

Common Core Reader Exemplar Grade K-2:

“The Wind”

by James Reeves

Learning Objective: The goal of this exemplar is to teach young students to read closely and critically in order to comprehend complex literary text. In this lesson sequence, the teacher uses a variety of strategies to actively engage students in searching for meaning in the figurative language and rich vocabulary of a poem. Students learn to test inferences against specific details of the text, to take three dimensional “notes” and to use those notes to more deeply understand the meaning of the poem. Discussion and a short writing exercise help students to synthesize what they have learned.

Rationale: From their very first school experiences, students can begin to develop habits of approaching literature that will form the foundation of close and critical reading. In this lesson, the teacher leads students through the process of asking questions, making inferences about meaning and testing those inferences against the language of the text. Developmentally appropriate teaching strategies such reading the text aloud, framing the reading task as a riddle and using simple objects to take three dimensional “notes” make this type of close reading and analysis accessible to young children.

Reading Task: This short poem is first read aloud, without the title, as a riddle. Students are invited to delve into the figurative language of the poem in order to “guess” (infer) what the poem is about. The poem is read multiple times and vocabulary is introduced in context. Key details in the poem are represented with concrete objects which the students manipulate as they explore the relationship between these details and the theme of the poem.

Discussion/Language Tasks: The text is presented and explored orally. Group discussion about the meaning of the poem forms the foundation of the lesson.

Writing Task: As a culminating activity, students synthesize their understanding in a brief writing piece which combines words and pictures. The balance of words and pictures in the response can be adjusted reflect the developmental needs of the students, making the lesson easy to adjust for a variety of grade levels.

Common Core Standards Addressed in This Instructional Sequence:

RLK.1, RL1.1, RL K.4, RL1.4, RL2.4, RLK.10, RL1.10, RL2.10, SLK.1, SL1.1, SL2.1, SLK.2, SL1.2, SL2.2

Diana Leddy

Lesson Sequence Overview

Day 1: Meeting the text

Advance preparation: Copy the poem onto chart paper for repeated reference throughout this lesson sequence.

1. Read the poem aloud as a riddle, omitting the title. Invite the students to guess what the subject of the poem might be.
2. Guide the students through a second “slow” reading, evaluating the list of student guesses against specific lines in the text.
3. Have the class orally summarize the poem by paraphrasing key details.

Day 2: Analysis and Three Dimensional Notes

Advance preparation: Gather objects or pictures to represent each of the things the wind can do. Label one sheet of yellow paper “rave and riot”. Label one sheet of blue paper “quiet as quiet”.

1. Students use objects to represent each key detail in the text.
2. Students group the objects to explore the relationship between key details in the text.

Day 3: Writing to synthesize understanding

Advance preparation: Place 3 dimensional notes (created on Day 2) in an easily visible spot. Copy student writing templates onto blue and yellow paper.

1. Students reflect on their notes and orally rehearse for writing.
2. Students use evidence from the text to prove the wind is sometimes strong.
3. Students use evidence from the text to prove the wind can be gentle.

The Wind

by James Reeves

I can get through a doorway without any key,
And strip the leaves from the great oak tree.
I can drive storm-clouds and shake tall towers,
Or steal through a garden and not wake the flowers.
Seas I can move and ships I can sink;
I can carry a house-top or the scent of a pink.
When I am angry I can rave and riot;
And when I am spent, I lie quiet as quiet.

strip:
to take off

drive :move

steal: sneak

scent:
smell

pink: flower

rave: to be
noisily angry

riot: to be wild
and out of
control

spent: finished