

A photograph of two young students, a boy and a girl, sitting at a wooden desk and reading books. The boy, on the left, is wearing a green sweater and holding a yellow pencil. The girl, on the right, is wearing a grey hoodie and pointing at a book. They are both looking down at their books with concentration. In the background, there is a wooden desk with various items on it, including a green container and some papers.

GRADE THREE
Sample Sessions

UNITS OF STUDY *for* Teaching Reading

LUCY CALKINS

with COLLEAGUES *from the* READING AND WRITING PROJECT

Heinemann
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™

GRADE THREE Components

- ◆ **Four Units of Study:** including two units in reading fiction and two in reading informational texts.
- ◆ **A Guide to the Reading Workshop, Intermediate Grades:** Details the architecture of the minilessons, conferences, and small-group strategy sessions and articulates the management techniques needed to support an effective reading workshop.
- ◆ **If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grades 3–5:** Contains additional units to support and extend instruction and to prepare students for work in the main units as needed.
- ◆ **Reading Pathways, Grades 3–5:** Puts a system for assessing reading into teachers' hands and into the hands of students.
- ◆ **Online Resources for Teaching Reading:** A treasure chest of additional grade-specific resources, including bibliographies, short texts, illustrations to show completed anchor charts, reproducible checklists, pre- and post-assessments, homework, mentor texts, videos, and Web links.
- ◆ **Large-Format Anchor Chart Post-it® notes:** Preprinted Post-it® notes with summarized, illustrated teaching points help teachers create and evolve anchor charts across each band and unit.
- ◆ **Trade Pack:** Grade-level book set for teacher demonstration, modeling, and read-aloud (recommended optional purchase; available in bundles with the units and also separately).

For complete details, please visit unitsofstudy.com/teachingreading



“Powerful instruction produces visible and immediate results; when youngsters are taught well, the thinking, talking, and writing about reading they produce becomes far more substantial, complex, and significant. Good teaching pays off. When you provide students with constant opportunities to read and to write and when you actively and assertively teach into their best efforts, their literacy development will astonish you, their parents, the school administrators, and best of all, the students themselves.”

—LUCY CALKINS

Welcome to the Grade 3 *Units of Study for Teaching Reading* Sampler. This booklet includes sample sessions from each of the four units of study for this grade level, chosen to broadly represent the range of work that students will do and to provide a snapshot view of how instruction develops across the school year.

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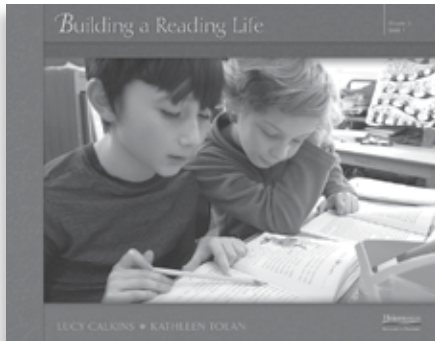
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GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 1 OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Building a Reading Life

LUCY CALKINS ♦ KATHLEEN TOLAN

This unit launches not just this year, but also your kids' lives as upper elementary school readers. The unit helps your students see themselves as people who care about reading. Your students will collaborate with each other and with you to turn the classroom into a good place for reading, devising systems for book recommendations and plans for organizing the classroom library.

Right from the start of third grade, your emphasis will not only be on getting students to love reading, but also on helping them work with resolve to ramp up their reading skills. This will begin with them reflecting on performance assessments and using new learning progressions to ratchet up the level of their work on those assessments. You'll show your students that with deliberate effort, they can accelerate their skills in ways that are visible to them, to each other, and to you. This first bend in the unit gets readers started keeping track of their reading and studying their data to set goals and make plans.

Over the rest of the unit, you'll continue to fan children's love of reading as you read aloud *Stone Fox* (or another book of your choice) and your children read within-reach fiction books they've chosen. You'll equip your kids with ways to check on their literal comprehension and to use fix-up strategies when they've lost the thread of the story. You'll also stress key foundational skills such as synthesis. As books get longer, it is important for readers to grasp how a new part of a story fits with earlier parts.

Without foundational skills in word solving and vocabulary, third graders

will not be able to do the work expected of them in literal comprehension, interpretation, or analytic reading. You'll support kids who need to strategies for tackling multi-syllable words and figurative language. Fluency is also a very big deal for third graders. The unit will not only help children who read robotically, in two- or three-word phrases, but it will also help proficient third-grade readers who are finding that as the sentences they're reading become longer and contain more subordinate clauses and parenthetical phrases, they again need some support with fluency.

The unit also supports envisionment and prediction—two foundational skills that are almost extensions of each other and that when taken together, allow readers to walk in the shoes of a character. When readers do this, it is almost impossible for them not to predict—they read, anticipating, worrying, co-constructing the story line. For readers to predict what will happen next in a story, they must draw on their theories about characters' traits, about the theme of a story, about the unfolding story structure. Prediction and envisionment, then, require that readers move beyond reading with blinders on, and instead keep in mind both the page at hand and the entire book—that which is behind them and that which lies ahead. The commitment to support prediction and envisionment, then, is a commitment to helping youngsters engage in minds-on-fire reading.

An Orientation to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Making a Reading Life

Start with Assessment

1. Building a Powerful Reading Life
2. Reading As If Books Are Gold
3. Finding Within-Reach Books, and Reading Tons of Them

A Day for Assessment

4. Setting Goals and Tracking Progress
5. Setting Up Systems to Find and Share Books
6. Reading in the Company of Partners

BEND II ♦ Understanding the Story

7. Readers Check for Comprehension
8. Follow Textual Cues as You Read: Shift between Envisioning and Assembling Facts
9. Prediction
10. Making Higher-Level Predictions
11. Retelling Stories
12. Readers Decide How to Lift the Level of Their Reading and Recruit Partners to Support Them

BEND III ♦ Tackling More Challenging Texts

13. Tackling Complex Texts Takes Grit
14. Figuring Out Hard Words
15. Using Textual Clues to Figure Out the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words
16. Making Sense of Figurative Language
17. Talking Back to the Text
18. Raising the Level of Questions to Unearth Deeper Meaning: Considering Author's Purpose
19. Celebration





GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 2 OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Reading to Learn

Grasping Main Ideas and Text Structures

LUCY CALKINS ♦ KATHLEEN TOLAN

This unit is one of many in this series that supports students in developing a rich life of nonfiction reading. In fact, this unit could be titled, “Foundational Skills of Nonfiction Reading,” because it addresses skills that are essential to reading nonfiction.

You will teach youngsters that readers of nonfiction read a long stretch of a nonfiction text, then pause after reading that long chunk of text to grasp what the author highlighted as especially important. The little facts that matter are those that support, illustrate, and embody the big ideas, and readers aim to construct a mental summary, complete with big ideas and supporting details. You’ll help your third graders know that it is important for them to be able to read an informational text in such a way that they can turn around and teach the main idea and the supporting points to someone else. That will be easiest for them to do if they approach a new expository text anticipating that it will follow the template that they’ll soon refer to as “boxes and bullets.” If your third graders expect an infrastructure of big ideas followed by supportive information, and if they learn to use text features, white space, and transitional phrases to help discern that infrastructure, they will be able to glean what matters from texts.

The main work in Bend I involves teaching children to read expository nonfiction with eagerness, interest, and fluency, ascertaining the main ideas and recognizing the infrastructure of a text. Bend II helps readers go beyond that work to compare texts, think critically, and apply the information they learned. You’ll encourage readers to ponder over what they have read—agreeing with it, disagreeing, and comparing it to other texts and to prior knowledge. You will remind them that they read differently when they know they are going to participate in conversations about their reading, and you’ll help them know they can have conversations in their own minds as a way to grow ideas.

Finally in Bend III, you will help children navigate narrative nonfiction texts, using their knowledge of story structure to help them determine importance. You’ll be amazed at how your children’s grasp of biographies improves when they stop recording minor facts—the name of the subject’s elementary school—and look instead for traits, motivations, challenges, and ways of overcoming challenges. Students will also be taught how to shift between reading with a lens of story and reading them with a lens of gleaning information.

This unit not only spotlights nonfiction, it also provides students with skills that are foundational to reading nonfiction in our twenty-first-century world.

An Orientation to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Determining Importance in Expository Texts

Start with Assessment

1. Previewing Nonfiction
2. Looking for Structure within a Nonfiction Text

A Day for Assessment

3. Grasping Main Ideas in Nonfiction Texts
4. Becoming Experts and Teaching Others from Nonfiction Texts
5. Tackling Complexity
6. Getting Better Requires Clear Goals and Deliberate Work:
Learning Progressions

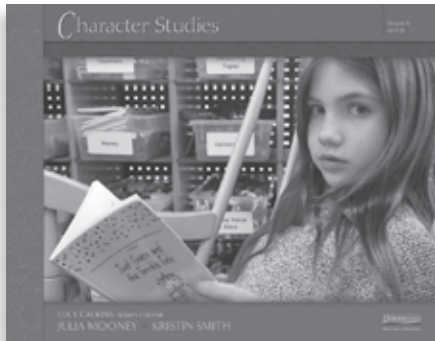
BEND II ♦ Lifting the Level of Thinking about Expository Texts

7. Reading for Significance: Approaching Nonfiction Reading as a Learner
8. Reading Differently Because of Conversations
9. Distinguishing Your Own Opinion from That of the Author
10. Lifting the Level of Students' Talk

BEND III ♦ Synthesizing and Growing Ideas in Narrative Nonfiction

11. Using Text Structure to Hold On to Meaning in Narrative Nonfiction
12. Summarizing Narrative Nonfiction
13. Tackling Hard Words that Complicate Meaning
14. Reading Biographies through Different Lenses
15. Seeking Underlying Ideas in True Stories
16. Bringing Your Narrative Nonfiction Lenses to a Broader Range of Texts
17. Identifying When a Text Is Hybrid Nonfiction and Adjusting Accordingly
18. Becoming Your Own Reading Coach
19. A Celebration





GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 3 OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Character Studies

JULIA MOONEY ♦ KRISTIN SMITH

Talk to any avid reader about the book he or she is reading, and that reader will tell you about the *characters*. It is characters who lure us into books, and characters who keep us reading. How much we love a character affects how much we love the book. A deeply unsatisfying character often leaves us with a sense of something lacking, whereas a character who grows and changes leaves us oddly proud, as if we had something to do with it!

This unit begins with a close study of characters. In the first bend, you will invite children to get to know characters by studying them deeply, first observing, then coming up with ideas, then investigating patterns that reveal deeper traits and motivations to articulate evidence-based theories. Readers will use those theories to make predictions as they follow their character on his or her journey across the story—a journey that follows the shape of a predictable story mountain, as they will learn in the next part of the unit. This focus on story arc, and on the interaction between character and other story elements, is part of the work of seeing the character as part of the larger story. Students will learn that what characters do in stories influences both other characters and the events that unfold.

This work brings with it new challenges. In second grade, your students may have found it relatively easy to point to the problem and the solution in a story, or to a character's traits, or to the way a character changed. All of that becomes vastly more difficult as children begin to read longer and more nuanced books. It can sometimes take a fair amount of thinking for a third-grade reader to figure out ways in which the character changes across a book. Has the character come to a new realization? Did the character's behavior change? And what key moments

contributed to the change?

Of course, to truly grasp the essence of stories, students need to deepen their interpretation skills and consider what big lessons a character might be learning through the problems that he or she faces, and this relates to the larger messages or ideas a story aims to convey. The big new work for third grade is that children will learn to express a lesson at some length and support their thinking with details from the story.

This unit will continue to support students in the foundational skills that were front and center during the first fiction unit of the year. You'll assess your students' abilities to be resourceful word solvers, drawing both on context clues and on their knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and some common root words to figure out new words. You'll notice whether your kids' abilities to envision and predict are strong. Pause at a spot in a read-aloud when most readers would predict, and then say to your students, "Jot what you think will happen next!" Ask students to assess their predictions against the learning progression that they came to know well earlier this year. By doing this, you will not only check in on your students' abilities to predict, you'll also remind students that all of your teaching is meant to make a lasting difference.

Finally, the third bend of this unit directly supports students in doing the important compare-and-contrast work that is expected of them. They will compare and contrast not only characters, but also the problems characters encounter and how they react, the settings, and the lessons characters learn (the themes authors convey).

An Orientation to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Getting to Know a Character as Friend

Start with Assessment

1. Readers Notice How a New Character Talks and Acts
2. From Observations to Ideas: Readers Think, “What Is My Character Like?”

A Day for Assessment

3. Noticing Patterns, Seeing More: Growing Theories about a Character
4. Growing Bigger Theories about a Character: Asking Why
5. Using Theories about Characters to Predict
6. Taking Stock and Self-Assessing: Looking at Checklists, Noticing Strengths and Weaknesses, and Making New Reading Goals

BEND II ♦ Following a Character’s Journey

7. Stories Are Shaped Like a Mountain: Readers Watch Characters Go Up—and Down
8. Readers Expect Characters to Face—and React to—Trouble
9. Readers Notice the Roles Secondary Characters Play in the Main Character’s Journey
10. Noticing the Roles Illustrations Play in a Story
11. Readers Pay Close Attention to the Climax of a Story, Noticing How the Main Character Is Tested

12. Readers Notice How a Character Resolves Big Trouble

13. Readers Learn Lessons Alongside Their Characters

14. Linger with a Story after It’s Done: Looking Back to Analyze Author’s Craft

BEND III ♦ Comparing and Contrasting Characters Across Books

15. Comparing Characters: Noticing Similarities and Differences

16. Readers Compare the Problems Characters Face—and Their Reactions

17. Readers Ask, “What Makes You Say That?”
Engaging in Text-Based Mini-Arguments about Characters

18. Comparing and Contrasting the Lessons Characters Learn

19. Celebration





GRADE 3 ♦ UNIT 4 OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Research Clubs

Elephants, Penguins, and Frogs, Oh My!

LUCY CALKINS ♦ KATHLEEN TOLAN

This unit is one of our favorites. Teachers who piloted it were flat-out astonished at the level of energy from their kids, and at the growth the children made. One of the minilessons preaches the importance of approaching a topic with zeal, and that rallying cry became a mantra for many of the classes that piloted the unit.

To begin Bend I, your kids form clubs, and each club studies an animal. You'll teach your children to preview the collection of texts on their animal and then to each take a subtopic at a time and read across books on that subtopic, starting with an easier book so as to develop the background knowledge needed to handle more detailed and challenging texts. As one club member researches the animal's habitat and another, the animal's life cycle, you'll teach them all to synthesize and organize what they are learning. Your budding researchers will also use the learning progression to ratchet up their skill levels as they engage in reading for the main idea and cross-text synthesis.

In Bend II, clubs transfer what they learned into the study of a second animal. Eventually you'll teach children to compare and contrast across animals—you and the children will be surprised to learn that yes, spiders and tigers actually are the same in some ways! The unit will end with children applying their knowledge of animals to solve real-world problems, such as creating a better habitat for animals in zoos or investigating why certain animals are no longer thriving in their environments.

This unit, then, is more than a unit on information reading. It is a unit on research. Information is exploding at a breathtaking pace and the young people in your care need to turn to texts as their teachers, learning from them as they learn from you. This unit has the power to change your students' lives, not because they will learn about dolphins or turtles, but because they will learn to learn—perhaps the single most important academic skill we can offer our students as we set them out into the world.

This unit is a precursor to a similar unit that is taught in fourth grade, when children study different forms of extreme weather in groups. This unit also sets the stage also for independent research projects that students tackle in fifth grade. Expect, then, that the work your kids undertake will be challenging, and they won't entirely master it. The only way in which our children will possibly be ready for the challenges of the twenty-first century is if we invite them into heady intellectual work.

An Orientation to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Researching a Topic

Start with Assessment

1. Revving Up for a Research Project: Readers Orient Themselves to a Text Set
2. Cross-Text Synthesis

A Day for Assessment

3. Using the Lingo of Experts
4. Zeal Matters: Pursuing Collaborative Inquiries with Commitment
5. Growing Ideas about Nonfiction
6. Researchers Ask Questions

BEND II ♦ A Second Cycle of Research

7. Planning a Second Study
8. Reading with Volume and Fluency
9. Readers Notice Text Structures and Use Them to Organize Their Learning
10. Compare and Contrast
11. Cause and Effect
12. Reading Closely, Thinking Deeply

BEND III ♦ Synthesizing, Comparing, and Contrasting

13. Experts Widen Their Field of Focus and See Patterns
14. Asking Questions, Growing Big Ideas
15. Pursuing Questions
16. Developing Evidence-Based Theories
17. Adding to Theories by Researching Big-Picture Concepts
18. Learning to Apply the Knowledge Readers Develop through Their Research
19. Finding Solutions to Real-World Problems: A Celebration





Session 15

Using Textual Clues to Figure Out the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words



FOR THE READERS IN YOUR CLASSROOM, there is likely no dispute over the definition of a “hard word.” It is, simply, a word that makes them stumble as they read. It is a word that requires grit. Figuring out tricky words requires more sophisticated reading work than it might appear to at first glance. In *When Kids Can’t Read*, Kylene Beers says, “Teaching students how to use context as a clue requires that students see relationships among words and make inferences” (2003, 187). An important message for readers shifting toward higher levels of text complexity, then, is that reading isn’t about *knowing* all the words; it is about *figuring out* hard words when one encounters them.

Likely, you will have a great range of readers in your classroom with a great range of levels of sophistication and needs when it comes to word-solving instruction. Context clues will be powerful tools in your students’ arsenals, no matter their level. Students who are reading books that contain pictures can rely on the picture as well as the content of the story for help. Once students graduate from books with pictures, you can teach them to “read around the word” or “skip the word and come back to it later.” Of course, the catchy phrases you use to teach students to rely on the text’s meaning to ascertain what a new word means will not be as valuable as your demonstrations. As you read aloud to your class, pause at hard words and think aloud as you consider the context clues that will help you determine the words’ meanings.

As children start to read harder texts, they can add other word-solving strategies to their repertoires. Tim Rasinski, the fluency and word study expert, says, “Building vocabulary from word roots teaches essential word strategies that enable students to unlock the meaning of vocabulary words they encounter inside and outside of school.” In the conferring portion of this session, we suggest you guide students who are ready to use prefixes and suffixes along with context clues to tackle difficult words. The work you are doing here is supporting students in moving from third- to fourth-grade work on the “Word Work” strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression.

It is no coincidence that kids who are ravenous readers have the best vocabularies. These readers attack and conquer any word that gets in the way of their knowing how Jo’s

IN THIS SESSION, you’ll teach students that sometimes readers can easily decode every word that is on the page but still not understand what is actually happening in the text. When this happens, they can figure out the definitions of the hard words by using textual clues.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Enlarge a copy of the lyrics to “The Star Spangled Banner” or another familiar song whose lyrics are well known but may be confusing (see Connection).
- ✓ “Clues Authors Leave Readers to Solve Tricky Words” chart (see Teaching and Active Engagement) ✨
- ✓ Prepare three short excerpts from *Stone Fox* or your chosen mentor text, written on chart paper. The excerpts should contain unfamiliar vocabulary words that can be figured out based on contextual clues (see Teaching and Active Engagement).
- ✓ “Readers Climb the Hurdle of Hard Words by . . .” anchor chart (see Link and Share) ✨
- ✓ A few small white boards and markers to demonstrate the use of prefixes to word solve (see Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✓ A short list of pronouns, written on chart paper (see Share)
- ✓ Prepare text excerpts from *Stone Fox* containing pronouns to share with students (see Share). ✨
- ✓ “Readers Climb the Hurdle of Hard Words by . . .” and “Readers Understand a Story by . . .” bookmarks (see Homework) ✨



family will react when they discover that she's sold her hair for a wig or whether Harry Potter really dies. In this session, you will honor the fact that a few hard words never got in the way of any serious reader, that plunging ahead often provides the context for figuring out the meaning that any single word stands for. After all, that's what readers do: they figure out meaning. No single word is so important in itself that it should get in the way of that.

"Reading isn't about knowing all the words; it is about figuring out hard words when one encounters them."



MINILESSON

Using Textual Clues to Figure Out the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words

CONNECTION

Invite children to sing the first verse of “The Star Spangled Banner,” then challenge them to talk about its meaning, highlighting that it’s all too easy to fly past new words, not noticing them.

“You all know the song ‘The Star Spangled Banner,’ right? You’ve sung it for years at assemblies and ball games.” The children agreed. “We’re going to begin reading time today by singing that again.” I pointed to an enlarged version:

*Oh, say can you see by the dawn’s early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

When we finished, I said, “So—here’s my question. What’s it mean? Turn and talk.” As children talked, I heard partners saying things like, “It’s something about stripes and stars, which I think is a flag.” Others focused on the rockets and bombs. Most struggled.

I interrupted. “Readers, I’m noticing that many of you are struggling a bit. You are saying to each other, ‘Hmm, . . . I’m not totally sure. After all, what is ‘twilight’s gleaming’? What are ‘ramparts’?”

“Here’s the thing I’m thinking. You know these words by heart and you sing them with gusto, yet you don’t really know what the song is about.

“You’re probably wondering, ‘What’s the point? What does this have to do with our unit?’”

◆ COACHING

It is important to vary what you do in your connection and to support little forms of engagement. You support engagement with something as simple as asking kids to reread a chart with a partner and to note which items on it they are doing. This goes a step farther and is meant to be fun. Play it up, have fun.

❖ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that when readers are flying through parts of a book and don't know what is happening, they need to use their grit. They need to say to themselves, 'Hold on!' and figure out the hard words. Authors sometimes leave clues to help readers figure out the tricky words."

TEACHING**Explain several kinds of contextual clues: synonyms, antonyms, and explanations.**

"So I know you already work with the letters and also think about the gist of what a sentence means, but authors leave other clues to help you figure out the tricky words. Authors sometimes actually give readers a synonym (a word that means the same thing), or they say, 'not . . .' and either give the reader an antonym (a word that means the opposite) or they tell what a word does *not* mean. And sometimes the author simply tells you what the word means." I revealed a list of possibilities that I'd earlier recorded on chart paper:

Clues Authors Leave Readers to Solve Tricky Words

- Gist (what's happening in that part)
- Synonym (a word that means the same thing)
- Antonym (a word that means the opposite)
- Explanation (tells what the word means)

Read aloud a line from *Stone Fox* that provides a contextual clue for a tricky word, and demonstrate the process of determining which kind of clue the author has used.

"Let's look at a line from *Stone Fox* and see if we can figure out the kind of clues that John Gardiner, the author, left for us." I read aloud a line I'd written on chart paper, with one word underlined:

"This is not a race for amateurs. Some of the best dog teams in the Northwest will be entering."

"Hmm, . . . this is not a race for amateurs. *Amateurs* is a tricky word. Help me think what clues the author has given readers," I said and reread the sentence, tapping the word *not*.

The kids pointed out that the author tells that the race *isn't* for people who are . . . amateurs (the tricky word). I nodded. "Let's read on and see if the next line says who the race *is* for." The class agreed that the next line shows that the race *is* for the "best" dogs.

"Do you see that in the actual words of the text, Gardiner is giving us some clues? He tells us that the dogs in the race are the best dog teams, and that amateurs don't enter the race. He hints at the fact that amateur teams are the opposite—they are *not* the best trained. So, would you agree that here, Gardiner left readers some clues by using contrasting words, or antonyms?"

This part will work best if you fly through it quickly, as if you are giving a quick little course. You don't need to overexplain, because the rest of the lesson helps kids grasp what all of these terms mean by giving them opportunities to practice.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Channel children to think about the sort of clues the author has left to figure out the meaning of difficult words in a passage.

"Let's practice this together. In a moment, we are going to be casting votes for the kind of contextual clue the author has left. To get ready to do this, take out a few Post-it notes from your folder and code them for each of the different kinds of clues." I pointed to our list and added a Post-it with a code to each item: *G* for gist, *S* for synonym, *A* for antonym, and *E* for explanation.

I revealed several more enlarged excerpts. "Let's give this a try. Listen and follow along as I read this aloud. Pay careful attention to the underlined word. Notice the clue the author has given and think about what kind of clue it is."

His eyes sparkled in the sunlight, but the rest of his face was as hard as stone.

The sled came to a stop right next to little Willy. The boy's mouth hung open as he tilted his head way back to look up at the man. Little Willy had never seen a giant before.

"Gosh," little Willy gasped.

The Indian looked at little Willy. His face was solid granite, but his eyes were alive and cunning.

"Turn and tell your partner, what kind of clue did the author leave?" I said, as I gestured to the chart.

"Hold up the Post-it with your vote." After most had registered their vote, I called on Lila, who had been holding up a Post-it with an *S* on it, to explain. She pointed out that to figure out the word granite, you could look a back a couple of sentences where the author says the Indian's face is as "hard as stone." The author also says his face was granite, so granite must be a synonym for stone.

Give students another opportunity to practice finding a word's meaning using a different kind of clue.

"Class, let's try this one more time. I'll read another passage from the book. Talk to your partner about what kind of clue the author has left to help you figure out the tricky word, and then talk to each other about what the word might mean."

His tribe, the Shoshone, who were peaceful seed gatherers, had been forced to leave Utah and settle on a reservation in Wyoming with another tribe called the Arapaho.

I gave students a moment to talk, and most held up Post-its with a *G* to indicate that readers could understand the underlined word based on the gist. Zack said, "If they were forced to leave one place, a reservation must be a place where they had to go."

SESSION 15: USING TEXTUAL CLUES TO FIGURE OUT THE MEANING OF UNFAMILIAR WORDS



Do not give children a lot of time for any of these turn-and-talks—just thirty seconds or so. As they talk, lean in and listen to a few partnerships so you can find a student that you can call on whose response will move your teaching along, not derail it.

Don't spend time analyzing these deeply. Instead, move through them at a quick clip. Remember, each extra minute of your minilesson is at the expense of more reading time for kids. Make a note to check in with students who need extra practice during independent reading time.

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LINK

Reiterate the work of the day, and remind children that using contextual clues should now be part of their word-solving repertoire.

"Readers, you're getting to be real word detectives! Today, and every day, you can use your grit by studying clues authors leave to solve the mystery of the unknown word. You may want to add *amateurs*, *granite*, and *reservation* to your word jar. And you may want to try to use these words as you talk to your partner, to get to know them better—or any other tricky words you discover as you read."

I added a line to our anchor chart and sent the students off to read, with a reminder to track their reading using their reading log.

ANCHOR CHART

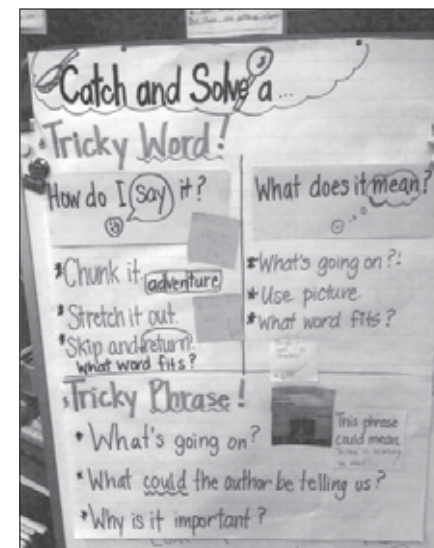
Readers Climb the Hurdle of Hard Words by . . .

- Chunking the word.
- Thinking about the story (picture: "What's going on?").
- Asking, "Does it look like a word I know?"
- Asking, "Does it sound like a word I know?"
- Trying out the different sounds that letters can make.
- **Searching for clues in the text to figure out what words mean.**

Searching for clues to figure out what words mean.



As you may have noticed throughout this book and the series, in most minilessons, you'll find yourself repeating the teaching point, perhaps rephrasing it slightly, at least three or four times—first in your connection to contextualize your lesson, then in your teaching as you give students a lens for watching or assisting your work, again in your active engagement as a way to focus students' practice, and finally in your link when you remind students to add the teaching to their repertoire. Adding the latest strategy to the anchor chart is a visual way to underscore your teaching point.





CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Supporting Children's Word-Solving Skills While Also Supporting Them in All They Have Learned to Do

AS YOU CONFER, remember that you need to support readers in drawing on all that you have taught this year—and all that students have learned over the years. Your minilessons for the time being spotlight the need for readers to be resourceful and flexible word solvers, drawing on a large repertoire of strategies, but meanwhile your readers are also drawing on all they know about reading fiction. They are aiming to follow the cues that the text gives about the sort of thinking work they need to do. So just as children learned today that the text itself often contains clues about the meaning of tricky words, they learned earlier that the text also provides clues about the sort of comprehension work readers need to do. One passage may signal, “Predict!” and readers now know a lot about doing that. Another passage may signal, “Envision,” and readers know a lot about doing that.

You will want to confer also to support readers working with deliberate intention to read more, to read more quickly, or to monitor for comprehension.

As you do this teaching, you will, of course, look for opportunities to support the work of this bend in your unit. In the last session, you worked with students who especially needed support with word solving. You might follow up with them. You may also want to work with your stronger students who will probably profit from encouragement to collect more words for their word jar, and to read with new words in hand, aware that they will continue to develop more nuanced understandings of those words as they read on. Students who are reading books set in other times and places will be especially likely to encounter unfamiliar words, so keep an eye out for readers of historical fiction or fantasy.

If you are able to do so, you will want to use small groups not only to support the teaching you have already done, but also to channel some new knowledge into your community—knowledge that will end up spreading through the peer network. For example, you might lead a small group on prefixes and suffixes. In doing so, you’re moving those students from third- to fourth-grade work on the “Word Work” strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression.

(continues)

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Learning Brand-New Words and Words with New Meanings

“Readers, you’re all using such grit to overcome hurdles. Peter, for example, just told me that he used to skip right over hard words. He didn’t want to take the time to solve them. Today he came across a word he didn’t know—*predator*—but this time, he used the clues in the story to figure out that it means an animal that kills and eats other animals, like a lion.

“Izzy came across a word that she recognized, but it was being used in a way that confused her. She read this sentence: ‘She couldn’t bear the thought of having to redo her homework for a third time.’ Izzy saw the word *bear*, and right away, she thought of the big, furry animal. Izzy is right, that is one meaning for the word *bear*. But Izzy smartly realized that this meaning of the word *bear* didn’t make a bit of sense in this sentence. So, she used the gist of the sentence to figure out that *bear* used in this way means to be able to stand or put up with something.

“That made me realize that there are two kinds of words you can add to your own word jars. One kind is a word that is brand new to you, like *predator* was to Peter. And another kind is a word you’ve seen before that is used in a new way. It’s a word with several meanings, like *turn*.” I spun around and then said, “It’s your turn” and gestured to a game that was in progress on the floor.

“As you read, don’t forget to add both kinds of words—brand-new words and words with a new meaning you learn—to your word jars.” Then I added, “And try using them when you talk.”

Use prefixes to word solve.

Before I pulled another small group, I walked around the room to see the work children were doing. I noticed that a few kids were having trouble figuring out the meaning of certain words in their books. Others had written down words that included prefixes and suffixes. I jotted these words on Post-it notes and then called that group together. My plan for today was to tackle prefixes, but I knew I would return to this same group in a few days to tackle suffixes. I wanted to teach into the four most frequent prefixes, which researchers estimate account for about 97% of prefixed words: *dis-*, *in-*, *lim-*, *re-*, and *un-*. But I decided to spotlight only *dis-*, *in-*, *lim-*, and *un-*, because they all mean “not.”

I passed out a small white board and marker to each student in the group and said, “Let’s look together at the word *impatient*.” I wrote it quickly on a white board. “This word can be broken up into two parts: *im-* and *patient*. *Im-* is called a prefix.” I put a hyphen after *im-* on my white board. “All that means is that it comes before the main, or base, word, which in this case is *patient*.” I underlined *patient*. “*Im-* means *not*. So *impatient* means not patient—in other words, easily annoyed. I’m telling you this because I noticed that some of the words you were having trouble figuring out had prefixes.”

Rosa called out, “One of my words was *impossible*.”

“Let’s look at that word together,” I said. I asked the kids to write it on their white board and to break it into its two parts. Then I had them turn and talk about what they thought it meant. They said *not possible*, and I agreed and said, “It can’t be done.” Then I said, “Here is something really cool. There are other prefixes that also mean *not*. They are *dis-*, *in-*, and *un-*.” I wrote those on the white board also and then asked the students to work together to figure out the meanings of the words *disappear* and *unconcerned*.

Next, I asked students to look back at words they had found that included prefixes. I coached them on identifying the prefix and base word and on using these to figure out the meanings of those words. I ended the group by saying, “So, readers, sometimes when you come to a tricky word, one thing you can do is break it up into parts. As you do this, look to see whether the word includes a prefix. Identifying one of these can help you figure out the word’s meaning.”

I made a note for myself so that I would remember to check up on this work the next time I met with this group, and then to tackle the four most frequent suffixes that account for 97% of suffixed words in printed school English: *-ed*, *-ing*, *-ly*, and *-s/-es*.





SHARE

When Little Words Get in the Way

Word Solving with Pronouns

Point out to children that it isn't just big words that interfere with meaning.

"Readers, I'm noticing that it's not always the big words that are getting in your way. It's the little words. Sometimes you seem stuck on words like . . . , " and I flipped to a new page of my chart with the words *they*, *it*, and *she*.

"Here's the thing. These are pronouns, which means they take the place of nouns. So I could say, 'I poked Ryan'" (and I did so), "or I could say, 'I poked him.' And if you get what is going on—in this instance, if you see me poking Ryan—you know that the pronoun *him* stands for Ryan.

"When you are reading a book and the author uses a pronoun, it is not as though you can see what is going on," and I again poked Ryan to make my point. "But if you are really following the story, whenever there is a pronoun, you can almost say in your mind, 'Ryan,' or whatever else goes there—whatever noun the pronoun is replacing.

"And here's the thing: if you can't substitute the right noun for each pronoun, then you need to take that as a signal to go back and reread. So right now, I'm going to pass out a passage from *Stone Fox*. Will you and your partner read it, underline the pronouns, and see if you can tell each other the person or thing that the pronoun references?"

Each morning he would get up and make a fire. Then he would make oatmeal mush for breakfast. He ate it. Searchlight ate it. Grandfather ate it. He would feed Grandfather a spoonful at a time

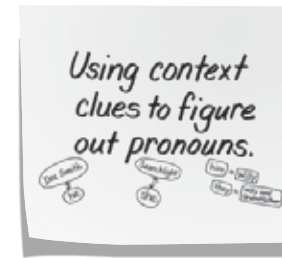
After breakfast little Willy would hitch up Searchlight to the sled. It was an old wooden sled that Grandfather had bought from the Indians. It was so light that little Willy could pick it up with one hand. But it was strong and sturdy.

Little Willy rode on the sled standing up and Searchlight would pull him five miles across the snow-covered countryside to the schoolhouse, which was located on the outskirts of town.

Searchlight loved the snow. She would wait patiently outside the schoolhouse all day long. And little Willy never missed a chance to run out between classes and play with his friend.

As students worked through the passage, underlining pronouns and determining their antecedents, I circulated and coached in. After a few minutes, I said, “Readers, as you read, remember that it’s not just the big words that can be a challenge. The little words can be challenging, too. Use your grit, and do the work to make sure you are really comprehending.”

I added this new strategy to our word-solving chart.



SESSION 15 HOMEWORK



USING STRATEGIES TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR READING

Readers, you will be given a bookmark. One side has strategies from our chart “Readers Climb the Hurdle of Hard Words by . . .” The other side has strategies from “Readers Understand a Story by . . .” Read tonight with your bookmarks next to you. You want to make sure that if you run into trouble, you can take action right away. Use Post-it notes to mark the places in your book where you used a strategy. On two of these notes, name the strategy you used and explain how it helped you.

FRONT



Readers Climb the Hurdle of Hard Words by...

- Chunking the word.
- Thinking about the story (picture: what’s going on?)
- Asking, “Does it look like a word I know?”
- Asking, “Does it sound like a word I know?”
- Trying out the different sounds that letters can make.
- Searching for clues to figure out what words mean.
- Using context clues to figure out which noun a pronoun represents.
- Working out figurative language phrases, using the text to help.

BACK



Readers Understand a Story by...

- Giving themselves a comprehension check.
- Thinking, “What mind-work is this text signaling me to do?”
 - “Should I make a movie in my mind as I read? (Use pictures for the details.)
 - “Or should I list—collect—information I’m learning?” (So don’t lose them altogether.)
- Making a prediction about what might happen next in the text, based on . . .
 - what has already happened
 - what you know about how stories tend to go
 - empathizing with the characters
- Retelling the big parts of their book that they’ve previously read





Session 11

Using Text Structure to Hold On to Meaning in Narrative Nonfiction

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that readers use different ways of reading for different text structures. They begin by identifying the type of structure a nonfiction text follows, and use this information to help them organize their understanding of the text.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Make sure your classroom library includes a plentiful collection of engaging biographies and other narrative nonfiction texts.
- ✓ "Rev Up Your Mind before Reading Nonfiction" anchor chart, from Bend I (see Teaching) ✨
- ✓ "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression (see Teaching and Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✓ "Story Elements" one-day chart (see Teaching, Active Engagement, and Share) ✨
- ✓ An example of a biography, enlarged for students to see. We used the biography of Ezra Jack Keats from the University of Southern Mississippi website: (http://www.lib.usm.edu/degrummond/ezra_keats/keats_bio.html) (see Teaching and Active Engagement). ✨
- ✓ Prepare a chart titled "Questions Narrative Nonfiction Readers Can Ask" (see Mid-Workshop Teaching). ✨

THIS SESSION BEGINS A NEW BEND, devoted to teaching students to read *narrative* nonfiction texts. The bend will start by channeling students specifically to biography, but within a few days your teaching will support narrative nonfiction more broadly defined. You'll be bringing back the "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression that the children used during Unit 1. They are still reading nonfiction, but now the texts will be structured as stories.

Before you begin this bend, make sure that you have lots of engaging biographies in your classroom library. You may wish to keep the heroes of your most reluctant readers in mind. Is there a sports star or a singer that those students love? Sometimes these famous heroes have their own websites and these sites include biographical information. Within a few days, you'll need to have other narrative nonfiction texts on hand as well. Even if the text is the story of a group of people (e.g., the colonists on the Mayflower), it can pay off for students to bring what they know about reading fiction to this sort of nonfiction.

In this session, the first thing for your children to learn is that people read nonfiction differently when it is structured as a narrative rather than as an expository text. This will feel like fairly simple, low-level instruction but trust us: this instruction can be transformational. Chances are good that, left alone, many of your students would have read narrative nonfiction texts as a fact-collecting enterprise, recording every passing detail in the text and proceeding at a snail's pace. That sort of reading makes it very hard for them to see broader expanses of the text and to synthesize.

When your students approach nonfiction texts asking, "What sort of text is this?" and realize a nonfiction text may be a narrative, this allows them to bring a story frame to their work with that text, which can lead them to synthesize as they read in ways that make a big difference. By teaching children to look for a main character who has traits and motivations and who encounters and resolves problems, you help your students see the pages working together as a story. This also helps them determine importance (and unimportance), which is especially necessary given the overabundance of information in many nonfiction texts. It will make a big difference when you encourage readers to focus on what that character

is like; what he, she, or it wants; what gets in the way of the character meeting those wants; what the character does to overcome obstacles—all things that your children have learned to notice within the context of fiction books.

“People read nonfiction differently when it is structured as a narrative rather than as an expository text.”

It is worth mentioning that the structure of a text does not totally control the way a person reads that text. One can also read a nonfiction narrative hoping to learn facts about a person's life or a time period. We're not emphasizing that sort of reading now because we're convinced that students do that work often, and can lose track of the main structure and ideas of the text when they do this. Watch them inch through a textbook, searching for answers to the questions at the end of a chapter, and you'll see evidence of that sort of reading. We are not suggesting there is no place for fact-mining, but only that it is also important for students to be able to read narrative nonfiction, taking in broad expanses of the text.





MINILESSON

Using Text Structure to Hold On to Meaning in Narrative Nonfiction

CONNECTION

Recall a time when you failed at something until an expert advised you to adapt your approach based on the nature of the task. Relate this to reading nonfiction differently, based on structure.

"Readers, a few months ago, I went fishing for the first time in my life. I thought, 'There's nothing to this. All I have to do is to stick this worm onto this hook, sink the line, and I'll catch me some supper!' Guess what? Anglers to the left and right of me were catching fish after fish and I got hardly a nibble. This went on for a few hours. I was embarrassed. The fisherman next to me must have noticed because he called out, 'It's the hook.'

"'What about the hook?' I asked him, irritated.

"'This is a freshwater lake with small fish,' he told me. 'You'll need an Aberdeen hook to catch these fish.'

"'Aberdeen hook? You mean there are different types of hooks?' My question must have sounded naïve to him because he guffawed with laughter. And then he said, 'Aberdeen hooks, O'Shaughnessy hooks, Kahle hooks, circle hooks. There are dozens of hooks. Unless you know which hook to use in which water for which specific fish, you'll be sitting here till the moon turns blue and you won't catch any fish.'

"Right away I changed the hook to fit the fish and made my first catch. And then another. I learned a very important lesson that day. We can't just cast any ol' hook into any ol' water and expect to have a bucket of fish. We first have to recognize not only the type of water but also the type of fish in that water, and *then* we choose the *appropriate* hook.

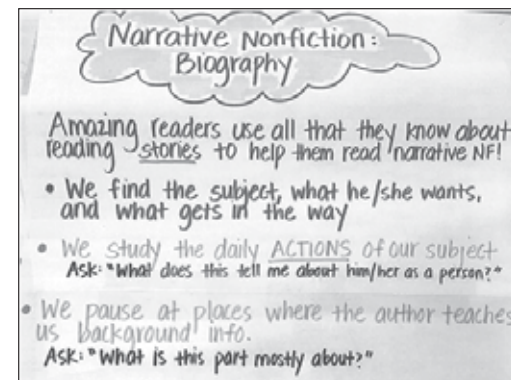
"You all know that this is the start to a new bend—and here I am talking about *fishes* and *hooks*! But I've chosen my fishing story for a reason. Many readers sink into nonfiction texts without even thinking about the hook. They think, 'Hmm, . . . it's nonfiction. I know how to read nonfiction.' But we don't read biographies the same way that we read a newspaper. We don't read car manual instructions the same way we read books about toads and frogs."

✿ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that just as anglers use different hooks for different fish, readers use different ways of reading depending on if a nonfiction text is an expository text or a story. Readers of nonfiction stories use their knowledge of how stories go to organize their understanding of the text."

◆ COACHING

In many world-class standards, students need to be able to think about how texts are organized and to use this awareness of text structure to vary their strategies accordingly. This fishing story is actually meant as a story about adapting one's approach to texts.

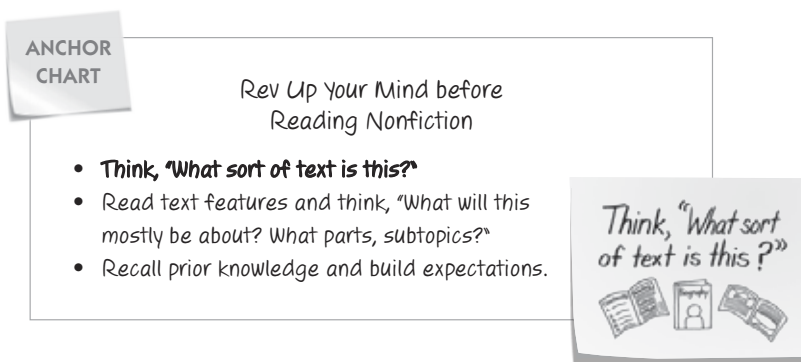


TEACHING

Remind children that readers rev up their minds for reading by asking, “What sort of text is this?” and then bring what they know about that kind of text to their reading.

“We’re going to start reading a new text together—another nonfiction text. You already know that nonfiction readers don’t just pick up a book and start reading. No way! Instead, nonfiction readers have ways to get ready to read,” and I gestured to the “Rev Up Your Mind before Reading Nonfiction” chart from earlier in the unit.

“But today I want to add a new bullet to our chart because, actually, before readers look over a text to notice text features and think, ‘What will this be mostly about?’ readers need to ask, ‘What kind of text is this?’ And once a reader decides a text is nonfiction, the biggest question is ‘Is this a narrative nonfiction text (a story) or is it expository?’ Notice I’ve added the new bullet to the top of the chart, because this is the work a reader will need to do before anything else.”



I displayed the text we were about to read, and said, “What kind of text is this?” Some children called out that this is a story, and I agreed.

“This is not an expository nonfiction text. It is not organized as categories of ideas. Instead, it is a story, a biography, to be more precise. The truth is that many nonfiction texts are stories, so we’ll be learning about how to read that sort of nonfiction for the next week or so. Here is the important thing: it really helps to reach for the storyline, buried under the facts, and let that storyline carry you through the text. And you know from the Narrative Reading Learning Progression work you did during Unit 1 that “readers of literature . . .” and at that point, I displayed the Level 3 progression for the “Retelling/Summary/Synthesis” strand and read from it: “When I finish a book, I can retell in a way that shows what I know about story elements. I talk about the characters—their traits and wants. I also retell the important events using sequence words, or talk about the problem and the solution.”

If the character learned a life lesson, I can talk about that, most likely at the end of my summary. I stopped reading and said, “You know about noticing a character’s traits? Have any of you already heard that readers also think about the main character’s problems?” Kids nodded and called out more characteristics of narrative texts, and I supported this.

It is important to recall what your students have already learned by referencing it in your lesson, especially when you are going to add a new bullet to an existing chart.



"So let's read this text like we read *Stone Fox*. Instead of thinking about Willie, we'll be thinking about the main character of this text. You'll see I've chosen a text about a writer (after all, you are writers, too)." I held up one of Ezra Jack Keats's books. Remember, you'll be reading a true story. It helps to read it as a story, which means thinking, "What does the main character want? What gets in the way of him getting what he wants? (I pointed to the "Story Elements" chart.) Listen for that, and I'll be listening for that as well."

Read aloud a narrative nonfiction book (in this case, a biography) and recruit students to join you in listening for the familiar elements of story.

Benjamin Katz and Augusta Podgainsky were born in Warsaw, Poland. However, they did not meet until they had both emigrated to the United States. Continuing the Polish custom, their wedding was arranged by a matchmaker. After the marriage, the two settled in the Jewish quarter of Brooklyn, New York. In a two-family house at no. 438 Vermont Street, their third child, Jacob Ezra Katz was born on March 11, 1916.

At an early age, Jacob, known later to the world as Ezra Jack Keats, became interested in art. His mother encouraged Keats' talent, but his father seemed only to criticize Keats' ability. Working at Pete's Coffee Shop in Greenwich Village, Benjamin Katz knew how hard earning a living could be. He felt that his son could never really be successful as an artist. However, his father did purchase tubes of paint for Keats under the pretense of having traded bowls of soup to starving artists. "If you don't think artists starve, well, let me tell you. One man came in the other day and swapped me a tube of paint for a bowl of soup."

"Are you thinking about what young Ezra (known then as Jacob) wanted? And do you have signs about the troubles he encountered?" I paused, then added, "What did you make of this part?" I said, rereading the last line about the father purchasing his son tubes of paint but pretending he'd gotten them from an artist who was so starving that he traded them for food. The class and I talked about how that detail showed so much—the father's reluctance to encourage his son because of his fear that artists were all starving, yet his surreptitious support.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

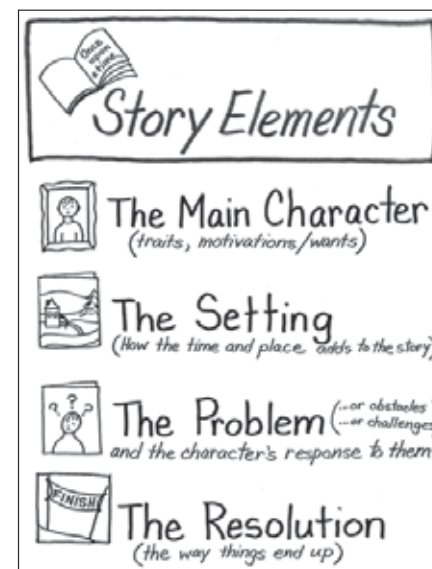
Continue reading aloud the narrative nonfiction text, this time asking children to tell each other what they notice about the character and his traits and struggles.

"Tell your partner what you know so far about the kind of person Ezra is. Try to reach for the exactly right words." Then I continued on in the reading.

Keats did win the approval of his father when he was paid twenty-five cents for painting an advertisement for a local store at the age of eight. Finally, Benjamin thought his son might be able to earn a living with his art, as a sign painter.

If you want children to refer to charts often as a reminder of all they have learned, it is important that you reference them as well.

Later you'll also teach your students how readers collect important information as they read these books, and you'll teach readers that, in fact, they can extract a boxes-and-bullets, main-idea-and-supports synthesis of the information in most narrative nonfiction texts.



"Before I read on, rev up your mind, use what you know about how stories go to get your expectations going. What you have already heard should set you up to predict what you believe might happen in this story." I gave children a moment to think about that—not to talk about it—and then resumed reading.

When Benjamin Katz died on January 1935, Keats, on the day before his high school graduation, had to identify his father's body. For the first time he learned that his father had been proud of his work. In his Caldecott Medal speech in 1963, Keats shared the experience. "I found myself staring deep into his secret feelings. There in his wallet were worn and tattered newspaper clippings of the notices of the awards I had won. My silent admirer and supplier, he had been torn between his dread of my leading a life of hardship and his real pride in my work."

"Readers, whether your nonfiction text is narrative or expository, you need to be able to put the parts of the text together. Can you talk about how particular parts of this text—say, the part about his father having those newspaper clippings in his pocket—fits with earlier parts?" The children talked, and I listened. Then, skipping ahead, I read the end of the text.

Keats authored and/or illustrated more than 85 books for children. In 1980, he was awarded the University of Southern Mississippi Medallion for outstanding contributions in the field of children's literature.

On May 6, 1983, Ezra Jack Keats died from a heart attack.

"Now that we have finished this story, draw on what you know about how stories tend to go to recap what the whole story is about to your partner. Pretend your partner has never heard the story. Remember that all stories involve a character who wants something, encounters obstacles, then somehow gets past those obstacles.

"Tell each other how this work with narrative nonfiction—in this instance, with biography—matches the "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand of the learning progression work from our first unit. You can refer to this copy of the learning progression," I said and pointed to an enlarged version of the strand from the progression. I gave children a moment to share their ideas.

LINK

Remind readers to notice text structure and to vary their reading stance accordingly. Specifically, remind them to bring their knowledge of story to narrative nonfiction.

"So, readers, you see that just like a fisherman needs to think, 'What kind of fish am I hoping to catch?' and to choose a hook accordingly, readers also need to think, 'What kind of text am I reading?' and to vary ways of reading based on that. When you are reading a narrative nonfiction text, a knowledge of how stories usually go gives you almost a list of things to look for as you read, things that are apt to be important. At each of your tables, I have put some bins filled with biographies for you to pick from. As soon as you have chosen your book, get right to work."

Charts can be co-teachers of reading. Referring to them as you teach reinforces that charts are tools that support readers.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Helping Children Bring Their Familiar Reading Strategies to Narrative Nonfiction

PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS LEARNED THROUGH STORIES, and that is the focus of this new bend in the road. When we meet someone new, the person's statistics alone—his age, address, anniversary—don't tell us much about him. What we want are the stories. When we hear someone else's story, we can put ourselves into that person's shoes for a while. We learn about that person's life, and we also *understand* what it is like to see the world through his eyes.

Channel your students to read biographies.

Throughout this upcoming bend, you will want to channel your kids' nonfiction reading so they are all reading narrative nonfiction texts. For these first few days, we strongly recommend you channel them to read biography.

The fact that you will be reorganizing your classroom library gives you an extra chance to spotlight high-interest, accessible books. You may need to go to the school or public library to replenish your supplies of biography. You definitely don't want to be dependent on computer printouts. It's hard to emphasize enough the importance of putting appealing, accessible books in kids' hands.

Use this chance to double-check that kids are reading within-reach books. Does the child's fluency and intonation suggest she understands the book? Children will encounter unfamiliar terms—the specialized vocabulary related to the subject—and you may allow for a little less accuracy than usual. But if the child's reading is robotic in ways that suggest a lack of understanding, you'll spot this after even just a tiny episode of reading aloud.

Assess also for engagement. Earlier in the year when you had just launched your reading workshop, there were days when you stood back during reading time, scanning the room to see whose nose was in the book and who showed signs of disengagement. Now is a good time to look for children whose heads are like revolving fans during reading time and to check whether they are reading books they find engaging and accessible.

We emphasize matching readers to books because frequently during nonfiction units, children hold texts that are just too hard. This may be because a preponderance of large colorful photographs can lure people into thinking a book is easier than it is! Remember, kids go down several levels every summer because of summer reading loss. You can't let your nonfiction unit be a time when kids slip backward as readers because they are not actually reading.

As you circle among your readers, give book introductions for the books that you believe will be especially well suited to readers. Even if you don't know a book, you can gush over it. "Oh, this looks like a great one, doesn't it?" you can say, and then read aloud a bit of the back cover, an opening passage, a few of the subheads or photo captions. "I bet this book will help you learn . . ."

Remind children to bring their fiction reading skills to narrative nonfiction books.

You may find that some of your children still think that fiction and nonfiction are poles apart. For these youngsters, you'll want to reinforce that when reading narrative nonfiction, it helps to pay attention to the elements of story that they see in these books, and then you'll want to notice the extent to which they tap into all they learned earlier about how stories go. When I pulled my chair up next to Kadija, she was reading a book about Sacagawea. She told me she was working on envisioning. "In this part, Sacagawea is in the river. She's really struggling 'cause the water is coming up—you know, rising? She has a baby on her back. And he's really heavy."

"I can see that, too. When you were describing it, you even kind of bent your shoulders, like you were feeling the weight of that heavy baby and feeling how hard it must have been to carry him. I'm glad you realize that making a movie in your mind can work when you read nonfiction as well as fiction. Does that scene make you think something about what kind of character Sacagawea is? What are you learning about her?" I tapped the key words in the learning progression.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Reading Closely to Infer Character Traits**

"Readers, can I stop you? I've been talking with a number of you about the people you are reading about, and sometimes my conversations with you have gone like this: I ask, 'I don't know that much about (you fill in the name—Jackie Robinson, Helen Keller, whomever). What's he (or she) like as a person?'"

"You won't believe this, but on more than one occasion, the response has been—get this—I don't know. It doesn't really say.'" I staggered backward, as if stunned.

"Readers. Think about how you got to know Willie in *Stone Fox*. Did the author come right out and tell you that Willie was persistent? No! You saw it. You saw his decisions. You saw his actions. You studied his relationships.

"Right now, point to a page of your book where your character is doing things, deciding things, saying things that are significant." I gave them a half a minute to do this. "Now will you each reread that page, reading it super closely, and think, 'What does this show about my character, my person?'"

As students worked, I called out, "Remember that actions are choices. The person could have acted differently. What could he or she have done or said? What do you make of what the person *did* do?" After another minute or two, I said, "When you begin to get a hunch, look for more evidence." I also coached, "Choose the precisely right words." Then finally I said, "Partners, turn and talk."

After children talked for a bit, I said, "As you read on, continue to realize that you are expected to figure this person out. I've written some questions on chart paper that I think will really help you. Tell your partner which of these questions you like the best, and then as you read on, keep that question in mind."

? Questions ? Narrative Nonfiction Readers Can Ask:

- ? What does the person's actions, thoughts, talk show about the person?
- ? What people/events influence the person?
"I think... caused him to..."
- ? What is the person known for—and how does the early part of the story connect with that?

Kadija answered, "I think she's courageous, trying that by herself."

"Hmm, . . . I see exactly what you mean. Do you think that there are other places in the book that support your idea that Sacagawea is courageous? They could become part of your theory about her."

"Oh, definitely!" Kadija started flipping quickly back through the book. "Here, on this page, she was really sick, and she had a bad fever, and she tried to travel anyhow. The whole expedition had to stop and wait for her to get better. I bet she was scared and thought she would die. You expect floods or whatnot to stop the trip, but sometimes sickness is the worst."

Not only had Kadija found evidence to support her theory that Sacagawea was courageous, but she had also thought about how that trait influenced what Sacagawea did—which in turn influenced history. I am aware that third-graders need to think about cause-and-effect relationships in books, so I decided to make a fuss over the way that Kadija had seen the way Sacagawea's trait affected history. I also pointed out that when reading biographies, the people often have traits like perseverance, courage, and grit; those are traits of successful people, and if this is a person who rates a biography, chances are great she is successful!



SHARE

Retelling Narrative Nonfiction Using Prior Skills

Ask students to summarize their biographies, following a story structure template.

"Readers, in a minute you are going to have time to talk with your partner. Before you do, would you review the Narrative Reading Learning Progression's "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand? Then look back over the whole text that you have read so far and get ready to summarize the text to your partner," I said. I gestured also to the "Story Elements" chart.

After the children took a moment to gather their thoughts, they talked to their partners, first summarizing their text and then talking about it. I listened in.

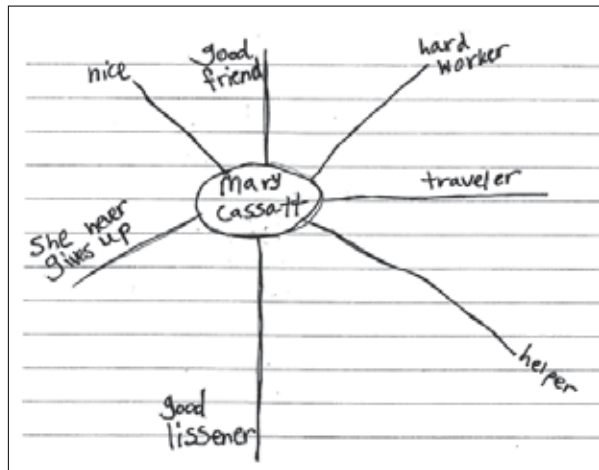


FIG. 11-1 This reader collected several different traits while reading about Mary Cassatt.

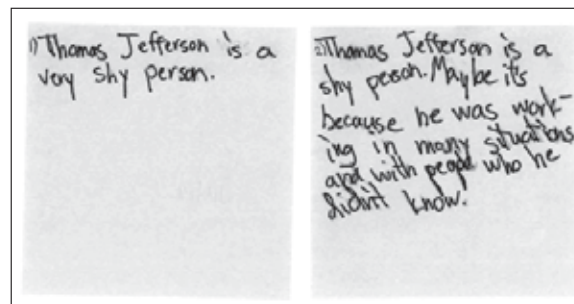
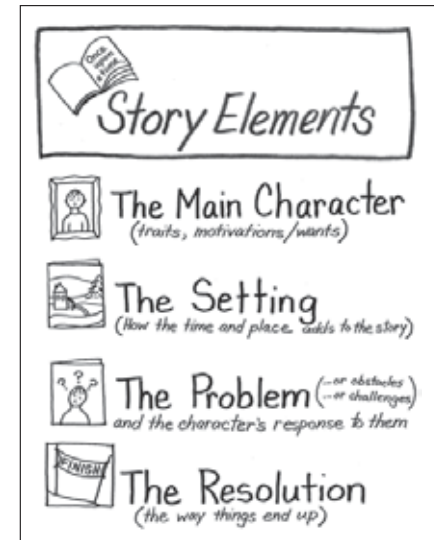


FIG. 11-2 This reader elaborates on his theory by adding a reason.

SESSION 11 HOMEWORK



NOTING THE KEY ELEMENTS OF YOUR BIOGRAPHY

Readers, continue reading the biography you started in school today. If you finish it, start another. What important things are you learning about the main character in your book? What are the character's traits, wants, problems, and changes? Mark those with a Post-it. Mark the major events in the story, too. What major events would you include in a recap of the story? Push yourself to maximize the amount of reading you get done. Please make sure you fill out your log.

STRONG: Ben Franklin is strong because whenever someone tells him that he can't do something or it's impossible to do something he will do it anyways or TRY it anyways.

Ben Franklin tried to catch lightning in a bottle but people thought he was crazy but he did. ^{this is} significant he discovered it and changed the world.

I think that Steven is very open minded, he has the mind of a inventor he even had a living room full of movie props. Steven got famous for his movie 'Amblin'.

FIG. 11-3 Notice now these readers first share theories about subjects of their biographies and support those theories with details that match.



Session 12

Summarizing Narrative Nonfiction

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that readers recognize the important details that contribute to the overarching storyline and learn how to synthesize secondary details and storylines into the larger story.

GETTING READY

- ✓ If you didn't do so yesterday, today you will need to share Ezra Jack Keats's biography to each partnership (see Active Engagement). ✨
- ✓ You may want to reference the "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression (see Active Engagement). ✨
- ✓ Biographies students are reading for independent reading (see Active Engagement and Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✓ "Analyzing Parts of a Text in Relationship to the Whole" strand of the Informational Reading Learning Progression (see Mid-Workshop Teaching) ✨

THIS SESSION REVISITS the content of the previous day's workshop. You give very realistic, direct help with a problem that your children are apt to encounter. Often when they read narrative nonfiction, they'll find a slew of details coming at them as they progress through the text, and it is not easy to decide whether some, all, or none of that detail matters. You'll point out that one of the ways to determine importance as they read is to learn about the notable accomplishments of the biography's subject, and then realize that the important details will be those that play a role in the storyline of how that person came to be famous for that accomplishment.

For instance, if this is LeBron James's biography, then yes, readers will note the first time his prowess in basketball was recognized. It will be important to note who supported that interest and who tried to derail it. Meanwhile, the name of LeBron James's first-grade teacher or of his elementary school is not apt to be important.

This lesson continues to support students' work with the "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression, so you will continue to weave references to that throughout the lesson. The work allows students to read nonfiction texts more quickly, holding onto the storyline that is buried under the accumulation of detail, so you will also support the volume of students' reading.

In the Mid-Workshop Teaching, you introduce another portion of the Informational Reading Learning Progression. This strand, while not a big focus for this unit, definitely relates to the work students are doing.



MINILESSON

Summarizing Narrative Nonfiction

CONNECTION

Name the problem of information overload in ways that kids can relate to, and then offer a solution to that problem.

"Readers, have you ever noticed that when you read a nonfiction book about a person, or about a bunch of people, a *ton* of facts come at you as you read? You read 'So-and-so had three brothers and two sisters. So-and-so was born in 1972 in Cleveland, Ohio. So-and-so went to Acorn Nursery School and Big Oak Elementary School.' And it is hard to hold on to all that stuff, isn't it? You don't know where to place a Post-it or what to record, because there are so many little facts flying at you as you read along, and who knows what's really important and what's not so important?"

"I want to tell you about something that might help. The things that turn out to be really important in a story are generally not the things that are just quick facts that come up once in a text. The things that will be important to a life story are the things that affect not only the past and the present, but also the future. Like in *Stone Fox*, Searchlight was important in Willie's life and he threaded through Willie's life story, but the buggy that Doc Smith drove in—that was just a quick thing that didn't really connect in deep ways to other parts of the story."

✿ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that when readers read a true story about a person or an event in history, they usually know from the start why the person or event is famous. They know LeBron James is famous for basketball. They know the end of the story. This clues readers into the details that will turn out to be important because they relate to the climactic ending."

TEACHING

Citing a person that the kids know, contrast a detail that is apt to be relevant and one that is not.

"So if this is a book about LeBron James, who is known for being a famous professional basketball player, and you read in an early chapter that LeBron was the first ever high school basketball player to be featured on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*—pow! That's important!"

◆ COACHING

As you tell about the fast-flying details, use your hands to dramatize the way facts come pelt-ing at the nonfiction reader: one fact, another, another. Illustrate the predicament that a non-fiction reader gets into, and a way of showing the need for readers to determine importance and to summarize as they read.

"On the other hand, if you read that LeBron liked eating waffles every Sunday morning while watching *Scooby Doo*, let it go. Unless that detail is written in a way to suggest otherwise, it is probably not so crucial.

"Now, had the text emphasized a second goal repeatedly—say, LeBron's longing to see the world—then you would, of course, keep in mind that people are complicated, they are not just one way. Stories, too, can be complicated. They may not just be one way. There could be a second thread that runs through the text as well, in which case you'd want to follow that, too."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Teach students that readers can not only identify the through-line(s) in their biography, but they can also think about how particular parts of the text fit into the overarching storyline.

"Let's practice this by working with the Ezra Jack Keats's biography that we read together yesterday. Think about what Ezra is known for and whether there is also a related second theme that runs through this story."

I listened as the children talked. Early on, I voiced over. "You are right that Ezra wants to be an artist. Is there a second-ary goal?" Soon children agreed that he wanted to be an artist, *and* he also wanted to get his father's approval.

"So, readers, remember that to summarize a narrative nonfiction text, you need to be able to figure out the main story line, the way the story holds together. It can help to think about the main character's wants—except that when it's a nonfiction text, we talk about the character as the subject. And you want to think about the main plotline, too. Think of what Keats is known for. Now, think about details from early in Keats's life that end up being important. They'll be details that go with either his ambitions to be a writer or his struggle for his dad's approval. What details from early in his life fit with this? Turn and talk."

Children talked, with many saying that the time he was eight and earned a quarter for painting an advertisement shows he got an early start on his art career.

Channel students to identify the through-line in the biography they are reading now, and to talk about specific parts of the text that relate to that through line.

"Now let's try something harder. Think about the biography you started yesterday. Before you read any farther in it, think: Why is the person featured in your biography—the subject of it—important enough to have been written about in a book? What do you know about the person or event that makes it special enough to have its own book?"

I gave students a minute to think about this. "What readers do next—here is the hard part—is they review the pages to locate passages that connect to the thread that runs through their text. So if you are reading about someone who grows up to be a freedom fighter, what are the early signs that the person would turn out that way? What are the influences along the way? Use Post-its to mark some places that connect!"

Notice that today's teaching is short and sweet. There is not a demonstration text used, nor is there modeling of the specific strategy. At times your teaching can consist of simply explaining your teaching point and citing an example. The active engagement will work to cement your teaching.

You may want to reference the "Retelling/Summary/Synthesis" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression.

After a few minutes for silent work, I said, “Partners, turn and talk about the important details, the events, that fit into the storyline of the person you are studying. Start by telling each other what the big thing is about the person, the event, and then tell about parts of the story that contribute to that storyline. Remember to use academic vocabulary if you can.”

LINK

Celebrate the summarizing work students have been doing. Challenge them to continue as they read on. Suggest they can assess their work against the learning progression.




I listened to children talking, and then after a bit said, “Readers, let me remind you that you are summarizing. See if you can do some thinking about your book that is at the third-grade level—or even, if you want to try it, at the fourth-grade level.”

“In a good summary, it’s important to include the important details only, to leave out the unimportant. You aim for your summary to be four or five sentences in length—and it’s not easy to summarize a person’s life story or the whole story of a major event in history in four or five sentences! It helps to think about what you know of a story structure: of a subject with motivations who encounters trouble, who tries hard to get past the trouble, and somehow either does, or finds another solution. See if you can read today in such a way that you can summarize the text you are reading, and do so in a way that matches the learning progression.”

Remind readers to maintain a good pace, and give them a volume goal for the day.

“Can I remind you of one more thing? Yesterday, many of you realized that you have been reading your nonfiction texts way too slowly. Right now, put a Post-it or a bookmark twenty pages from where you are now (and maybe twenty-five full pages, if you are reading a book with a lot of pictures). That’s the goal post for today in class. To get that much reading done, you need to sit up, look alert, and hold on to the storyline, and not to each and every teeny, tiny detail. If those details matter, you can reread to find them.

“*But* don’t race so fast that you stop comprehending. You know that. Don’t forget to write down the number of pages you read today in your reading log. Off you go!”

Informational Reading Learning Progression			
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
INTERPRETIVE READING			
Cross Text(s) Synthesis	<p>When I read several books (or parts of one book) on the same topic, I add what I learned from one text or part of text onto what I learned from the other text or part of text in no special order.</p> 	<p>When I read two texts (or parts of a text) that teach about the same subtopic, I can find the information on a subtopic from both texts (or parts of one text) and put that information together.</p> 	<p>As I read two or more texts (or parts of a long text) on a topic, I can collect and merge information and ideas from both texts (or parts of a long text) in a way that makes a new organization for the combined information.</p> <p>If there are ways to categorize the information on the subtopic, I sort information from both texts into a category.</p> 



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Researching and Teaching Students to Transfer

IF YOU SEE EVIDENCE that readers are applying what they learned earlier with both expository texts and with fiction, then you'll definitely want to celebrate this. It is hard to emphasize enough how important it is for youngsters to draw on their accumulating repertoire of strategies. After all, you teach with the hope that students are developing a toolkit that they'll use forever. If your students don't draw on what they learned a week or a month ago, in the same classroom, with the same teacher and the same general expectations, then the chances are good that they won't draw on those lessons a year from now when they are no longer in your class!

Of course, if students are not drawing on what you taught them earlier, don't despair. You have an extraordinary opportunity to make a very big difference. Teaching kids to be resourceful and to draw on all they have learned is just about the most important thing you could teach.

Learn whether students are drawing on prior work.

It may not be immediately obvious to you whether readers are drawing on prior lessons. You can probe. Pull alongside a child who is reading, and say, "Can I stop you? What sorts of work are you doing at this point, as a reader?" You might extend your question. "As you get to meet these people in your books, what sort of thinking are you doing? What are you noticing?" These questions can help you learn whether the child is noting that a character's actions show something about the kind of person the character is. Does the child pause to realize the character could have acted differently and that this action is probably a window to the character's traits?

There are other ways to learn whether the child is drawing on what she learned during the narrative unit. You might, for example, ask the reader to tell you how she thinks the text might unfold. Of course, an informed reader of biographies is not going to rely only on story structure to produce an answer, but it is probably the case that if she is reading a book about a famous pianist, in the book's first few pages we'll learn the subject's earliest character traits. Was she very musical as a child? Tenacious? Many

subjects of biographies are people who showed, at a young age, that winning combination of perseverance, industry, and dedication. Is the reader using those character traits to help her make sense of the unfolding narrative, to grow her understanding of the text and the individual it is about?

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Thinking about How Parts of the Text Fit with the Whole

"Readers, please stop for a moment and put your finger on the part of the true story you are reading right now." I waited. "Now, I have a question." I pulled out my copy of the "Analyzing Parts of a Text in Relation to the Whole" strand of the learning progression and said, "If some of you are ready for a new challenge, let me know and I will give you another strand of the learning progression. This is from the Informational Progression—and the work is called 'Analyzing Part to Whole.' That means dividing a text into parts, thinking about how the parts of a text, like parts of a clock, work together." I displayed that strand.

"Don't say anything just yet. Just think about whether there is an earlier part of the biography you are reading that goes with the part you are on now. You can look back and mark with a Post-it earlier parts that relate." I gave children time to do this. "Write your thinking in your reader's notebook, because we'll study it later. How does the part you are reading go with an earlier part?"

In a voiceover, I added, "Was the part you are reading now set up in an earlier part? Did an earlier part cause this to happen? Is this similar to an earlier part? Different from it?"

"Readers, time to continue reading. Leave your writing out on your desk so I can talk with you about it as you work and if any of you want copies of this strand, let me know."

You can also probe to see if the reader is attentive to ways in which the character—the subject—struggled. A biography of a great piano player will show ways that she struggled. Was her mother insistent on her becoming a doctor, not a musician? Did she suffer from stage fright? What struggles did she experience on the path to success, and how did she resolve them? And in the end, once the person achieved success, did she come to new realizations? New insights? Did she teach lessons the rest of us can learn from?

You could be more specific. You could give a child, a partnership, or a small group a short fictional text to read and then ask, as they start to read it, how the child's reading is similar to and different from his reading of a biography. You could ask the child to look between the sorts of Post-its made while reading biographies and those made earlier in the year when reading fiction.

Tell kids, “Over the last few days, I have been studying the writing and thinking and talking you do as you read these true stories. I’ve been trying to understand whether you are bringing the stuff that you learned from reading fiction into this new unit. My

mind has been going a mile a minute because it is so fascinating to notice ways your reading is and is not the same now that you are reading true stories, compared to when you were reading fiction. I’m wondering things like, when you read a biography and learn that Abe Lincoln stayed up late, trying to read by wavering firelight, does that give you ideas about him? Do you think about the work we did earlier on finding more precise words to capture a character? Do you record your theories about the characters when reading nonfiction, just as you did when you read fiction, or do you record different sorts of things entirely when reading nonfiction?”

A few children might volunteer to take a turn as researchers, interviewing others in ways that encourage these readers to self-reflect. These mini-researchers can ask questions of each other such as “Can you tell me how you read this biography differently because of all the work we did earlier with reading fiction?” Or “Here is a chart of the things we learned about reading fiction. Can you tell me which of these things you are still doing now that you are reading biography and show me where you are doing that work?” Of course, a similar discussion comparing reading of narrative and expository nonfiction would pay off, but we’ll be getting to that later in this bend.





SHARE

Sharing Skills in Summarizing

Create an opportunity for readers to analyze and revise their summaries.

"Readers, earlier you did some writing about your biography that can, I think, be assessed as an example of your abilities to summarize narrative nonfiction texts. Right now, get together with another partnership and share with each other the writing you have done about how parts of the biography go with the whole. Then in your small group identify one person's work that is especially strong and talk about why it is strong. What did that one person do that the rest of you haven't yet done and that you may want to try? Then will you help each other to either revise the writing you already did or make a new draft of a summary? Get started."

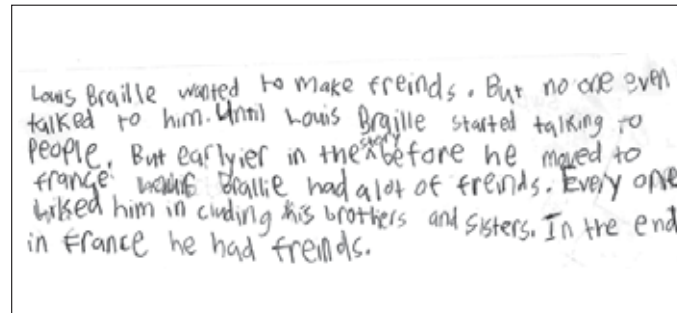
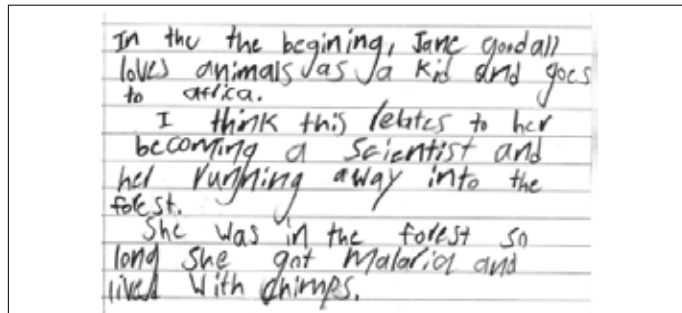


FIG. 12-1 These readers are connecting earlier parts of the text with their theories.

SESSION 12 HOMEWORK



PRACTICING YOUR ABILITY TO SYNTHESIZE

Readers, your work today has been impressive. Before you read for homework tonight, mark how far you'll read. When you get there, stop and think about how what you've read fits with what came before. Can you retell the sequence of events? Can you explain how the event you read about tonight fits with an earlier event. Can you see that one event is the cause of another? Is the result of another? Is an example of another?

Session 3

Noticing Patterns, Seeing More

Growing Theories about a Character



NOW THAT YOUR STUDENTS have begun to think inferentially about the characters in their books, you'll teach them to extend their first thoughts, which are likely fairly simple, fledgling ideas, into text-based theories. You'll tell children that readers expect their initial thinking to grow bigger as they read on and that one way readers think past first ideas is to look across all the chapters they've read so far, on the lookout for patterns in the character that reveal something telling. Then you'll show them how you put an initial idea about a character front and center, adding to it as you look back and see even more.

Today's teaching is built on the premise that readers come up with theories that hold weight only when they've read enough of a book to detect patterns in characters. However, even early on in a story, in the beginning chapters, readers should begin to see patterns in a character's actions and words.

You may be wondering whether this teaching applies to your students reading at lower levels; after all, their characters are often one-dimensional. Don't let this derail you. Even children reading at level M can rise to the challenge to see patterns and to notice and say more. Yes, one pattern in a character like Horrible Harry is that he is horrible time and time again. However, readers can also notice how persistent Harry is across a story. In today's mid-workshop, you'll point out that it pays for readers to notice times when a pattern in a character is broken. Opal is bighearted to everyone *except* a few kids her age. Horrible Harry is awful to everyone, *except* his best friend Doug, who sometimes escapes his wrath.

No matter what levels your children are reading, their shared challenge will be to look at the larger picture of a character and to synthesize what they've learned earlier in the text with what they discover as they read on. That is, they'll need to look past just one page or one part of a book, to turn initial, simple ideas about characters into richer, more developed ideas that carry across the story.

This is complex work for third-graders, so you may need to offer more scaffolds—more explicit instruction—than usual. Many of your children are still new to reading books that span many chapters and many days. Whereas last year, their books tended to be episodic,

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that once readers move forward in a book, they notice patterns in a character's actions and feelings, and they use those patterns to develop a theory about the character.

GETTING READY

- ✓ If you are using *Because of Winn-Dixie*, read aloud through the end of Chapter 7 prior to today's session. In today's lesson, be prepared to read aloud again an excerpt from Chapter 7, page 50 (see Teaching).
- ✓ Have chart paper and markers ready to write ideas about characters (see Teaching).
- ✓ Students will need their independent reading books, Post-it notes, and pens (see Active Engagement).
- ✓ Display and add to the "Getting to Know a Character" anchor chart (see Link). 🌟
- ✓ Make sure students have their reading logs now and for the remainder of this unit (see Link and Conferring).
- ✓ Refer to the "Fluency" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression, Grades 2 to 4 (see Share). 🌟



with a straightforward character encountering a different small adventure in each short chapter, now their stories unroll across a whole series of ups and downs, crises and solutions. And now you are asking them not only to keep the various events of the story in mind, but also to do something far more subtle—to notice patterns and form theories. The time-space dimensions of that work, alone, are not simple.

“Readers come up with theories that hold weight only when they’ve read enough of a book to detect patterns in characters.”

This session, then, is designed on the assumption that kids will have difficulties with this work and that you need to anticipate those difficulties and be ready to help them with the hard parts.



MINILESSON

Noticing Patterns, Seeing More

Growing Theories about a Character

CONNECTION

Point out that you are starting to detect patterns in your students' behavior.

"Readers, now that we've been together for a few months, I'm starting to get a sense of who you all are. I can tell who you are just by your handwriting or by the sound of your voice. I know who likes baseball, who likes art, and who likes singing. I even know whose backpack I tripped over just by looking at all the key chains dangling from the zipper.

"There's another way I'm coming to know you, too. I'm starting to notice the things you do again and again. I think, 'There goes Jake again, helping other kids in the morning on his patrol site. There he is reminding students to throw away their garbage in the lunchroom. Jake is so helpful and take-charge.' Or I think, 'There goes Lulu again, running to catch the spider on the windowsill so others won't be so scared. There she goes again, volunteering to talk to the fifth-graders about being more careful at recess when the kindergartners are on the playground.' Her actions reveal that she is brave and thoughtful.

"I see you nodding. Are you noticing these things about one another?

"Here's the thing, though. It took me a while to realize that these were patterns. I didn't just see Lulu catch one spider or Jake guide kids during one morning patrol and then say, 'There Jake goes again!' and 'There Lulu goes again!' I had to observe them doing similar kinds of things across several months before I could see these patterns and come up with theories—big ideas—about these two.

"I bet you know what I'll say next, right? The same thing is true of characters!"

✿ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that as you read on in a book and learn more about a character, you'll start to notice patterns in the things the character does again and again, across the story—and you can add on to your initial ideas to come up with a big idea, or theory, about the character."

◆ COACHING

Of course, you'll want to replace these examples with ones that spotlight the traits of your own students. Anytime you are able to use authentic examples from your own class, take advantage of it. The chance to be seen and recognized for their special qualities will be precious to your kids and will increase their engagement.

TEACHING

Invite children to notice whether there is a pattern of behavior further on in the story to support their initial ideas about a character.

"So if I want to grow an initial idea about a character, I first place that thinking front and center," I said. "We toyed with the idea that Opal is gutsy and brave, a risk taker, but the idea that's sticking with me—the one I want to linger with—is our idea that she is bighearted." I wrote that on chart paper:

Opal is bighearted.

"Now, remember, I told you that this is just *initial* thinking, right? So what I'll do next is I'll remind myself of the big things that have happened in the book so far. I'll look across the chapters, and as I do, I'll think, 'What do I see Opal doing again and again?'"

I opened *Because of Winn-Dixie*. "Let's see. In the first chapter, Opal saves Winn-Dixie from going to the pound. In the second chapter, she convinces her dad to give Winn-Dixie a home." I jotted these things on chart paper and said, "That's bighearted of her. She's really looking out for this stray dog."

"We want to ask ourselves, 'Were those just two freak episodes of bigheartedness, the only ones we'll see from her? Or is this a pattern of behavior she'll show again and again?'"

I turned a few pages in the book and continued, "In the third chapter, Opal gives Winn-Dixie a bath, and she tells him all about herself." I looked up. "Hmm, . . . Opal is taking care of Winn-Dixie, and she's even treating Winn-Dixie like a friend. Could we call that bighearted?"

The children nodded.

"But is this an even bigger pattern of behavior? Are there other parts in the text where we see Opal having a big heart?"

I picked up my pace, skimming through the next few chapters and pointing out other instances of this trait—when she took Winn-Dixie to church after discovering he was scared to be alone, when she prayed that the mouse thrown out of the church by the preacher would land on a soft patch of grass.

Then I said, "Let's go back to this part we just read in Chapter 7, when Opal is at the library with Winn-Dixie, listening to Miss Franny. Remember how Opal has just learned that most of Miss Franny's childhood friends have died? As I read, will you listen closely for things that Opal says or does here that may go together with this new idea we've noticed about her—that she has a big heart? Let's see if this is a pattern not just with animals, but with people, too."

"Well now, look at that," she said. "That dog is smiling at me."

By naming the chapters during your think-aloud, you show students that the pattern isn't specific to just one part of the text but continues across longer stretches of text.

"It's a talent of his," I told her.

"It's a fine talent," Miss Franny said. "A very fine talent." And she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.

"We could be friends," I said to Miss Franny. "I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends."

"Readers, are you thinking, like I am, that Opal just asked Miss Franny to be her friend?" I added that to the chart. "Maybe she realized that Miss Franny was lonely without her old friends. That's another example of how Opal is bighearted."

"Remember yesterday, when some of you said that Opal seemed to love animals? I'd say you're right. But it's not just animals, right? Opal cares for people, too—her mama, of course, and the preacher, and now Miss Franny. Bigheartedness is definitely proving to be a pattern in Opal. So let me phrase that as a theory. How about 'Opal is the kind of person who opens her heart to everyone.'"

Debrief. Point out the steps you followed to grow your initial thinking about the character by noticing patterns that contribute to a bigger theory.

"Readers, do you see how when I want to push myself to see more and say more about a character, it helps to look back over what I've read so far, with my idea front and center? I can do this, thinking, 'What do I see this character doing again and again?' and then I can use that information to come up with an even bigger idea about her—a theory!"

"I think that we are on to some insightful theories about Opal. And I know this because we have checked to be sure that she isn't just kind to one person in one part of the story. That big heart of hers doesn't just make one appearance, does it? Nope. She is kind again and again. That behavior is a pattern."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Set students up to look across the pages they've read in their own books, noticing patterns that help them come up with a bigger theory about their character.

"Okay, let's put Opal aside. Will you take out your own book now and try this same work? First, you might look for any patterns in your character's behavior. Are there things your character does or says over and over—things that repeat? If you need to, take a few moments first to retell the story in your head. That can help you spot patterns."

I gave children a few minutes to do this. Then, I said, "Now, turn and talk to your partner about some of the patterns you are noticing."

I circulated as children talked, voicing over coaching tips. "Are there other places that show this? Can you go to those parts in your book? How can this pattern help you come up with a theory about the character? You might use the prompt '_____ is the kind of person who . . .' to help you develop a theory."

Listen in to see if students are making connections across the text. Note whether they are looking across chapters or simply talking off of one chapter. If a child can give just one example of a specific behavior, nudge him to consider other patterns that will generate a stronger theory. Take note of any students who struggle with this work. Your observations will guide today's conferring.

I overheard Juan say to his partner, “Amber keeps hoping Justin’s family doesn’t move. This is a pattern. She’s glad that his house is taking a long time to sell. She crosses her fingers that no one else will buy the house. Amber thinks inside of her head that she doesn’t want there to be a next family when Justin’s mom talks about selling it.”

He stopped talking and the conversation came to a halt. “What does this pattern reveal about Amber? What theory can you grow about her?” I whispered in.

Juan tapped his nose a few times and then said, “Amber really cares about her friendship with Justin and might be a little mean too!”

Recap the work children did in a way that is transferable to another text, another day.

“Bravo! I can tell that you are paying close attention to the things your characters do over and over. You’re noticing the kinds of things they do and say, and even what they feel inside.

“See how when you are able to notice that something repeats again and again, you start to develop strong theories about your characters? Will you write those theories down?”

LINK

Reiterate the fact that readers can notice patterns in any character they come to know well.

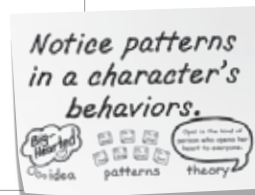
“Readers, anytime you read and come to know a character well, you can use that understanding to think, ‘There he goes again!’ When you do this, you’ll see that characters, like people, really do act in predictable ways. And once you start to see patterns in the kinds of things a character says or does, mark those parts so you can keep track of them and come up with theories about the character. This sets you up to follow that character across a story, understanding even more. Let’s add this new strategy to our anchor chart so we don’t forget it.”

While today’s lesson focuses on patterns in what characters do and say, students might notice other patterns as well, such as what a character wants and also the types of situations that the character finds herself in again and again. Celebrate these patterns, too.

ANCHOR CHART

Getting to Know a Character

- Notice how the character talks and acts.
- Study observations to grow an idea.
 - Make your idea more precise!
 - Find text evidence to support your idea or come up with a new one!
- Notice patterns in a character’s behaviors to develop a theory.



"Before you begin reading, be sure to log in and look around the classroom to see if there are any charts that will help you as you read today."

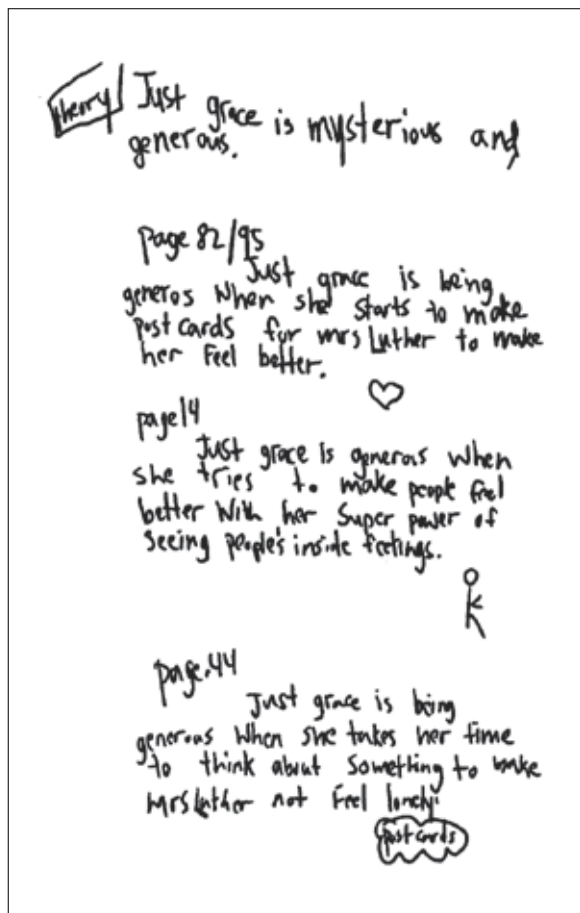


FIG. 3-1 Maggie notices patterns in her main character's behaviors across the book.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Scaffolding Children's Work around Patterns

THE ABILITY TO DETECT PATTERNS in characters will no doubt be a challenge for most kids in your room. In the next bend, you'll teach children to follow characters across a story, anticipating and noticing how they respond to problem after problem. Children will learn that how a character reacts to problems is integral to his journey and the lessons he takes from it. All of this work relies on children's ability to notice patterns in their characters' wants, reactions, and behaviors as they are reading.

To lay the groundwork for that learning, you'll want to pull together a small group of students who are struggling to see patterns in their characters. Ask these kids to bring their books, rife with sticky notes, with them, and then to take out their notes, sorting these into categories that seem to go together.

You might say something like "Readers, it is important that you take a few moments to retrace your steps and look across your Post-its to see if you are 'connecting the dots' as you move from one chapter, or one scene or one page, to the next. Reread your Post-its now asking, 'Do all of these Post-its follow one character? Am I noticing patterns in the character's behavior? Do any of the Post-its contain repeated words or phrases?'"

You might choose first to model this work with a few class jots from the read-aloud book to illustrate the concept. Then, prompt students to look over their own Post-its. Have them mark their Post-its with the character's name or use a symbol like a star to mark notes that seem to go together.

Once students have grouped their jots, you might prompt them, using a few of the questions below to determine *how* the jots fit together. The patterns will lead students to theorize about the characters in their books.

- ◆ How do these jots fit together around a larger theory?
- ◆ What is the same or similar about these Post-its?
- ◆ What bigger idea do I have about the character based on these jots?

When students have identified a pattern or two, you might say something like "Be sure to write this pattern, this new theory, in your notebook, so you can follow it across the story to see if it holds true."

Study reading logs to notice patterns.

You will want to continue to highlight the role of reading logs in the workshop. Use your observations and conferring notes to gather a group of students who are inconsistently filling out their reading logs or those who don't understand the value of logging regularly. Your conferring will both reinforce the importance of the reading log to their growth and encourage self-reflection.

You might say something like, "Readers, I pulled you together because, though you've been logging your reading across the unit, sometimes I see gaps in your logs. It's as if you forget how important it is to track your reading every time you read. Some of you

(continues)

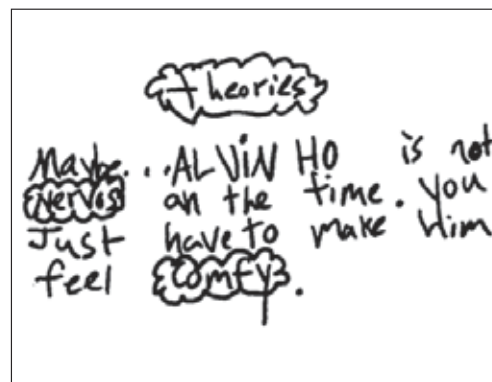


FIG. 3-2 Samuel notices a break in the pattern of his character's behavior.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Noticing When a Character Breaks Patterns of Behavior

"Readers, may I have your attention for a moment?" I waited until their eyes were on me. "I saw many of you rereading and reading on, working diligently to notice patterns in your character's behavior. You were placing sticky notes on all the spots where the character did or said something again and again.

"Then, I saw a group of students looking a bit puzzled, expecting the pattern to continue and being surprised when it didn't. For example, Maggie said, 'Jake Drake usually just lets people bully him. He lets this happen in day care, in kindergarten, in first grade, and even some of second grade! But *then*, he breaks the pattern. He *joins* the bully by laughing at himself.'" I paused, then said, "And what about Opal? She shares her big heart with the whole community—Winn-Dixie, Miss Franny, her Mama, the mouse—but not with Amanda Wilkes, right?

"Sometimes, a character acts one way over and over again, and then—poof! He breaks that pattern! Good readers are alert when those patterns break. They notice and think, 'Hmm, . . . I wonder why?'

"So, do you have any ideas about *why* an author might do this? *Why* might the author decide to break a pattern? Turn and talk to the person next to you about what you think." I gave students a few moments to share their ideas before they returned to their reading.

are logging more faithfully than others, but everyone could use a reminder of why a reading log matters so much.

"Just like you've been studying your characters' actions to learn more about them, your reading actions reveal things about you! Reading logs offer a *ton* of information that can help you reflect wisely on how reading is going for you. But this is only possible if you actually take the time to fill in and study your logs *every time you read*."

Then you might ask these students to study their reading log for patterns, noticing what is revealed about their reading habits. Is their volume consistent across the days, or do they read more some days than others? How much they are reading at home versus at school? Give children a few moments to investigate the information they can glean based on what's recorded in their logs. Then, have each child share this information with another child in the group. Tell them to say not only what they've learned about themselves from their log entries, but also what they *haven't* yet learned. Do they need more log entries to establish a pattern in their volume? Their stamina? The kinds of books they like to read?

After students talk, recap by saying, "Now that you know more about your reading patterns, you can use this information to set goals for yourself. How can you push your volume and stamina so that you continue to grow as a reader? If you weren't able to glean patterns because your log has too many gaps, make filling out your log every day one of your goals! Write your goal at the top of your log."



SHARE

Dramatization Can Support Fluency and Comprehension





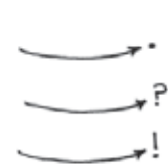
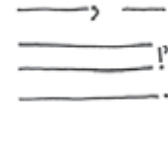
Invite partners to read aloud marked parts in their books that support their theories about what their character is like, using their voice to bring out that theory.

"Now that you have marked parts that fit with your theories, will you step into the shoes of your character? Read those parts to your partner and make your voice and gestures match how your character is feeling or acting in a particular scene.

"As you act out your scenes, place your theory Post-its between you and your partner. Partner 2, your job today will be to watch and listen to Partner 1's role play and then say whether the performance matches the theory. Or should Partner 1 revise the performance to bring out the theory in an even better way? Does the performance make it clear what kind of person this character is, or should your partner read it with even more feeling?" I gave students a few minutes to ready themselves.

As I moved among the partnerships, I held the "Fluency" strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression in front of me, taking notes in my conferring binder on students who needed more work with fluency, while whispering in prompts to help readers lift the level of their reenactments. "Is that *really* how the character would be saying that? You said your theory is that the character is kind, but it sounds like the character is bored! Try rereading that part again so that your voice shows that this is a kind person. What does a caring voice sound like?" If partners did not have the same book, I suggested that they hold the book between them so that all eyes were on the text.

After a few minutes, I reconvened the class. "Readers, I feel like your characters are here among us, sitting in the meeting area. I heard the curious Cam Jansen, the spunky Amber Brown, and the competitive Jake Drake—and so many others!"

Narrative Reading Learning Progression			
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
LITERAL COMPREHENSION			
Fluency <i>The sound of my voice</i>	<p>I aim to make my reading voice sound like I'm talking or storytelling. I can do that out loud or in my head. I scoop up a bunch of words at a time. I do this in ways that make the story easy to understand.</p> 	<p>I can read in my head and aloud in ways that help my listeners and me understand the story (e.g., changing my voice to show dialogue or a character's feelings). The new work I'm doing now is that I can do this even when I'm reading longer sentences.</p> 	<p>The way my voice sounds (whether in my head or out loud) is mostly based on what is going on in the story and on what each character is thinking, feeling, or experiencing. It might also be based on what I've learned about characters and the kind of people they are.</p> 
Punctuation and Sentence Complexity	<p>When I read dialogue, I can make it sound like a character is really talking. I use punctuation as a road signal that helps me know when to pause.</p> 	<p>When I read dialogue, I can make it sound like a character is really talking. I use punctuation as a road signal that helps me know when to pause. I can do this with longer, more complex sentences now.</p> 	<p>Punctuation steers my reading, but it is not something I have to think a lot about. However, when sentences are complex, the punctuation can help me figure out how to read them.</p> 

SESSION 3 HOMEWORK



NOTICING PATTERNS TO SEE MORE IN YOUR READING LIFE

Readers, today you worked on recognizing patterns in a story. You learned how seeing patterns can help you develop theories about your characters.

Tonight, before you read, ask yourself these questions.

- What kinds of patterns do I tend to notice?
- Are the patterns based on what the character says or does?
- How does the character think, feel, or react to events in the story?

Then see if those patterns happen at the beginning of the story or if they continue across the book.

Consider all the ways you can spot patterns to build your theories.



Session 9

Readers Notice Text Structures and Use Them to Organize Their Learning

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach children that when readers recognize the structure of the texts they read, they can use those same text structures to help organize their notes and their learning.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Students should bring their homework from the last session to the meeting area (see Connection, Link, and Share).
- ✓ Display your notes about two sections of a book you've read—one set of notes organized in a boxes-and-bullets structure, one sequentially (see Teaching).
- ✓ Prepare the "Researchers Take Notes that Follow the Structure of Their Texts" anchor chart (see Teaching) ✨
- ✓ "The Cycle of Life" and "Deadly Colors!" sections from *Frogs and Toads* to read aloud or another book with a sequential organization (see Active Engagement and Conferring and Small-Group Work) ✨
- ✓ "To Research . . ." anchor chart (see Link). ✨
- ✓ It may be helpful to have the Informational Reading Learning Progression handy, especially the "Main Idea(s) and Supporting Details/Summary" strand (see Conferring and Small-Group Work). ✨
- ✓ Prepare chart paper and markers to list students' observations of transition words (see Mid-Workshop Teaching).

THIS IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES of lessons designed to highlight the importance of text structures as an organizer to support the "Main Idea(s) and Supporting Details/Summary" strand of the learning progression. Research on long-term memory has shown it is impossible for the mind to hold onto a hodgepodge of a zillion tidbits. Learning involves structuring knowledge, building links between one fact and another.

In the first nonfiction unit, you used the memory game to help kids grasp the importance of structuring information, and you could return to that today, if you'd like. When presented with a tray of items, the best way to learn what is on that tray is to organize those items into categories and subcategories. When the students did this they found that some items belonged in the kitchen, some were office supplies, some were toys.

Similarly, authors of information books know that information needs to be structured for learners to take it in, and they handle the demand for structure in a variety of ways. Some texts have a single overarching structure. For example, a text may be structured as a story—say, a day in the life of a frog—with information laid out in a time sequence. A text may revolve around a single claim (the frog's body is designed to meet the challenges of its life) with subordinate sections related to that claim (the frog's eyes, the frog's legs). Usually, each section in a nonfiction book will have some semblance of a text structure.

Today you'll revisit the most basic concept: readers think about the way that information they are learning is structured, and their notes (and their summaries) often echo those structures. As readers become more sophisticated, a text can be structured in one way and readers can extrapolate information and ideas that are structured in another way. For example, a text can be structured as a story, and readers can pull out information in a boxes-and-bullets structure. The reader could read a story and generate a list of actions the subject took. For now, you'll remind students that it's important to read, noting the main idea and the supporting details, and organizing them according to the structure of that part of the text.



MINILESSON

Readers Notice Text Structures and Use Them to Organize Their Learning

CONNECTION

Channel students to review their notes, made during their homework, with each other. What are the qualities of effective notes?

"Researchers, for your homework last night, you took notes as you read about your animal. Will you get those out now and show your notes to your club mates? Looking across each others' notes, will you think about what effective notes look like?"

As children did this, I scanned their work and noted, as expected, that a large number of their notes showed no evidence that the learner was structuring the information at all. Many pages were simply lists of information.

"Here is my question: What are the characteristics of effective notes? If you were to put notes that you've made on different days into piles—not so good, quite good, very good—what's the difference? What are you aiming to do as you take notes? Turn and talk about that, and as you talk, identify an example or two of especially effective notes."

✿ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to remind you that when you're trying to learn about a subject, it doesn't work to just pile a zillion facts in one huge pile, or one huge list. It helps to bucket those facts, to make subsections in your notes, and to pop out the main ideas, showing how the smaller details go with them."

TEACHING

Show notes you took earlier on two sections of your text—one organized in a boxes-and-bullets structure and one sequentially. Ask kids to talk about what they notice in your notes.

"Last night I took notes on two sections of *Frogs and Toads*, and I want to show you my notes. Will you and other members of your club talk about the logic behind the ways that I've organized—bucketed—the information that I learned? Then look back at your own notes and think about how you organized them."

◆ COACHING

For this connection, you do not want to allow students enough time to thoroughly read anyone's notes. Instead, they need just enough time to get a sense of how other students' notes compare to their own—and you only need enough time to confirm that most students will need instruction and support in taking effective notes. Do not belabor this part of the minilesson; speed is of the essence.

I displayed my notes and listened in while children talked about them.

Big, Bulging Eyes

Some frogs and toads have beautiful eyes that come in brilliant colors. Some eyes look like gold or silver. Others look like jewels of red, blue, or green.

A frog's or toad's eyes are wide apart, and they bulge from the top of the head. The frog or toad can see above, beside, ahead, and even behind itself to look for food or enemies.

Frogs and toads see well at night. They are also good at seeing moving things. A fly can sit in front of a frog's nose, and the frog will not notice it; but if the fly moves, the frog will eat it in a flash!

Frogs and toads have an extra eyelid. They can see through this clear eyelid. It covers their eyes like a diver's mask when they are swimming.

After listening for a bit, I said, "Researchers, when I learned about frog and toad eyes, I tried to capture the main ideas and supporting details using a boxes-and-bullets structure. The book didn't actually come right out and name the main idea and the big points. I read for a bit, then I thought, 'What is this saying?' and I came up with a heading for that part of my notes: Frog and Toad's Eyes Are Unique.

"But what about the notes on 'Frog and Toad Croaking'? That section wasn't really chunked into a couple of subsections, with information about each. Can you detect the organizational plan that underlies those notes?" Many kids indicated they could see the structure, but wanting to help the others, I read the first few steps aloud, using my fingers to count off as I did.

Ribbit! Ribbit!

Have you ever heard the croaking of frogs and toads on a quiet summer night? Long ago, frogs and toads were the only animals that could make sounds. Now, male and female frogs use sounds to find a mate. Only the males croak, or "sing." The females have quieter voices.

Male frogs and toads sing without opening their mouths! They have a voice sac in their throat. The voice sac is made of stretchy skin that swells like a balloon. Inside the balloon of skin, air moves back and forth and echoes. As the air touches the vocal cords, it makes a croaking noise.

Some frogs and toads make unusual sounds. The pig frog sounds like a grunting pig. The cricket frog sounds like a chirping cricket. Can you guess what sound this barking tree frog makes?

You may wonder why these are the only structures you are mentioning. These are the structures you taught in your previous unit, and for now, the goal is to keep this work as simple as possible. However, in your next class meeting, you'll highlight that there are other text structures that students will find often, and you'll spotlight compare and contrast. Don't leak that now, because you'll want to save that thunder for later.

Frog and Toad's Eyes Are Unique	Frog and Toad Croaking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some have eyes that are brilliant colors like gold and jewels. • Far apart and on top of head so can see all around • Help them see at night • Extra eyelid so can see when swimming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice sac swells up like a balloon • Air goes back and forth in it • Air touches vocal cords • They croak! • Get mate!!!

FIG. 9-1 Teacher notebook

"It's close to a narrative, but actually, people would say it's 'organized sequentially.' It is organized into a sequence."

I revealed a chart that showed these two structures. "This chart can help you remember how to organize your notes for these common text structures."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Explain that in life, the job is not to detect organizational structure in other people's notes, but to make notes that reflect those structures. Set kids up to practice doing this.

"Of course, in real life the job isn't to reread someone else's notes and name how they are organized. In real life, the job is to read subsections of a text and to think, 'How is this text organized?' and then take notes in ways that show that organization. And that question—How is this organized?—is usually asked and answered at the start of reading, so your notes are structured from the start.

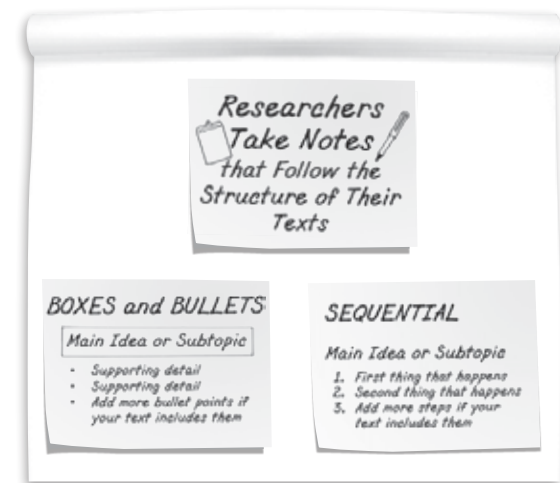
"Let's try reading a few other sections of *Frogs and Toads* and see if you can detect how the texts are organized and how my notes should go." I read a portion of a section of a chapter titled, "The Cycle of Life" that went like this:

"The Cycle of Life"

1. Females lay hundreds or thousands of eggs in the water. Frogs lay their eggs in clumps. Toads lay them in strings. The eggs are called **spawn**.
2. After a few days, an egg turns into a **tadpole**. Tadpoles have long tails and breathe through flaps called **gills**. They cannot live out of the water.
3. The tadpoles soon grow legs. They lose their gills and develop lungs for breathing out of water. Their tails get shorter and shorter until they disappear.
4. One day, an adult frog hops out of the water and onto the land.

The kids quickly agreed that this section, like the section on how to croak, is organized sequentially.

I also read aloud the chapter "Deadly Colors!" and helped kids to spot that it is organized in a boxes-and-bullets structure, with a little information about frogs of three different colors.



If you have this book, you'll notice that I skipped the portion of the chapter that is not organized sequentially and also skipped the first step in the process—when the male sits on the female's back and spreads sperm on the eggs. Of course, you can include that step if you like!

The graphics you make for each nonfiction text structure add a visual explanation, making it more likely that children will be able to identify and comprehend information that may be new. Children, too, will use graphics as they organize and develop their own research projects.

LINK

Send kids off to research and take notes, and remind them that some texts are hybrids. Invite them to invent ways to take structured notes.

"Today, as you study your animal, make sure that you decide on how to structure your notes. Do that by looking over the section of text that you are reading and asking, 'How is this organized?' You'll find that often texts contain one sort of organizational plan for a bit, and then they switch, so you may start with a boxes-and-bullets plan, then shift into a sequential list, and then get to a place where the text tries to build a mental model and decide that the best way to capture the text is through a diagram.

"Be ready to invent other ways to organize your notes too. The goal is to make it so you can think and talk about the information more easily and remember it more easily. Remember all you know about good research as you take notes and learn more about your new animals today." As I sent the students off to work, I added another bullet to the anchor chart.

ANCHOR
CHART

To Research . . .

- Get ready
 - Sequence texts, easy → hard
 - Read easy overview
 - Search for subtopics/key
- Study 1 subtopic
 - Easy book first
- Synthesize (combine) information from across texts.
- Talk with others and take notes about what you're learning, thinking, wondering.
- Use the topic's special vocabulary.
- Think your own thoughts.
- **Use text structures to organize your learning and note-taking.**

Use text structures
to organize your
learning and note-taking.





CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Supporting Critically Important Work

Reading with Awareness of Text Structures

IT IS TRULY ESSENTIAL that all your students grasp that texts are written in ways that signal their organizational structure. Some of your students may need support in discerning the differences between the types of text structures they know. Others know a text is structured into main ideas and supportive details but may need more help recognizing the main ideas.

Provide extra support in recognizing text structures.

You may find some lingering confusion about the two different text structures that you've highlighted so far: boxes and bullets, and sequential organization. If so, you might convene a small group and read them bits of penguin books, asking them to decide on the text structure they discern. For example, you could say, "How would you expect a text to be structured if it goes like this? 'As babies, penguins eat . . . When they become adolescents, penguins eat . . . Then, as adults, penguins eat . . .'"

Children might say boxes and bullets, and they are right in a way, but you'd want to point out that it is more precise to describe such a text as sequentially organized. You might tell kids that when a text is organized sequentially, the events are presented in the order that they happen. If the text starts, "As babies, penguins eat . . .," it's likely that the text as a whole can be placed on a timeline in order, or sequence, from first ("baby penguins eat . . .") to last ("adult penguins eat . . .").

You might continue, "What if a text went like this? 'All penguins live in the southern hemisphere . . . Some penguins live in Antarctica . . . Others live in South America and Africa . . . Penguins also live in Australia . . .'"

Kids might agree that such a text was organized in a boxes-and-bullets structure. They may say that the box—or main idea—was that all penguins live in the southern hemisphere. The bullets—or supporting details—were the continents that were listed: Antarctica, South America, Africa, and Australia.

(continues)

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING Recognizing Transition Words as Clues to Organizational Structure

"Readers, can I stop you? Do you find yourself extra aware of the text structures as you read?" Lots of kids indicated yes. "Let me give you a tip about how to notice those structures. Often there are a few key transition words that writers use that clue readers into the organizational structure of a text."

Turning to the kids on my right, I said, "I'm going to give you two minutes. Will people on this half of the room work together to come up with some key words you'd expect to find in a text that is structured sequentially?" Turning to the other half, I asked them to do the same for texts structured into main ideas and supporting details, or boxes and bullets.

After a short time, I asked the two halves of the classroom to pitch out some ideas, and we made this list:

Texts that Are Sequentially Organized	Texts that Are Organized by Main Ideas and Supporting Details
First, then, later, next	One way/kind/sort/type . . . another way/kind/sort/type . . .
At the beginning, a bit later, before long	Also, in addition, furthermore
When they are young . . . / later . . .	For example, in specific, for instance

Help kids move from collecting factoids to recognizing main ideas.

You will probably find instances when the work that is called for is even more foundational. For example, there may be some kids who continue to read, attending above all to little factoids, not seeming aware at all that the first job of an information text reader is to glean what the main ideas are that the text is conveying. “If you cut this text up into little bits and put them in a strainer meant to hold onto only the most critical information, which bits of the text would go down the drain and which would remain in the strainer? That is, what are the parts of this text that are especially important?”

In addition to supporting students in the specific work of the minilesson, you might look for students who are ready to move from identifying subtopics to identifying main

ideas. You might, for example, go to “The Cycle of Life” chapter from *Frogs and Toads*, used in the active engagement of the minilesson, to model how you don’t simply group information into categories or along a timeline, but that you also step back and ask yourself, “When I look across all the facts in a category or along a timeline, what is the main thing the author is teaching me about this topic?” Show students how you might revise so that the initial heading, “The Cycle of Life” now becomes a main idea, “Frogs develop from egg to adult frog in a series of specific stages.” From there you can help them to look over one or two of their notes, rewriting the words and phrases that identify subtopics into full sentences that spell out the main ideas of their reading.

In either case, using the “Main Idea(s) and Supporting Details/Summary” strand of the Informational Reading Learning Progression will support these readers to independently do this work over the days and weeks to come.





SHARE

Readers Use Their Notes to Teach Each Other

Ask researchers to lay their notes from the day before alongside those from today, and then orchestrate a museum sharing.

"Time for your club meeting! Will you start by laying out your notes? If your notes aren't locked into a spiral binding, put yesterday's notes on the top half of your work space and today's notes on the bottom half. In a moment, I'm going to ask you to step away from your work area so that people can wander past your notes, admiring how much more organized your notes have become.

"You ready to stand up and back from your notes?"

I let children wander, and as they did, I called out a few voiceovers: "You should be getting some ideas for how your notes could be even better!" "Are your classmates setting big ideas apart from little details? Are they signaling, 'This is important'? "What do you admire? Sketches? Stars? Arrows? Marginal ideas?"

Ask researchers to return to their clubs, and this time, to teach each other what they've learned, remembering to teach in ways that are well structured.

"Researchers, although it has been fun to admire each others' notes, really looking at people's notes is like looking at their underwear. I know that sounds silly, but usually your notes aren't public. Usually that's not what you show off to other people. In fact, the only reason to take good notes is that those notes help you learn and they help you teach.

"So right now, use your notes to get ready to teach others what you have learned. Look back over your notes from the last few days, find some parts that are interesting, star those parts, put them into some order, prepare to make a little lecture to your club mates about your topic."

As children did this—starring and numbering their notes, I coached into their work. Then I said, "So one member of each club, you start. Put on your professor hat and give your club mates a little lecture about your topic. Go!"

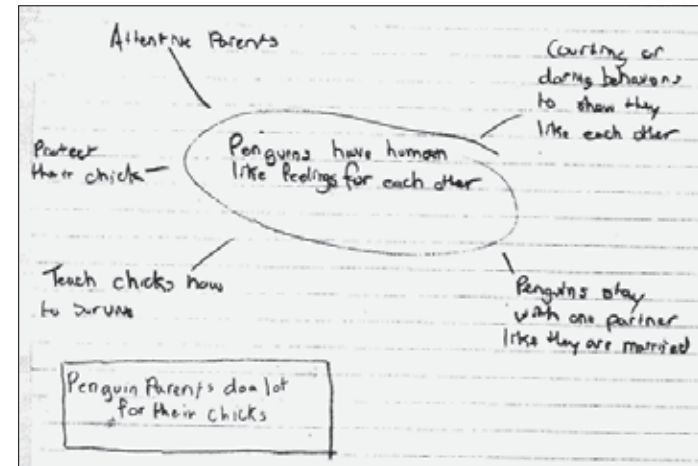


FIG. 9-2 This group recorded their learning on a new web.

SESSION 9 HOMEWORK



IDENTIFYING TEXT STRUCTURES

Readers, take two more books from your club's bin home tonight. You'll skim the books to look for information on a subtopic about your animal. Take notes in your notebook. But this time, identify the structure of the texts you read. Are they organized in a sequence? Do they have a boxes-and-bullets structure? Or do they have some of both? Make sure to use the same structure in your notes that your books use. Can you see that your notes are more effective now? Be sure to bring your books back to school!

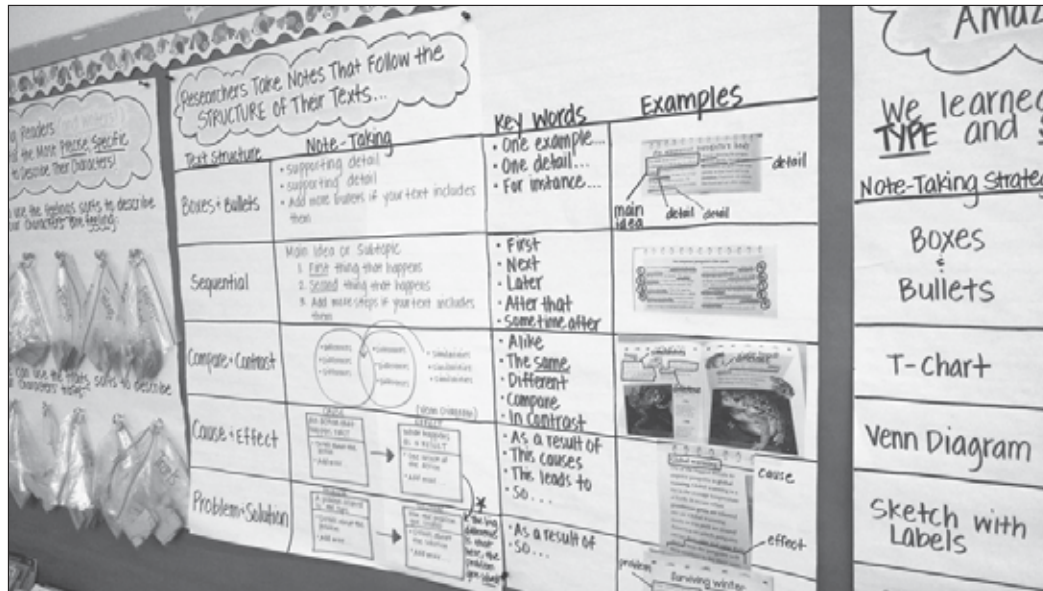


FIG. 9-3 Charts with text examples from books the class knows along with student examples help deepen children's understanding.



PROFESSIONAL Development

Implementation and Professional Development Options

The *Units of Study* books are a curriculum—and more. Lucy Calkins has embedded professional development into the curriculum, teaching teachers the “why” and “how” of effective reading instruction. Through regular coaching tips and detailed descriptions of teaching moves, essential aspects of reading instruction are underscored and explained at every turn. The professional development embedded in this series can be further enhanced through the following opportunities.

IN YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT

Units of Study Days

Through a one-day intensive session, teachers can get started unpacking the series’ components, grasping the big picture of effective workshop teaching, and gaining an understanding of how to integrate assessment into the curriculum.

Contact Judith Chin, Coordinator of Strategic Development
judith.chin@readingandwritingproject.org
Phone: 212-678-3104

Multi-Day Institute for 40–300 educators

Invite a Reading and Writing Project Staff Developer to work in your school or district, helping a cohort of educators to teach reading and/or writing well. Host a “Homegrown Institute” for writing instruction, reading instruction, or content literacy. Tailored to your district’s needs, the instruction and materials are specialized for K–2, 3–5 or 6–8 sections.

Contact Kathy Neville, Executive Administrator
kathy@readingandwritingproject.org
Phone: 917-484-1482

Leadership Support

Topics include planning for large-scale implementation, establishing assessments across the school or district, learning from walk-throughs, designing in-house staff development, and instituting cross-grade alignment.

ONLINE FROM TCRWP

Classroom Videos

Dozens of live-from-the classroom videos let you eavesdrop on Lucy and her colleagues’ instruction in literacy workshop classrooms. These clips model the minilessons, conferences, and shares you will engage in as you teach the units of study.

View these videos at:
readingandwritingproject.org/resources/units-of-study

Resources

The Project posts important and useful resources throughout the year, including examples of student work.

Visit readingandwritingproject.org/resources

Twitter Chats

On Wednesdays from 7:30–8:30 P.M. EST join TCRWP and our colleagues for live chat sessions on topics supporting literacy instruction. Follow them at @TCRWP or search #TCRWP.

[Twitter.com/tcrwp](https://twitter.com/tcrwp)

Distance Learning Teacher-Leader Groups in Reading and Writing

TCRWP’s online Teacher-Leader Groups bring together potential teacher-leaders from schools across the nation. Led by Senior Staff Developers, each grade-specific group convenes for five two-hour sessions at crucial times throughout the year. These sessions enable teacher-leaders to think across the units of study and to explore methods of facilitating student transfer of skills from one unit to the next.

Visit readingandwritingproject.org for full support.

AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

Multi-Day Institutes at Teachers College

Teachers College offers eight institutes each year. Each of these is led by teacher-educators from the project, with other world-renowned experts joining as well. Institutes include keynotes, small- and large-group sections, and sometimes work in exemplar schools.

- Summer Institutes on the Teaching of Reading and Writing
- Literacy Coaching Institutes on the Teaching of Reading and Writing
- Content Area Institute
- Argumentation Institute

For registration and application information go to:
readingandwritingproject.org/services/institutes

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

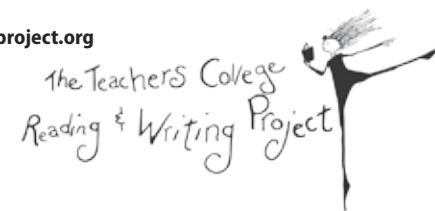
Each year, the Reading and Writing Project and Heinemann offer several one-day workshops for teachers and administrators. These off-site seminars are held in selected locations across the country and focus on units of study for teaching reading and writing. The workshops are delivered by TCRWP leaders and are open enrollment events.

For dates, locations, and registration information go to:
readingandwritingproject.org/services/one-day-events/conferences
and heinemann.com/PD/workshops

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

525 W 120th St, Box 77
New York NY, 10027

readingandwritingproject.org



NEW from Lucy Calkins

UNITS OF STUDY *for* Teaching Reading

A WORKSHOP CURRICULUM ♦ Grade-by-Grade, K-5

Lucy Calkins *with Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*

“This series builds on decades of teaching and research—in literally tens of thousands of schools. In states across the country, this curriculum has already given young people extraordinary power, not only as readers, but also as thinkers. When young people are explicitly taught the skills and strategies of proficient reading and are invited to live as richly literate people do, carrying books everywhere, bringing reading into every nook and corner of their lives, the results are dramatic.” —LUCY CALKINS



GRADE 2 SHOWN

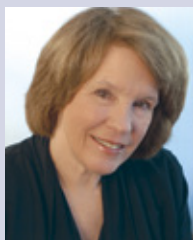
Following on the success of the *Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, K-5*, the new grade-by-grade *Units of Study for Teaching Reading, K-5*:

- ▶ provide state-of-the-art tools and methods to help students move up the ladder of text complexity
- ▶ build foundational reading skills and strategies
- ▶ support the teaching of interpretation, synthesis, and main idea
- ▶ provide all the teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work needed to teach a comprehensive workshop curriculum
- ▶ include the resources to help teachers build and evolve anchor charts across each unit
- ▶ help teachers use learning progressions to assess students' reading work, develop their use of self-monitoring strategies, and set students on trajectories of growth
- ▶ give teachers opportunities to teach and to learn teaching while receiving strong scaffolding and on-the-job guidance



Learn more at
unitsofstudy.com/teachingreading

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Lucy Calkins is the Founding Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, a New York City-based organization that has influenced literacy instruction around the globe. In that role, Lucy's greatest accomplishment has been to develop a learning community of teacher educators whose brilliance and dedication shines through in the Units of Study books, which are quickly becoming an essential part of classroom life in tens of thousands of schools around the world. The power of the Units of Study and TCRWP can be felt, too, in the schools that bear their distinctive mark: a combination of joy and rigor in the classrooms, and entire school communities—teachers, principals, parents, kids—who wear a love of reading and writing on their sleeves.

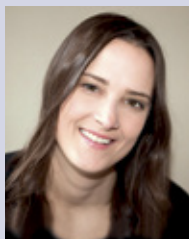
Lucy is the Robinson Professor of Children's Literature at Teachers College, Columbia University where she co-directs the Literacy Specialist Program—a masters and doctoral program that brings brilliant teachers and coaches to TCRWP schools everywhere and to the Project itself. She is the author or coauthor of several score of books, including *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* (Heinemann 2012), which was on the New York Times education bestseller list, and a sister series, *Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grades K–8* (Heinemann 2013–14).



Alexandra Marron is a Staff Developer, Researcher, and Writer-in-Residence at TCRWP. Her responsibilities include leading a yearlong study group for master teachers, presenting at conferences, teaching at summer institutes, and above all helping teachers and principals in dozens of schools lead state-of-the-art reading and writing workshops. Ali is the coauthor of five books in the Writing Units of Study series—*Writing About Reading* (Grade 2), *The Literary Essay* (Grade 4), *Narrative Craft* and *Shaping Texts* (Grade 5), and *Personal Narrative* (Grade 6). Ali has played a leadership role in developing learning progressions in argument writing, and participates in a study group on the subject, sponsored by the Council of Chief School Officers, involving Educational Testing Service and TCRWP. Prior to this work, she taught at PS 6, and while there contributed to the book *Practical Punctuation: Lessons on Rule Making and Rule Breaking in Elementary Writing* (Heinemann 2008.)



Julia Mooney is Writer-in-Residence at TCRWP, where she collaborates with Lucy Calkins and a team of writers on K–8 literacy curricula, learning progressions, performance assessments, and other major projects. Julia holds a BA in English from Stanford University. At Teachers College, Julia has helped organize and TA courses by children's book authors James Howe and Sarah Weeks, in whose classes she tapped into her first love of storytelling. Julia is the coauthor of three books in the Writing Units of Study series—*Lessons from the Masters* (Grade 2), *If . . . Then . . . Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grade 2*, and *If . . . Then . . . Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grade 3*; as well as *Constructing Curriculum: Alternate Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades 3–5* (Heinemann 2010).



As a staff developer at TCRWP, **Kristin Smith** works with many schools in New York and across the country. She has a deep interest in working with students and teachers to develop reading and writing identities while fostering strong classroom communities where all students are afforded opportunities to succeed. Kristin received her MEd from Teachers College in the Literacy Specialist Program, and has since worked as an instructor, teaching graduate reading courses. In all of her work, Kristin draws on her teaching experiences in West Windsor-Plainsboro, New Jersey and in the South Bronx, New York.



Kathleen Tolan is a Senior Deputy Director of the TCRWP. In that capacity, she has special responsibility for the Project's work with reading instruction. Kathleen organizes instruction for staff developers and the Project's four summer institutes, and plays a lead role in the Content Literacy Institute and the coaching institutes. She works closely with school principals, assistant principals, literacy coaches, and teachers to bring about schoolwide change in the teaching of reading and writing. She also provides staff development at schools in Brooklyn, Harlem, Manhattan, and Scarsdale, and each of those schools has become a TCRWP teaching site.

Kathleen is the coauthor of four books in this series—*Building a Reading Life*, *Reading to Learn*, and *Research Clubs* (Grade 3) and *Interpreting Characters* (Grade 4); as well as two books in the Writing Units of Study series—*The Literary Essay* (Grade 4) and *The Literary Essay* (Grade 6). She also was the coauthor of five books in the previous *Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades 3–5* series (Heinemann 2010), and is featured in many of TCRWP's videos.

For more than thirty years the **Teachers College Reading and Writing Project** (readingandwritingproject.org) has been both a provider of professional development to hundreds of thousands of educators and a think tank, developing state-of-the-art teaching methods and working closely with policy makers, school principals, and teachers to initiate and support schoolwide and system-wide reform in the teaching of reading and writing.

