Teaching Point:** Readers select books that are appropriate for them and that they will enjoy.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** introduce your students to resources to help them find the next book they’ll be successful with. You may use websites such as Amazon, Goodreads, and BiblioNasium. Show students how to type in a book they remember loving and see what recommendations pop up. You may also model how to read the reviews and summaries while thinking about what they like about books to see if any of the ones suggested are a good fit. Some prompts you may use are:
  ○ Which book do you remember loving? Type that one into the website.
  ○ Read the summary before you decide.
  ○ Think about what it is you liked about this book. Which of these suggestions seem to also have that quality?

- **Another way to do this is to** model for students how choosing a just-right book means more than choosing a book based on level. Instead of going to the library saying, “I’m a _____ (level),” go to the library saying “I’m a reader who enjoys _____ (description of your book interests).” Think, “Where would I find books that fit who I am as a reader?”
  ○ You may wish to create a questionnaire that they can fill out. Some questions you may ask are:
    ■ Tell me about the books you’ve loved. What do they have in common?
- If you were going to ask a friend for a recommendation, what would you tell them to help them suggest the right book?
- What do you like outside of reading that you think might help you find a good book?
- Tell me what series, authors, or genres you think you most enjoy.
- Where do you think you could go to find books like that?
- What genres of books have you never read before? Why have you never read this genre?

- **Another way to do this is** to point out how readers reflect on the past and plan for the future. You may choose to say something like “*It can be hard selecting books from just the cover and the blurb. Chances are good that some books you’ve picked in the past turned out to be not such great fits for you and that others were fabulous. One way to tell how focused you were while you were reading is to look at your reading rate. When you divide the pages by the minutes you get a page-per-minute (ppm) rate. It should be about .75, or three-quarters of a page per minute. Much slower and it might be showing that you’re getting distracted while you were reading. See if you can tell what these books have in common—a theme? A character type? A topic? A genre? Then, browse books with that in mind, and/or ask for help from me, or your friends, asking what might fit that same profile. You can also look over your log to notice the patterns around how often you read and where you read. You can use what you notice to make resolutions about future habits.*”

- **Another way to do this is to** focus on whether or not the text engages the reader. You may wish to model how you read the first page of a book. Notice whether you feel like the book grabbed you and if you were eager to read the rest of the book. Ask yourself, “Can I see the story or topic? Do I care to find out what comes next?” If so, the book may be a good fit. Some prompts you may use for this work are:
  - How do you feel after the first page?
  - What grabs you here?
  - Tell me what you picture after reading that first bit.
  - Tell me why you’d like to keep reading.
  - What makes you want to read on?
  - Do you feel like you were focused on that whole page?
Chronic Abandoning

*Note: Many times students who are chronically abandoning books are struggling to select books that are a good fit for them in the first place. Some of the lessons from Selecting Books, may also be needed during this unit.

Teaching Point: Readers I want to teach you that sometimes books just don’t fit us. That is absolutely ok! It is our job to figure out what books make us want to read, what books don’t, and what to do about this.

Suggested Length of Time: varies depending on the need

Possible Ways to Do This:

- **One way to do this is to** let students know that even adults abandon books. Abandoning a book does not equate to failure. What we have to watch out for is making sure we aren’t abandoning (or half reading) every book we pick up. Create an anchor chart encouraging students to share out reasons that they might abandon a book.

  Sometimes we let books go when they are...
  
  - Too easy
  - Too difficult
  - Not interesting
  - Too confusing
  - About a topic you don’t particularly enjoy
  - Not what you expected
  - Slow moving and hard to get into
  - Don’t like the characters
  - Disappointing sequel
  - Not interested in the genre
  - Too long and you lose interest
  - Doesn’t feel like the story is going anywhere
  - Poor writing style

Remind students that just because we “quit” a book one time, does not mean that we are never going to read it again. It is ok to give books a second chance. Encourage students to help you brainstorm reasons, from the anchor chart, that might lead you to giving a book a second chance. (ex. This book was too hard the
first time I read it, but now I feel much stronger as a reader and would like to try it again.)

- **Another way to do this** is to help students understand that sometimes we have to give books a little more time to decide if they are worth reading. Ask students to share out a book that it took a while for them to get into. Ask them what made them stick reading it. Tell students that as readers sometimes we have to give books a chance, it can take more than just the first few pages for a story to get good. Encourage students to set a personal standard for how long they will give a book before they give it up. (ex. 50 pages, 2 chapters, etc.)

- **Another way to do this** is to have student create an “I read because…” page in their Reader’s Notebooks. Model for students that there are many different reasons people read. Have students fill this page with all of the reasons that they read. Use this as an anchor point during these lessons. Make notice of students who struggle to think of reasons they read. This will be a great segue for deciding which students would benefit from conferring or small group talk about this.

- **Another way to do this** is to tell students you are getting ready to let them know you are getting ready to let them in on a secret. Share with students that sometimes you read a book and you realize after a little while...that you just don’t like it. Remind them that if we are reading a lot of books that will happen from time to time. However, as readers we have to give books a reasonable chance, before we hop on to the next text. Talk to students about a book you read that you realized just wasn’t a book you liked. How many pages did you read? What let you know it wasn’t a good fit for you? How did you decide you were done reading it?

- **Another way to do this** is to use a strategy like Most & Least Desirable Actions from The Reading Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo. Model for students what it looks like to be disengaged, distracted or unfocused while you’re reading. You could even conduct your read aloud with these behaviors for effect. Ask students to name the actions you were showing, that showed that you weren’t interested. Now, change your body and mind to show what it looks like to be focused and engaged, you might even ask students to guide you through the changes they should make. Ask students to go out into the classroom and model for you unengaged reading. Ask students to model for you engaged reading. Spend workshop checking in with students about what things help them stay engaged. ( The Reading Strategies Book p. 56)

- **Another way to do this** is to remind students that as the school year goes on sometimes we change and grow. It is important that we check in with ourselves to make sure that we
are making decisions based on what we know about ourselves. Model for students how you might think about yourself as a reader and the things that have changed for you over the year. Give students a Reading Interest Inventory/Reading-Interest-Alyzer (found in coaches’ corner) use these inventories to guide small group and conferring conversations, as we work to help students identify the things they want to read about.

**Another way to do this is to use** a strategy like Choose Books with Your Identity in Mind from The Reading Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo. Model for students that choosing a just-right book means more than choosing a book based on the reading level. Instead of going to the library and saying, “I’m a -----level reader.” go to the library saying “I’m a reader who enjoys…..type of books.” Think, “Where would I find books that fit who I am as reader?” You might then say to your students. Sometimes in this classroom I hear kids who worry about reading books that are their reading level. Parents do it too. Sometimes I even hear teachers refer to kids that way. But I have to tell you that books have levels, readers don’t have levels. A better way to describe yourself as a reader is based on the kinds of books that interest you-series, genres, authors, topics, themes, characters. Today, instead of saying you’re a level…, I want you to stop and reflect about the kind of books you love, using a few questions I am going to put on the board. I want us to start thinking about how we might use this information to label ourselves as readers.

○ On the board you may put some of these questions:
  - Tell me about the books you’ve loved. What do they have in common?
  - If you were going to ask a friend for a recommendation, what would you tell them to help them suggest the right book?
  - What do you like outside of reading that you think might help you find a good book?
  - Based on what you like to do, what kinds of books do you think you’d want to read?
  - Tell me what series, authors, or genres you think you most enjoy.
  - Where in our classroom library do you think you could go to find books like that?

(The Reading Strategies Book p. 63)

**Another way to do this is to use** a strategy Choose Like Books for a Best Fit from The Reading Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo. Share with students that sometimes when we are abandoning books it is because we aren’t picking the kinds of books we like to read. Remind students that readers can turn to resources to help them find the next book they’ll read. We can help our classmates by being resources to each other. First we are going to think about the books we most remember loving. Which books are those? Type one title that the teacher or student brainstormed into Amazon, Goodreads or
BibliOasium, see what recommendations pop up. Ask students to think about why these books were suggested as being similar to the one typed in. Encourage students to use their own reading experiences to make recommendations as well. Ex. I liked reading Wonder, I also liked reading Because of Mr. Terupt, because it had a similar structure. I know that Encourage students to create a Liked…? Try… poster to share out books they have liked and other books that are similar.

(The Reading Strategies Book p. 62)

- Another way to do this is to use a strategy like Rereading to get back in your book from The Reading Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo. Sometimes we start to quit on a book because it begins to get too hard, too challenging or too confusing. One way to help yourself get back on track is to stop and notice where you attention started to drift. Go back to the last thing you remember not just reading, but really understanding. Did you notice yourself getting distracted there? What are some things that we can do? Rereading is one way of going back and making sure that the words we are reading have meaning. (The Reading Strategies Book p. 50)
Teaching Point: Readers share book recommendations with other readers about books they love, and they listen to the recommendations of others for ideas of what to read in the future.

Suggested Length of Time: varies depending on the need

Possible Ways to Do This:

- **One way to do this is to** set aside time for book talks. If you started the year with book talks, but they have fizzled for lack of time, this is the moment to reignite the practice. Or, if you haven’t done book talks with your students, start now. Share with students that the purpose of a book talk isn’t to summarize the book. A book talk is also not something you as the teacher would use to assess a student’s reading completion or comprehension. A book talk is to persuade other readers to read a book you feel passionate about! Model a book talk from the classroom library. Model your enthusiasm for the experience of reading the book as well as a brief explanation of the setting, character, and the main problem, but don’t give away the climax or end of the story. Compare and contrast your book to other books students may have read. For instance, if you are book talking the book *Upside-Down Magic* by Sarah Mlynowski, you might say that like Harry Potter, the main character has magical powers and goes to a special school to learn how to use them. Unlike Harry Potter, this book is shorter, more comical, and about a character whose magical abilities have troubles. End by saying something like, “if you like books that are . . . then you’ll love this book.” For instance, with *Upside-Down Magic*, you might say, “if you like books that tell school stories, have a character who is less than perfect, and are funny too, then you’ll love this book.”

- **Another way to do this is to** introduce book commercials. Book commercials are like book talks, but the focus is on something short, and the idea is to have a commercial pop up here and there, rather than a lot of book talks all at once. When teaching the book commercial, focus on what the student should say and shouldn’t say. Teach the term, “spoiler.” A commercial should be focused on creating enthusiastic persuasion for others to read a book without giving too much away. Model using the teasers and language from the backs of books. After a student has presented a commercial, allow them to ask for the opinions of any other students who have read the book. Students can raise their hands, and the presenter can call on them. This will give students a chance to agree or disagree respectfully with the presenter and will lend an informal, conversational tone to the book.
commercial time. Students listening to the commercial should record titles that sound interesting to them on a “Books to Read” page in their reader’s notebook.

- **Another way to do this is to** teach students to write book reviews. You can share with students that adult readers who love to read often get ideas of what to read by reading book reviews in magazines like *Booklist, The New York Times Magazine, The New York Review of Books*, and on websites like Amazon and Goodreads. Your students can share their book reviews on a class blog, through Google Classroom, or they can type and print them, cut them out and share them on a review bulletin board or other area of the classroom. Another idea would be to showcase book club books in holders or along your whiteboard ledge and have students who read those books write reviews and hang them around the book. Students shopping for their next book can read the reviews and pick up a copy of the book if they are interested. When writing the reviews, have students use the backs of books as mentor texts for their writing. Create a class anchor chart with things the students noticed from these mentor texts. A class anchor chart created by Donalyn Miller’s students and shared in *The Book Whisperer* has these criteria (p. 138):
  - Quotes from the book
  - Quotes from famous writers and reviews
  - Cliffhanger questions
  - Personal reactions and opinions
  - Awards the book and author have won
  - Recommended reading age
  - Other books by the same author
  - Comparisons with other books

- **Another way to do this is to** hold reading clubs. These reading clubs will differ from book clubs, because their goal is not to read a certain book together but rather to discuss the reading each student has been doing lately. Group students who have similar reading levels and interests and allow them to share the books they have read with each other. Have these students give book commercials or share reviews with each other as well as informally discuss books they have finished reading this year. Have students list ideas for future reading on a “Books to Read” page in their reader’s notebooks during the club meeting. Also consider holding reading clubs on several days, each day with a different configuration of students in each club so that each student has the opportunity to talk with multiple readers.
Responding to Reading

**Teaching Point:** Readers use writing to help them remember important events from a text and their own reactions while reading.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** show students how stopping to jot can help readers monitor their comprehension, as well as remember the main details. Instruct students to place a sticky note on every 5th page of a text. (You may need to adjust the number of pages in between sticky notes based on a child’s reading ability and text complexity.) When students get to a page with a sticky, they should stop reading and write a sentence retelling who and what the prior 4 pages were about. Explain to students if they can’t recall who or what those prior pages were about this signals the reader to reread for understanding.

- **Another way to do this is to** remind children that jotting notes while reading has a number of benefits. For one, it makes our thinking visible and supports us when we have conversations about our reading. Using sticky notes allows us to refer immediately back to the text that sparked our thinking. However, as readers we must reflect on our notes and determine which notes are truly worth keeping. Model for students how to reread sticky notes, asking the following questions to determine what notes are worth keeping:
  - Does it help me understand my book?
  - Does it connect with my goal?
  - Will it help me talk to my teacher about my reading?
  - Will I use it to springboard conversation?
  - Will I use this note to write a longer entry about my reading?

  Once you’ve selected the ideas you what to keep, show students how to organize them into your reading notebook with a title on the top of the page, and the sticky notes that go with that book on the rest of the page.

- **Another way to do this is to** explain to students that one of the best ways to understand what you read is to practice summarizing it. When you are forced to say just what is most important about a selection of text, you have to sort through all the details and just pick the most essential ones. This can be accomplished by sharing the five most important events, in the order they happened. Model how you do this by telling the 5
most important events across your five fingers for one of your recent read alouds. Then show students how they can take those sentences and write them down on a page of their Reader’s Notebook. (This might also be a good opportunity to teach students how the addition of transition words at the beginning of each sentence connects the ideas and creates a smoother sounding summary.) Through your discussion, guide them to notice you didn’t include every single detail, just the big events that move the story along. Possible prompts to use for this lesson include:

- What happened first?
- Was that the most important event that happened next?
- You’re at the middle finger, which should be about the middle of the book.
- One finger left—what’s the conclusion of the story that connects back to the initial problem or what the character wanted?

**Teaching Point:** Readers can expand on their own thinking, as well as the thinking of others.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** model for students how to select a sticky note that you think has a strong starting idea written on it. (It would be powerful to use a sticky note you created in reaction to a class read aloud.) Place the selected sticky note on the corner of a blank page in your Reader’s Notebook. Now, model for students how a reader can use conversational prompts to expand on their “in-the-moment” thoughts so they grow into something bigger and deeper. It is important to show students that your expanded writing will begin by restating the idea on the sticky note and then elaborating on that idea with details from the text, more personal insight, and maybe some lingering questions. Encourage students to keep their pencil moving. Don’t worry about perfection; just write to get your ideas down. Possible prompts to use:
  - At first I thought _______ but now I’m thinking ________.
  - The text said _________. That made me think _________.
  - I agree/disagree with ________ because…

- **Another way to do this is to** ask students to take an idea they have about a character, theme, or something else in their book and have them write about that idea. Then, have students partner up to discuss their thinking. After their discussion, ask students to go back to their notebook and write about their thinking now. In particular, how their ideas changed or shifted, or how they’ve gotten a new perspective because of the conversation. Possible prompts to help guide student thinking:
  - How has your thinking changed?
○ What did you think before, and what are you thinking now?
○ You can say, “Before I thought… but after talking I’m thinking…”
○ Think about ideas your partner or club members shared. What’s new from what you had written down before?

● Another way to do this is to set up “Themed Notebooks” for students to record their responses to favorite books. Themed Notebooks can be created using composition notebooks, spiral notebooks, etc. Assign a popular literary theme to each notebook. Possible themes include:
  ○ Friendship
  ○ Courage
  ○ Love
  ○ Hope
  ○ Acceptance
  ○ Life Lessons (like Crime Doesn’t Pay)

The idea behind using these notebooks is to create an authentic place for written responses to reading, foster a sense of community writing, and provide students with another place to access book recommendations. Themed Notebooks are meant to be kept from year to year and used by all students and adults in the classroom. When a student finishes a book, they may select the appropriate Themed Notebook, open to the next blank page in the notebook, write the title of their book, their response to the book, and date the entry.

Tracking Reading Growth

Teaching Point: Readers have goals and track their progress toward those goals, just like athletes do.

Suggested Length of Time: varies depending on the need

Possible Ways to Do This:
• One way to do this is to share the idea of creating and tracking goals. You might refer back to the beginning of the year when you tracked minutes of quiet reading as your class worked to grow their independent reading stamina. Some students may need to return to tracking their minutes of engaged reading if this is something they are struggling with. (Click here for a graph you can use.) You might give the example of an athlete in a gym. If the athlete wanted to increase his arm strength, he might make a goal of being able to
lift a certain amount of weight. Obviously, just going to the gym and hanging out would not help that athlete meet his goal. The athlete would have to use his time at the gym well and gradually increase both the minutes he lifted weights as well as the heaviness of those weights. Likewise, a reader has to use his or her independent reading time well and gradually increase both the minutes he or she reads and thinks about the book as well as the number or complexity of the books he or she is reading.

- **Another way to do this is to** create a party ladder. For students who are struggling to maintain focus or meet reading goals, a party ladder, as described in Jennifer Serravallo’s *The Reading Strategies Book* (p. 57), could be helpful. Break down a goal, like engaged reading for a longer period of time, into a small series of steps that ends with an agreed upon celebration. Draw a sideways representation of stairs on a piece of paper, and on each step, break the goal down. For example, the first step might say, “Read 5 pages.” The second step might say, “Jot a thought.” The third step might say, “Read 5 pages.” Then at the top, the celebration might say, “Party! Read a poem.”

- **Another way to do this is to** revisit book logs. If you set up book logs at the beginning of the year or gave students the 40-book challenge, take time to update and reflect on the progress shown in those book logs. Talk to students about the reason for logging their books. What are they learning about themselves as readers by looking at their logs? Are they doing a good job of reading across genre? Can they help identify a reading preference? Model analyzing a book log of a student who is a strong reader and does not mind sharing their log or model analyzing your own book log. Discuss the ways you can reflect on the log and then model creating a reading goal, such as reading a certain number of books in a new genre. Students could also create a goal to read more books in the next quarter or semester than they have so far. You could use the analogy of the athlete by discussing that a basketball player who wanted to get better would have to build both strength and endurance. One without the other would not help her achieve her goal. Likewise, in focusing on strength, she would need to build strength in both her arms and legs to truly improve. Readers need to focus on reading more and reading a variety of books to truly improve as readers. Jennifer Serravallo’s *The Reading Strategies Book* has these ideas for analyzing a book log:
  - **Reading log rate reflection.** Is the student reading too fast or slow? This may lead to a discussion of whether or not they are choosing just right books as well as a discussion of whether or not they are taking the time to make meaning as they read.
o **When do students read?** Are students reading only at school? Could they find other times to read? Are they reading at home? Are there times in the school day where they could steal time to read (bathroom breaks, when they finish work, when they first arrive at school, etc.)?

o **Set page goals.** Without sacrificing meaning, can a student prompt themselves to gradually read more pages? Do they tend to read a consistent number of pages during reading or does it vary widely? Are the number of pages read consistent within a book?

o **Read with a focus to focus.** How many pages can the student read before losing focus? Can they increase this? Do they need to plan to take small mental breaks to increase the time they can read without losing focus?

● **Another way to do this is to** Reflect on the past unit. What kind of reader were you? What books did you read? What have you learned that will help you in the future? What did you learn about yourself as a reader? It is through reflection that we can learn more about ourselves and find areas we want to improve. As Jennifer Serravallo says in *The Reading Strategies Book* on page 67, “Reflect on your reading history to set a better reading future.” This helps lead us to setting goals. Model your own reflection of your reading over the past quarter. Model setting a goal and discuss with students the satisfaction you feel in reaching a goal. Let students share times they have met goals and how they felt. If they have not yet had this experience, help students get excited about this future event! For an example of a student-friendly reading reflection, click here.

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**Variety and Text Choice**

**Teaching Point:** Readers vary the texts they read, just like we vary the foods that we eat.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

● **One way to do this is to** model for students how you pack a lunchbox. You may wish to point out to them that although you know apples are good for you, you do not simply have a lunchbox full of apples. If you did this, you would be missing other key food groups such as protein and vegetables. Then, relate this to the selection of books for a book box. While you know that Magic Tree House books are just right for you, you select various types of texts to read, considering what would give you a “balanced reading diet”.

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● Another way to do this is to show your students the assortment of reading that you are currently doing. You may show them a catalog, an expository text, a magazine, and a novel. Talk with students about how some of it is easy, like the catalog; just right, like the magazine and novel; and challenging, like the expository text.

**Teaching Point:** Readers keep track of the genres they read in order to grow themselves as a reader.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** bring to light whatever book-tracking tool you use in your classroom (40 Book Challenge, Reading Log, etc.). You may model for students how you look over the books that you’ve completed so far this year, considering the various genres as well as reading difficulty. You may even tally up for each of these. An authentic addition would be to discuss with readers how you select new books when you go to the bookstore. When you have read 3-4 books about cooking, you’re likely to visit another section of the bookstore for variety.

**Teaching Point:** Readers rely on other readers and tools to help themselves select their next book to read.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** emphasize the work of book talking in your classroom. If you have not yet introduced these, you may wish to see that portion of this unit (“Book Talking”: The Why and the How). Emphasize to students how many of the books that you select as your next book come from book recommendations from another adult who reads like you do. If a student is struggling to have variety in the difficulty of their books, you may encourage them to talk with a reading partner who is of like ability or slightly higher to select a next book.

- **Another way to do this is to** utilize online tools that give students ideas for what to read next.
  - **www.whatshouldireadnext.com** allows users to enter in the name of a book they’ve recently read or an author that they enjoy and get other book recommendations based on this.
- [www.literature-map.com](http://www.literature-map.com) allows users to enter the name of an author they enjoy and it will provide them with other authors who have similar texts

### Modeling a Passion for Reading

**Teaching Point:** Teachers who model their passion for reading inspire a desire to read in their students.

**Suggested Length of Time:** varies depending on the need

**Possible Ways to Do This:**

- **One way to do this is to** model reading as an “emotional and intellectual journey.” This can be accomplished by portraying reading as a gift not a goal. [The Book Whisperer - Donalyn Miller](http://blog.idealbookshelf.com/post/34989664192/this-page-is-in-the-back-of-our-book-my-ideal)

  - *My Ideal Bookshelf:* A great way to model what your reading life looks like is to show them your ideal bookshelf. In this activity you will model for them the 10 books you can’t live without. The key to this is explaining what emotions each book brought out in you, what made the story so powerful, how it changed/grew you as a reader, and maybe how it helped you view life in a different way.

  - By giving students time to also do this work will help other students see their peers as passionate readers and will give them great ideas for new books to read.

  - View the link below for the paper form of your “Ideal Bookshelf.”


- **Another Way to do this is to take** the Self-Reflection Activity from the “Walking the Walk” chapter in Donalyn Miller’s *The Book Whisperer* (p 111). This reflection activity allows you to think back to your own childhood reading experiences, asks you to think about how you share past and current reading experiences with kids, to think about your role models for reading, and how you view yourself as a reader now. It is crucial to share your reading experiences with your students every day. You set the tone, and create the climate for your classroom. They look to you as the example.
○ It would be helpful to give students a reading survey to get a pulse on who they are as readers, and what types of topics and genres they are interested in.
○ At the beginning of the year it is powerful to give them a book stack from your library or the school library based on the information you received from your conference with them. By explaining why you chose each book specifically for them is powerful. It also makes your students feel really special. This would also be something that you will want to do for your students at different times throughout the year.

- **Another way to do this is to** have a sign on your board or by your door that shows students what you just finished reading, what you are currently reading, and what book you want to read next. By updating this throughout the year shows students that you are a reader, and it models that good readers read all the time.

- **Another way to do this is to** have a box or create a space for students to recommend books to you. Then have conversations when you do read books that they have recommended. It is important to continue to read children’s books in order to have a wealth of choices to recommend to them, and to have shared reading experiences with them. A list of good reasons for why adults should still read children’s books is on pg. 114 in *The Book Whisperer*.

- **Another way to do this is to** investigate recommendations from industry sources. This will allow you to stay up to date on current books for students to read by finding what is new and relevant, but also the tried and true classics.

Here are some helpful books and websites to do this work:
- Books That Don’t Bore ‘Em: Young Adult Books that Speak to This Generation (Blasingame, 2007).
- Goodreads: [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)
- [www.teenreads.com](http://www.teenreads.com)
- March Book Madness
- **#titletalk:** [https://twitter.com/hashtag/titletalk](https://twitter.com/hashtag/titletalk)
Unit 6: The Study of Short Text: Diving into Language

Subject: Reading  
Grade: 4  
Name of Unit: The Study of Short Text: Diving into Language  
Length of Unit: 5 weeks (2nd week of February — 2nd week of March)

Overview of Unit:  
In this unit students will learn to understand that singular pieces of poetry, prose and drama, as well as collections of these pieces of writing, tell a story and teach lessons through specific structures and language. This study of short text will focus on the way that poets use language to convey a meaning. Students will spend time reading, listening to, and speaking poetry, prose and drama to develop a strong understanding of these different types of writing and the messages that are hidden inside.

In Topic 1 (Bend I) of the unit, students begin by building on the information they have about poetry, prose and drama from previous grades. Students will learn to identify and determine the meaning of specific words that have been chosen in these pieces of writing, learning how specific words, references to Greek mythology, and figurative language help us to visualize and understand the story that is being told.

In Topic 2 (Bend II) of the unit, students will learn how the structure of poetry, drama and prose impact how these pieces are read and the message they share. Students will quickly realize their own close relationship with poetry, drama and prose already exists—through the songs they hear, familiar stories they have heard, and plays they have seen. Students will also develop an understanding of how the specific structures used in each of these types of writing help readers to better understand the piece.

In Topic 3 (Bend III) of the unit, students will draw on what they know about determining theme to compare texts, seeing how themes are expressed in different structures and in different texts. Through modeling and practice students will be able to describe how specific themes, topics and patterns of events in stories, myths and traditional literature from different cultures teach us about the world we live in. During this topic, students will begin to see that poetry is best understood when careful and purposeful rereading of poems is practiced. Students will have opportunities to compare themes across texts. They will study this skill much more in depth.
during the interpretation unit. This unit serves simply as an opportunity to expose students to this skill for a first time.

**Getting Ready for the Unit:**

- Gather high interest poems and poetry anthologies at different levels.
  - For some poems you will want to make multiple copies so all students have access to the major poems you reference in your lessons.
- During the workshop time for these lessons students will be encouraged to analyze texts and work in Literature Clubs. Students might be looking for connections across poems with similar themes or characters, or looking at texts by the same author. The most important part of this club aspect is that students are getting opportunities to read and work with texts that are of a different nature than they might be used to.
- During this unit there are some mini lessons that are very short and compact, and there are others that ask us to guide our students through the process of talking about meaning, and understanding text deeply. You will need to gauge your students to determine which lessons will need more time and which lessons you can work through in a shorter amount of time.
- Choose read-alouds for this unit.
- While introducing Greek Myths, it is important to be mindful of the stories. Several Greek myths cover mature concepts. For this reason it is important to preview Greek myths before selecting them for lessons, as well as being mindful of Greek Myth links shared with students.
- Ensure that students’ book boxes are full with up-to-date books of their choosing. These may or may not be in the poetry genre. At the beginning of this unit it may be difficult for some students to study a poem or two for 35 minutes of independent reading. Students’ stamina for poetry will strengthen as you teach them the skills of careful and purposeful rereading. However, a book box full of books will allow students to have something to read at all times. If you confer with a student who has moved on from their poetry reading; be sure to bring the conversation back to their work as a reader of poetry.
  - Texts You Might Want to Collect:
    - *This Place I Know: Poems of Comfort* by Georgia Heard
    - *This is Just to Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness* by Joyce Sidman
    - *Extra Innings: Baseball Poems* by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- *If You’re Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand: Poems about School* by Kalli Dakos
- *Fine Feathered Friends* (Science) by Jane Yolen
- *Roots and Blues: A Celebration* (Social Studies) by Arnold Adoff
- *A child’s introduction to Greek mythology: the stories of the gods, goddesses, heroes, monsters, and other mythical creatures* by Heather Alexander; illustrated by Meredith Hamilton.
- *Z is for Zeus: a Greek mythology alphabet* written by Helen L. Wilbur; and illustrated by Victor Juhasz.
- *Usborne Greek Myths* for Young Children
- Mythopedia Pack from Scholastic-*What a Beast, She’s All That, Oh My Gods!, and All in the Family*
- *Pegasus, The Flying Horse* by Jane Yolen
- *Greek Myths and Legends* retold by Anthony Masters
- *Monsters and Myths: Classical Myths* 
- *Greek Myths* retold by Geraldine McCaughrean
- *Z is for Zeus,- A Greek Mythology Alphabet* by Helen L Wilbur
- *Greek Mythology* by Jim Olhoff

- **Links to Access**
  - List Of Text in Verse and Poetry
  - Check the Poetry Foundation Website ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)) which includes a children’s poetry section 
    - Great poems for kids
  - Poetry Based in Greek Mythology
Pre-Assessment (given prior to starting the unit):

- Give students a copy of a poem to read, then pose the following questions. Some poems you might consider are: “If I Were in Charge of the World” by Judith Viorst, “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost, or “Dreams” by Langston Hughes.

1. What did you notice about the structure or organization of this poem?
2. What is this poem really about?

Some poem-specific questions are:

For “If I Were in Charge of the World”:

- What do you know about the narrator from these lines below?
  
  If I were in charge of the world  
  There'd be brighter night lights,  
  Healthier hamsters, and  
  Basketball baskets forty-eight inches lower

For “The Road Not Taken”:

- What do you think the author is trying to say in the lines below?
  
  And sorry I could not travel both  
  And be one traveler, long I stood

- Access to Dramas, as well as several dramas being acted out:
  
  - [http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE.html](http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE.html)

- Aesop’s Fables
  

- Greek Myths
  
  - [http://www.storynory.com/category/myths/greek-myths/?PageSpeed=noscript](http://www.storynory.com/category/myths/greek-myths/?PageSpeed=noscript)

- Greek Mythology and Vocabulary Reference List
  
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

For “Dreams”:
- What do you think the author is trying to say in the lines below? What does “Life is a broken-winged bird/That cannot fly” mean?
  For if dreams die
  Life is a broken-winged bird
  That cannot fly.

**Essential Questions:**
1. What does it mean to read a text closely?
2. How does understanding the structure of a text help me to understand the message and feelings the author is trying to convey?
3. What characteristics differ between poetry, drama, and prose?
4. How do words that reference characters found in mythology communicate specific meaning to us?
5. Why do authors use specific verse, rhythm and meter in poetry?

**Enduring Understanding/Big Ideas:**
1. Readers read short text closely (ex. annotate, reread, talk about text) to develop a deep understanding of the message and feelings the author is trying to convey.
2. Authors use different structures to express their ideas. Comparing the elements and structural difference enhances our understanding of the text.
3. Reading poetry requires us to think critically and thoughtfully about words, language and structure.

**Priority Standards for unit:**
- **RL.4.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- **RL.4.5** Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.
- **L.4.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
  - **L.4.5.a** Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., as pretty as a picture) in context.
o L.4.5.b **Recognize and explain** the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

o L.4.5.c **Demonstrate** understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

**Supporting Standards for unit:**
- RL.4.4 **Determine** the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean)
- RL.4.9 **Compare and contrast** the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.
- L.4.4 **Determine or clarify** the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
  - L.4.4.a **Use** context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  - L.4.4.b **Use** common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., telegraph, photograph, autograph).
  - L.4.4.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 keywords and phrases.

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<th>Unwrapped Concepts (Students need to know)</th>
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<td>theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text</td>
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<td>theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text</td>
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<td>RL.4.5</td>
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<td>the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text</td>
<td><strong>Refer to</strong></td>
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L.4.5 understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. | **Demonstrate** | **Analyze** | 2

Unit Vocabulary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academic Cross-Curricular Words</strong></th>
<th><strong>Content/Domain Specific</strong></th>
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<td>stage directions</td>
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**Topic 1: Words are Chosen to Share a Message**

**Engaging Experience 1**  
**Teaching Point:** Studying Words to Understand Meaning  
“Today I want to teach you that authors use words in different ways to convey shades of meaning. A reader must make meaning of different types of language in various ways to understand the nuances of an author's message.” In order to do this, a reader must learn to read closely, which means reading and rereading with a purpose in mind.  
**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini lessons  
**Standards Addressed**  
**Priority:** RL.4.2, L.4.5
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way to do this is to** specifically introduce students to close reading. Students have been reading closely all year with you to learn different things, but let students know that when they are intentionally doing a close reading of a text, they are rereading to look for specific things. Close reading should always start with a general reading of the text to get its gist, to understand what is there. Then the close reading begins when the reader approaches the text *again* with a certain goal in mind. It may be to pay attention to examples of figurative language, to find unknown words, to hunt for symbolism. Let students know that for most of their lives they have been learning to be able to read a text, and they have done a great job, but now it is time for them to learn to reread carefully to uncover all the layers of meaning in a text, and that is careful yet exciting work. Close readers are treasure hunters!

- Consider using the poem “Fog” (this poem is included at the end of this unit). At first glance this poem looks like a short, easy read. As you pass out a copy of the poem to each student, ask students to read it to themselves and circle any words they are unsure about or put question marks in the margins of any parts that don’t make sense. Next, allow students to turn and talk about what they marked and about what they think is going on in the poem. Have students share out their thoughts and note misconceptions or points they make and questions they have. Now ask students to read just the first stanza in order to describe what is going on. Do they know what fog is? (Many of them may incorrectly read fog as frog). Why would the author use the phrase “little cat feet” to describe fog? As the discussion continues, ask students to read the next stanza, just to find out what is going on. After a discussion of what is happening literally, ask them to read again for anything special they notice. Have them look for descriptions and deeper meaning and then discuss. Talk about how with each reading, it is they are finding layers of meaning. Get to the point where you can discuss that this poem is both a lovely description of a moment in time and some weather but is also a description of how sadness or depression can enter and exit a person’s life.

Questions you might pose during this close reading:

- What is this poem trying to describe? (prompt student to give text evidence in answer).
- What does the author compare the fog to?
- Why do you think the author compares the fog to a cat?
- If the author said, “the fog is like a cat” do you know what that is called? Because the author does not say like or as but still makes this comparison throughout the poem, do you know what that is called?
- What are haunches?
- Why did the author choose haunches instead of another part of the cat?
- Why do you think the author wrote this poem?
● Do you think this poem could have a deeper meaning than just describing the weather?

● **Another way to do this is to** choose a poem that you, the teacher, enjoy (you may chose a short drama or piece of prose instead, based on what speaks to you as a reader). Try to reach beyond school yard poetry (*while these poems are fun and enjoyable we want to challenge students’ comfort level when thinking about poetry early in this unit*). Look for poetry that is deep and full of symbolism and meaning. This will allow students opportunities to analyze and discuss meaningful ideas right from the beginning. (Poetry from Sandra Cisneros, Maya Angelou, Pablo Neruda, Langston Hughes or Lillian Moore might be great places to start.) Read the poem you have selected out loud. Post this on a SMART Board, or on a piece of large chart paper, so that students are able to see the words and structure as you read. You might want to read this poem more than once. Talk to students about how you are reading the sentences, referencing your tone and voice. Go back and make notes on your document, noting unusual words and associations, marking your poem with circles, or underlines when a specific word or phrase seems powerful or interesting, to help students see your thinking. Model for students how you might go back after you have read to look up words you are unsure of, as well as words that just don’t seem to fit. Show students how you might draw pictures or make notes of what these unusual words might mean. Re-read the poem slowly, thinking about what message and emotions these out of place words might be trying to tell you.

● **Another way to do this** would be to select a poem, drama or piece of prose and plan an oral interpretation of that text. Determine the meaning you want to convey through your pacing, emphasis, rhythm, tone, sounds, and nonverbal cues. Then, perform your oral interpretation for your class or create a video of your performance to be shown to the class. Ask students to respond to the meaning that was conveyed through your performance to determine if the conveyed meaning matches your intended meaning. Ask students to share ideas about which words and phrases stuck out from this poem and how those words and phrases helped them determine what the author was trying to communicate.

*You will want to have copies of poetry, prose and dramas copied and available for students to read and mark during workshop. Use this as an opportunity to introduce deep and meaningful poetry, as well as Greek myths, and traditional folktales and fables. (Have students save these documents for a later lesson.)*

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3  

**Engaging Experience 2**  
**Teaching Point:** Big Messages, From Little Words
“Today I want to teach you that because authors choose specific words and phrases to tell a story or share an idea, a reader must think critically about how these words help us to understand the setting, character, or struggles in the text more deeply.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini lesson

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL.4.2, L.4.5

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** might be to help students zone in on specific words and phrases that help us to uncover the potential meaning of a text.

  - One possible lesson might be to let students know that this lesson will focus on inquiry and thinking as an individual and a group. Introduce students to the text *Little Things Are Big* (you could also select any text that you think might lend itself to this lesson, this text is included at the end of this unit). Give each student a copy of the text and read the text out loud, so that students can listen and think about the possible messages. Read up to the first portion of the text that ends with “then…” Encourage students to think about what they believe might happen next.

  - Have students write a few lines that support their thinking in their notebook. Ask students to go back to the text and underline the specific words and phrases that made them decide on the ending they chose.

  - Have students break into two groups, one group that thought the story would end in one way, another group of students who believe it might have ended in the opposite way. Have students talk with their groups about the words and phrases that they picked out that helped them decide on their ending.

  - After giving time for like minds to discuss their ideas, have students stop and pair up with a student whose feelings are of the opposite opinion. Encourage students to bring their underlined pieces to share out the words and phrases that convinced them one way or the other.

  - Have students come back up and read the actual ending of the story. Guide this conversation so that it helps students to understand that there are many interpretations to texts we encounter, and this is why keeping our eyes, ears and minds open as we read is so important.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze, Understand

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 3**

**Teaching Point:** Using Word Histories to Understand Symbolism
Suggested Length of Time: 2 mini lessons  
Standards Addressed  
Priority: L.4.5, RL.4.4  
Detailed Description/Instructions:  
- **One way to do this might be** to introduce students to Greek myths and the words from Greek mythology that appear in modern English (this lesson might work best if begun with words and characters such as Hercules, Nike, Pandora and Amazon). Talk to students about the words and how we think of them in our culture. Have a discussion about why these companies and storytellers might have chosen these words and characters to represent their company or entertain others. Create a chart that shows the words from mythology, possible meanings based on what we know, and a third column for new information. Choose one story to read (ex. Nike, Pandora or Amazon). Show students how you draw conclusions about these words or characters and record them on the chart. You will want to model this with multiple myths. Encourage students to create a chart of their own and to record their findings as they are reading Greek myths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Word or Character</th>
<th>Possible Meaning</th>
<th>Actual Meaning (New Information from reading)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pandora</td>
<td>She was a woman. Pandora shares music. Maybe she shared something.</td>
<td>Pandora has come to mean “all-giving”. Pandora music service gives a wide variety of music to people.</td>
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*Click [here](#) for a great reference for teachers to gather an understanding of some of these words and their meanings.*  

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3  

### Engaging Experience 4  
**Teaching Point:** Figurative Language and Nuances  
**Suggested Length of Time:** 5 mini lessons  
**Standards Addressed**  
Priority: L4.5  

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**  
- **One way to do this might be** to create a figurative language reference guide. Using a PowerPoint, Google Slide, or Flip Book, show how you might stop to think about a word or phrase and take notes. As you read texts with figurative language, model how you
might record what you have heard or seen in your presentation or flip book. Create a reference guide for figurative language.

- **Figurative Language and Nuances to Cover:**
  - **Alliteration, Personification, and Onomatopoeia**
    - Using texts like *Punctuation Takes a Vacation, The Giving Tree, The Ears of an Elephant* and *Walter Was Worried*, model for students the patterns and characteristics that you see these texts use. Take notes and record in your Language Flip Book or Language Google Slide.
  - **Other Possible Texts:**
    - "Grandpa’s Clock" by Alice F. Green
    - "Vacuum Cleaner" by Ethel Jacobson
    - "Pompous Mr. Pumpkin" by Elsie Melchert Fowler
    - "Lawn Mower" by Dorothy Baruch
    - Three witches excerpt from *MacBeth* by William Shakespeare
    - "Dancing Dolphins" by Paul McCann
    - The Sun Had a Nasty Day by Deborah Rodgers (poem)
  - **Antonym and Synonyms**
    - Model use of antonyms and synonyms in the way that they emphasize that an idea is true or introduce contradictory information. (ex. In the poem “The Sun Had a Nasty Day,” by Denise Rodgers, she references the sun having a “nasty” day. We don’t often think of the sun as nasty. We typically reserve this word to describe rain and other undesirable weather. By choosing to pair these words together, the author helps us to get our mind thinking about how this poem might differ from what we typically think of when we think of the sun.)
    - Another way to do this would be to share the video, *How Writers Use Antonyms and Synonyms to Set Tone and Mood*, with
students. Model for students how you might do this for additional words you find in a text.

- Adages, Proverbs, Idioms and Hyperbole
  - Share with students that there are parts of language that are familiar and have an implied meaning. Explain to students how these phrases can be used to teach lessons and to add interest to the text in which they appear.
  - Possible Texts:

    **Adages & Proverbs**
    Use this link for a selection of stories from *Aesop’s Fables*.
    - "Slow and steady wins the race." - *Aesop's Fables*: The Hare and the Tortoise
    - "Appearances often are deceiving." - *Aesop's Fables*: The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
    - "Things are not always what they seem." - *Aesop's Fables*: Bee-Keeper and the Bees

    **Idioms**
    Here is a list of great books for teaching idioms.

    **Hyperbole**
    - *Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U. S. Marshal* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson and R. Gregory Christie
    - *Levi Strauss Gets a Bright Idea: A Fairly Fabricated Story of a Pair of Pants* by Tony Johnston, Stacy Innerst
    - *Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Will Not Take the Garbage Out* by Shel Silverstein

- Metaphor and Simile
  - Model for students how metaphors and similes are used to strengthen writing
  - Possible Poems:
    - “The Base Stealer” by Robert Francis
    - “Spring Storm” by Jim Wayne Miller
Bloom’s Levels: Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 2

**Engaging Experience 5**

**Teaching Point:** Themes from Clues

“Today I want to teach you that the theme of a story is woven all the way through a story, drama, or poem. As we read, we must be mindful of characters’ actions, interactions, and motivations, because the theme is rarely stated in the text. I must instead use details from the text to help me infer the theme.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini lessons

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this might be** to choose a Greek myth to share with students. Since Greek myths were intended to teach lessons, it is often easy to find familiar themes. Myths are a great resource to experiment with the process of finding the theme. While reading the story to students, pull out moments throughout the story where you notice clues that might support a theme or lesson. Pay special attention to specific words or phrases. Illustrate for students how you stop and jot down notes about ideas you have, collecting ideas as you read. Also show how you might go back at the end to reread pieces that stuck out. Model for students how you might group your ideas to begin to develop possible themes. Help students to see that clues such as repetition, contradiction, as well as thoughts or actions that the main character shares, help us to determine the theme. Looking at what the main character has learned in the story can also help us to determine the theme.

  o Example: If we were using the text *King Midas*, these are some points I might pull out while reading the story out loud:

    - We are told that Midas, “had plenty of gold of his own, but that he could not bear the thought of anyone else having any.”
    - When talking about Apollo bringing out the sun King Midas says, “only kings should have gold. Only the rich know what to do with it.”
    - When Midas touched the rose and it turned to gold they describe it as *rigid* and *heavy*, while gold is beautiful the author chooses to depict is in a different way.
    - After reversing the curse Apollo says, “Life is the only wealth.”
In this story there are several themes that can be seen, but one that is clear is that having wealth is not of any value, if you can’t enjoy your life.

Bloom’s Levels: Analyze, Understand
Webb’s DOK: 2, 3

Engaging Experience 6
Teaching Point: Studying Structures of Short Text
“Today I want to teach you that when looking at texts such as poems, drama and prose we must pay attention to how they are arranged differently to illustrate events and ideas or to create a dramatic effect. These structural elements enhance the reader's experience of events and ideas portrayed in a text.”

Suggested Length of Time: 3 mini lessons

Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.5

Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way to do this** would be to introduce students to structures of poetry, drama, and short prose over the next several days. Each day draw on the learning from the day before to make comparisons and inferences about the texts chosen.
  - Example:
    - Poetry
      - **One way to do this would be to** introduce students to a poem that has many traditional characteristics of poetry. Read the poem out loud, as well as displaying it on the SMART Board. Have students follow along and listen to the way the poem sounds, while also noting the way it is organized. Create a small anchor chart (since you will be creating multiple small charts to compare during this session) that lists things you noticed in this poem and that you notice about poems in general. Encourage students that as they go out and read poetry to add any common ideas about poetry that they have to a post it note and these ideas can be added to the small chart. Include the vocabulary of verse, rhythm, and meter.
● **Another way to do this** would be to provide students with a large collection of Poetry, Prose (short stories, fables, Greek myths, folk tales, etc.) and Dramas (in the form of readers’ theaters with stage directions). Encourage students to preview these documents looking for pieces they would identify as poetry. Provide a range of documents varying from very obvious poetry all the way to free verse. Pull students back together and begin to brainstorm what these texts have in common that make them poetry. Create a small anchor chart (since you will be creating multiple small charts to compare during this session) that lists things you noticed in these poems and that you notice about poems in general.

● **Drama**

● **One way to do this would be to** choose a short play/readers’ theater with stage directions, like *The Legend of Lightning Larry*. Ask students to read the drama in a small-group, taking parts and reading and observing. After students have read the play, stop and ask if students noticed any difference about this text. Make notes about the characteristics students noticed on a small anchor chart. Ask students why they think the stage directions were included? What information do they get from stage directions that’s not right there in the text?

● **Another way to do this** might be to have a few students perform a quick cold read from a readers’ theater in front of the class. While assigning parts, assign one student to read the stage directions and to deliver these directions when appropriate during the performance. Encourage students to take mental notes of what they are noticing. You might have students turn and talk to a partner about the things they noticed that made this a play/drama. Be sure to pull out any specific discussions about stage directions as they relate to the setting, characters actions or interactions. Encourage students to share what these directions tell us that the author leave out in the words they use. Record the traits they have noticed in Drama/Plays on a small anchor chart.

*This would be an ideal time to add readers’ theaters and small plays like *Who’s On First*, or *The Legend of Lightning Larry* to student’s book boxes or the classroom library. Allowing students time to experiment and test out readers’ theaters in small groups, partnerships, or triads during workshop will help to add to the excitement of this new kind of reading. As a result of
Prose

One way to do this might be to introduce students to a short story, fable or myth. Prose is the most familiar type of writing, since it is written as we talk with a narrator telling a story. This mini lesson will focus on talking to students about how prose appears in most of the texts that they read. As you share this text, encourage students to make mental notes of the differences they see between poetry and drama that have already been talked about. After reading the text, encourage students to verbalize these differences. Students might start to make these comparisons on their own. Encourage students to start a chart on paper or on the board alongside the anchor charts, drawing comparisons between the different types of structures seen.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand
Webb’s DOK: 3

Engaging Experience 7
Teaching Point: Comparing Structures to Understand Text
Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.5

Detailed Description/Instructions:

One way to do this is to talk to students about how different writing structures help us to draw different inferences from the text. Let students know that today’s lesson will be an inquiry. Students will be working through different texts to develop their understanding. Group students into partnerships or triads. Each group will receive three different texts. You will need a poem, a drama, and an excerpt of prose (ex. Poetry: “If-ing” by Langston Hughes (included at the end of this unit), Prose: The Bat, The Bird and The Beast or another from Aesop’s Fables, Drama: choose a readers’ theatre here) You may choose any three texts that have elements of poetry, drama, and prose. You may also choose to provide a template so students can glue it into their reader’s notebooks. Students will work together to compare the different texts and chart what they notice about each text. The level of support you provide will depend on what your students are able to discover as they work together. After groups have charted a few notes, allow students to post their charts and perform a gallery walk to look at the charts from other groups. Explain the expectation of the gallery walk: read each chart and use post-it notes to post any questions or comments the group may have for the other group. After the gallery walk, groups will receive their own chart back and have an opportunity to read the feedback others provided. This may be a new experience for students so they may need to see you
model the process. Once students are ready, post the charts again. As a class, look for commonalities between the different charts. Begin a class chart, clearing up any misconceptions you may see and adding any elements that students may not have noticed.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand  
Webb’s DOK: 3

**Topic 3: Comparing Writing to Build Understanding**

**Engaging Experience 8**

**Teaching Point:** Comparing Different Versions/Performance of the Same Text

“Today I want to teach you that when we are reading a story, listening to a play or song, or watching a video we must pay attention to how this format and structure enhances or limits the story.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini lessons

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.5

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** might be to share with students two different versions of the same story. Draw on the work you did in Topic 2 to discuss how the structure of each version affects the theme and the communication of the story. Ask students to pull out the differences in the ways that they were presented, as well as finding similarities in their presentations. This lesson will allow you to have conversations with students about how different structures and presentations have different effects and invoke different emotions.

  - Possible Examples:
    - The Spider and The Fly Poem vs. The Spider and The Fly Book by Tony DiTerlizzi read on video.
    - Casey at Bat Story vs. Casey at Bat Short
    - The Giving Tree Poem vs. The Giving Tree Book (Mentor Text)
    - Stone Soup by Marcia Brown vs. Stone Soup Video

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
Webb’s DOK: 3
Engaging Experience 9
Teaching Point: Comparing Similar Themes Across Texts
“Today I want to teach you that readers carry ideas from text to text. And that in doing so, sometimes readers notice themes that appear in multiple texts.”
Suggested Length of Time: 2-3 mini lessons
Standards Addressed
  Priority: RL.4.2, RL.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:
  • One way to do this would be to introduce students to the idea that you will be working to find themes across texts. Share with students two different pieces. These might be a poem and a short story with similar themes, songs and poems, or any combination that asks students to look for similarities from different sources. Model for students how you might create a T-chart to share out similar themes, characters, actions or activities. Model for students how you might also pick out differences in the ways that the authors chose to show these similar events or feelings. You might want to repeat this lesson for multiple sessions, giving students the time and opportunity to build their ideas and revisit their theories. You may want to reuse stories and compare them to different texts from day to day, or choose completely fresh texts each day.
    o Possible Pairings
      • The Land of Nod by Robert Louis Stevenson vs. Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak (click here for a video presentation and here for another one.
        • The world we live in when we are not awake is full of adventures just beyond our reach.
        • who are you; little i by ee cummings vs. Salvador Late or Early by Sandra Cisneros (at the end of this unit)
        • Our view of the world is shaped by our perspective.
      • Glory by John Legend and Common (song) vs Dream Speech by MLK Jr. Video here
        • Drawing on the theme of having a vision for what the world can be.
          • Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox vs. The House that Build Me by Miranda Lambert
            • Our memories are the collection of things that make us who we are
• **Rachel Delevoryas** by Randy Stonehill (poem) vs. **Popular** by Kristen Chenoweth

  - People are judged unfairly on their appearance. You can’t judge a book by its cover.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
Webb’s DOK: 3

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**Post Assessment**

- For a possible assessment, revisit what you chose for the pre-assessment. Give students the same poem and have them respond to the same questions. It will be exciting for you and the students to see the growth they will make with their answers.

- Give students a copy of a poem to read, then pose the following questions. Some poems you might consider are: “If I Were in Charge of the World” by Judith Viorst, “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost, or “Dreams” by Langston Hughes.

1. What did you notice about the structure or organization of this poem?
2. What is this poem really about?

Some poem-specific questions are:

For “If I Were in Charge of the World”:

- What do you know about the narrator from these lines below?
  
  
  If I were in charge of the world  
  There'd be brighter night lights,  
  Healthier hamsters, and  
  Basketball baskets forty-eight inches lower

For “The Road Not Taken”:

- What do you think the author is trying to say in the lines below?
  
  And sorry I could not travel both  
  And be one traveler, long I stood  
  And looked down one as far as I could  
  To where it bent in the undergrowth;

For “Dreams”:

- What do you think the author is trying to say in the lines below? What does “Life is a broken-winged bird/That cannot fly” mean?
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Engaging Scenario

Engaging Scenario
One possible closing activity for this unit would be for students to review the texts that they have studied over the last several weeks and participate in short text groups.

- Students will be asked to choose one or two texts that seemed particularly interesting or powerful to them over the course of this unit. Remind students that these do not have to be texts that were read aloud or shared with the whole class. Encourage students to think about all of the different types of writing that they studied during this unit (poetry and prose, mythology, fables or folktales).

- Students will have a short amount of time to practice reading the piece they selected smoothly, listening to themselves practice the words, the nuances in the understanding and other factors that impact performance and meaning of the piece.

- Students will record the theme they have identified for this piece, as well as how it is supported by words and phrases in the text. Students will want to have recorded this information in their reader's notebook. (At this point students could record themselves reading this piece and explaining their theme and evidence, to share with family.)

- Students will get into their small groups and read their text to others in their group. After reading their text, students will share out their themes and evidence.

- After all groups members have shared, encourage students to look for connections across texts and share these connections out!
“I’ve been thinking; you know, sometimes one thing happens to change your life, how you look at things, how you look at yourself. I remember one particular event. It was when? 1955 or ’56...a long time ago. Anyway, I had been working at night. I wrote for the newspaper and, you know, we had deadlines. It was late after midnight on the night before Memorial Day. I had to catch the train back to Brooklyn; the West side IRT. This lady got on to the subway at 34th and Penn Station, a nice looking white lady in her early twenties. Somehow she managed to push herself in with a baby on her right arm and a big suitcase in her left hand. Two children, a boy and a girl about three and five years old trailed after her.

Anyway, at Nevins Street I saw her preparing to get off at the next station, Atlantic Avenue. That’s where I was getting off too. It was going to be a problem for her to get off; two small children, a baby in her arm, and a suitcase in her hand. And there I was also preparing to get off at Atlantic Avenue. I couldn’t help but imagine the steep, long concrete stairs going down to the Long Island Railroad and up to the street. Should I offer my help? Should I take care of the girl and the boy, take them by their hands until they reach the end of that steep long concrete stairs?

Courtesy is important to us Puerto Ricans. And here I was, hours past midnight, and the white lady with the baby in her arm, a suitcase and two white children badly needing someone to help her.

I remember thinking; I’m a *Negro and a Puerto Rican. Suppose I approach this white lady in this deserted subway station late at night? What would she say? What would be the first reaction of this white American woman? Would she say: 'Yes, of course you may help me,' or would she think I was trying to get too familiar or would she think worse? What do I do if she screamed when I went to offer my help? I hesitated. And then...
* The word Negro was commonly used in the early and middle years of the last century to refer to an African American. Its use reflects the time period.

**Print Following Portion Separately or Post to SMART Board**

I pushed by her like I saw nothing as if I were insensitive to her needs. I was like a rude animal walking on two legs just moving on, half running along the long the subway platform, leaving the children and the suitcase and the woman with the baby in her arms. I ran up the steps of that long concrete stairs in twos and when I reached the street, the cold air slapped my warm face.

Perhaps the lady was not prejudiced after all. If you were not that prejudiced, I failed you, dear lady. If you were not that prejudiced I failed you; I failed you too, children. I failed myself. I buried my courtesy early on Memorial Day morning.

So, here is the promise I made to myself back then: if I am ever faced with an occasion like that again, I am going to offer my help regardless of how the offer is going to be received. Then I will have my courtesy with me again.”

**Sourced From:** [https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resource-collections/choosing-to-participate/little-things-are-big](https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resource-collections/choosing-to-participate/little-things-are-big)
Salvador Late or Early
Sandra Cisneros

Salvador with eyes the color of caterpillar, Salvador of the crooked hair and crooked teeth, Salvador whose name the teacher cannot remember, is a boy who is no one’s friend, runs along somewhere in that vague direction where homes are the color of bad weather, lives behind a raw wood doorway, shakes the sleepy brothers awake, ties their shoes, combs their hair with water, feeds them milk and cornflakes from a tin cup in the dim dark of the morning.

Salvador, late or early, sooner or later arrives with the string of younger brothers ready. Helps his mama, who is busy with the business of the baby. Tugs the arms of Cecilio, Arturito, makes them hurry, because today, like yesterday, Arturito has dropped the cigar box of crayons, has let go the hundred little fingers of red, green, yellow, blue, and nub of black sticks that tumble and spill over and beyond the asphalt puddles until the crossing-guard lady holds back the blur of traffic for Salvador to collect them again.

Salvador inside that wrinkled shirt, inside the throat that must clear itself and apologize each time it speaks, inside that forty-pound body of boy with its geography of scars, its history of hurt, limbs stuffed with feathers and rags, in what part of the eyes, in what part of the heart, in that cage of the chest where something throbs with both fists and knows only what Salvador knows, inside that body too small to contain the hundred balloons of happiness, the single guitar of grief, is a boy like any other disappearing out the door, beside the schoolyard gate, where he has told his brothers they must wait. Collects the hands of Cecilio and Arturito, scuttles off dodging the many schoolyard colors, the elbows and wrists crisscrossing, the several shoes running. Grows small and smaller to the eye, dissolves into the bright horizon, flutters in the air before disappearing like a memory of kites.
Fog

BY CARL SANDBURG

THE fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.
If-ing

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

IF I had some small change
I’d buy me a mule,
Get on that mule and
Ride like a fool.

If I had some greenbacks
I’d buy me a Packard,
Fill it up with gas and
Drive that baby backward.

If I had a million
I’d get me a plane
And everybody in America’d
Think I was insane.

But I ain’t got a million,
Fact is, ain’t got a dime —
So just by if-ing
I have a good time!
Unit 7: Interpretation of Text

Subject: Reading
Grade: 4
Name of Unit: Interpretation of Text Unit of Study Template
Length of Unit: 7 weeks (3rd week of March — 2nd week of May)

Overview of Unit:
This unit will focus on readers’ ability to interpret and analyze a text and determine multiple ideas and themes. Readers will be taught specific strategies that focus on analytical reading practices, to make sure that they are able to interpret the meaning of texts. This unit will also continue to support students in describing characters, setting, and plots in-depth. As with any unit, you need to first decide upon the skills that your students most need you to emphasize. In other words, you will want to gather data to inform your teaching and help you to see how your students have grown at reading literature before starting the unit.

In Topic 1 (Bend I) students will work to discuss themes and issues independently and in the company of their reading clubs. Students will look for places where the theme is clear and shines through. In these lessons students will learn ways to think about themes and lessons learned in familiar read-aloud texts, as well as learning that stories are never really about just one idea.

In Topic 2 (Bend II) students will learn to use an analytical lens for interpretation that focuses on literary craft, so that students are alert to the word and image choices and metaphors in the texts that they encounter. This ability to think metaphorically enriches students’ experience of literature, it hones their thinking in new directions, and it will enhance their own language and expressiveness.

In Topic 3 (Bend III) students will move to more nuanced reading and thinking by learning that looking at texts with similar themes, alongside each other, allows us to really investigate how different texts speak to different themes. Rarely are setting, characters, or events exactly matched, and it is in these fine differences and their implications that students will learn to unpack, and analyze how ideas that a first glance appear the same, may be different either in their development of in their details. During this lesson students will also learn to notice differences in nuances of the message or in each author’s treatment of the message. Students will learn to contrast how authors present or develop a meaning, theme, or character.
Getting Ready for the Unit:
- Familiarize yourself with the structure of book clubs and how they will look in your workshop classroom. Remember that these clubs will revolve around short stories, picture books, pieces of poetry, working our way up to novels.

- Gather a collection of high level picture books that have strong themes. The School Library Journal has a collection of the Top 100 picture books. While this list may have some books that don’t exactly fit this lesson, many of these books are a good starting place. Because of the nature of this unit, it is difficult to have students begin by identifying themes in their book club books. To ensure students build a solid foundation, beginning these lessons with a study of a high level picture book might be a better option.

- The first several lessons of the Interpretation unit pair well with the Literary Essay Unit in writing. However, as a result of stair stepping our reading and writing units, these lessons may or may not begin at the same times. Use your professional judgment to decide how to incorporate these ideas early in the reading unit, or to revisit them later during the writing unit.

- Choose read alouds

Pre-Assessment (given prior to starting the unit):
- Read aloud a story or picture book, pausing at prompts you have embedded and asking students to write in response to these.
  
  o How does this scene fit with what has come before?
  
  o What does this phrase mean?
  
  o Why is this (scene, event, setting, object) important to the story?

At the end of the reading ask students to:
“Write what you think this story is really, truly about---what lessons does it teach? Use details from the story to support your thinking.”
Possible books to use: Fox, The Lemonade Club, Willow

Read-Aloud Considerations:
Select read-alouds to support this work. Look for a read-aloud that has strong themes and symbolism. You will want to choose a read aloud text that you strongly connect to. Some text suggestions might be:

- Love that Dog

- The Wizard of Oz
- Robin Hood
- The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe
- The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane
- Holes

Also, any of the books suggested during the Following Characters Unit (Unit 2) that were not read, might be great read-alouds for this unit as well.

_During your read-aloud make sure to hit standard RL.4.2: Determine the theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text._

**Essential Questions:**
1. How can I think about ways in which different authors approach the same theme differently?
2. How can I compare and contrast the way a theme is handled similarly and differently in different texts?
3. How can I heighten my skills at interpretation so I see themes that thread through a text and that sometimes thread across many texts?
4. How can I use the words and actions of characters to really understand the message the author is trying to share?

**Enduring Understanding/Big Ideas:**
1. Studying authors and their approach to themes helps us to understand different ways to share similar thoughts, feelings, events.
2. Understanding the words, actions and characters that different authors create, helps us to better understand the texts we are reading and the characters inside of them.
3. Being aware of the author's point of view is essential when interpreting text from multiple lenses.

**Priority Standards for Unit:**
- RL.4.2: **Determine** a theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text; **summarize** the text
- RL.4.6: **Compare and contrast** the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
• RL.4.9: **Compare and contrast** the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths and traditional literature from different cultures.

**Supporting Standards for unit:**

• RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

• RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. character’s thoughts, words or actions)

• SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  
  o A Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
  
  o B Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
  
  o C Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
  
  o D Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Unwrapped Concepts (Students need to know)</th>
<th>Unwrapped Skills (Students need to be able to do)</th>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomy Levels</th>
<th>Webb's DOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL.4.2</td>
<td>A theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text</td>
<td><strong>Determine</strong></td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The text</td>
<td><strong>Summarize</strong></td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>RL.4.6</td>
<td>point of view from which different stories are narrated.</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>difference between first- and third-person narrations.</td>
<td><strong>Compare and Contrast</strong></td>
<td>Analyze</td>
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the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths and traditional literature from different culture.

| RL.4.9 | Compare and Contrast | Analyze | 4 |

**Unit Vocabulary:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Cross-Curricular Words</th>
<th>Content/Domain Specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>symbolism</td>
<td>interpret, repetition, perspective, point of view</td>
</tr>
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**Topic 1: Discussing Themes and Issues in the Company of Clubs**

**Engaging Experience 1**

**Teaching Point:** What is Interpretation?

Readers use all they know, from all their reading work, to think about what the story they are reading might be teaching them about life.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- One way you can do this is to make sure the examples students shared during connection are still visible so students to compare their interpretation thinking to what you are about to model.

  o Using a read aloud text from the year, model for students your interpretation of a familiar text.
Example: You might choose to use *Tiger Rising* (or your read aloud from Unit 2, so the students can see how developing theories are different than interpretive work.) Have a T-chart ready with one side that lists the theories you developed about Rob and Sistine in Unit 2 and the other side blank for you to fill in your interpretations. (see example below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Theories</th>
<th>Text Interpretations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rob:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Rob’s connection with Sistine will help him find a way to talk about his mom.&lt;br&gt;- Rob does not want to keep his feelings inside, but fear and sadness keep him from doing anything about it.&lt;br&gt;- Rob had to find comfort and acceptance again, in order to be the person he truly is.</td>
<td>- While at first Rob did not see Sistine as someone he would like, he realized he judged her way too quickly. (This interpretation can then lead to how we can think about life as well—People in life are not always what they seem, we often judge people in life based on superficial values, or it is possible to befriend a person that you might not originally think you would like.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- As you model this thinking, continue to point out that just like there are many theories that can be said of a character, there are also many different interpretations that can be gleaned from a text. It all depends on your schema and how the book connects with you as a person, based on your own experiences.

- Name explicitly what you have done, showing how your interpretation of the text was more universal and could applied to life in general. You could say something like, “I also focused on an area of the text that really spoke to me, because I, too, have judged people too quickly and ended up seeing the error of my ways.”

- Allow students time to work with their shoulder partner to create their own interpretations of *Tiger Rising* (or the text you use). They may focus on one of these other areas:
  - Closing people off
  - Difficulties with moving
  - Family relationships
  - Death
- Bullying, etc…

- Do not provide them this list, as you want them to come to these big issues on their own, but this will give you an idea of the direction to move your students.

  - Their interpretations may be very surface-level at this point and that’s okay, but do remind them that just like with theories, they need to have text evidence to back up their interpretations. Document what they share from the active engagement section of your mini-lesson, and use that as a basis to build your lessons for the remainder of the unit.

- Leave students with the following questions to help guide them and their partners during workshop time: (make into an anchor chart if you wish)

  - What did the main character learn?
  - What made good things happen in the story?
  - What could have prevented bad things from happening in the story?

  You can also provide these sentence starters to help them with their discussions:

  - The character learned that…
  - This story teaches us…
  - Good things happen when people…
  - Bad things happen when people do/don’t…
  - The moral of the story might be…

- It will be beneficial to set up an Interpretation Anchor Chart for your read-aloud to reference and add to as you read the book. This anchor chart will also be a tool you can use for Engaging Experience 6.

**Bloom’s Levels:** 2, 3

**Webb’s DOK:** Understand, Analyze

**Engaging Experience 2**

**Teaching Point:** Interpretation through Issues in Text

To interpret or learn from books, readers can look for issues—especially issues that recur or issues that seem particularly important to the characters—and then consider how the main character relates to that issue—what does he or she think about it, feel about it, how does he or she react to it?”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this is to** use your current read aloud or a previous read aloud and identify a major issue that happens in the text. Then explicitly model evidence that supports how the characters are reacting towards the issue and how they feel about it.
Model how as a reader you take a step back from the evidence and ask these questions to help identify a possible theme:

- What message does the author want us to learn from this problem?
- Based on _______ (character’s) feelings, how does the author want us to feel about _______ (issue)?
- What larger idea does this problem represent, and what is the author trying to tell us about that idea?

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze, Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

### Engaging Experience 3  
**Teaching Point:** Using Key Scenes to Foster Interpretation

“Readers carefully consider key scenes in stories—when characters experience strong emotions and/or make critical choices. Readers think extra hard about these scenes, because they are usually related to the lessons in the book. To find these lessons, readers will unpack those scenes—maybe free writing about them or talking with others about them.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

### Standards Addressed

**Priority:** RL.4.2

### Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you can do this is to** pull out a powerful scene that has occurred from your read aloud. Discuss how you know it is a powerful scene—because the characters change because of it or act out of character, or it creates or solves a problem.
  
  - An example for a scene you could model with would be when Mr. Terupt gets hit in the head with a snowball in *Because of Mr. Terupt*, or when Jack makes a horrible comment about August on Halloween to Julian in *Wonder*.

  - Based on the event you choose, model focusing in on the lesson readers can learn from the scene, not just about that story but about life. Make sure to note that there could be more than one interpretation that readers could make.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze, Understand  
**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

### Engaging Experience 4  
**Teaching Point:** Comparing Character Perspectives to the Meaning of the Story

“Today I am going to teach you how to look more deeply at point of view. So far we have done this work *between* texts in order to compare and contrast point of view, but never have we done this work *within* a text to analyze how the main character’s point of view affects the story. This
is complex work we are attacking today as we analyze how a text might be told differently depending on the person telling it.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson  
**Standards Addressed**  
**Priority:** RL.4.6

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you could do this is** to pull out one of the first scenes in the novel, *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt *(pgs.6-10)*, where Ally has selected a card to give to her teacher, Mrs. Hall. Discuss how her perspective/point of view shapes the events that follow in the classroom. Also, make predictions of how her perspective of herself, and her inner thoughts will impact her in school, and in maintaining friendships within the classroom. Then model and discuss what assumptions adults and other students would make about how Aly feels about her teacher and the type of person she is. Make sure in your modeling to use specific evidence from the text to support your thinking.

- **Note:** you could do this with any text that clearly highlights the way a character thinks or feels about a particular topic and how that contributes to the events that unfold in the plot.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 3

**Engaging Experience 5**  
**Teaching Point:** Developing a Reading Plan to Deepen Interpretations  
Readers get lost in the words of a text to help guide their interpretive work. There is much to glean from a text, some words that are explicitly stated and some that are hidden. As reading detectives it’s our job to figure out what is being implied. This helps us track our thinking about our interpretation through the text.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson  
**Standards Addressed**  
**Priority:** RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you can do this is** to use any text that has details that are directly hidden and those that also have hidden messages, or use figurative language that we as the reader need to interpret or decode to determine the message that the character or author is implying. Project your text of choice on the Smartboard or Document Camera, and begin by highlighting what is explicitly stated (directly stated). Then use another color to highlight clues to what the character or author is implying by using inferences to decode their hidden meanings. Explain how you arrived at your inferences for what is implicitly stated, and write the inferences and your thinking directly on your copy of the text.
An example of how to do this would be to use Salvador Late or Early (found at the end of Unit 6). Model how to pull out specific things that Salvador does in his day or tasks he has to perform. Then transition into what is being implied about his character. For instance when it says “in that cage of the chest where something throbs with both fists and knows only what Salvador knows,” it doesn’t directly say what Salvador knows. So we need to imply and interpret this by piecing together, and putting into context all of the details. Model your thinking for how to infer from the implied excerpts.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze, Understand

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

**Engaging Experience 6**

**Teaching Point:** Revisiting Interpretations to Build Supporting Evidence

“Readers need a strong body of evidence to support their interpretive work. Often stories and topics are around many ideas and issues, so it’s important for readers to keep an open mind and accept that their idea might change the more they read. Today we are going to read further, collecting evidence, and thinking critically about how it connects to our interpretations.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini lesson

**Standards Addressed**

**Priority:** RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you could do this is** to pull up an excerpt of the next scene you will be coming across in your read-aloud. Refer back to the interpretation anchor chart you have been creating from your read-aloud text. Model your self-talk to students as you come across different pieces of evidence in the new section of this text. Is the evidence supporting or contradicting our interpretation? If it is contradicting it, model how to modify your interpretation if need be. If it is supporting our interpretation, then demonstrate how to pull out the evidence that best supports the interpretation you are forming.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

**Engaging Experience 7**

**Teaching Point:** Revising Ideas and Interpretations as the Story Progresses

As readers get more information, they may realize they need to revise their interpretation(s). This happens in our real lives all the time. We interpret a situation one way and then get more information and realize that’s not how it is at all. We’re going to do that same work in our texts today.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you could do this is** to pull out your interpretation that you have previously created for your selected read-aloud text. Review the evidence that you have started to list to support your interpretation. See if there is more evidence that you can add to this. Discuss with your students that as they are doing their interpretive work, they may realize that they are struggling to find enough evidence to support their interpretation. This could mean one of two things: the interpretation is too specific, and we need to think more universally, or that we need to revisit and look for a different interpretation that may be stronger within the text.

- Discuss with the students that either way, books often have more than one interpretation or theme that we can pull from the text. Sometimes a story changes dramatically from the beginning and we need to redirect or change our thinking. Demonstrate how to pull out another key event/ form of repetition/ or issue that a character is facing. Ask these questions again to help guide your thinking for your new interpretation:
  
  - What should we be learning alongside the character based on their struggles?
  - Is there a statement or an idea that is repeated throughout the text? What statement is the author trying to make about that idea?
  - What has a character learned about themselves by overcoming their big struggle?

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

**Engaging Experience 8**

**Teaching Point:** Seeing Interpretations in More Than One Way

“Since good books are about more than one idea, readers follow more than one idea as they go forward, supporting their ideas with evidence from the text, or revising their ideas when the evidence isn’t there.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

Priority: RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you could do this would be** to pull out the second interpretation that you modeled with your students yesterday. Remind them that to test the strength of your interpretation, there should be plenty of evidence that we as readers can pull out to support it. Note: to more effectively meet the needs of your students, you may want to purposefully have made your second interpretation from yesterday’s lesson too specific
to show you problem solving or struggling by not finding enough evidence. Model how
to take your statement and make your interpretation more universal. Then model how
much easier it becomes to find the evidence.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3

**Engaging Experience 9-10**

**Teaching Point:** Revising Multiple Interpretations

“Today we are going to revisit the work of revising our interpretations. However, now we have
more than one to track and find evidence for or against. Remember what we talked about
yesterday—that you want to look for the deep, implicit evidence that makes a connection, not the
obvious. This is work we will do over the next two days.”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

- **Priority:** RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you could do this is to** select a new scene that you will be reading during the
  read-aloud, and provide copies of that scene for the students. Have an anchor chart or
  anchor charts prepared for the interpretations or ideas that you have previously come up
  with in your earlier mini-lessons, the ones you will continue to track and revisit
today. Model for students how to add evidence or revise interpretations based on the
  information you are reading.

  - Elicit ideas and conversation from the students as well, allowing them to offer
    ideas after turning and talking with their shoulder partner or club members.

  - Additionally, this is a great place to pull in close reading strategies and revisit any
    of those that are applicable or that students still struggle with. Incorporating these
    is a great way to find evidence that supports our work.

  - If students are tracking their own interpretations of the text, they can bring their
    reading plans with them to the carpet and work on their individual ones as well.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3
Topic 2: Reading Closely to See How Themes are Shaped by Authors

Engaging Experience 11
Teaching Point: Studying How a Text Develops Theme

Readers sift through everything that happens in a text, looking for patterns, patterns that may not be seen right away. These patterns can give the reader clues to figure out the theme, and if the reader pays attention, they can see how the author develops the theme through the patterns. Patterns could include character behaviors such as: boys not wanting to do girl stuff, characters who take in those who have been left alone in the world, characters who are cruel to animals, or any other pattern of character behaviors or thought. A good reader asks themselves when they notice these patterns, “What is the story really saying about that?”

Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL.4.2

Detailed Description/Instructions:

● **One way you could do this** is to use *The Wizard of Oz*, (especially if you’ve chosen this as your read-aloud). Pull excerpts where the Lion says he wants “courage” from the wizard even though his actions already show bravery already in several places in the book, or when the Scarecrow wants a “brain” but his actions already show thoughtfulness and intelligence in several places in the book. Work with students to notice these patterns. Prompt students by asking “Why does the author use this pattern?” or “What lesson is the author hoping we learn alongside the characters through this pattern?”

● **Another way you could do this** is to use provide students with two fresh texts that contains patterns—they should be short texts (poems, prose excerpts, drama excerpts, or video clips) that could be read/watched and responded to within a single class period. With the first text analyze the patterns together, allowing students to turn and talk as you pose questions such as “Why does the author use this pattern?” “What does this pattern teach us about the character?” “What do you think the author is trying to teach readers with this pattern?” For the second text, pull out your “Writing to Think About Message or Theme” anchor chart (page 97 of Literary Essay unit) and have students use these thought prompts to either respond individually in their notebook or discuss with their book club the analysis of the patterns they see in that text. Let students do this part during workshop time.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand, Analyze

Webb’s DOK: 2, 3
Engaging Experience 12
Teaching Point: Using An Author’s Word Choice, Images, and Phrases to Foster Interpretation
Not only do readers read closely to find patterns in characters’ thoughts, actions, and speech, but readers also read closely by thinking about why an author may have chosen the precise words, phrases, and images in the story to communicate a theme or life lesson.
Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:
• One way you could do this is to use a text that uses very precise words, phrases, and images to describe characters, setting, or other elements.
  o For instance, you could use the opening chapter, The Cyclone, in the Wizard of Oz, where L. Frank Baum describes Kansas and Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. Give students their own copy of this section and ask students to find examples of how the author uses color to describe the characters and the setting. Pull out the language and word choice that the author is using. For instance, when describing Aunt Em, Baum says that the sun and wind “had taken the sparkle from her eyes and left them a sober gray; they had taken the red from her cheeks and lips, and they were gray also.” Ask students what impression this gives us about Aunt Em, not only what she looks like but who she is and what her life is like. Continue to look at the language and word choice for the other characters and the setting. What effect does this create in the mood? Use this discussion to guide your students to think more deeply about the intentions that authors have when they choose precise words, phrases, and images.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 2, 3

Engaging Experience 13
Teaching Point: Analyzing Symbolism
One way readers are moved by literature and understand literature more deeply is when they are able to notice and understand symbols in stories. Symbols are objects that have great importance in the story. Symbols also have more than one meaning. They connect the reader to bigger meanings, letting a simple thing stand for a more complex thing. Symbols are another thing readers can look to in order to figure out the theme or themes of a story.
Suggested Length of Time: 2-3 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you could do this** is to have students think of well-known objects/symbols that they know of that represent a larger idea or meaning. Model for students using texts you have read this year that have symbols in theme. Model the process of how to select an object or image that played a key role in the story and find where this object was highlighted in the text. Then model how you arrive at deciding what idea this object represents. Last demonstrate the lesson we should be learning based on that big idea.

  o Examples of symbolism you could use:

    - Book: *Wonder-* Object: Astronaut helmet—what the helmet represents: insecurities or disguise. Theme: Don’t hide your insecurities because someone will always like you for who you are.

    - Book: *The Wizard of Oz-* Object: The yellow brick road—what the object represents: self-discovery/ journey. Theme: Through our journeys we discover who we truly are and what matters most to us.

    - You can use a visual presentation to model your thinking and your work. Students can then create their own symbolism presentations for their book club groups. An example of template presentations for this work that you can use are linked below:

- **Another way you could do this** is to use the picture book *Tea with Milk* by Allen Say. In this book, the author uses tea as a symbol of the two cultures the main character must live between. As you read, think aloud as you notice the repeated references to tea and what they mean. Tell students, “I know when authors use an object over and over, it is not by accident. Often the author wants the reader to think of that object as a symbol. I wonder what tea could be symbolizing in this story.” As you continue to read, invite the students to turn and talk or jot their thoughts about tea as a symbol and what it means. As you and the class finish the analysis of tea as a symbol in this book, ask book clubs to discuss whether or not there are any symbols in their books and if so, what they are and what they mean.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Understand, Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 2, 3  

**Engaging Experience 14**

**Teaching Point:** Analyzing Meaning in Author Repetition  
“Readers, today I’m going to teach you about a literary device called repetition. Sometimes authors choose to use this in order to convey the theme or important ideas that connect to their
message. Today we are going to look for repeating patterns in texts and ask ourselves, ‘Why did the author choose to do that? What might they be trying to tell us?”

**Suggested Length of Time:** 2 mini lessons

**Standards Addressed**
- Priority: RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you could do this** is to read the poem, “The Wall,” by Nicolas Guillen (see below). This poem is full of repetition that helps the poet to emphasize the message he is trying to convey to his audience. Make sure students have their own copy of the poem to highlight the areas of repetition that is found throughout. Also, reference the difference between the words “open” and “close” within the stanzas. What implications is the poet trying to make with this vocabulary? Use this language to help support your modeling for identifying the theme.

  o Note: It may be helpful to have students buddy up and immerse themselves in their own discussions about what the poet is trying to emphasize with the repetition and variations of language, and share out their thinking, as you scaffold and support their work.

- **Another way you could do this** is to read the poem, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” by Robert Frost (see below) (Click here for a wonderful presentation of this poem). Make sure students have their own copy of the poem to highlight the repetition they find. Ask students to read the poem to themselves first and allow them to talk with a partner about what they believe is going on in the poem. Next, allow groups to share out their initial thoughts about the poem. As groups share out, address misconceptions and help students with words they may not know. Ask students to read the poem again to look for repetitions. Students will most likely find that the last two lines are repeated very quickly. Ask them to think about why the poet repeated the lines. It wasn’t because he didn’t know what else to say! What are these repeated lines telling readers? Is there more than one meaning? Is the phrase “miles to go before I sleep” a symbol for anything? After a rich class discussion, allow students time to put their own thoughts in their reader’s notebooks.
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

By Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.
The Wall

To make this wall,
bring me all of the hands:
The blacks, their black hands,
the whites, their hands of white.

Ah,
a wall that runs
from the beach up to the hills,
from the hills down to the beach, yes,
over along the horizon.

"Knock, knock!"
"Who's there?"
"A rose and a carnation..."
"Open up the wall!"
"Knock, knock!"
"Who's there?"
"The colonel's saber..."
"Close up the wall!"
"Knock, knock!"
"Who's there?"
"The dove and the laurel..."
"Open up the wall!"
"Knock, knock!"
"Who's there?"
"The scorpion and the centipede..."
"Close up the wall!"

For the heart of a friend,
open up the wall;
for poison and daggers,
close up the wall;
for myrtle and mint,
open up the wall;
for the fangs of a serpent,
close up the wall;
for the hummingbird on a flower,
open up the wall...

Let us raise up a wall
by joining all the hands;
the blacks, their black hands,
the whites, their hands of white.

A wall that runs
from the beach up to the hills,
from the hills down to the beach, yes,
over along the horizon.

—Nicolás Guillén
Translation by Sarita Chávez Silverman
Bloom’s Levels: Understand, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 2, 3

Engaging Experience 15
Teaching Point: Analyzing Symbolism in Titles
“Readers don’t just find symbolism in the objects authors include in the story. Sometimes the title of the text is symbolic as well, and we need to look past its more literal meaning to see if something deeper resides there.”
Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.2
Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way you could do this** is to select a shorter passage/poem to help your students understand a title as symbolism. You could refer back to the poem, “The Wall” that you read previously.
  - Again, model your thinking about all the emotions and functions that are associated with a wall. Review the theme you pulled out earlier, based on the repetition. Think aloud about the author’s intentions for giving the poem that title and what he wanted to convey to his readers. What is “The Wall” symbolizing in this case? Refer explicitly to evidence in the text that supports this symbolism and the theme as you work through the poem together with your students.
  - For application: Allow students time to process with their shoulder partners what the meaning of the titles of two other familiar texts could mean. Require students to use evidence from those texts to support their interpretation of the symbolism they feel is being shown and how it connects to the overall theme/lesson of the text.
  - Bring students together to share out among the group. Highlight the different themes people had even though they were all looking and thinking about the same material.

Bloom’s Levels: Understand, Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 2, 3

Engaging Experience 16
Teaching Point: Using Text Details to Find Foreshadowing
“Powerful readers know that in good stories details matter, and readers think hard and ask about details that seem to be in the text for no clear reason, because there will be a reason and readers find it.” When authors use foreshadowing, they are hinting to the reader about important events
that will be coming up, and good readers know that important events can lead to the theme or themes of a story.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson

**Standards Addressed**

**Priority:** RL.4.2

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way you could do this** is to refer back to previously used texts that show clear foreshadowing of events that occur later in the story. Model aloud for students in the details that seem ominous or not connected to what they are reading, and show them how you hold onto these thoughts and questions throughout your reading of the text and eventually how it all comes together.

- Inform students that the most difficult part of this literary device is keeping track of those details that are confusing or questions you have as you read through the text. Model your process or organizational structure for doing so, so that students have a way to do this while reading during workshop time. Also emphasize the importance of reading closely to hold onto those “hints” authors give us to help us to predict the outcomes that will happen in the text.

- **A few examples you could use:**
  - In *The Lemonade Club*, the teacher telling her student who has cancer, “I do know how you feel” foreshadows that she too has cancer.
  - In *Wonder*, Auggie’s Dad saying that August attending public school, would be like “leading a lamb to the slaughter,” foreshadows the incident in the woods at the end of the book.

- Allow students time to think about foreshadowing with their book club members and ways the author may have used foreshadowing in their text. Have them think about details that hinted at events that occurred later or character traits they noticed early on that hinted who a character was going to be in the story.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze

**Webb’s DOK:** 3

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**Topic 3: Comparing Themes and How Characters Relate to Them Across Texts**

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Engaging Experience 17
Teaching Point: Connecting Between Texts
Readers, today I am going to teach you that making connections across texts helps us see how similar ideas can be expressed different ways. It is important to see these connections, because they help us see how we can make connections in our own reading and writing lives
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.9

Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way you could do this** would be to have students share their thoughts about two of the read-alouds you have done this year. Make this a structured conversation, asking students specifically to connect ideas, lessons, characters, and themes in these two texts. Ask students if they are able to connect any of these ideas to another text they have read?
- One example would be to compare *Tiger Rising* and *Bridge to Terabithia*. You could compare the characters of Jack and Jess. You could compare lessons each character learned and the themes you could pull from both books. You could compare the idea that both boys were closed off to things that made them uncomfortable or they felt they would be judged by. You could compare how both Jess and Jack learn to believe in themselves more. You could find a theme that would work for both books, including the theme of growing up, the theme of friendship, and the theme of individualism.

Bloom’s Levels: Analyze
Webb’s DOK: 4

Engaging Experience 18
Teaching Point: Comparing Theme, Topics, and Patterns in Texts
Today I want to teach you that while some of our stories have similar connections, it is important to be very precise in the types of connections we are making. Today we are going to focus on similar themes, topics and patterns we see in texts
Suggested Length of Time: 1-2 mini-lessons
Standards Addressed
Priority: RL.4.9
Detailed Description/Instructions:
- **One way you could do this** is to pull out an overarching big idea that your read-aloud centers around. For instance, if you were reading *The Wizard of Oz*, you might pick the big idea of journey or quest. Then you would ask students in different book clubs if their text also contained this same big idea of going on a journey or quest. Allow a book club whose text has a journey or quest in it to help you model a group discussion, showing
how the same big idea can be demonstrated in different ways in different stories. Brainstorm some possible other big ideas with the students (e.g., friendship, love, freedom, greed). You will be pairing up book clubs that you think could find a common big idea between their two books.

- Here are some questions that could guide both the modeling you do with one book club as well as each combined book club discussions:
  - What are some of the big ideas in your book?
  - How is your big idea shown through the book? Describe it.
  - What is the life lesson that the author is trying to teach us about ________ (big idea topic).
  - What evidence from the story supports your interpretation?
  - What patterns have you noticed with a character's behavior, thoughts, struggles that continue to influence the plot?
- Explain and model how after each group shares their responses to the questions above about their book they should be building off one another’s ideas in the conversation, by highlighting the similarities or comparisons between the two different texts, questioning other book club members for clarification if need be. Make sure to not just make surface level connections but really dig deeper by focusing on character development, plot events, and how you arrived at your interpretations.
- Once students have a clear model of how to have collaborative discussions about making comparisons across texts, send them off to do this work with the other book club you have paired them up with. Students will begin their conversations using the guided questions above, and at the end of the lesson groups will come back to share how the same big idea was shown across multiple texts, noting the similarities and differences.

**Bloom’s Levels:** Analyze  
**Webb’s DOK:** 4

**Engaging Experience 19**  
**Teaching Point:** Using Character Viewpoint to Understand the Differences in Texts  
While some of these stories have similar themes, there are also a lot of differences—so many viewpoints centered on the same theme. One way readers study those differences is to look at how different characters handle (or connect to) the same theme or issue.

**Suggested Length of Time:** 1 mini-lesson  
**Standards Addressed**  
  - **Priority:** RL.4.2, RL.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**
One way you could do this is to revisit the themes you previously came up with from two different texts that share a similar theme.

- An example of texts that you might choose could be *Love That Dog* and “Stray” from *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant. One possible theme might have been the importance of helping those who can’t help themselves—in both texts we see children who rescue dogs with the consent of their parents. Or perhaps your theme is around the inhumanity of animal shelters, as this was addressed in both pieces as well. Or maybe your students came up with the theme of accepting those that have been outcasts in life, whether they be animal or human.

- Take time to model for students how each author addressed this same theme differently based on the viewpoint of their character. For instance in *Love That Dog*, Jack and his father go out intentionally to rescue a dog and Jack wants to title his poem, “You Come Too” showing that he is accepting a dog that has been outcast. However, in “Stray” we see the daughter take the lead in wanting to take in the stray puppy, and it’s her example that leads her parents to agree to let her have the dog. So, another theme you could bring into the discussion is the idea that adults learn from children just as much as children learn from adults.

- Have students work with their shoulder partner or book club group to do this same work with another theme that is presented in both texts. It could be one that came up in the previous lesson or one of the other two mentioned above.

- If your students are doing this work with their clubs, you might assign each club a different theme to address (especially if you got a good sampling of responses the day before).

- It could be just as powerful to give every group the same theme and see how they bring in the characters’ viewpoints and events in the story to defend it. Have students consider ways that the author addressed this issue in the same way and in different ways.

Bloom’s Levels: Analyze, Understand  
Webb’s DOK: 2, 3

**Engaging Experience 20**  
**Teaching Point:** Comparing Key Scenes from Two Different Texts  
“Key scenes can give us great insight into what the theme of a story may be. We have done this work with just one text, but today we are going to try it with two texts. I want you to pay special attention to the characters’ reactions and the events that unfold in each scene.”
Suggested Length of Time: 1 mini-lesson

Standards Addressed

Priority: RL.4.9

Detailed Description/Instructions:

- **One way you could do this** could be to pull out two powerful scenes from texts that your students know well that center around characters facing a similar event or conflict.
  
  o An example of texts you could use could be the May 14th entry in *Love That Dog* where the reader learns that all Jack’s poetry has really been about his dog (and losing him), even when he was writing about the blue car. In “Stray,” revisit the scene where Doris cries in the pillow as she hears her father leave with the dog. No matter which texts you choose, use these thinking stems to model your thinking for the class:
    
    - How did the two characters react to a similar event?
    - How did a similar idea come to each of the two different characters?
    - What did the characters say? Do?
    - How does the author describe them in these moments?

- **Another way you could do this** is using the same two texts you’ve chosen, pull up the starter questions below to help facilitate strong conversations in book clubs today. You will want to explicitly model how to use these starters using the two example texts. Explain that the purpose of these starters is to push members to say more about what they are thinking. Then you can have students also try them out for the two model texts that you’ve chosen. Note: It may be helpful for student to have a copy of both text examples, as well as the starters during your mini-lesson.
  
  o One idea this book suggests is….
    
    - One example that shows (this idea) is…because…
    - Another example that shows (this idea) is…because…
    - This makes me realize/think that…

  o Or
    
    - I used to think this text was about…because…
    - Now I think this text is about…because…
    - This makes me realize/think that…

  o Or
These two texts are similar because they both teach that…

On the one hand, though, in the first book…

On the other hand, in the second book…

This makes me realize/think that…

**Bloom’s Levels**: Analyze
**Webb’s DOK**: 4

**Engaging Experience 21**

**Teaching Point**: Connecting Story Themes to Real Life

“Readers recall other stories and think and talk about how the stories compare; readers weigh our own lives and decisions with those characters make, finding possible life-lessons that books leave us with. Moreover, as the books we read get more complicated, things are not always what they seem. Characters who appear to be trustworthy may not be, and so their relationship to themes and lessons they demonstrate will shift. But with our training, we are like a basketball player, weaving with grace and power through complicated courts, full of fouls and blocks.”

**Suggested Length of Time**: 1-2 mini-lessons

**Standards Addressed**

**Priority**: RL.4.6, RL.4.9

**Detailed Description/Instructions:**

- **One way to do this** would be to use the text “Rainforest Hero” by Patricia Newman or Crow Call by Lois Lowry.
  - Model your thinking about what the theme of this story might be, using evidence to support it (both implicit and explicit), and compare that with the texts of Love That Dog and “Stray” by considering the character’s point of view and patterns you see in all three texts.
  - Model for students how to construct your ideas into a reading response that can be put in their notebook.

**Bloom’s Levels**: Analyze

**Webb’s DOK**: 4
Post Assessment

Assessment:
- Read aloud a story or picture book, pausing at prompts you have embedded and asking students to write in response to these.
  - How does this scene fit with what has come before?
  - What does this phrase mean?
  - Why is it important to the story?

At the end of the reading ask students to:
“Write about what you think this story is really, truly about---what lessons does it teach? Use details from the story to support your thinking.”

Possible books to use: Fox, The Lemonade Club, Willow

Engaging Scenario

As a way to assess and celebrate students’ knowledge from the unit you could have students create a video or audio representation of how their interpretation was supported from different details of their book. Some ways students might complete this could be:
- Creating a Prezi that shows verbal and visual symbols.
- Use IMovie Trailer on the IPad to entice other students to read their book by highlighting the life lesson that the text brings about using evidence.
- Create a Tagxedo that includes words or details that are associated with their interpretation of the text.
Unit 8: Gem Unit: Recommitting to Reading

Subject: Reading  
Grade: 4  
Name of Unit: Gem Unit: Recommitting to Reading  
Length of Unit: 2 weeks (Last two weeks of May)

Reference teaching points from Unit 5, and select those you feel would most benefit your students as you wrap up the year and commit to summer reading goals.