

**Unit 8: Fiction Book Clubs: Spotlight on Activating Background Knowledge & Making Connections
(3 weeks)**

Rationale

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

Having students engage in meaningful talk about literature provides them with various ways to derive meaning from the text. As students work on becoming interactive readers who think deeply about their reading, it is important for them to examine texts from different perspectives. During this unit, students will build upon and extend their thinking about characters and stories This unit builds upon the character analysis study from earlier in the year.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students will:

- Be active participants in their book clubs to listen to divergent ideas and different voices
- Engage in book talk that deepens comprehension
- Activate background knowledge to make connections that deepen understanding of the text
- Analyze the characters and plot of a story from multiple perspectives
- Demonstrate how to cite evidence from the text to improve conversation

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Reviewing routines and procedures for book clubs (Unit 4, 6)
- Reviewing ways to keep talk going during book clubs (Unit 4, 6)
- Reviewing ways to prepare for book conversations by jotting notes about their thinking/annotating texts, etc. (Unit 4, 6)
- Reviewing qualities of good book talk – what does it sound like, look like
- Developing questions for book club talk by reviewing and synthesizing notes
- Understanding the difference between thick and thin questions when generating/proposing questions for book talk
- Managing conversation so that all members participate
- Differentiating between distracting connections and those that deepen comprehension of the text
- Making connections to characters through personal experiences to deepen understanding and develop empathy
- Revising our image(s) of character(s) as we read on and gather new information
- Revising theories about characters as we read on and gather new information and text evidence to support thinking
- Differentiating between plot and “big ideas” which can be found in many texts
- Understanding that there are “big idea” which can be found in many texts
- Connecting big ideas and themes across texts by making text-to-text connections and text-to-world connections
- Rethinking misconceptions allowing new information to change our thinking as you read on, as you talk with others
- Looking at events and characters in the book from the perspective of a supporting character to analyze plot and character relationships from their perspective
- Revisiting and rereading previously read text to examine the book from a different character’s perspective

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- Celebrating the end of the unit. Possibilities may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Have club members each complete a self-reflection. What did we do well? What are some areas we needed to work on? What did I learn about being a club member? What will be important to remember when I work in my next book club? Think about the different book clubs you have participated in this year (mystery, historical fiction, fiction). Write a brief description describing your experiences, likes, dislikes, etc.
 - Pair up book clubs to “book talk” with one another. (This would be a great way to introduce/recommend books for future reading, supporting the work students will do when making summer reading plans.)
 - Pair up book clubs to engage in a conversation – debating ideas, thinking about character/texts read.

Notes/Tips:

- **Students should maintain stamina by continuing to read independently for a minimum of 45 minutes.**
- To ensure successful book clubs, it is important that the habits of rich book talk are modeled and practiced all yearlong during read aloud (turn and talk partners), shared reading (turn and talk partners), and reading partnerships.
- Whole class conversations (about familiar read alouds) are an effective way to prepare students for the demands and responsibilities of book clubs.
- Book clubs can range from 2-4 students but shouldn't exceed that amount to allow for all students multiple opportunities to share. Some students may benefit from working in a partnership rather than a club during this unit and other book club units. Within a class, there may be students in groups of 2, 3 and 4 – all groups can be referred to as book clubs.
- Book clubs typically meet two or three days a week as students need time to read and prepare.
- Confer into book clubs to raise the quality of book talk.
- Share videotape of partners and clubs engaging in conversation. Have students identify the habits of book club members. Teachers can videotape effective book clubs or share professional videos. (Teachers College has several book club videos available <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/common-core-standards/ccs-videos.html>.)
- Create (or refer to one created during previous book club units) an ongoing anchor chart of conversational prompts (e.g., initiate conversations, keep the conversation going, question and deepen the talk).
- Group students together for clubs considering interests, level, behaviors, etc.
- Short texts and text sets are alternative to having students solely read chapter books during this unit. Text sets can be easily created by teachers and/or students. When creating text sets teachers and/or students may decide to group together texts based on theme, character type, social issue, etc. Text sets may include a range of texts including picture books, chapter books, articles, poems, etc. Many teachers find using short typed texts/stories a great resource because students can annotate the texts easily in preparation for the conversation. A second advantage of using short texts is that students will read the entire text and then gather for the book talk – this supports book clubs who may have difficulty setting reading volume goals. Short texts also enable students to move from one club to another more frequently since the texts are short and discussed with one setting. Recommended resources of fiction short story collections include the following: *Every Living Thing*, *Stories About Being Nine* and *Hey World Here I Am*. Many teachers simply type up familiar picture books to use as short texts which students enjoy. It is important to note that often picture books include rich vocabulary, universal themes and reflect high quality writing.
- After students finish reading and preparing for their book club conversation they should continue reading another just right chapter book as a way to promote reading stamina and volume. (Having another book available for independent reading also allows for students with different reading rates to participate in book clubs together.)
- Meet with guided reading groups consistently as a way to differentiate reading instruction for all students.
- To view recommended genre specific texts for read aloud and independent reading use the following link: <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-libraries.html>.
- 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**

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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)
- *Still Learning to Read* by Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak
- *Fourth Grade Readers: Units of Study to Help* by Martha Heller-Winokur and Marcia Uretsky (Chapter 2)
- *Literature Circles* by Harvey Daniels
- *Grand Conversations: Literature Groups in Action* 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 Reading in Small Groups: Differentiated Instruction for Building Strategic Independent Readers* by Jennifer Serravallo
- *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