

Unit 9: Character Study: Spotlight on Visualizing and Inferring (4 weeks)

Rationale

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

During this unit, students will read about a character across a series. Using a variety of comprehension strategies students will think deeply about characters being studied and share their thinking with others.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students will:

- Use pictures and words to infer character’s feelings
- Discuss observations about a character with a partner
- Read with greater expression
- Make generalizations about a character based on his/her behaviors
- Share opinions about characters and reasons for thinking

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Noticing and describing a character’s actions and behaviors
- Noticing how a character is alike and different from the reader
- Identifying a character’s personality traits – things s/he often does, things s/he often says
- Comparing the same character across books
 - How is he/she the same across books? (Consider likes, dislikes, behavior, problems, etc.)
 - How is he/she different across books? Does he/she behave differently?
- Studying character dialogue for clues about a character’s feelings or behaviors
- Looking carefully at illustrations (facial expression, body language) for clues about what the character might be feeling
- Role playing – using voices, tone, gestures and body language to act out scenes imitating characters
- Developing ideas (“hunches”) about characters and finding evidence to support ideas in pictures and words
- Marking places in texts with Post-its that support the idea(s) about a character
- Revising ideas/hunches about a character after further reading, rereading, talking about the character
- Sharing theories and ideas about characters with partners
- Developing additional ideas about characters based on partner conversations
- Celebrating the end of the unit. Possibilities may include but are not limited to the following:
 - Create a class book about favorite characters. Have each student create a page for the book. Pages might include an illustration of the character as well as a written response as to what the student liked about the character, noticed about the character, etc.
 - Create posters/advertisements of different characters. The advertisements can include illustrations as well as written text that highlights for other readers why they might be interested in reading about the character depicted. Students can work independently or with a partner who read about the same character.

Notes/Tips:

- Each day students will spend time independently reading just right books for a *minimum* of 12 min. and reading with a partner for 10 min.
- Book baggies include just right character books, other just right books, copies of guided reading texts.
- Continue having daily guided reading groups.
- Shared reading, guided reading and independent reading are essential daily components of the kindergarten instructional schedule, providing daily opportunities for teachers to model print and comprehension strategies across genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction) and for students to practices and transfer these strategies to texts read independently.
- Choose a character to study as a class to model the strategies students will be using when they read their character books during independent reading. Read aloud many books about the character and engage students in conversation about the character as a way to model and support the thinking work they will do with a different character in independent reading. Create a class chart about the character studied including character traits and examples from texts to support thinking as well as any big ideas about the character and evidence. It is important that evidence is collected to support ideas et all about a character.
- Gather character series that match the varying reading levels of students. Students will study different characters. Each student will study a character different from the class study. It is recommended that reading partners student the same character to help them extend and deepen their conversation. Different partnerships study different characters. All students must study a character that reflects their reading level.
- Use daily read aloud also as an opportunity to model and have students practice turning and talking.
- Have different groups perform the same text/scene (read aloud texts) to notice differences in interpretation.
- Create character baskets or baggies of books with the same characters that students can select for independent reading (Rigby Publishing characters that span multiple texts include Ben, Sally, Baby Bear, Nick, Kate, James, etc., other recommendations include Brand New Readers, Puppy Mudge Series, Puppy Sam Series etc.). A twist on the unit could be to have students read about types of characters (books with bears as characters, books with kids as characters, books with teachers as characters, books with characters who have pets, books with characters who have problems).
- Guide partners to select a character series/type of character set of books that reflect their just right level.
- Make a class list of favorite characters.
- Any class charts created to support the work of reading workshop should be read and reread multiple times during shared reading so that students are familiar with the resources and able to use them independently as needed.
- **To view Grade K archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade K reading/writing page. Select “Resources” from the top nav bar. To access the units of study website use the link http://ww3mamkschools.org/units_of_study/.**
- Chart Chums is a great online resource for creating interactive, clear and visually rich anchor charts. To view use the link <http://chartchums.wordpress.com/>.
- Additional resources of sample anchor charts for reading and writing units of study include the following: <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-charts/kindergarten>.

Professional Resources

What professional resources will be helpful in planning the unit?

- *The Common Core Lesson Book K-5* by Gretchen Owocki
- *The RTI Daily Planning Book* by Gretchen Owocki
- *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Kindergarten Reading Curriculum Calendar 2010–2011*
- *Mosaic of Thought* by Ellin Keene and Susan Zimmerman (Chapter 4, pp. 66–101, Chapter 6, pp. 138–154)
- *Growing Readers* by Kathy Collins (Chapter 7, pp. 231– 234)
- *Comprehension: Strategic Instruction for K-3 Students* by Gretchen Owocki
- *Strategies that Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis
- *The Primary Comprehension Toolkit* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis
- *Perspectives on Shared Reading: Planning and Practice* by Bobbi Fisher
- *Read It Again!: Revisiting Shared Reading* by Brenda Parkes
- *The Next Step in Guided Reading: Focused Assessments and Targeted Lessons for Helping Every Student Become a Better Reader* by Jan Richardson