



Kindergarten:

Elements of a Story

Purpose: Why This Unit?

Your scholars have been reading at home and at school. They have “read” fiction and nonfiction emergent story books.

In this unit, your scholars will learn to recognize and use the essential elements of stories to help them make meaning. Fiction has characters, setting, and a plot. These essential story elements help readers understand the main idea. We always read for meaning, but these elements help us as readers to understand the story!

In this unit, your job is to teach your scholars to identify these essential elements and use them to get at the powerful idea in the story.

If you do your job well, your scholars will use their understanding of story elements to think critically about the main idea, or lesson, in their books.

The development of this capacity to interpret story meaning should be applied at home and at school.

Make sure at-home reading is happening—parents must read to their scholars for 15 minutes, 6 days a week. Meet with families who are falling short to recommit them to this team effort. If you

cannot succeed in persuading families to do this work consistently at home, you need to manage up to leadership.

It is your responsibility to ensure that ALL parents are reading to their scholars 6 days a

week!

Lessons

Spend two days on each lesson to give scholars practice.

Lesson 1: Great readers identify the characters in the story.

Lesson 2: Great readers make mind movies as they read, to identify the story's setting.

Lesson 3: Great readers make mind movies as they read, to describe what is happening in the story. This is called the plot.

Lesson 4: Great readers talk about the character's problem and how he or she solved

it. **Lesson 5:** Great readers talk about what they learned from the character.

Lesson 1

What Does Success Look Like?

Great readers identify the characters in a story.

Success is when scholars are able to identify the story's main characters.

Lesson 1

Engage — 1 minute

- Identifying story elements is key to understanding the story—they're the ticket to the big idea! Characters are the stars of the show—they'll be at the forefront of your mind movie and are essential in piecing together the big idea.

Direct Instruction (Model/Practice) — 5–7 minutes

- Read aloud pages 3–7 of The Three Billy Goats Gruff, to introduce the story's main characters. Think aloud about how and why the billy goats are stars of the show, or main characters.
- Read pages 8–9, introducing the troll. Scholars turn and talk to discuss the new character added to the plot of this story. Listen in to understand how well scholars can identify the character and his role in the story.
- Briefly share out two scholar responses.
- Set the expectation that scholars have two eyes reading, two hands on the book, and two feet on the floor during Independent Reading.

Independent Reading/Targeted Teaching Time — 20 minutes

- Scholars must sustain focused reading for 20 minutes. Get them excited about getting lost in their books and the luxury of reading time!
- Both you and your teaching partner should meet with two Guided Reading groups per day, spending approximately 10 minutes with each group.
- In between Guided Reading groups, or during the last few minutes of Independent Reading, spend 2–3 minutes working individually with 2–3 scholars. Ask each scholar to identify her reading goal and what’s holding her back. Kids should know and articulate their goals!
- During Independent Reading and Guided Reading, listen to scholars read, assessing their struggles and level of understanding. Do they need to envision more? Do they need to stop after each paragraph and think about what the big idea is? Do they need to work on their fluency? Do they stop to figure out the meaning of unknown vocabulary words? Is their oral language development lagging?
- Model for scholars and give them strategies to tackle their goals.
- Listen to scholars as they read, and hold them accountable for applying the strategies.

Partner Share — 3–5 minutes

- When the timer is up, reset expectations for partner talk.
- In partnerships, scholars share the main characters of the story.
- Listen in to determine if scholars are mastering the lesson objective. Look for a scholar who can model his thinking during the Whole-Class Share.

Whole-Class Share — 5 minutes

- Bring scholars together at the rug and reinforce today’s objective.
- Choose a scholar to share who the main characters are and what he learned about them.
- Ask scholars to articulate what they learned and how this makes them better readers.

Lesson 2

What Does Success Look Like?

Great readers make mind movies as they read, to identify the story’s setting.

Success is when scholars are able to create pictures of the setting in their minds.

Lesson 2

Engage — 1 minute

- Main characters may be the stars of our mind movies, but the setting is the stage— and the show can’t go on without a stage. The setting paints a picture in your head of when the story takes place and where your characters are. Great readers always set the stage in their mind

movies when they begin to read.

Direct Instruction (Model/Practice) — 5–7 minutes

- Set your scholars up with paper and crayons.
- Read aloud page 1 of Fletcher and the Falling Leaves—don't show scholars the pictures while reading.
- Scholars sketch the “when” (time of day, time of year, etc.) and the “where” (place and surroundings) that they envision as you read the story aloud.
- Scholars turn and talk about their sketches. Listen in and observe scholar sketches to understand how well scholars have identified key elements of the setting.
- Briefly share out two scholar responses.
- Set the expectation that scholars have two eyes reading, two hands on the book, and two feet on the floor during Independent Reading.

Independent Reading/Targeted Teaching Time — 20 minutes

- Scholars must sustain focused reading for 20 minutes. Get them excited about getting lost in their books and the luxury of reading time!
- Both you and your teaching partner should meet with two Guided Reading groups per day, spending approximately 10 minutes with each group.
 - In between Guided Reading groups, or during the last few minutes of Independent Reading, spend 2–3 minutes working individually with 2–3 scholars. Ask each scholar to identify her reading goal and what's holding her back. Kids should know and articulate their goals!
- During Independent Reading and Guided Reading, listen to scholars read, assessing their struggles and level of understanding. Do they need to envision more? Do they need to stop after each paragraph and think about what the big idea is? Do they need to work on their fluency? Do they stop to figure out the meaning of unknown vocabulary words? Is their oral language development lagging?
- Model for scholars and give them strategies to tackle their goals.
- Listen to scholars as they read, and hold them accountable for applying the strategies.

Partner Share — 3–5 minutes

- When the timer is up, reset expectations for partner talk.
- In partnerships, scholars identify and describe the setting of the story.
- Listen in to determine if scholars are able to identify and describe the setting. Look for a scholar who can model her thinking during the Whole-Class Share.

Whole-Class Share — 5 minutes

- Bring scholars together at the rug and reinforce today's objective.
- Choose a scholar to share her story's setting.
- Scholars evaluate which great reading tactic the scholar used.

Lesson 3

What Does Success Look Like?

Great readers make mind movies as they read, to describe what is happening in the story. This is called the plot.

Success is when scholars are able to retell the story's key events in order.

Lesson 3

Engage — 1 minute

- In their mind movies, scholars are able to identify the stars of the show and set the stage. Now they will also be able to retell the action—or plot. The plot is the final puzzle piece needed to decipher the big idea of the story.

Direct Instruction (Model/Practice) — 5–7 minutes

- Refer to a book you have read with scholars, such as Little Red Riding Hood or The Incredible Book Eating Boy.
- Briefly discuss with scholars who the main character of the story is. Remind them that they will need to know the main character in order to develop the plot.
- Teacher models retelling the events up to the climax in sequential order.
- Scholars then turn and talk to retell the final events of the story. Listen in to understand how well scholars are able to articulate the key events in order.
- Briefly share out two scholar responses.
- Set the expectation that scholars have two eyes reading, two hands on the book, and two feet on the floor during Independent Reading.

Independent Reading/Targeted Teaching Time — 20 minutes

- Scholars must sustain focused reading for 20 minutes. Get them excited about getting lost in their books and the luxury of reading time!
- Both you and your teaching partner should meet with two Guided Reading groups per day, spending approximately 10 minutes with each group.
- In between Guided Reading groups, or during the last few minutes of Independent Reading, spend 2–3 minutes working individually with 2–3 scholars. Ask each scholar to identify her reading goal and what's holding her back. Kids should know and articulate their goals!
- During Independent Reading and Guided Reading, listen to scholars read, assessing their struggles and level of understanding. Do they need to envision more? Do they need to stop after each paragraph and think about what the big idea is? Do they need to work on their fluency? Do they stop to figure out the meaning of unknown vocabulary words? Is their oral language development lagging?
- Model for scholars and give them strategies to tackle their goals.
- Listen to scholars as they read, and hold them accountable for applying the strategies.

Partner Share — 3–5 minutes

- In partnerships, scholars retell the plot of the story.
- Listen in to determine if scholars are able to retell the plot in sequential order. Look for a scholar who can model her thinking during the Whole-Class Share.

Whole-Class Share — 5 minutes

- Bring scholars together at the rug and reinforce today's objective.
- Choose a scholar to share the plot of her story.
- Scholars evaluate which great reading tactic the scholar used.

Lesson 4

What Does Success Look Like?

Great readers talk about the character's problem and how he or she solved it.

Success is when scholars are able to make a connection between the character's problem and how he or she solved it.

Lesson 4

Engage — 1 minute

- Once you are able to retell your story, it's important to distill your retelling into the most important events. Great readers are able to extract the main character's problem and how the problem was solved, in order to find the big idea.

Direct Instruction (Model/Practice) — 5–7 minutes

- Read The Three Little Pigs, to the part where the wolf is about to try to blow down the third little pig's house, thinking aloud about the problem.
- Finish reading the book. Scholars turn and talk about how the third pig solves his problem. Listen in to understand how well scholars are able to unearth the solution.
- Share out two scholar responses.
- Remind scholars that great readers are able to retell the problem and solution together. Think aloud about how the problem and solution are connected.
- Set the expectation that scholars have two eyes reading, two hands on the book, and two feet on the floor during Independent Reading.

Independent Reading/Targeted Teaching Time — 20 minutes

- Scholars must sustain focused reading for 20 minutes. Get them excited about getting lost in their books and the luxury of reading time!
- Both you and your teaching partner should meet with two Guided Reading groups per day, spending approximately 10 minutes with each group.
- In between Guided Reading groups, or during the last few minutes of Independent Reading,

spend 2–3 minutes working individually with 2–3 scholars. Ask each scholar to identify her reading goal and what’s holding her back. Kids should know and articulate their goals!

- During Independent Reading and Guided Reading, listen to scholars read, assessing their struggles and level of understanding. Do they need to envision more? Do they need to stop after each paragraph and think about what the big idea is? Do they need to work on their fluency? Do they stop to figure out the meaning of unknown vocabulary words? Is their oral language development lagging?
- Model for scholars and give them strategies to tackle their goals.
- Listen to scholars as they read, and hold them accountable for applying the strategies.

Partner Share — 3–5 minutes

- When the timer is up, reset expectations for partner talk.
- Scholars share the problems and solutions of their stories.
- Listen in to determine if scholars are able to connect the problem and solution. Look for a scholar who can model her thinking during the Whole-Class Share.

Whole-Class Share — 5 minutes

- Bring scholars together at the rug and reinforce today’s objective.
- Choose a scholar to share the problem and solution of the story she read.
- Scholars evaluate which great reading tactic the scholar used.

Lesson 5

What Does Success Look Like?

Great readers talk about what they learned from the character.

Success is when scholars are able to explain what they learned from the characters in their stories.

Lesson 5

Engage — 1 minute

- Books are some of our greatest teachers! The characters in our books make mistakes and have problems, just like us. We can learn important life lessons from the characters in our books.

Direct Instruction (Model/Practice) — 5–7 minutes

- Reread the last two pages of The Incredible Book Eating Boy and think aloud about the character’s problem and solution—how even though reading his books takes more time than eating them, it does not make Henry sick.
- Scholars turn and talk about what they have learned about hard work from Henry. They should identify evidence from the story that supports their ideas. Listen in to understand how well scholars explain the lessons they’ve learned.
- Share out two scholar responses.

- Set the expectation that scholars have two eyes reading, two hands on the book, and two feet on the floor during Independent Reading.

Independent Reading/Targeted Teaching Time — 20 minutes

- Scholars must sustain focused reading for 20 minutes. Get them excited about getting lost in their books and the luxury of reading time!
- Both you and your teaching partner should meet with two Guided Reading groups per day, spending approximately 10 minutes with each group.
- In between Guided Reading groups, or during the last few minutes of Independent Reading, spend 2–3 minutes working individually with 2–3 scholars. Ask each scholar to identify her reading goal and what’s holding her back. Kids should know and articulate their goals!
- During Independent Reading and Guided Reading, listen to scholars read, assessing their struggles and level of understanding. Do they need to envision more? Do they need to stop after each paragraph and think about what the big idea is? Do they need to work on their fluency? Do they stop to figure out the meaning of unknown vocabulary words? Is their oral language development lagging?
- Model for scholars and give them strategies to tackle their goals.
- Listen to scholars as they read, and hold them accountable for applying the strategies.

Partner Share — 3–5 minutes

- When the timer is up, reset expectations for partner talk.
- In partnerships, scholars share the lessons they learned in their books.
- Listen in to determine whether each scholar is able to explain what he learned from his character’s experience. Look for a scholar who can model his thinking during the Whole Class Share.

Whole-Class Share — 5 minutes

- Bring scholars together at the rug and reinforce today’s objective.
- Choose a scholar to share what he learned from his character’s experience.
- Scholars evaluate which great reading tactic the scholar used.

You Did It!

Congratulations! You’ve reached the end of Unit 6: Elements of a Story.

As a result of teaching this unit, **you, as the teacher, have:**

- Given your scholars the tools to identify a story’s essential elements and then use these elements to get at the powerful idea of the story.

Your scholars can:

- Identify key story elements including the main characters, setting, and plot.
- Closely observe details from the story to re-create the setting.

- Articulate the story's plot.
- Use their understanding of story elements to better understand the big idea, or lesson, in their books.

Celebrate your scholars' successes by acknowledging what they can now do as readers as a result of their work over the past several weeks. For example, scholars now know that there are three key ingredients to every story—main characters, setting, and plot. Your scholars are also able to use those ingredients together to identify the big idea, or lesson, in the story.

Reflect on your successes and stretches, as well as those of your scholars. Look at your F&P results. Have your scholars grown as readers over the past month? Are they using the pictures independently to read the text? Do they use details when describing what's happening? Do they use the author's exact words? Do they read with expression?

Scholars must read at home, as well as in school. Are 100% of your kids reading 6 days a week at home? Make sure at-home reading is happening, and meet with families who are falling short to recommit them to this team effort.

Are 100% of your kids reading fluently? Are they using all the tools at their disposal to figure out the meaning of what they are reading?

Are 100% of your kids doing their literacy homework?

Going into the next unit, make specific reading goals for yourself. Set a percentage goal for how many children you will move in the next 15 days. Set a goal for children who are not reading at home. Whom will you get to consistently read at home? Do they understand what they're reading? What is their struggle with decoding? How will you partner with parents to support their growth?

If you are having trouble meeting your goals, do not wait until you have NOT succeeded. Consult your colleagues. Consult your leaders. ASK FOR HELP so you can meet your goals!