

Lesson Title: *The Best School Year Ever*: Understanding Character

Created and Submitted by: Angelica Salinas

School Name: F. D. Roosevelt Elementary School

District: United I.S.D.

Role: School Librarian

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Lesson Plan Objectives:

After reading *The Best School Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson, students will be able to:

1. Record text-to-self and text-to-text connections prior to and during reading in order to assess background knowledge and grasp a better understanding of character development
2. Make logical inferences about a character's traits and values based on literal details contained in the text
3. Formulate a new perspective of the Herdman family by linking the characters' actions with the characters' traits.

ELA-R TEKS:

§110.16.b (6)

Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

(B) explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts.

Other Content Area(s) Addressed:

Writing

Standards for the 21st-Century Learner Indicators

1.1.6 Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format in order to make inferences and gather meaning.

Classroom Teacher – School Librarian(s) Collaboration:

- The school librarian provides multiple copies of *The Best School Year Ever*.
- Classroom teacher and school librarian collaboratively design the graphic organizers/assessment tools.
- The classroom teacher will guide the reading of *The Best School Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson in the classroom prior to starting this collaborative lesson.
- The educators share responsibility for monitoring the students' guided practice and assess the learning outcomes.

Measurable Outcome or Final Product:

Students will analyze character traits and behavior in order to make logical inferences and draw sound conclusions towards a better understanding of the characterization of one of the Herdman family members. The student will use text-to-self and text-to-text connections and complete the "Synthesizing Is When Your Thinking Changes as You Read" graphic organizer.

Assessment Tool(s):

- Prewriting Graphic Organizer

- Character Map Graphic Organizer
- “Synthesizing Is When Your THINKING Changes as You READ” Graphic Organizer

Resources: Include appropriate print, electronic, and Web-based resources to meet the learning objective(s).

- Multiple copies of *The Best School Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson (HarperCollins 1994)
- Prewriting Graphic Organizer (text-to-self connections)
- Character Map Graphic Organizer
- Character Traits Video: <http://youtu.be/e8mgZANm9CE>
- *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale* by Mo Willems (Hyperion 2004)
- Vimeo Video *Knuffle Bunny* Video story by Mo Willems - <http://vimeo.com/18025570>
- Poem: “How to Torture Your Teacher” by Bruce Lansky from *No More Homework! No More Tests! Kids Favorite Funny School Poems*. (Meadowbrook, 1997)
- “Synthesizing Is When Your Thinking Changes as You Read” Graphic Organizer
- Student Observation for Tagxedo Graphic Organizer (for extension)

Estimated Lesson Time: Two Days

Instructional Plan Outline:

Preparation

In preparation for this lesson, students will read *The Best School Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson prior to the collaborative lesson between the two educators.

- Classroom teacher will distribute one Prewriting Graphic Organizer (text-to-self) prior to the onset of reading *The Best School Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson.
- Classroom teacher will guide the discussion of the prewriting activity.
- The teacher will ask students to keep a log of one of the Herdman children during their reading. There are six Herdman children in the family. (It is best to have students choose a character with bigger roles, such as Imogene, Leroy, or Charlie.) Ideally, you will want to have about an equal number of students working on each character to form smaller groups later in the assignment. They should be looking for:
 - What the character looks like
 - What the character says and thinks
 - What the character does
 - What the character feels
 - What the others say and think about the character
 - How the character changes over time

Day One:

Motivation

1. Brainstorm different character traits of real or fictional people.
2. Have students watch the following YouTube video about character traits:
<http://youtu.be/e8mgZANm9CE>
3. Invite students to share how they think traits, such as responsibility or irresponsibility, make an impact to a person’s character.
4. Educators post and review the lesson objectives.

Presentation

5. Educators separate the students into two groups for text-to-text connection activities. The classroom teacher conducts the activity with picture book *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale* by Mo Willems. The librarian conducts the activity with the poem “How to Torture Your Teacher” by Bruce Lansky. Educators will switch groups and run the activity with the other half of the class.
6. Students demonstrate understanding by making an inference using text-to-text connections:

Notes: Classroom Teacher:

Read *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems and/or watch the following Vimeo video: *Knuffle Bunny* Video - <http://vimeo.com/18025570>. Trixie and Howard behave similarly when their beloved item is lost. Trixie had her parents to help her. Ask students what can be learned about Imogene’s reaction when Howard loses his blanket.

- Invite students to have a pair-share discussion about their opinions as to why Imogene shows sympathy toward Howard as this is a pivotal point of understanding the character.
- Invite students to share their opinions with whole group.

Notes: Librarian:

Read “How to Torture Your Teacher” by Bruce Lansky.

- Invite students to have a pair-share discussion comparing and contrasting how the Herdsman and the students from the poem.
- Invite students to share their opinions with the whole group.

Guided Practice

7. Educators monitor the discussion and sharing of ideas as students present their opinions to the whole group.

Day Two

Presentation

1. Educators divide the students into partnerships of two or three people who have selected the same character to complete Character Map.
2. Students use their reading logs and apply the connections they have made from Day One activities.
3. Educators use the projector to model completing the Character Map. They ask students to find evidence in the text, connect with their background knowledge, and ask them to make an inference as they work collaboratively on character map.

Guided Practice

4. Educators monitor small group discussions and oversee students using the reading log of their Herdsman character to complete Character Map.
5. Educators disband the small groups and distribute graphic organizer: “Synthesizing Is When Your THINKING Changes as You READ.” Students will work independently as they synthesize their information about the Herdsmans and record their new perspective on the character.

Closure

6. Educators ask students to join with their assigned small group to share their synthesis of their better understanding of their Herdsman character.

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7. Educators guide as students volunteers share with the entire class.

Assessment

8. The educators review and assess the students' "Synthesizing Is When Your Thinking Changes as You Read!" graphic organizer.

Extensions

9. Understanding by Predicting - Comic Strip: After reading Chapter 7, the reader begins to see a different side to Imogene Herdman. Considering the sequence of events thus far, create a four panel cartoon making a logical conclusion to the novel. Go to <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com> to create an online comic strip. Make a print out and/or email it to the classroom teacher.
10. Compliments for Classmates - Tagxedo: For this assignment, conduct a drawing to decide which classmate each student will compliment. Students use the Student Observation for Tagxedo graphic organizer to interview her/his subject and help organize notes. The student will study this person for the next couple of days and jot some additional notes. Go to <http://www.tagxedo.com> to create a Tagxedo word cloud of this person.