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How to Use This Literature Guide

Today's standards demand rigor and relevance in the reading of complex texts. The units in this series guide teachers in a rich and deep exploration of worthwhile works of literature for classroom study. The most rigorous instruction can also be interesting and engaging!

Many current strategies for effective literacy instruction have been incorporated into these instructional guides for literature. Throughout the units, text-dependent questions are used to determine comprehension of the book as well as student interpretation of the vocabulary words. The books chosen for the series are complex and are exemplars of carefully crafted works of literature. Close reading is used throughout the units to guide students toward revisiting the text and using textual evidence to respond to prompts orally and in writing. Students must analyze the story elements in multiple assignments for each section of the book. All of these strategies work together to rigorously guide students through their study of literature.

The next few pages describe how to use this guide for a purposeful and meaningful literature study. Each section of this guide is set up in the same way to make it easier for you to implement the instruction in your classroom.

Theme Thoughts

The great works of literature used throughout this series have important themes that have been relevant to people for many years. Many of the themes will be discussed during the various sections of this instructional guide. However, it would also benefit students to have independent time to think about the key themes of the book.

Before students begin reading, have them complete the *Pre-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 13). This graphic organizer will allow students to think about the themes outside the context of the story. They'll have the opportunity to evaluate statements based on important themes and defend their opinions. Be sure to keep students' papers for comparison to the *Post-Reading Theme Thoughts* (page 59). This graphic organizer is similar to the pre-reading activity. However, this time, students will be answering the questions from the point of view of one of the characters in the book. They have to think about how the character would feel about each statement and defend their thoughts. To conclude the activity, have students compare what they thought about the themes before the book to what the characters discovered during the story.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Analyzing the Literature

After you have read each section with students, hold a small-group or whole-class discussion. Provided on the teacher reference page for each section are leveled questions. The questions are written at two levels of complexity to allow you to decide which questions best meet the needs of your students. The Level 1 questions are typically less abstract than the Level 2 questions. These questions are focused on the various story elements, such as character, setting, and plot. Be sure to add further questions as your students discuss what they've read. For each question, a few key points are provided for your reference as you discuss the book with students.

Reader Response

In today's classrooms, there are often great readers who are below average writers. So much time and energy is spent in classrooms getting students to read on grade level that little time is left to focus on writing skills. To help teachers include more writing in their daily literacy instruction, each section of this guide has a literature-based reader response prompt. Each of the three genres of writing is used in the reader responses within this guide: narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion. Before students write, you may want to allow them time to draw pictures related to the topic. Book-themed writing paper is provided on pages 69–70 if your students need more space to write.

Guided Close Reading

Within each section of this guide, it is suggested that you closely reread a portion of the text with your students. Page numbers are given, but since some versions of the books may have different page numbers, the sections to be reread are described by location as well. After rereading the section, there are a few text-dependent questions to be answered by students. Working space has been provided to help students prepare for the group discussion. They should record their thoughts and ideas on the activity page and refer to it during your discussion. Rather than just taking notes, you may want to require students to write complete responses to the questions before discussing them with you.

Encourage students to read one question at a time and then go back to the text and discover the answer. Work with students to ensure that they use the text to determine their answers rather than making unsupported inferences. Suggested answers are provided in the answer key.

How to Use This Literature Guide *(cont.)*

Guided Close Reading *(cont.)*

The generic open-ended stems below can be used to write your own text-dependent questions if you would like to give students more practice.

- What words in the story support . . . ?
- What text helps you understand . . . ?
- Use the book to tell why _____ happens.
- Based on the events in the story, . . . ?
- Show me the part in the text that supports
- Use the text to tell why

Making Connections

The activities in this section help students make cross-curricular connections to mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, or other curricular areas. These activities require higher-order thinking skills from students but also allow for creative thinking.

Language Learning

A special section has been set aside to connect the literature to language conventions. Through these activities, students will have opportunities to practice the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, and punctuation.

Story Elements

It is important to spend time discussing what the common story elements are in literature. Understanding the characters, setting, plot, and theme can increase students' comprehension and appreciation of the story. If teachers begin discussing these elements in early childhood, students will more likely internalize the concepts and look for the elements in their independent reading. Another very important reason for focusing on the story elements is that students will be better writers if they think about how the stories they read are constructed.

In the story elements activities, students are asked to create work related to the characters, setting, or plot. Consider having students complete only one of these activities. If you give students a choice on this assignment, each student can decide to complete the activity that most appeals to him or her. Different intelligences are used so that the activities are diverse and interesting to all students.

Name _____ Date _____

Vocabulary Activity

Directions: Draw lines to complete the sentences.

Beginnings of Sentences	Endings of Sentences
The Big Top Mall	to draw pictures.
Ivan is a mighty	silverback.
He was captured when	he was a juvenile.
He lives in a domain	is nothing like a jungle .
Julia uses her imagination	at the Big Top Mall.

Directions: Answer this question.

1. What are three things that Ivan likes best about his jungle domain at the Big Top Mall?

Ivan at the Big Top Mall (pages 1-60)

Analyzing the Literature

Provided below are discussion questions you can use in small groups, with the whole class, or for written assignments. Each question is written at two levels so you can choose the right question for each group of students. For each question, a few key points are provided for your reference as you discuss the book with students.

Story Element	Level 1	Level 2	Key Discussion Points
Character	Where do elephants and gorillas naturally live?	How do you think the elephant and gorilla feel about living at the Big Top Mall instead of their natural environments?	Elephants and gorillas naturally live in grasslands and jungles. Stella and Ivan are captured and taken away from their homes to perform in the circus and at the Big Top Mall. They are probably unhappy and would like to be in their natural environments.
Character	Bob is the one animal who made a choice to live at the Big Top Mall. Why does he like it there?	How is Bob's life at the Big Top Mall different from that of the other animals?	Bob is abandoned on a freeway when he is a puppy and has no place to go. Finding the Big Top Mall is good for him because he has access to food and a warm place to sleep. He is not kept in a cage like the other animals and can come and go as he pleases. At the Big Top Mall, Bob is safe and has friends.
Setting	Describe Ivan's domain.	Describe how Ivan feels about his domain.	Ivan's domain is small and is painted to look like a jungle on one wall. The other three walls are glass. It has a small pool of dirty water. Ivan gets bored in his domain. He probably wishes he had more space and more things to do.
Setting	How is Ivan's domain different from living in a jungle?	What do you think Ivan wants to change about where he lives?	A jungle has trees, clean water, fresh air, and fresh food. A jungle also has other gorillas. Ivan probably wants his domain to be more like a real jungle, but really, Ivan would probably be happiest if he were not in captivity at all.

Guided Close Reading

Closely reread about Ivan and the drawings he makes (pages 15–20).

Directions: Think about these questions. In the space below, write ideas or draw pictures as you think. Be ready to share your answers.

❶ What text helps you understand how Ivan feels about drawing pictures?

❷ Explain the differences between Julia’s drawings and Ivan’s drawings.

❸ Based on the story, how does Ivan feel about his art?

Story Elements-Plot

Directions: Ruby is afraid to get out of the truck until she sees Stella. When the elephants are together, they twirl their trunks together, flap their ears, and sway back and forth. Ruby holds on to Stella's tail. Draw a picture showing Ruby and Stella together.

