

Reading Toolkit: Grade 4 Objective 3.A.3.e

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 3. Use elements of narrative texts to facilitate understanding

Objective e. Identify and explain relationships between and among characters, setting, and events

Assessment Limits:

Connections between and among characters

Connections between and among characters

Connections between and among situations

Connections between and among situations

Cause/effect relationships between characters' actions and the results of those actions

Cause/effect relationships between characters' actions and the results of those actions

Cause/effect relationships between and among situations and events

Cause/effect relationships between and among situations and events

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Advanced/Gifted and Talented Reading Grade 4 Objective 3.A.3.e

Other Objectives Addressed

- a. Identify and distinguish among types of narrative texts
- b. Identify and explain the elements of a story
- c. Identify and describe the setting and the mood
- d. Identify and analyze the characters
- f. Identify and explain how the actions of the character(s) affect the plot

Instructional Task

Students will use the elements of narrative text to create a dinner party seating plan for characters from a narrative text. The goal of the seating arrangement is to facilitate an interesting and lively conversation. Students will determine who should sit next to whom and will develop a dialogue around the narrative elements (authentic product).

Development of Task

- Students will read narrative text of appropriate complexity and map the elements of narrative text.
- The teacher will introduce the problem of the dinner party using a question about the text such as, "What would happen if you invited both (the protagonist) and (the antagonist) to a dinner party? What might happen if they sat next to each other at dinner? What could we do to ensure that they did not sit next to each other?"
- Students will select characters from the text to invite to the dinner party, explaining their choices through discussion or writing. Students will decide on a seating arrangement and create a visual representation of the dinner table (visual learning style).
- The teacher will use the "Questions for the Dinner Plan" from the chart below to focus student thinking on the elements of literary text to include in the dialogue.
- Students will compose the conversation between the pairs or triads of guests that could occur at the table, incorporating the elements of narrative text including character relationships, story setting, plot and mood (synthesis).
- As an option, students may perform their dinner party conversation as a Reader's Theatre (auditory learning style).

Objectives	Questions for the Dinner Plan
Identify and distinguish among types of narrative texts	In what ways does the type of narrative text affect the type of dinner party you will plan?
Identify and explain the elements of a story	Based on the events of the story, what characters would you sit next to each other? What characters would you sit far apart?
Identify and describe the setting and mood	Based on the setting and mood of the story, when and where should the dinner party take place?

Identify and analyze the characters	Based on the characters' traits in the story: What behaviors would the characters exhibit at the table? Which characters had traits that would make them popular guests? Which characters had traits that might cause problems?
Identify and explain relationships between and among characters, setting, and events	How might the setting and mood affect what the characters say and how they say it? Which characters would you not want to sit together? Why? (analysis) Which relationships might change if the characters had a chance to meet one more time at your dinner party? Why? (interpersonal intelligence)
Identify and explain how the actions of the character(s) affect the plot	How would the characters describe their roles in starting and resolving the conflict of the story?
Identify and describe the narrator	What would the characters say about the narrator of the story?

Lesson Seeds

Reading Grade 4 Objective 3.A.3.e

Activities

After students have read a narrative text, direct them to a section of the text where the resolution of a cause/effect relationship is recorded. The teacher should list on four pieces of poster paper a single different cause for that final result. Place these posters in four different areas of the room. Have each student locate himself to that area of the room where is located the cause he/she believes to be correct. Each of the four groups should return to the text to find justification for his/her belief. After reviewing the text, students are allowed to revise their opinions and locate to another area. A final review will determine the correct cause or combination of causes.

Students will read a narrative text where cause/effect relationships exist. The teacher will isolate the cause/effect relationships for students. Teacher and students will work on placing each relationship in its correct sequence in the narrative. Next students will analyze the text to determine whether the relationship involved characters, setting, events, or any combination of the three. Finally students will analyze the sequence of these relationships in the text to determine if any cause/effect relationship was the cause of the following relationship or if the any cause/effect relationship works in isolation.

After reading a narrative text, students will be placed in small groups. Each student within the group will be given a teacher generated graphic organizer that will allow student to analyze relationships among characters.

Character A	Relationship	Support
Character B		
Character C		
Character D		

The example above requires students to analyze Character A's relationships with three other characters. Each group's organizer will require those students to analyze the relationships of a different dominant character. For example the next group will analyze Character B or C. Once groups have completed their analysis of relationships, the information should be shared with the entire class. As the information is shared the teacher will create on the board or overhead a schema of the relationships of all the narrative's characters. This will allow students to have a visual of the interplay among all characters. As an extension for advanced students they may analyze the character relationships to determine how they affect story events or setting.

After reading a narrative, the teacher should place students in small groups. Each group will be given an envelope which will contain pieces of paper with names of characters, details of setting, and story events from the narrative. Students should be instructed to return to the text and create with the manipulatives as many narrative-based relationships as possible with the information from the envelope. Students should always be able to justify the relationships with text support.

Clarification

Reading Grade 4 Indicator 3.A.3

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will demonstrate an understanding of the **elements of narrative texts** which are the components through which a story is told. Identification of each component and its relationship to all other components in a story assists a reader in comprehension of an entire text. As a text requires more complex thought processes, a reader advances from the identification, recognition, and recall of literal elements to the inference, analysis, and evaluation of more abstract elements. Thinking about all the elements in a story and determining how they fit together allow the reader to understand and evaluate an entire text and its complexity.

In order to comprehend narrative text, a reader must **identify and distinguish among types of narrative texts**. Narrative text tells a story to make a point, to express a personal opinion, or to provide a reader an enjoyable experience. By recognizing the characteristics of a variety of literary texts which represent diverse perspectives, a reader is better able to construct meaning from a text.

Fiction

prose writing that tells an imaginary story

Nonfiction

prose writing that tells about real people, places, and events

Realistic Fiction

prose writing set in the modern world

Science Fiction

prose writing that explores unexpected possibilities of the past or future by using scientific theories or data and imagination

Historical Fiction

contemporary fiction set in the past, may reference actual people or events

Tall Tales

humorously exaggerated stories about impossible events in which the main characters have extraordinary abilities

Folktales

stories passed by word of mouth from generation to generation

Folklore

traditions, customs, and stories passed down within a culture

Myth

a traditional story, usually by an unknown author, that answers a basic question about the world

Legend

a story handed down from the past about a specific person who usually demonstrates heroic accomplishments

Fables

brief tales that teach lessons about human nature

Fairy Tales

stories about imaginary beings possessing magical powers

Fantasy

literature that contains fantastic or unreal elements

Biography

story of a person's life written by someone else

Autobiography

nonfiction; a person tells about his or her own life

Personal Narrative

personal story; a shorter form of autobiographical writing

Memoir

type of autobiography, usually about a significant experience in the author's life

Journals

a personal record of experiences or reflections

Short Story

a brief work of fiction, usually readable in one session

Essay

a short, cohesive work of nonfiction dealing with a single subject and presenting the writer's viewpoint

Play

literature intended to be performed by actors in front of an audience; includes script with dialogue, a cast of characters, and stage directions

Poetry

stories, ideas, and feelings expressed in compact, imaginative, often musical language

Lyric Poetry

poetry that presents the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker

Narrative Poetry

poetry that tells a story and includes narrative elements

To **identify, explain and analyze the conflict of a narrative and determine its role in advancing the plot**, a reader must know the structure of a narrative passage.

- In the beginning or exposition of a narrative, information is given about the characters, their location, and the situation in which they find themselves. This situation creates a story problem or conflict.
- A conflict can be created by single or multiple sources, either external (caused by outside forces) or internal (created within the character). Typical types of conflict include person versus person (problem between and among characters), person versus society (problem with the laws/beliefs of a group), person versus nature (problem with natural forces), person versus self (problem within a character regarding decision-making), and person versus fate (problem which seems out of a character's control). In complex texts, there may be multiple conflicts.

A character experiencing one of these conflicts may act on or speak about the conflict to other characters and be motivated to action by the conflict. In some narratives, a conflict may help clarify character traits for the reader. In other stories, a conflict can also advance the story events, pushing the characters to a critical point of a story.

A critical reader can identify and determine conflicts, sometimes isolating a common cause for different conflicts.

- In the rising action, the chronology of events develops and the conflict deepens. At the climax of the narrative, the deepening conflict reaches a critical point and can alter the subsequent events.
- As the conflict resolves, the narrative moves toward completion in the falling action.
- Finally, in the resolution the narrative comes to a close. A critical reader should be able to analyze the resolution of the conflict and trace the plot development to determine how each stage of that development advanced the plot.
- As the level of a text becomes more difficult and the main plot develops, a subplot of lesser importance may be present. The subplot may have all the elements that a main plot does and will tell a story that relates to character development, theme development,

or any other story element. The subplot may have an effect on the outcome of the main plot or may simply serve as additional, perhaps interesting, element of the story.

To identify, describe, and analyze details that provide information about setting, mood created by setting, and the role the setting plays in the text, a reader must first know what information to look for in a text. Setting is where and when a story takes place. Clues to setting include any of the following: time, day or dates, month, year, season, historical references, geographical names, landscape details, and weather elements. As the complexity of a text increases, a reader should take note not only of stated setting details but also look at more subtle details.

Setting can relay information about characters to a reader. A character's reaction to an environment, whether familiar or unfamiliar, gives clues to what a character is feeling or how a character will act in certain circumstances. Changes in setting may signal changes in mood and development of a character.

Mood is the feeling a text creates within a reader. Setting can help create mood. For example, a setting in an abandoned house creates an eerie mood. Details of that setting help establish that uncomfortable mood in a reader. An author also creates mood through dialogue and word choice.

A critical reader will be attentive to the details of setting, mood, and character and their integration within a narrative.

Not all narrative texts have theme, but in those that do, there is often more than a single theme. Theme is the author's message to the reader or the underlying idea of a text. Theme is often relayed to a reader through characters—what they say, what they do, or what others say about them—as well as by other narrative elements.

To identify and analyze characterization, a reader must identify a character as a person, animal, or imaginary being in a narrative. Major characters are most involved in the conflict of a narrative and are central to much of the story action. Minor characters are less important and become known to a reader through their interaction with major characters.

Characters may reveal their attitudes and innermost thoughts through their speech and their behavior. For more complicated texts, a reader is privileged to know directly the interior thought processes of a character. This enables a reader to draw conclusions about why a character might behave the way he/she does and to consider reasons for the type of interactions that character has with other major or minor characters. Then these interactions allow other characters to comment about the behavior or speech of that character. One character's comments about another character form a direct link to understanding their behavior.

Character speech, action, thought, motivation, and reaction are interdependent and work together to create well-rounded characters. These elements make a character "real" and lend believability to the narrative. When characters are made "real," they, like real people, change and grow. They are called dynamic characters because of their development. Their opposite, static characters, change not at all or only marginally. The strong, dynamic character shifts or is shifted by the plot, each exerting an equally forceful influence on each other. Character and plot then become linked in a narrative.

To identify, explain, and analyze relationships between and among characters, settings, and events, a reader must discover how each element is linked. Connections between and among characters are established by elements of characterization. Connections between

and among situations are established by key events and how these events fit together. A critical reader can determine an organizational pattern, such as cause and effect, between or among situations and then draw conclusions about characters and their speech and behaviors within the context of the situation.

For more complicated texts, a critical reader can isolate characters and determine major from minor characters, the degree to which each is developed, and how they affect each other and the story events. A critical reader can isolate each story event to see its effect upon previous events and those that follow it as well as the effect the event exerts upon a character or characters.

To identify and describe the narrator, a reader must determine the teller of the story. In a first person narrative, the story is told by a character in the story who uses the nominative pronouns I, me, and we. In a third person narrative, the narrator is a voice outside the story action that uses the nominative pronouns he, she, it, and they.

The speaker of a poem is the voice that "talks" to the reader. The speaker of a poem is not necessarily the poet.

To identify, explain, and analyze the actions of the characters that serve to advance the plot, a reader should know that characters cause the plot to happen. Usually a story plot is based on what characters say, do, or believe. Conflicts evolve from interactions between and among characters. In turn, plots develop around conflicts. What a character does affects the development of the plot as well as its resolution.

A critical reader of literary text can

- isolate characters, determining if they are major or minor characters, noting their actions, speech, and thoughts, and observing the attitudes of other characters toward them
- detail conflicts created by and among characters and determine the type of conflict that is created
- follow a plot, judging how that plot is driven by character elements or character conflict
- determine how character, conflict, and plot function together

To analyze an author's approach to issues of time in a narrative, a reader must first be able to follow the elements of a narrative--exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution--and to identify key events within each of those divisions of a narrative. Some events may be related as flashbacks during which the author relates an event out of sequence at an earlier time. A flashback provides a reader with information that will help him/her understand setting, characters, or conflict. A critical reader is aware of transitional words or text features that signal a flashback.

Foreshadowing is present through hints or clues in a text that suggest what may occur later in the sequence of the narrative's events. Foreshadowing occurs throughout a narrative and helps to create a tension as the reader anticipates what will happen. A critical reader understands that plots are not always chronological and that these two techniques are used to augment a reader's comprehension of and interest in a narrative.

To identify, explain, and analyze point of view and its effect on the meaning of a narrative, a reader must know that point of view is the perspective from which an author tells a story. There are two major points of view--first person and third person. In a first person narrative, the story is told by a character in the story. This narrator is a participant in the story action and tells the story using the pronouns I, me, and we. This type of narration is

limited because a reader knows only the narrator's perspective of other characters, the setting, and story events.

In a third person narrative, the story is told by someone who is not a character in the story. This type of story-teller may relate events much like a reporter relaying the news and use the nominative pronouns she, he, and they. More often, though, a third person narrator will relay the thoughts and attitudes of a single character, usually the main character. This is limited omniscient narration. At times a narrator will relay the thoughts and feelings of all characters. This is the omniscient or all-knowing narrator.

A critical reader knows that not all narrators are reliable and that they may present information limited by their own knowledge and observations. This, in turn, may limit a reader's knowledge. To construct meaning of a narrative, a critical reader must acknowledge the scope and the limitations of each type of narration and then using other narrative elements, draw conclusions about meaning.

To analyze the interactions among narrative elements and their contribution to meaning, a reader must have knowledge of all narrative elements and their dependence upon each other. A critical reader must determine the type of narrative being read, the type(s) of conflict in the narrative, the relationship between the setting and the mood of the narrative, the ways that character is developed, the relationship that exists among the characters, the setting, the story events, and the point of view from which a narrative is told. Each of these elements must be analyzed in isolation and then observed as a piece of a whole narrative. Finally, a critical reader makes judgments about the relative importance of each of these elements to a particular text, and then using each element and its contribution, constructs meaning of a whole text.

Sample Item #1 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

Question

Read the story 'The River' and answer the following question.

Describe the relationship between Cory and Elisa and their dog, Minnie. In your response, use details and examples from the story that support your description. Write your answer on your answer document.

Annotated Student Responses

They have a relationship and it is that they are determined. Minnie was determined that he would get out. Cory and Elisa were determined that they would get Minnie out of the water.

Annotation: The student does not answer the question that is asked. The student describes the relationship as determined. Being determined is a character trait rather than a description of a relationship between the children and their dog. The student has used information from the text that supports the idea of determination, the character trait, instead of describing a relationship. The response provided by the student is irrelevant to the question asked.

Minnie is more than a dog to
 Cory and Elisa she is like part
 of the family because Cory and
 Elisa risked their lives for Minnie
 and that means that they think of
 Minnie being a lot more than a dog.

Annotation: The student describes the relationship that Cory and Elisa have with their dog, Minnie. She is "more than a dog" to them; she is a "part of the family." The student suggests that a family relationship is worth risking their lives for. While the student presents a valid description of the relationship between the children and their dog, the response lacks details that describe how the children risked their lives for the dog.

The relationship between Cory, Elisa and their dog Minnie
 is a very special relationship it is because they love their
 dog so much they were risking their life for her. Elisa
 was about to dive into the water.

Annotation: The student identifies that a relationship exists between Cory, Elisa and Minnie and describes it as special, by stating that "they were risking their life for her." The student begins to support this special relationship, stating that "Elisa was about to dive into the water." This support could have been extended or enhanced if the student had connected the danger of diving into icy water with risking their lives.

The relationship must be really strong because when Elisa was getting ready to go out on the ice, Cory pulled her back. And once Minnie saw Cory and Elisa, she tried to get to them. The last one is that Cory went on the ice just to get her (dog) so there was a good relationship between them.

Annotation: The student answers the question stating, "the relationship must be really strong." The student describes the strength of the relationship by referring to Cory's protection of Elisa, Minnie's attempt to get to the children and Cory's being on the ice to get to Minnie. This response could have been strengthened by making a connection between the events described and why these events show a "strong" relationship.

Handouts

The River

Yetti Frenkel
(Based on a true story)

"Sh," whispered Elisa. "I think she's coming!"

Elisa and Cory stifled their giggles and crouched behind the pine tree. Peeping out through the snow-covered branches, the children held their breath and listened for the tinkle of Minnie's collar as the old dog tried to find their hiding place. It was usually the hound's favorite game, but today the only sounds the children heard were the wind whistling softly across the frozen snow and ice cracking on the river.

Cory shivered with cold. "I wonder where she is," he said. "I hope she isn't off chasing a deer."

Elisa snorted. "Minnie's too lame for that. I bet she went home to wait where it's nice and warm."

Cory looked doubtful. "She wouldn't go home without us," he said. "Maybe she got ahead, and we didn't notice. Let's go to the bridge and see if she's there."

⁶They started down the trail at a quick pace, glad to be moving again. The bare branches of the trees rattled forlornly as they tramped through the frozen snow.

Elisa struggled hard to keep up with her older brother. "Wouldn't it be easier to walk on the ice on the river?" she called to him.

⁸Cory slowed his pace and waited for her to catch up. "It's too dangerous," he said. "The water is still flowing underneath, and the ice is thin. We might fall through." He held out a mittened hand. "I'll help you."

"No thanks," said Elisa stubbornly. "I can keep up." But she was secretly glad when Cory walked beside her until they reached the bridge.

The old wooden bridge spanned the widest part of the river. In summer they often came here to fish or lie in the sun, but now it was a desolate, wind-swept place. They could hear the water gurgling softly beneath the ice as they looked out over the railing, hoping to glimpse Minnie walking along the bank.

Cory cupped his hands to his mouth and called, "Minnie, Min-nie!" His voice echoed back to him from the lonely woods. "I don't see her, Elisa. Do you?" he asked.

Just then Elisa gave a startled cry, and Cory turned sharply to see Minnie ten feet from shore. The old dog had fallen through the ice and was paddling in desperate circles.

"Hang on, Minnie, I'm coming!" Cory cried, racing toward the river. Elisa was already ahead of him, pulling off her coat, scarf, and mittens, ready to plunge in and save her dog. Blinded by tears, she stumbled out onto the ice.

Cory caught up with her and pulled her back. "Do you want to drown yourself?" he shouted. His face was white as he held out the warm clothes she'd dropped. "Put these back on and let me think of something." He looked grimly at the river.

Ella sobbed as she struggled into her coat. "You can save her, can't you, Cory? She won't die, will she?"

"Of course not," he said, wishing he felt as confident as he was trying to sound.

The sight of her masters had given Minnie new hope, and she managed to get her front paws up on the ice. She scratched and clawed frantically at the slippery surface, but her hind legs were too arthritic to be of much help. For a moment her frightened brown eyes met Cory's, then she slipped back into the icy water and began wearily swimming once more.

¹⁸Cory searched the bank until he found a long, twisted branch. Holding it firmly, he maneuvered the end until he had it hooked under Minnie's collar. "C'mon, girl," he said to the tired dog. She heaved her front paws onto the ice and struggled desperately while he tried to help her by pulling on the branch. But frost and moisture had made the wood brittle, and it snapped almost immediately. Once more Minnie struck out swimming, but now her head was barely above the surface of the water.

A terrible thought crossed Cory's mind — Minnie was going to drown before their eyes. It's not fair, he thought. Why doesn't someone come along to help us? He scanned the woods for a game warden or hunter, but saw no one. The woods were dark and silent, waiting. "I don't know what to do," he said, frightened.

"I know what to do," cried Elisa. "I'm going to help her!"

²¹Once again Cory grabbed his sister's arm to prevent her from going out onto the ice. She bit and kicked at him like a small fury as tears of frustration ran down her cheeks.

"Listen to me!" yelled Cory. "I thought of something, but I need your help." Elisa wiped the tears from her face. "I'm going to lie down on the ice and try to crawl to Minnie. You lie down behind me and hold my ankles. Don't let go, no matter what, and don't stand up. Understand?" Elisa nodded, sniffing.

Cory lay on the ice so that his weight would be distributed more evenly and there would be less chance of breaking through. He felt Elisa's hands close around his ankles. As he inched his way forward, he could hear the water rushing beneath the ice. A few feet in front of him was the deep green hole where the dog had broken through. Cory's heart pounded with fear, but he bit his lip and kept going. At last he reached the edge of the hole and threw his arms around Minnie's neck. It felt reassuring to have a hold on her, but he soon realized that there was little else he could do. The ice was slippery, and every time he tried to pull her out, he began to slide forward himself.

"Have you got her?" called Elisa anxiously.

"Yes," Cory yelled over his shoulder, "but I can't" — Before he could explain, he found himself being pulled back across the ice with Minnie in his arms. He looked around in amazement, expecting to see a big man with a broad grin standing behind him, but there was only his sturdy little sister, laughing and crawling over the ice to throw her arms around the shivering dog. "How did you ever do that?" cried Cory. "You're not that strong!" Then as Minnie, tail wagging wildly, began to lick his face, he saw what had happened.

Elisa had put her wool coat down on the ice to protect her from the cold. The warmth of her body lying on the top of it had made the wool fibers stick firmly to the ice so that when she pulled on Cory's legs, he slipped across the surface to her as easily as a cork popping from a bottle.

Cory grinned in admiration. "You sure are one smart little sister!" he said, tousling her hair. He took off his plaid shirt and dried Minnie with it. "It's a good thing we were all together today," he said to the old dog softly as he rubbed her lopsided ears. She wagged her tail in agreement, and the three hurried toward the warmth of home without looking back.

Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant¹ information to clarify or extend understanding

Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant¹ information to show understanding

Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.²

Notes:

¹ Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

² An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

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