

**Unit 6: Historical Fiction Book Clubs:  
Spotlight on Activating Prior Knowledge and Visualizing (4 weeks)**

**Rationale**

*Why is this unit important and appropriate for this grade level and at this time of the year?*

Reading historical fiction challenges students to comprehend texts that take place in unfamiliar settings and understand the relationships among complex characters. Students will need to assimilate the personal stories of fictional characters with a historical era. Book clubs provide a scaffold as students develop and extend their ability to think and talk about increasingly complicated plots and themes.

**Learning Outcomes**

*What do we expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit?*

Students will:

- Connect and use what they know about reading fiction into their work with historical fiction
- Use a variety of multimedia resources and artifacts to build an understanding of the time period and setting studied
- Understand the nature of the setting, the ways people live, who the characters are, as well as the relationship the characters have to historical tensions
- Infer about characters' feelings, problems, and solutions based on what they know about the time period
- Use their background knowledge of the specific time period to make inferences, and predictions, as well as to build comprehension

**Minilessons/Notes/Tips**

*What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?*

Possible Minilessons:

- Reviewing routines and procedures for book clubs (See Unit 4)
- Reviewing ways to keep talk going during book clubs (See Unit 4)
- Reviewing what we already know about fiction (usually constructed around a character facing a challenge) and using that knowledge to read historical fiction texts
- Paying attention to character strengths, challenges, and relationships
- Noticing important information about the setting
- Reviewing strategies for decoding unfamiliar words and understanding unfamiliar vocabulary (See Unit 5)
- Visualizing what is happening in a part of a story, including where it takes place, the mode, and details about events to understand new words encountered
- Using tools (e.g., graphic organizers, time lines, character lists) to accumulate and organize information
- Monitoring comprehension while reading in a different time period (see notes/tips for possible resources)
- Using background knowledge to visualize the setting (e.g., what people are wearing, what buildings look like)
- Revising visualizations as new information is obtained
- Keeping track of plotline(s)
- Noticing how characters grow and change alongside of changes in the time period
- Keeping track of shifts in time and place
- Understanding the character and the challenges that he/she faces
- Thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of the main characters
- Demonstrating an understanding of how these strengths and weaknesses affect the character and how he/she responds to these challenges

## 2014-2015 Grade 4 Reading Units of Study

- Paying attention to the character's relationship with other characters
- Constructing the sense of another time
- Lingering at significant moments in texts to notice lessons such as human endurance or social justice
- Modeling how to identify the problems related to an issue which is central to the era in which the story is set and discussing if the issue is still an issue in today's society
  - Discuss experiences and understanding of the issue
- Gathering and sharing text evidence to support thinking about texts read
- Noticing and discussing issues and themes with book club members
- Celebrating the end of the unit. Possibilities may include but are not limited to the following:
  - Share short video clips of each book club to highlight one or more effective moves the members of the book club are demonstrating.
  - Have students compose and share a brief list of tips/guidelines for successful book clubs. (Refer back to list at the start of the next book club unit.) Create a class chart, class book or bulletin board display with these ideas along with photos.
  - Create a ring of cards or bookmark with talk prompt to start and keep the conversation going based on those shared by students.
  - Have clubs meet with one another to share book recommendations, historical learning, etc.
  - Have students complete a historical fiction study reflection. (What did you learn about the genre of historical fiction? What strategies did you find useful when reading historical fiction? What do you know now about the structure of historical fiction? How can you apply what you learned about reading historical fiction to all of your reading? Be as specific as possible.)

### Notes/Tips:

- ***By the end of the unit, the students should be reading independently for a minimum of 45 minutes.***
- Meet with guided reading groups consistently as a way to differentiate reading instruction for all students.
- Text choice should be based around a consistent time period or era (e.g., westward expansion, the holocaust), not around a specific book.
- Connect historical fiction texts to social studies units of study.
- Teachers College has compiled a wealth of social studies resources that teachers use during the nonfiction and historical fiction units of study. The social studies resources include the following: annotated list of museums and historical archives, list with direct links of recommended magazines. To view resources use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/social-studies-resources.html>. Teachers College has also gathered text sets around time periods students are learning about as part of the social studies curriculum. To support students in doing cross-genre, cross-text work and have texts available for independent reading during the nonfiction and/or historical fiction units of study use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-libraries/archive.html>.
- Confer into book clubs to raise the quality of book talk.
- Create an ongoing anchor chart of conversational prompts (initiate conversations, keep the conversation going, question and deepen the talk).
- Students should spend part of the reading workshop reading their book club text and the remaining time reading their independent just right fiction texts to build reading stamina.
- Book clubs typically meet two or three days a week as students need time to read and prepare.
- Students should be encouraged to read about the time period through the lens of *several* novels.
- Each book club should have a text-set containing multi-level books dealing with the historical era. Easier texts can be used to introduce the era and scaffold understanding of the more harder texts in the set.
- Use resources, like video clips, timelines, photographs and newspaper headlines to build knowledge of the time period.
- Text selection is an extremely important consideration during this unit. It is critical that students have choices about what they read so that they read with high volume and high interest. It will be important to have enough books at your students' just right levels so that they can still choose books they want to read. Avoid putting readers in books that they cannot or do not want to read just so that they can "be in the unit." Good book introductions will help generate interest and excitement over the books available.
- A read aloud text such as *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia which is told through several simultaneous plot lines is recommended. While reading, teachers can scaffold students' understanding of the complex plot lines and model strategies for keeping the stories straight. Recommended picture

## 2014-2015 Grade 4 Reading Units of Study

books for read aloud are *Redcoats and Petticoats* by Katherine Kirkpatrick, *Charlotte* by Janet Lunn, *The Butterfly* by Patricia Polacco, *Freedom Summer* by Deborah Wiles. Suggested chapter books include *A Lion to Guard Us* by Clyde Robert Bulla, *The Secret of Van Rink's Cellar* by Beverly Haskell Lee, *The Tiger Rising* by Kate DiCamillo, *The House of Sixty Fathers* by Meindert De Jong and Maurice Sendak, *Maggie's Door* by Patricia Reilly Giff and *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry.

- Many teachers integrated the social studies curriculum with this unit of study. Several teachers, for example, read aloud and had students read texts about the American Revolution. Some titles read by students included *American Girl* (Felicity book series), *A Lion to Guard Us*, *Phoebe the Spy*, *And Then What Happened to Paul Revere?*, *The Whipping Boy*, *The Secret Soldier*, *Hannah of Fairfield*, *Magic Tree House – American Revolutionary War*.
- To view other recommended genre specific texts for read aloud and independent reading use the following link: <http://tc.readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-libraries.html>.
- During read alouds and shared reading, teach into interpretive thinking students should be doing by encouraging many opportunities for turn-and-talk as well as whole group discussions. It is helpful to have club members turn and talk to one another during read aloud and shared reading. Prompts might include:
  - The main character is facing a big problem. Turn and talk to your club about how you think he/she may try to solve it.
  - I'm thinking that if I were this character in this situation, I might have done something different. Stop and jot what you would do, keeping in mind what you know about that time period.
  - So far we have gathered a lot of details about the setting. Turn and talk with your club, how do you think the setting is affecting the main character?
  - How do you think what just happened will affect the character?
  - How does this situation compare to other experiences or situation we've read about?"
- One recommended writing exercise teachers used was to have students pick a character from their book club book and keep a diary for a week as if they were that character. A mentor text in the diary format was read aloud and used a model for writing diary entries. Criteria for diary entries was identified, modeled and charted for student reference.
- Teachers are encouraged to share copies of short typed texts they use for shared reading and/or independent reading with district colleagues. To share/view texts go to eChalk.
- **To view Grade 4 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 4 reading/writing page. Select "Resources" from the top nav bar. To access the units of study website use the link [http://ww3.mamkschools.org/units\\_of\\_study/](http://ww3.mamkschools.org/units_of_study/).**
- Additional resources of sample anchor charts for reading and writing units of study include the following: <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-charts/third-eighth-grade.html>.

### Professional Resources

*What professional resources will be helpful in planning the unit?*

- *The Common Core Lesson Book K-5* by Gretchen Owocki
- *Strategies That Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis
- *The Art of Teaching Reading* by Lucy Calkins (Chapter 20)
- *Units of Study in Reading* by Lucy Calkins and Mary Ehrenworth (Tackling Complex Texts: Synthesizing Perspectives, Volume 1 and Tackling Complex Texts: Interpretation and Critical Reading, Volume 2)
- *Fourth Grade Readers: Units of Study to Help* by Martha Heller-Winokur and Marcia Uretsky (Chapter 2)
- *Still Learning to Read* by Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak
- *Literature Circles* by Harvey Daniels
- *Grand Conversations: Literature Groups in Action* by Ralph Peterson and Maryann Eeds
- *Comprehension Through Conversation* by Maria Nichols
- *Talking About Text: Guiding Students to Increase Comprehension Through Purposeful Talk* by Maria Nichols
- *Teaching for Comprehension and Fluency* by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell
- *The Next Step in Guided Reading: Focused Assessments and Targeted Lessons for Helping Every Student Become a Better Reader* by Jan Richardson
- *Teaching Reading in Small Groups: Differentiated Instruction for Building Strategic Independent Readers* by Jennifer Serravallo