

## Curricular Plan for Reading Workshop

### Grade 5

#### Unit 2: Following Characters into Meaning

##### *Synthesize, Infer, and Interpret*

Students should understand and be able to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generate theories about characters they encounter</li><li>• Develop skills of synthesis and inference</li><li>• Grow theories into big ideas about characters</li><li>• Think interpretively across texts</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story by drawing on specific details</li><li>• Participate in literary conversations</li></ul> |
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#### Mentor Texts

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>The Tiger Rising</u> by Kate DiCamillo</li><li>• <u>Because of Winn Dixie</u> by Kate DiCamillo</li><li>• Those Shoes</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Becoming Naomi Leon</u> by Pam Munoz Ryan</li><li>• <u>Notes from a Liar and Her Dog</u> by Gennifer Choldenko</li></ul> |
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#### Possible Teaching Points

##### *Part One: Building Theories about Characters*

(RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.5, RL.5.6, RF.5.3, SL.5.1, SL.5.1a, SL.5.1b, SL.5.1c, SL.5.1d, L.5.6)

- Just as we grow theories about people around us, readers also grow theories about characters in books. We can do this by:
  - Paying close attention to not only *what* a character does but also *how* the character does these things.
  - Thinking, *Does the text give any clues about the character's gestures?*
  - Thinking about why the character acts this way
  - Looking for patterns of behavior
  - Noticing how other characters treat the character
  - Paying attention to the objects the character holds near and dear
- Readers also pay attention to the way characters think and talk.
  - Notice how the characters interact with one another through dialogue.
  - Think, *What is the tone of their voice, or what words did they choose?*
  - Think about the emotional cues the author uses
  - Notice other clues the author gives us through the character's thoughts or explanation of the character's motives
- Readers know that characters can be complicated. They are not just one way!
  - Notice when a person seems to act out of character.
  - Think, *Do these new parts of the story confirm or change my ideas about the character?*

- Readers grow ideas about characters by thinking between several related parts of the story. We can do this by:
  - Thinking specifically what is happening at the beginning, the middle, and the end.
  - Thinking about how the character changes across the storyline.
  - Thinking, *Did the character learn a lesson? I wonder why the author might have made the decision to have the character do this?*
- Readers use their knowledge of how stories tend to go.
  - Thinking about the story structure. This will help you focus on what's worth noticing and how the character may have changed.
  - Compare and contrast how characters are affected by an event.
- Readers can infer specific meaning from specific actions that the story tells us. We can do this by:
  - Marking up the text, recording ideas and traits that describe a character or event.
- Readers use various strategies that help them generate and hold onto their ideas about characters. Some of these include:
  - Post-it notes
  - Partner talk using conversational prompts
  - Boxes and bullets
- Readers talk long about an idea so they learn to think in depth. We do this by:
  - Asking and answering questions
  - Referring to the text to support your ideas
- Readers understand that they can revise their theories about characters in light of new information. We can change our theories by:
  - Using more precise language to describe the character as you learn more.
  - Reading with more alertness to the language being used in the text and to your own thinking about the character.

*Part Two: Inference toward Interpretation*

RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.5, RL.5.6, SL.5.1, SL.5.1a, SL.5.1b, SL.5.1c, SL.5.1d, L.5.6

- Reader's pause in when they are reading so they can organize their thoughts. We can do this by:
  - Building piles of related thoughts or Post-it notes and then sorting them in a variety of ways,
    - Piles that are about one particular character or another
    - One event in the book
    - A particular relationship
- Readers look for patterns and new ideas within the stack of related Post-it notes. We can ask,
  - What do these have in common?
  - What is different about these ideas?
  - If I was getting to know someone and these were my observations of them, how would I see them?

- Readers hold their theories loosely as they read, knowing it will grow, change, and take on a life of its own as they read on. We start with simple, obvious ideas about a character and climb to higher levels of thinking as we grasp new ideas—like we’re climbing a ladder.
- Readers understand that ideas live throughout the book not on just one page or one scene.
  - Look for scenes that go with your theory and then stop if you need to revise your thinking or add it for evidence later
  - Think, *What does the character want? What are some obstacles that have been getting in the way? How does the character respond to those obstacles? What resources does the character draw upon to meet those challenges and reach the goals?*
- Readers keep going, thinking of more ideas and writing more. One way we can do is by using conversational prompts such as,
  - Perhaps it’s because...
  - Or maybe it’s...
  - Another thing it could be...
  - This connects to earlier when...
  - That reminds me of...
  - A stronger word to describe that is...
  - This seems significant because...
- Readers realize that as they read on they see that repeated actions and objects often turn out to be symbolic. They often tell us something meaningful about the characters and about the story.
  - Keep track in your notebooks of recurring things
  - Asking, *Why this one? Why that one? What is the significance? What do these repeated things have in common?*

*Part Three: Reading across Books and Characters*

*Seeing Similarities and Differences and Growing Bigger Theories*

(RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.5, RL.5.6, RL.5.9, SL.5.1, SL.5.1a, SL.5.1b, SL.5.1c, SL.5.1d, L.5.6)

- Readers think about characters as types by noticing the similarities and differences across books.
  - How are these characters alike? Different?
  - What about their situation is the same?
  - Is there something the same about how they solve issues in their lives?
- Readers compare characters that face similar issues or struggles. We can do this by:
  - Thinking about what makes these characters struggle.
  - Thinking about what traits contribute to this struggle/longing.
  - Asking, *How do these characters handle this struggle? Longing? How do they go about resolving the situation? What can we learn from each one?*

- Readers compare characters that play parallel roles in different books to help them uncover parallel threads they may never have noticed before.
  - Two moms, two best friends, two grandpas
  - Villains, heroes, side-kicks
- Readers also compare characters to themselves. They ask,
  - Have I faced similar losses/wants/struggles?
  - How did I deal with it?
  - What traits do I have that may have influenced my actions?
  - What life-lessons can I learn from this character?
- Readers push each other to think beyond the surface by using prompts such as,
  - What does your character really want?
  - What is your character's biggest struggle?
  - Why do you think that?
  - Is there something in the text that makes you think that?
  - I think these two characters might be similar/different because...
- Readers reflect on themselves and the work they have done either in their journals or a celebration time. We can do this by 'spying' on our own reading and asking,
  - Who am I as a reader?
  - What kind of thinking work do I tend to do as I read?
  - What can I learn about myself by comparing and contrasting my thinking to that of my partner?

## Helpful Tips

- At the start of this unit, it is important to clarify the unit’s reading goals to the students.
- Be prepared to differentiate this character work to the work they have done in the previous year with character. They need to be reminded that there will be some new character work but they will draw from what they already know as well. The unit requires your teaching to be cumulative.
- It is crucial for them to still be keeping up with their reading logs if that was already an expectation.
- The goal is for students not to abandon reading habits or skills they have already acquired but to “add” to their “toolbox”.
- Continue to encourage the high volume of reading needed so they can read independently with purpose and understanding.
- Keep in mind the number of books students should be reading each week according to their reading level.
- During this unit it is important that readers meet with a partner for 5 minutes at the end of reading workshop to discuss characters. (See prompts below.)
- As you prepare for the unit, think about the structures you will put into place, keeping your students reading levels in mind.
- You may want to give out “transitional baggies” with some easier books to students who have started a new text level.
- Use a performance assessment and feedback to determine where students lie in synthesis and inference skills and how to move them along. Study their Post-it notes, thinking about the skills with which they are secure and the skills that need more attention.
- The interpretation work in this unit is important. Study your students Post-it notes to decide whether their thinking is simplistic or complex.
- There are many ways this unit on characters could go, you will have choices to make as you plan and teach this unit!
- In Part 3, it may be best to have students focus on books they have recently read.
  - It is important that students make thoughtful decisions about which books to look across rather than just looking at any book.
  - It may be helpful to group like books together at first, guiding students to think across texts

### Partner Question Starters

- “What kind of partner is the character? In what ways is he or she the same or different from other characters?”
- “Do you like or relate to one character more than you do another? In what ways?”
- “Why did the character do that? Why did other characters react in different ways?”
- “How come the character is feeling that way? Do other characters feel differently?”
- “Do you think he/she did the right thing? “
- “What do the interactions between two characters tell you about each?”
- “What do you think will happen next?”

### Conversational Prompts

- “What in the text make you say that?”
- “I thought that too because...”
- “Another example of that is...”
- “I thought something different because...”
- “I agree because...”
- “Wait, I’m confused. Are you saying...?”
- “Have you found the same thing with the character in your story?”
- “Can you say more about that? “
- “Can you show me the part in the story where you got that idea?”

## Common Core State Standards

RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

RL.5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.

RL.5.9 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

L.5.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships

SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.5.1a Come to discussions prepared having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

SL.5.1b Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

SL.5.1c Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

SL.5.1d Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.