

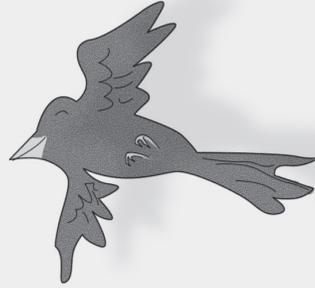
Grade 3

Mirrors and Windows: Exploring Characters in Reading and Writing

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Reading Lessons
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Language Companion Lesson





Introduction

Our world is multicultural and diverse. To live together in this world, we must help students embrace our diverse society. Literature can either reflect the world back to the reader or show the reader an entirely new world. We need to fill our classroom libraries with books that are “mirrors” into students’ own lives as well as books that are “windows” into the lives of others and how they experience the world. The best books provide opportunities for both.

The lessons in this lesson set will incorporate any knowledge students may have of characters from literature they read in earlier grades. As such, the lessons will extend students’ thinking beyond physical appearance and basic actions into the characters’ thoughts, feelings, and motivations. In addition, this lesson set will explore how characters change over the course of a story, giving students the opportunity to think about how they, too, have grown and changed in different ways.

In grade 3, students begin reading longer, more complex pieces, so more time is spent on the study of plot, story conflict, and character analysis. Helping students understand what they read is a hallmark of this grade. In grades K–2, students master the decoding skills described in the standards for reading

Why This Lesson Set?

In this lesson set, students will:

- Read closely to examine how the actions, feelings, and traits of characters influence the course of a story
- Consider how character study allows them to reflect on themselves (mirrors) and gain insight about the lives of others (windows)
- Include narrative story elements in their own original character stories
- Create visual presentations to showcase their learning about characters

foundational skills. In grade 3, students apply these skills to negotiate multi-syllabic words, which in turn increases their fluency and confidence when reading new and unfamiliar material. Doing a character study provides students with the opportunity to practice these skills in a focused way.

In support of the reading standards, this lesson set teaches students to ask questions of one another to deepen their understanding of characters. Students will have many opportunities to present their ideas publicly and to offer appropriate elaboration on classmates’ ideas, building on what others have said. By focusing on character development, students will develop a deeper understanding of stories, and by taking a closer look at characters,

students will see how authors make characters come to life.

Through writing their own narratives, students will become better readers of narrative text. More specifically, this lesson set will provide students with the opportunity to write short stories based on character profiles, which will help them to identify character traits and themes more effectively when reading fictional stories.

Common Core State Standards Alignment

Reading Standards

RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as *chapter*, *scene*, and *stanza*; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

RL.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

RL.3.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band, independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards

W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and

create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

- b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *because*, *therefore*, *since*, *for example*) to connect opinion and reasons.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *also*, *another*, *and*, *more*, *but*) to connect ideas within categories of information.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

W.3.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

- c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- d. Provide a sense of closure.

W.3.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

W.3.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

W.3.6 With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

W.3.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening Standards

SL.3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. 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.

- b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
- c. Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
- d. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

SL.3.2 Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SL.3.3 Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

SL.3.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

SL.3.6 Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Language Standards

L.3.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- a. Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.
 - b. Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.
 - c. Use abstract nouns (e.g., *childhood*).
 - d. Form and use regular and irregular verbs.
 - e. Form and use the simple (e.g., *I walked; I walk; I will walk*) verb tenses.
 - f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
 - g. Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.
- h. Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
 - i. Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.
- L.3.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- a. Capitalize appropriate words in titles.
 - b. Use commas in addresses.
 - c. Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.
 - d. Form and use possessives.
 - e. Use conventional spelling for high frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., *sitting, smiled, cries, happiness*).
- f. Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.
 - g. Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.
- L.3.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- a. Choose words and phrases for effect.
 - b. Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.
- L.3.5** Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- a. Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., *take steps*).
 - b. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).
 - c. Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., *knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered*).
- L.3.6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., *After dinner that night we went looking for them.*).

Essential Skill Lenses (PARCC Framework)

As part of its proposal to the U.S. Department of Education, the multi-state Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has developed model content frameworks for English Language Arts to serve as a bridge between the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments

in development at the time of this publication. In the lesson sets for grades 3 to 5, we expect students to engage in reading and writing through eight PARCC specified skill lenses that are rooted in the standards. The following table details how each skill lens is addressed across the lesson set:

	Reading	Writing
Cite Evidence	Students are encouraged throughout the lessons to refer back to specific parts of fictional stories when discussing their ideas. This is especially important during whole-class and partner discussions of characters and their traits.	Students are asked to write about their reading in several places throughout the lessons. Emphasis should be on students' beginning with the general topic and then providing supportive details that cite evidence for their thinking.
Analyze Content	Students are asked to analyze characters' personality traits, especially their thoughts, feelings, and motivations. In addition, emphasis is placed on students' analyzing when they see themselves in characters and when the characters provide insight into how others experience the world.	By writing about their reading, students show what they know and how deeply they are analyzing characters across books. Special emphasis is placed on when students see themselves in stories and what they are learning about others' experiences in the world.

	Reading	Writing
Study and Apply Grammar and Usage	Students demonstrate usage and understanding of selected conventional elements associated with character development, such as the use of commas and quotation marks in dialogue.	When writing their reading responses and their own short stories, students use accurate punctuation for dialogue.
Study and Apply Vocabulary	Students understand what character traits are and identify words that authors use to describe characters.	Identifying important vocabulary in reading provides support for student writing. When creating their own original characters, students think about words and phrases that describe their characters.
Conduct Discussions	Throughout the lessons, students engage in both whole-group and small-group discussions and have multiple opportunities to talk one on one with classmates. Students discuss their in-process character profiles and stories. The teacher should emphasize following general rules and etiquette for discussions and review this information as needed. Following general rules and etiquette is crucial to having successful discussions.	Students have opportunities to discuss their in-process character profiles and stories. Following general rules and etiquette for discussions will be crucial for the success of these discussions.
Report Findings	Students share with the class their investigations into characters, including when they see themselves in characters and when they learn new things about the world through characters.	Students share their final stories and visual presentations with each other and other classes in a culminating celebration. In addition, throughout the lesson set, students report back to the whole class about their findings.
Phonics and Word Recognition	Teachers should plan opportunities for students to build Reading Foundational Skills by exploring grade-level appropriate skills in the context of the core texts from each lesson set and applying this knowledge to students' independent reading.	Teachers should encourage students to apply Reading Foundational Skills in the context of their daily writing.
Fluency and Stamina	The development of fluency and stamina are emphasized throughout the lesson set. By focusing on character traits and ways of learning about characters, students gain a clear focus for their reading. Students should be encouraged to read series books to help build their fluency and stamina.	The lessons offer many opportunities for short, quick writing assignments, as well as longer, more extended pieces. Maintaining this balance gives students an opportunity to increase their writing stamina. When students read their character profiles aloud, they are encouraged to read with accuracy, with the appropriate pace, and with expression.

Core Questions

Before getting started with the individual lessons, it is important to consider the core questions that underlie the lesson set. These questions should remain at the core of your teaching, and each lesson should come back to these overarching ideas:

- What are character traits?
- How do authors make characters come to life?
- What can I learn about myself by looking deeply into characters?
- What can I learn about others and the world by looking deeply into characters?

Ready To Get Started?

How do books provide readers with mirrors and windows?

Third graders are developing a deeper sense of who they are and what they want to be in the world. They are becoming more aware of their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. This makes them the perfect age for conducting a character study which gives them the opportunity to think about their own life experiences as well as the experiences of others. This lesson set is designed not only to broaden students' understandings of the world but also to help them reflect on their place in the world, both now and in the future.

Lesson Set Goals

Within this lesson set, there are many goals we as teachers want to help our students reach.

Reading Goals

Through this lesson set, students will:

- Build and demonstrate understanding of fictional characters through close reading of text, citing textual evidence to support their thinking and ideas. (RL.3.1, RL.3.5, RL.3.10, SL.3.1b–d, SL.3.6, L.3.1)
- Identify character traits in main characters. (RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.10)
- Identify and summarize the ways in which characters change and develop throughout a story. (RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, RL.3.10, SL.3.1a–d, SL.3.2)
- Explain how illustrations contribute to a deeper understanding of the characters. (RL.3.7, SL.3.1a–d, L.3.1)
- Compare themselves and the people in their lives to characters in literature. (RL.3.1, RL.3.6, RL.3.10)
- Record thoughts about characters in writing. (RL.3.3, RL.3.6, W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.6, W.3.10, SL.3.6, L.3.6)

- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (RL.3.1)
- By the end of the year, independently and proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literature at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band. (RL.3.10)
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.3.10)
- In collaborative discussions, demonstrate evidence of preparation for discussion and exhibit responsibility to the rules and roles of conversation. (SL.3.1a, SL.3.1b)
- In collaborative discussions, share and develop ideas in a manner that enhances understanding of topic. Contribute and respond to the content of the conversation in a productive and focused manner. (SL.3.1c, SL.3.1d)
- Speak in complete sentences when appropriate and demonstrate a command of standard English grammar and usage. (SL.3.6, L.3.1)
- Acquire and accurately use grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific vocabulary and phrases. (L.3.6)

Writing Goals

Through this lesson set, students will:

- Include dialogue, interactions with other characters, and descriptions to show characters' motivations, thoughts, and feelings. (W.3.3b, W.3.4, W.3.10)
- Write a story in which the main character experiences a series of events in a logical sequence, with a clear beginning, climax, and end. (W.3.3a, W.3.3c, W.3.3d, W.3.4, W.3.10)
- With guidance and support from peers and adults, plan, revise, and edit a story, paying close attention to the conventions of standard English and the clarity of the story's development. (W.3.5)
- With guidance and support from adults and peers, create a visual presentation of the final story. (W.3.6, SL.1ba–d, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, L.3.1, L.3.6)

- By the end of the year, independently and proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literature at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band. (RL.3.10)
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.3.10)
- In collaborative discussions, demonstrate evidence of preparation for discussion and exhibit responsibility to the rules and roles of conversation. (SL.3.1a, SL.3.1b)
- In collaborative discussions, share and develop ideas in a manner that enhances understanding of topic. Contribute and respond to the content of the conversation in a productive and focused manner. (SL.3.1c, SL.3.1d)
- Speak in complete sentences when appropriate and demonstrate a command of standard English grammar and usage. (SL.3.6, L.3.1)
- Demonstrate knowledge of standard English and its conventions. (L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3)
- Acquire and accurately use grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific vocabulary and phrases. (L.3.6)

Choosing Core Texts

Getting to know your students—including their interests and passions as well as their fears and their worries—is an important precursor to this lesson set. Having this understanding will help guide you in choosing texts for read-alouds, guided reading, and independent reading for your students. Conducting a student interest inventory is a great way to quickly get some input from your students. We also believe in the power of one-on-one conferencing as an essential way to establish a relationship with each student and to create an ethic of care in your classroom. The following books are used as examples in this lesson set:

- *Charlotte’s Web*, by E. B. White
- *Enemy Pie*, by Derek Munson
- *The Name Jar*, by Yangsook Choi

- *Stuart Little*, by E. B. White (Language Companion Lesson)
- *Those Shoes*, by Maribeth Boelts

The following books have strong characters and are wonderful for read-alouds or as guided-reading texts:

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain
- *Bridge to Terabithia*, by Katherine Patterson
- *The Chalkbox Kid*, by Clyde Robert Bulla
- *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, by Beverly Cleary
- *Freckle Juice*, by Judy Blume
- *Frindle*, by Andrew Clements
- *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, by Katherine Patterson
- *Harriet the Spy*, by Louise Fitzhugh
- Henry Huggins and Ramona series, by Beverly Cleary
- *The Hundred Dresses*, by Eleanor Estes
- *Island of the Blue Dolphin*, by Scott O’Dell
- *Lemonade War*, by Jacqueline Davies
- *My Life as a Book*, by Janet Tashjian
- *Secret Identity* (Book 1: *Shredderman*), by Wendelin Van Draanen
- *Shiloh*, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- *Stink, the Incredible Shrinking Kid*, by Megan McDonald
- *The View from Saturday*, by E. L. Konigsburg
- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, by C. P. Curtis
- *War with Grandpa*, by Robert Kimmell Smith

The following are picture books with strong characters:

- *Amazing Grace*, by Mary Hoffman
- *Beatrice’s Goat*, by Page McBrier
- *Bird*, by Zetta Elliot
- *Boundless Grace*, by Mary Hoffman
- *Chrysanthemum*, by Kevin Henkes

- *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave*, by Laban Carrick Hill
- *Fly Away Home*, by Eve Bunting
- *Freedom Summer*, by Deborah Wiles
- *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse*, by Kevin Henkes
- *Lost and Found*, by Oliver Jeffers
- *Migrant*, by Maxine Trottier
- *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*, by Tomie dePaola
- *Owen*, by Kevin Henkes
- *Train to Somewhere*, by Eve Bunting
- *Wemberly Worried*, by Kevin Henkes

When choosing other stories for this lesson set, consider realistic fiction books that have characters that are developed enough for students to be able to discuss the characters' thoughts, feelings, and motivations.

A Note about Addressing Reading Standard 10: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

This lesson set provides all students with opportunities to work with texts deemed appropriate for their grade levels as well as texts at their specific reading levels. Through shared experiences and focused instruction, all students engage with and comprehend a wide range of texts within their grade-level complexity bands. We suggest a variety of high-quality, complex texts to use within the whole-group lessons and recommend a variety of additional titles in the section Choosing Core Texts to extend and enrich instruction. However, research strongly suggests that during independent practice and in small-group collaborations, all students need to work with texts they can read with a high level of accuracy and comprehension (i.e., at their developmentally appropriate reading levels) in order to significantly improve their reading (Allington, 2012; Ehri, Dreyer, Flugman, & Gross, 2007). Depending on individual needs and skills, a student's reading level may be above, within, or below his or her grade-level band.

Teacher's Notes

Think of a novel you recently enjoyed or one that you loved as a third grader. Did the main character remind you of yourself? When you were reading, did you think about living a different kind of life?

A good story does both. The metaphor of mirrors and windows has been an important part of the dialogue on children's literature as a way of reflecting on one's own culture and the cultures of others. The mirror invites self-reflection and affirmation of one's identity, and the window offers a view into others' lives. This lesson set goes beyond text-to-self connections and offers students a language for discussing when they see their story on the page, when they don't, and what they can learn from disconnections or stories different from their own.

We believe that all children need to see themselves and their communities on the page to reaffirm who they are. We also believe that all children benefit from reading about lives different from their own. As such, children can think about power relations, issues of social justice, and how to make a better world for themselves and others. Our classrooms need to be places where all children can find their mirrors, as well as their windows of new experience.

It is important to review your classroom reading collection and think about the children in your class. Are the stories in the collection representative of children's experiences? When adding to your collection, consider publishers that

“ For one who reads, there is no limit to the number of lives that may be lived, for fiction, biography, and history offer an inexhaustible number of lives in many parts of the world, in all periods of time.

—Louis L'Amour

”

specialize in multicultural children’s literature, such as Lee & Low Books. Students from dominant social groups have always had “mirror” books. It’s time for all children to see themselves in the characters on the pages and in the authors on the book jackets.

Core Message to Students

Before the first lesson, use this as a shared reading or read-aloud to set the stage and engage students in discussion about your upcoming study. See Appendix 3.1 for an enlarged version to reproduce and share with students.

Reading provides us with a world of mirrors and windows. When I see myself in a story, it’s like I’m looking in the mirror into my own life. That happens when I see characters who remind me of myself and my community. And when I see lives different from my own, it’s like I’m looking out the window, watching the world unfold around me. That happens when I see characters’ lives different from mine and get to learn something new and think about how I want the world to be. During this lesson set, we’ll be talking about these “mirror and window” moments in the books we read. I can’t wait to hear about when you see yourselves in your reading, and when you’re learning about lives different from your own.

Questions for Close Reading



The Core Ready lessons include many rich opportunities to engage students in close reading of text, which requires them to ask and answer questions, draw conclusions, and use specific text evidence to support their thinking (Reading Anchor Standard 1). These opportunities are marked with a close reading icon. You may wish to extend these experiences using our recommended Core Texts or with texts of your choosing. Use the following questions as a resource to guide students through close-reading experiences in any stories with characters:

- Who is telling the story?
- What characters have you encountered?
- Who is (are) the main character(s)?

- Who are the secondary characters? Why do you think they are included?
- What does the character say and do? What does this tell you about him or her?
- What have you noticed about the character’s relationships with other characters? Do any of the character’s relationships change?
- How are these character relationships important to the story?
- What does the character look like? How is this important to the story, if at all?
- What inner traits do you associate with the character? Why?
- What is the character’s goal?
- What obstacles does the character face in reaching the goal?
- What events in the story are most important to the character? Why?
- How does the main character change across the story?
- What is the relationship between how the character changes and the theme of the story?
- Does the character remind you of yourself? Why or why not?
- What do the experiences of this character teach you that you can apply to your own life?

Building Academic Language

Following is a list of academic core words and phrases. Learning them will increase your students’ comprehension of the focus of this lesson set and facilitate their ability to talk and write about what they learn.

Rather than introduce all the words and phrases at once, add them slowly to a learning wall as your teaching unfolds. See the glossary at the end of this lesson set for definitions of the words. Also provided are sentence frames, which may be included on a sentence wall (Carrier & Tatum, 2006), a research-proven strategy for teaching English language learners (Lewis, 1993; Nattinger, 1980), or as a handout to scaffold students’ use of the content words. Some students, especially English language learners, may need explicit practice in using sentence frames. Encourage all students to use these words and phrases regularly in their conversations and writing.

Core Words

actions
character
climax
dialogue
emotions
empathy
evidence

feelings
inner traits
obstacles
outer traits
perspective
plot
point of view



resolution
setting
thoughts

These recommendations have great potential to get students excited about books their friends and classmates love. The end of the writing lessons is the perfect opportunity for students to share their original short stories and have the rest of the class discuss whether they see themselves in the characters others have created. There are also many other fun ways to make the end of the unit memorable:

- Students dress up as their favorite characters.
- The class plays character charades, guessing which character each student is playing.
- Do a reader's theater/role-play on morning TV.
- Act out a favorite story with vivid characters for younger students.

Core Phrases

- _____ (character's name) makes me feel like I'm looking in a mirror because _____.
- _____ (character's name) shows me a window to another world because _____.
- My favorite character is _____ because _____.
- This character reminds me of another character we've read about named _____ because _____.
- I think this because _____ (textual evidence to support your thinking).

Assessment



Assessment in this lesson set is both ongoing and culminating. As teachers, we are constantly “kid watching” and observing how students are making meaning and interpreting new material. Throughout this lesson set, look for performance-based assessments called Milestone Assessments, each marked with an assessment icon. Milestone Assessments are opportunities to notice and record data on standards-aligned indicators during the course of the lesson set. Use the results of these assessments to determine how well students are progressing toward the goals of the lesson set. Adjust the pace of your teaching and plan instructional support as needed.

We also encourage you to use the Core Ready Reading and Writing Rubrics (also marked with assessment icons) with each lesson set to evaluate overall student performance on the standards-aligned lesson set goals. In this lesson set, each student's finished character profile is an important piece of performance-based assessment evidence that can be analyzed and then placed in a portfolio of work.

In addition, we have provided a Speaking and Listening Performance Checklist in Appendix 3.13 that provides observable Common Core-aligned indicators for you to use when assessing student performance as speakers and listeners. There are multiple opportunities in every Core Ready lesson set to make such observations. Use the checklist in its entirety to gather performance

Recognition

At the end of the lesson set, it is important to recognize the hard work your students have put into their learning and thinking about themselves and others. At the end of the reading lessons, students will share book recommendations they have for classmates that emphasize the main characters' personality traits.

data over time, or choose appropriate indicators to create a customized checklist to match a specific learning experience.

Core Support for Diverse Learners

Reading

Third graders reading below grade level may have a difficult time finding characters who are sufficiently deep for consideration as mirrors or windows. Look for text choices that include complex characters, even at lower reading levels. *Frog and Toad*, by Arnold Lobel, is a classic example of a book with rich, complex characters in a text that has an accessible font, vocabulary, and number of words per page.

Writing

Many students benefit from drawing prior to writing. This can be a pathway to deeper thinking about characters, including their actions and feelings. In addition, consider creating a character traits word wall and decide whether providing individual copies of the traits lists will help students. Also consider providing visual cues for students who need extra support with the definitions of new terms.

English Language Learners and Emerging Readers and Writers

Forming small groups of students who have similar needs will be critical in meeting individuals' needs, whether additional support is needed with language acquisition, decoding, or meaning making. Consider forming small, flexible groups of students with similar needs called Character Clubs. Each group can focus on a particular character throughout the lesson set, and you can use the groups as a platform for reinforcing individual lessons on reading and writing about characters.



We have highlighted specific strategies embedded in the lesson to shelter instruction for English language learners. These elements will help English language learners participate successfully in the whole-group lesson

and support the development of their language skills. Look for the icon that marks these strategies.

Complementary Core Methods

Read-Alouds

During read-alouds, share a wide variety of picture books and novels that feature complex characters. Make sure to include books that include characters from different backgrounds. Consider the students in your class, and seek out characters that provide both mirrors and windows for them. Be conscious of achieving a balance between strong male and female main characters and characters that represent our diverse society. When appropriate, use read-alouds as additional opportunities for students to practice one or two of the following skills:

- Making a prediction about the subject or nature of the text by discussing the cover, title, and illustrations
- Asking and answering questions about a text, using portions of it as evidence in responding
- Identifying and exploring the meanings of new vocabulary words
- Generating a list of key words to use in discussing and writing about the book

Shared Reading

Shared reading provides a wonderful opportunity to investigate close reading of a portion of a picture book or chapter book. It also provides the chance for students to read short selections that are beyond their own independent reading level, thus giving all students access to complex literature. Use shared reading to reinforce the idea of reading to learn (versus learning to read). Here are some prompts you may want to use in your conversations about these texts:

- What are the main character's traits? How do you know?
- What words does the author use to describe the character?
- After reading this text, what do you wonder about this character? What do you imagine he or she is like?

- What new vocabulary did we take away from this text? How can we use this new vocabulary?
- Let's summarize what we just read in our own words.

Shared Writing

Shared writing also provides an opportunity to consider the many layers of character development. Use this time to do the following:

- Create shared lists of character traits.
- Write character penpal letters.
- Jot down notes about a shared reading.
- Compose questions about characters.
- Craft answers to shared questions.
- Revise shared writing to link ideas, creating more complex sentences and using words and phrases such as *also*, *another*, *and*, *more*, *but*, *in addition*, and so on.

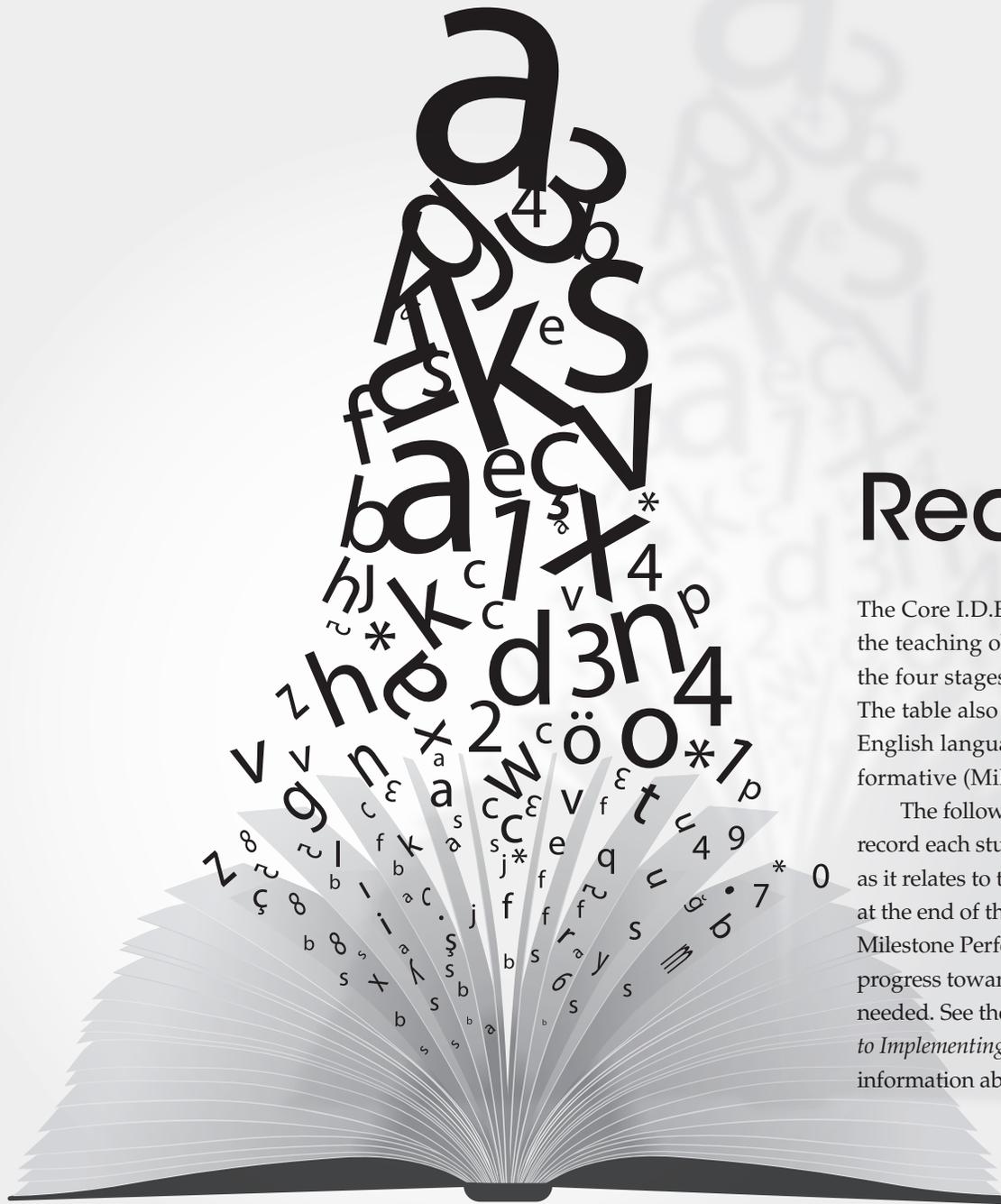
Core Connections at Home

Ask each student to bring a favorite book from home. Does it have a main character that acts as a mirror or window for the student? For homework, have students interview family members about their favorite characters in books: Which characters are they drawn to and why? What characters remind them of themselves, and what characters make them see a different world? (If the families are low literacy, offer the option of having them select people from their own lives and tell stories about them, asking: which characters from your own lives are mirrors for you and which are windows?)

Invite families to the classroom to share read-alouds of books with their favorite characters. Have the class ask their guest readers whether the characters are mirrors or windows for them and why.

Have students share their final writing projects with their families during a special recognition program. Ask each family to write a letter to their child, sharing what they learned from his or her presentation. Display these letters alongside students' final presentations.





Reading Lessons

The Core I.D.E.A. / Daily Reading Instruction at a Glance table highlights the teaching objectives and standards alignment for all ten lessons across the four stages of the lesson set (Introduce, Define, Extend, and Assess). The table also indicates which lessons contain special features to support English language learners, technology, speaking and listening, and formative (Milestone) assessments.

The following Core Ready Reading Rubric is designed to help you record each student's overall understanding across four levels of achievement as it relates to the lesson set goals. We recommend that you use this rubric at the end of the lesson set as a performance-based assessment tool. Use Milestone Performance Assessments as tools to help you gauge student progress toward these goals. Reteach and differentiate instruction as needed. See the foundational book, *Be Core Ready: Powerful, Effective Steps to Implementing and Achieving the Common Core State Standards*, for more information about the Core Ready Reading and Writing Rubrics.

The Core I.D.E.A. / Daily Reading Instruction at a Glance

Grade 3 Mirrors and Windows: Exploring Characters in Reading and Writing

Instructional Stages	Lesson	Teaching Objective	Core Standards	Special Features
Introduce: Notice, explore, collect, note, immerse, surround, record, share	1	Readers consider whether characters are mirrors or windows.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.6 • RL.3.10 • W.3.4 SL.3.1a–d • SL.3.2 • SL.3.6 L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL S&L Tech
Define: Name, identify, outline, clarify, select, plan	2	Readers identify major and minor characters.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.7 • RL.3.10 • W.3.4 W.3.10 • SL.3.1a • SL.3.1b • SL.3.2 • SL.3.6 L.3.6	Close Reading ELL
	3	Readers discuss characters by focusing on their traits.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.10 • W.3.4 • W.3.8 W.3.10 • SL.3.1a–d • SL.3.6 • L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL
	4	Readers learn about characters in many ways.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.5 • RL.3.10 W.3.4 • W.3.10 • SL.3.1a • SL.3.1b SL.3.2 • SL.3.6 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL Milestone Assessment
Extend: Try, experiment, attempt, approximate, practice, explain, revise, refine	5	Readers notice how characters feel and offer reasons to support their ideas.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.5 • RL.3.10 SL.3.1a–d • SL.3.2 • SL.3.6a–d L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL
	6	Readers use illustrations to better understand characters.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.7 • RL.3.10 W.3.4 • W.3.10 • SL.3.1a–d • SL.3.6 L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL Milestone Assessment Tech
	7	Readers identify how characters change over the course of a story through specific markers.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.5 • RL.3.10 • SL.3.1a SL.3.1b • SL.3.6 • L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL
	8	Readers summarize how a character changes from the beginning to the end of the story.	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.5 • RL.3.10 • W.3.2a–d W.3.4 • W.3.10 • SL.3.1a–d • SL.3.2 • SL.3.6 L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL Milestone Assessment
	9	Readers describe choices that characters make and ask themselves, “Would I do the same thing?”	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.6 • RL.3.10 • W.3.1a W.3.1b • W.3.4 • W.3.10 • SL.3.1a SL.3.1b • SL.3.6 • L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL Milestone Assessment
Assess: Reflect, conclude, connect, share, recognize, respond	10	Readers make book recommendations by focusing on when they have seen themselves in the story and when they have considered something new (mirror/window moments).	RL.3.1 • RL.3.3 • RL.3.5 • RL.3.6 RL.3.10 • W.3.1 • W.3.4 • W.3.6 W.3.10 • SL.3.1a–d • SL.3.4 SL.3.6 • L.3.1 • L.3.6	Close Reading ELL Milestone Assessment S&L Tech



Core Ready Reading Rubric

Grade 3 Mirrors and Windows: Exploring Characters in Reading and Writing

Lesson Set Goal	Emerging	Approaching	Achieving	Exceeding	Standards Alignment
Build and demonstrate understanding of fictional characters through close reading of text, citing textual evidence to support thinking and ideas.	Student is unable to use character descriptions, actions, and dialogue effectively to gain and demonstrate understanding of fictional characters. Little or no textual evidence to support thinking.	Student attempts to develop and demonstrate an understanding of fictional characters by looking at the character descriptions, actions, and dialogue. Inaccuracies may be present. Provides some but insufficient textual evidence to support thinking.	Student develops and demonstrates understanding of fictional characters by looking at the character descriptions, actions, and dialogues. Provides sufficient textual evidence to support thinking. Some components may be more developed than others.	Student effectively uses character descriptions, actions, and dialogue to develop and demonstrate deep understanding of fictional characters. Provides detailed and thoughtful textual evidence to support thinking.	RL.3.1 RL.3.5 RL.3.10 SL.3.1b–d SL.3.6 L.3.1
Identify character traits in main character.	Student is unable to accurately identify character traits found in a text or support thinking with evidence.	Student displays some understanding of character traits. Is able to accurately identify some basic traits of characters in a text. May have some inaccuracies or lack evidence.	Student displays solid understanding of character traits. Is able to accurately identify basic traits of the characters in a text with sufficient textual evidence.	Student displays deep understanding of character traits. Is able to identify multiple, sometimes subtle, traits of characters in a text. Consistently provides thorough textual evidence.	RL.3.1 RL.3.3 RL.3.4 RL.3.10
Identify and summarize the ways in which characters change and develop throughout a story.	Student is unable to provide ways that characters change and develop throughout a story.	Student attempts to explain how characters change and develop in a story but has difficulty summarizing these changes.	Student is able to identify and summarize some of the ways in which characters change and develop throughout a story and provides sufficient textual evidence.	Student consistently identifies and summarizes multiple ways that characters change and develop throughout a story and provides accurate and thorough textual evidence.	RL.3.1 RL.3.3 RL.3.5 RL.3.10 SL.3.1a–d SL.3.2
Explain how illustrations contribute to a deeper understanding of the characters.	Student struggles to describe what is conveyed in an illustration and is unable to explain the connection to characters.	Student attempts to describe information about a character that is learned by looking closely at the illustrations.	Student is able to clearly explain how illustrations contribute to a deeper understanding of character.	Student provides multiple examples of how illustrations contribute to a deeper understanding of the characters and provides several exemplary textual examples.	RL.3.7 SL.3.1a–d L.3.1
Compare his- or herself and the people in his or her own life to characters in literature.	Student struggles to identify the point of view of a character. Does not make comparisons to self.	Student may be able to distinguish his or her own point of view from a character's point of view but is unable to clearly explain how his or her perspective is similar or different.	Student is able to identify a character's point of view and to identify his or her own point of view and can clearly explain how his or her perspective is similar or different.	Student can consistently and accurately identify the point of view of a character and his or her own point of view and provides accurate textual examples. Student can explain in detail how his or her perspective is similar or different.	RL.3.1 RL.3.6 RL.3.10

Core Ready Reading Rubric, Grade 3, *continued*

Lesson Set Goal	Emerging	Approaching	Achieving	Exceeding	Standards Alignment
Record thoughts about characters in writing.	Student shows little or no evidence of recording thoughts about a character in writing.	Student attempts to record thoughts about a character in writing but may include inaccuracies or lack detail.	Student successfully records thoughts about characters in writing and provides specific supporting details from the text.	Student records thoughts about characters in writing and provides multiple, relevant, and accurate supporting details from the text.	RL.3.3 RL.3.6 W.3.2 W.3.4 W.3.6 W.3.10 SL.3.6 L.3.6
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	Student shows little or no evidence of active, purposeful reading or searching the text for specific information and evidence. Student makes little or no attempt to ask and/or answer questions about the text. Text evidence is minimal or non-existent.	Student shows some evidence of active, purposeful reading and searching the text for specific information and evidence. Student may be able to ask and/or answer some questions about the text accurately, but may not provide sufficient textual evidence to support thinking.	Student shows solid evidence of active, purposeful reading and searching the text for specific information and evidence. Student usually asks and/or answers questions accurately and provides appropriate textual evidence to support thinking.	Student demonstrates exceptional evidence of active, purposeful reading and searching the text for specific information and evidence. Student asks and answers questions with accuracy and provides appropriate, detailed, and/or thoughtful textual evidence to support thinking.	RL.3.1
By the end of the year, independently and proficiently read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band.	Student shows little or no evidence of reading and comprehending texts appropriate for the grade 3 text complexity band.	Student shows inconsistent evidence of reading and comprehending texts appropriate for the grade 3 text complexity band with independence and proficiency.	Student shows solid evidence of reading and comprehending texts appropriate for the grade 3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	Student shows solid evidence of reading and comprehending texts above the grade 3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	RL.3.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Student shows little or no evidence of writing routinely for short or long time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Student shows some evidence of writing routinely for short and long time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Student shows solid evidence of writing routinely for short and long time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	Student shows exceptional evidence of consistently and accurately writing for short and long time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	W.3.10
In collaborative discussions, demonstrate evidence of preparation for discussion and exhibit responsibility to the rules and roles of conversation.	In collaborative discussions, student comes unprepared and often disregards the rules and roles of conversation.	In collaborative discussions, student's preparation may be evident but ineffective or inconsistent. May occasionally disregard the rules and roles of conversation.	In collaborative discussions, student prepares adequately and draws on the preparation and other information about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. Usually observes the rules and roles of conversation.	In collaborative discussions, student arrives well prepared for discussions and draws on the preparation and other information about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. Always observes the rules and roles of conversation.	SL.3.1a SL.3.1b

Core Ready Reading Rubric, Grade 3, *continued*

Lesson Set Goal	Emerging	Approaching	Achieving	Exceeding	Standards Alignment
In collaborative discussions, share and develop ideas in a manner that enhances understanding of topic. Contribute and respond to the content of the conversation in a productive and focused manner.	Student shows little or no evidence of engaging in collaborative discussions and makes little or no attempt to ask and answer questions, stay on topic, link his or her comments to the remarks of others, or to explain his or her own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.	Student shows some evidence of engaging in collaborative discussions and with marginal success attempts to ask questions to check understanding of information presented, to stay on topic, link his or her comments to the remarks of others, and explain his or her own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.	Student engages in a range of collaborative discussions and asks questions to check understanding of information presented, stays on topic most of the time, and frequently links his or her own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.	Student effectively and consistently engages in a range of collaborative discussions and asks high level questions to check understanding of information presented, always stays on topic, and with great insight and attention to the comments of others links his or her own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.	SL.3.1c SL.3.1d
Speak in complete sentences when appropriate and demonstrate a command of standard English grammar and usage.	Student shows little or no evidence of attempting to speak in complete sentences. Student demonstrates little or no command of standard English grammar and usage.	Student attempts to speak in complete sentences when appropriate and demonstrates some command of standard English grammar and usage.	Student speaks in complete sentences when appropriate and demonstrates a command of standard English grammar and usage.	Student always speaks in complete sentences when appropriate and demonstrates an extraordinary command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage.	SL.3.6 L.3.1
Acquire and accurately use grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific vocabulary and phrases.	Student shows little or no evidence of the acquisition and use of grade-appropriate conversational and academic language.	Student shows some evidence of the acquisition and use of grade-appropriate conversational and academic language.	Student shows solid evidence of the acquisition and use of grade-appropriate conversational and academic language.	Student shows a high level of sophistication and precision when using grade-appropriate conversational and academic language.	L.3.6

Note: See the Core Ready Rubrics chart in the Welcome at the beginning of the book for descriptions of category headers.

Reading Lesson 1

▼ Teaching Objective

Readers consider whether individual characters in books are “mirrors” or “windows.”



Close Reading Opportunity

▼ Standards Alignment

RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.6, RL.3.10, W.3.4, W.3.10, SL.3.1a–d, SL.3.2, SL.3.6, L.3.1, L.3.6

▼ Materials

- Charting supplies, interactive whiteboard or other display tool
- Picture book that has themes that resonate with third graders, such as *Enemy Pie*, by Derek Munson; *The Recess Queen*, by Alexis O’Neill; *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*, by Patty Lovell; or *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to Be Who You Are*, by Maria Dismondy
- Mirror/Window Chart

▼ To the Teacher

When we look in the mirror, what do we see? We see ourselves staring back at us. When we look out the window, what do we see? A new day, a new view, something we might not have seen before.

This lesson set will help your students think about characters more deeply, but it should ultimately help them think differently about themselves, their classmates, and others in the world. As third graders, your students are becoming more self-conscious of who they are and their place in the world. Who are my friends? What do my favorite TV shows say about me? What do my clothes say about me? Where do I belong? For students in this age group, reading realistic fiction is often the first time they explore stories that make them pause and consider whether they have experienced the same thing or something different. They are beginning to learn that the best books are the ones that make you think at the end of each chapter “What would I do?”

This first lesson introduces the terms *mirror* and *window* in relation to literature, and throughout the lesson set, you will want to use the language of *mirror and window moments*, *characters*, and *books* to help reinforce the idea that we all have connections to the stories we read, but we also have times when we don’t feel a connection. Both are important to experience. This first lesson will also give you a quick assessment of whether students are able to identify characters or books which reminded them of themselves as well as moments in reading fiction when they learned something new. Notice which students have not been able to see themselves in any characters and spend your initial conferences with them, helping them find texts in which you know they will see things about the characters that seem familiar—whether that means the character looks like them, acts like them, or feels like them in different situations.

For this lesson, it’s helpful to have a small mirror with you as a prop to pass around and have students see their own reflections looking back at them.

▼ Procedure

Warm Up Gather the class to set the stage for today’s learning

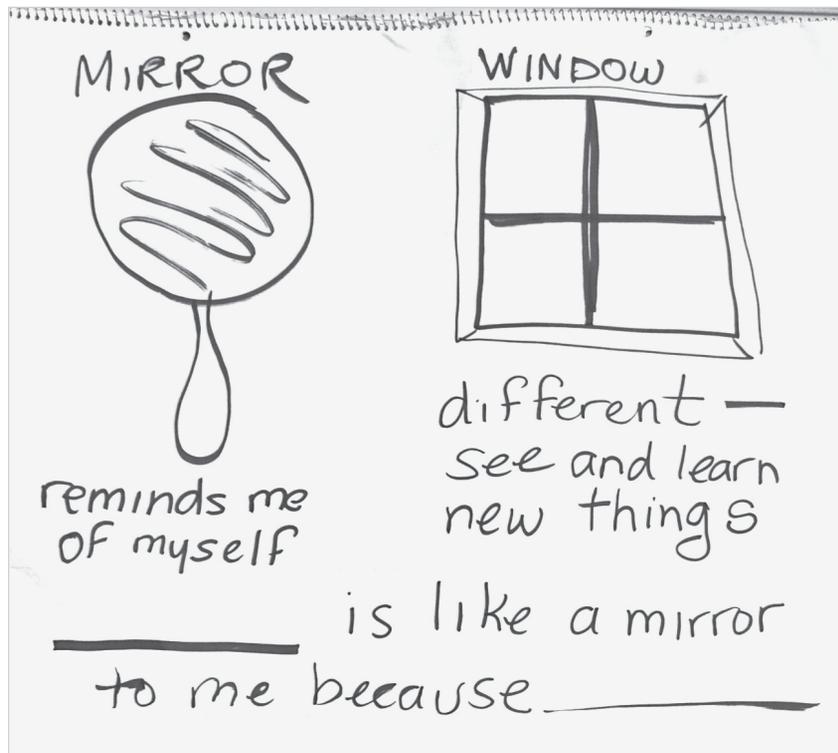
Gather your class to introduce the new lesson set and the metaphor of mirrors and windows.

When you look in the mirror, you see yourself. You see your hair and eyes and mouth. You might also see a smile and remember what made you laugh earlier that day. You might see sadness in your eyes and remember the fight you had with your friend at lunch. When we look in the mirror, we see who we are on the outside, but we can also see things like hurt or happiness in our facial expressions and the gestures we make. When you look out the window, what do you see? You see a view to the outside world. You see the leaves fall or the cars drive by or the people sitting on the stoop. You see things that might not be things in your own life, but that make you think in new ways about other people’s lives.

Teach Model what students need to learn and do



Now guide students to how this metaphor can be applied to their reading lives.



Books are like mirrors and windows. Sometimes when I'm reading a story, I'm reminded of something that happened to me or how I felt the same way a character does. Those are moments when it feels like I'm looking in the mirror. Other times, I'm reading a story and the life experiences of the main character are so different from my own that it's like I'm looking out the window and seeing a whole new world.

At this point in the lesson, give an example of a time you experienced a mirror or window moment in a book, preferably from a read-aloud you have already read with the class. A picture book that works well for this lesson is *Enemy Pie*, by Derek Munson. *Reading Rainbow* also created a segment on *Enemy Pie*, which is available on YouTube. The segment shares the picture book, as well as scenes from a park setting for students to analyze how people are treating each

other in that setting. **ELL** Provide Comprehensible Input—Audiovisual Aids. Providing pictures and visuals offers a nonlinguistic window into understanding the task.

In *Enemy Pie*, one boy's perfect summer seems to be ruined when his worst enemy, Jeremy Ross, moves in down the block. Luckily, Dad has a recipe for "enemy pie," but it seems that the pie will only be effective if the recipient is treated kindly before eating it. Reluctantly, the boy agrees to spend time with Jeremy. As the boys spend the day shooting hoops and jumping on the trampoline, our protagonist begins to realize that Jeremy isn't a bad kid at all; in fact, he and Jeremy share many traits and interests. When the pie is finally served, the boy desperately wants to tell Jeremy, "Don't eat it! It's poison!" Then he realizes that Dad is eating the pie, as well, and enjoying himself immensely.

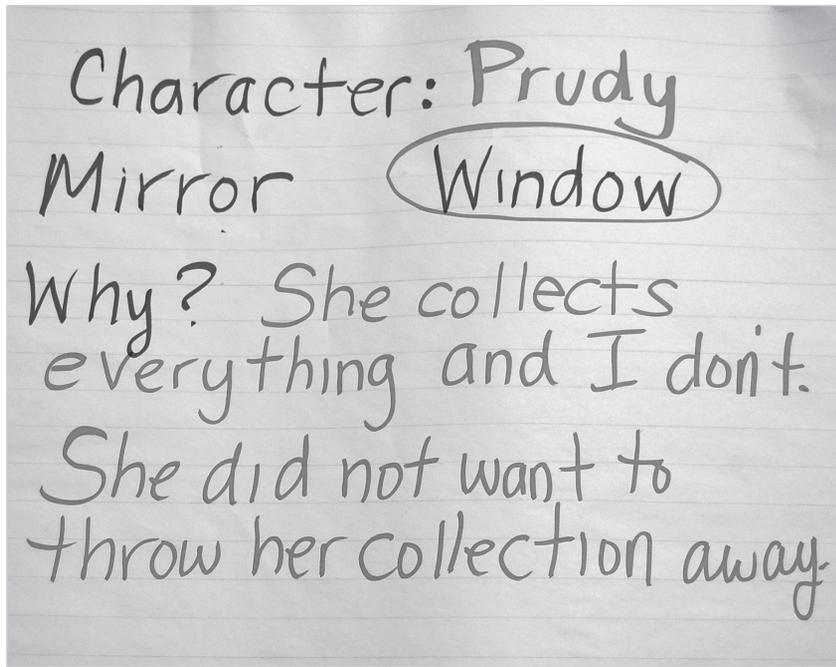
Have you had people in your lives whom you negatively judged before getting to know them and then had them turn out to be wonderful friends.

Try Guide students to quickly rehearse what they need to learn and do in preparation for practice



Have students turn and talk about whether the protagonist's story was more of a mirror or a window to them and why. Remind students of how to engage effectively in collaborative discussions by following agreed-upon rules (listening with care, one voice speaking at a time, asking questions for clarification or discussion). (SL.3.1b-d) Once the book or viewing has finished, spend a few moments discussing the story. Check for students' understanding by asking them to retell the story, focusing on the lesson that Derek learned. **ELL** Identify and Communicate Content and Language Objective—Check for Understanding. During this time you can informally assess each ELL's level of language acquisition and be able to think of how you can support him or her during the upcoming units.

If you read another story or refer to other read-alouds that you have done this year, the same guidelines apply. Some of our favorites that students can relate to include *The Recess Queen*, by Alexis O'Neill; *Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon*, by Patty Lovell; *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to Be Who You Are*, by Maria Dismondy; and *Those Shoes*, by Maribeth Boelts. Once the presentation has been finished, spend a few moments discussing the story.



Courtesy of the author

Clarify Briefly restate today's teaching objective and explain the practice task(s)

Today, I want you to think about times in your reading life when you have felt like you were looking in the mirror and times when you have felt like you were looking out the window.

Practice Students work independently and/or in small groups to apply today's teaching objective

Students choose two to four characters from their past reading (including read-alouds and other familiar stories) and decide if the characters are mirrors of themselves or windows into a new world.

Character	Mirror or Window?	Why?

Wrap Up Check understanding as you guide students to briefly share what they have learned and produced today



At the end of class, take volunteers to share their mirror/window moments and why they felt the way they did. You may want to start a class chart of mirror/window books and keep the chart going throughout the lesson set. Encourage students to use language from this lesson set's Core Phrases: **ELL** Identify and Communicate Content and Language Objectives: Language Form and Function. These models offer support for your ELLs as they are crafting responses. They will refer to these models to show them how to use language in their thinking.

- _____ (character's name) makes me feel like I'm looking in a mirror because _____.
- _____ (character's name) shows me a window to another world because _____.

Goal

Students listen to *Enemy Pie* or another picture book with a strong main character and themes that resonate with third graders.

Low-Tech

Students participate in an interactive read-aloud of the book.

High-Tech

Students view the *Reading Rainbow* video online, which retells *Enemy Pie* and includes additional park scenes for discussion of the issues of fairness central to the book.



“

*He who knows others is learned;
He who knows himself is wise.*

— Lao-tzu

”

Reading Lesson 2

▼ Teaching Objective

Readers identify major and minor characters.



Close Reading Opportunity

▼ Standards Alignment

RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.7, RL.3.10, W.3.4, W.3.10, SL.3.1a, SL.3.1b, SL.3.2, SL.3.6, L.3.6

▼ Materials

- Charting supplies, interactive whiteboard or other display tool
- Major or Minor Character Sheet (see Appendix 3.2)
- Read-aloud such as *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts

▼ To the Teacher

By naming major characters, students are better able to track what events in the story are more important and less important to focus on.

▼ Procedure

Warm Up Gather the class to set the stage for today's learning

Remind students of the text read aloud yesterday, *Enemy Pie*. Identify a new character that you will introduce students to today. Choose a text that has a strong main character as well as other major and minor characters.

Yesterday, we met a character named Derek who learned an important lesson about enemies and friends. Today, we're going to meet another character who learns an important lesson about friendship. And, like Derek, he has people in his life who help him along the way. Don't we all have people in our lives who help us learn things? The most important people to you might be your family and friends, and they play a major role in your life. Other folks, like people who live in your neighborhood, may play a minor role in your life.

Teach Model what students need to learn and do

For this lesson, I use *Those Shoes*, by Maribeth Boelts, but any book with a clear main character and supportive minor characters will work.

Today as readers, we will learn the difference between major and minor characters. This is important to notice as we read, because it helps us track a character's actions and interactions with others throughout a longer text. Major characters are those who are central to the main plot and story conflicts. Most of the dialogue and inner thinking happens with the main character. Minor characters are there to support the major characters but have less influence on the story. When I'm reading, I want to ask myself "Who is the main character? Why is he or she the main character? Who are minor characters? Why are they minor characters?"

Listen as I read *Those Shoes*, by Maribeth Boelts, and identify one major character, Jeremy, and the clues that led me to realize he is a major character.

Read aloud from *Those Shoes* or another short text that has a clear major character.

Jeremy is the main character. He dreams of having a pair of black high-tops with two white stripes. He wants “those shoes.” He is the character telling the story. When I look at the pictures, Jeremy is the main figure on each page.

Now listen as I identify a minor character, Mr. Alfrey. He is the guidance counselor who gave Jeremy shoes with the Velcro after his broke. His actions help Jeremy, but if he wasn’t in the story, the story would continue on and we would still understand Jeremy’s struggle to get “those shoes.”

Start a chart titled Major or Minor Characters Chart.

Major or Minor Characters Chart

Major Character	Why?	Minor Character	Why?
Jeremy	Tells the story Title reflects what he wants Does most of talking We know how he is feeling Key figure in illustrations	Mr. Alfrey	Actions support major character Story would continue without him

Try Guide students to quickly rehearse what they need to learn and do in preparation for practice

 Continue reading *Those Shoes*. Have students complete Major or Minor Character Sheets with partners. **ELL** Provide Comprehensible Input—Graphic Organizers/Outlines. You can partner ELLs with partners who speak their native language to increase transfer between languages. You could also partner ELLs in triads, partnering your ELL student with one partner who speaks only English, and one who speaks English and the native language.



ELL Enable Language Production—Increasing Interaction.

Whom did you jot down as the major characters? (Jeremy, Jeremy’s grandmother, Antonio) Whom did you jot down as the minor characters? (Mr. Alfrey, other kids in class) Let’s discuss why.

Clarify Briefly restate today’s teaching objective and explain the practice task(s)

As you read today, notice the major and minor characters in your story. Add to your Major or Minor Character Sheet, and look for evidence of why the characters are major or minor. Remember, major characters are those who are central to the main plot and story conflicts. Most of the dialogue and inner thinking happens with the main character. Minor characters are there to support the major characters but have less influence on the story.

Practice Students work independently and/or in small groups to apply today’s teaching objective

Students read independently, noting major and minor characters and what text evidence supports their thinking. They record their thoughts on the Major or Minor Character Sheet in Appendix 3.2 and support their conclusions with evidence from the text.

Wrap Up Check understanding as you guide students to briefly share what they have learned and produced today

Have each student share one major or minor character and explain his or her selection. Ask students, “Do any of the major or minor characters feel like mirrors so far? Why?”

Reading Lesson 3

▼ Teaching Objective

Readers discuss characters by focusing on their traits.



Close Reading Opportunity

▼ Standards Alignment

RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.10, W.3.4, W.3.8, W.3.10, SL.3.1a–d, SL.3.6, L.3.1, L.3.6

▼ Materials

- Charting supplies, interactive whiteboard or other display tool
- Picture books you have read already, such as *Enemy Pie* and *Those Shoes*
- Other picture books with characters with defining traits, such as *The Name Jar* (self-conscious), by Yangsook Choi; *Quiet Bunny* (determined), by Lisa McCue; *Where the Wild Things Are* (brave, stubborn, boastful), by Maurice Sendak; *Amos and Boris* (boastful), by William Steig; *Lily and the Purple Plastic Purse* (boastful), by Kevin Henkes; *No, David!* (stubborn), by David Shannon; *Sheila Rae, the Brave* (brave), by Kevin Henkes; *Wemberly Worried* (worried), by Kevin Henkes; *Chrysanthemum* (shy), by Kevin Henkes
- Character Trait Chart (start today to add onto later)

▼ To the Teacher

Picture books have many well-known characters with defining traits. Today is the first day that students will begin defining characters according to their traits. Creating a trait chart or word wall will help guide your students in defining characters according to their traits throughout the lesson set. Below are terms for typical character traits, which students can use when discussing characters and writing their own character profiles:

absent-minded	compassionate	energetic
adventurous	competitive	enthusiastic
argumentative	courageous	fearful
arrogant	creative	fearless
bold	cruel	foolish
bossy	curious	forgiving
brave	daring	fragile
brilliant	defiant	frightened
calm	determined	generous
cheerful	embarrassed	giving

hardworking	melancholy	responsible
helpful	messy	rude
honest	mischievous	self-important
humble	mysterious	sensible
imaginative	nervous	serious
independent	noisy	shy
insightful	opinionated	silly
intelligent	organized	strong
inventive	outgoing	stubborn
jealous	patient	thoughtful
joyful	perfectionist	tough
judgmental	powerful	trusting
kind	proud	understanding
knowledgeable	questioning	weak
light-hearted	quiet	wise
lovable	rebellious	witty
loyal	respectful	

▼ Procedure

Warm Up Gather the class to set the stage for today's learning

For this lesson, I use the two books we have already used in this lesson set, *Enemy Pie* and *Those Shoes*, but listed in the Materials section are other picture books with strong characters that your students may be familiar with and enjoy reading.

Jeremy and Derek are characters whom I learned a lot from. I also enjoyed reading about them and thinking about the lessons they learned and how the lessons apply to me. What did you like or dislike about Jeremy or Derek?

Start a list with students of things they like and dislike about these characters. This list will be a springboard into defining the characters' most important traits.

Teach Model what students need to learn and do

Tell the class that today they will focus their reading on character traits: physical traits, or what a character looks like, and personality traits, which show us as readers how characters act and feel.

There are many reasons you like or dislike Jeremy and Derek. Many of the reasons you have given have to do with their traits, or what makes them who they are. Writers create characters who have specific character traits—things that make them who they are. Character traits tell you or show you how the characters in a story look, feel, and act. There are two types of traits that we'll focus on today: physical traits, or what a character looks like, and personality traits, which show how characters act and feel. Let's start a chart to help us remember the important physical and personality traits of Jeremy and Derek.



Start a five-column chart. As students share their thinking, add their ideas to the class chart. **ELL** Provide Comprehensible Input—Graphics. You can visual the organizer with pictures and sketches to help tie visuals to words for ELLs to refer to during the lesson.

Character Trait Chart

Character	Physical Traits	How Do We Know?	Personality Traits	How Do We Know?
Jeremy	black hair dark skin boy shoes different from other kids	pictures emphasis on shoes	determined empathetic	uses allowance to buy shoes squeezes into shoes that are too small gives his shoes to Antonio
Derek	boy brown hair freckles	pictures	becomes open-minded	agrees to spend time with Jeremy accepts that his opinion of Jeremy needed to change

Try Guide students to quickly rehearse what they need to learn and do in preparation for practice

Help students understand character traits by using your own traits as an example. Explain why you believe you exhibit specific traits. Then direct students to share traits they have.

Just like characters, we all have traits that define who we are. What do you think is a trait that defines you. Why? Jot down a physical trait of yours that you love and then a personality trait you have and how you show that trait. (You may want to give students some examples, such as brave, honest, energetic.) I consider myself _____ because _____.



Turn and talk to your partner, sharing the trait you decided on and explaining why you chose that trait. **ELL** Enable Language Production—Increasing Interaction. This is a good opportunity to listen in and see how to best scaffold and support language structures in partnerships. It is also an opportunity to understand the amount of language your ELLs bring to the topic they are discussing.

Clarify Briefly restate today's teaching objective and explain the practice task(s)

Today in your independent reading, I want you to think about the main character and his or her most defining traits. Are there physical traits that make this character unique or different? What are his or her defining personality traits? Is the character brave? honest? energetic? generous? When you read, mark places where the main character is exhibiting a certain trait. The places you mark should show evidence that the character possesses that trait.

Practice Students work independently and/or in small groups to apply today's teaching objective

Students read in their independent reading books, noting places where authors describe the characters' physical traits or where the characters exhibit personality traits. Students mark places in their books where the characters exhibit specific traits and are ready to share their conclusions about character traits by citing examples from the texts.