



6th Grade English Language Arts

Unit 3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Anchor
Text(s)

Collection of Short Stories

Pacing

3 weeks

Unit Overview

During this unit, students will read a collection of short stories to investigate the intentional choices authors make when writing. The stories and teaching points from this unit invite students to dive deeply into an analysis of author's craft, including the interaction of story elements (RL.3), word choice (RL.4), and point of view (RL.6). Instead of focusing solely on what authors are trying to say, this unit challenges students to think about how authors wrote their stories, and why they made particular choices. Through repeated and purposeful close readings of each story, students will analyze:

- how narrative elements (conflict, setting, plot, characters) interact and convey themes (RL.3)
- the author's choice of words, and their figurative and connotative meanings (RL.4)
- the development of a character's or narrator's point of view (RL.6)

Students will read a total of five stories, each of which students will read multiple times across class periods, every time for a new purpose (as is outlined in the Weekly Overview). These particular stories were selected because they have many layers of meaning that require multiple reads to uncover, and because their authors made intentional "craft and structure" moves that provide excellent opportunities for teaching and analysis. These stories, which we will read in this order, are "Stray" by Cynthia Rylant, "The Scholarship Jacket" by Martha Salinas, "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros, "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov, and "Charles" by Shirley Jackson.

In addition to analyzing each story as a complex piece of literature, we will also use this unit's stories as "model texts" and inspiration for student writing. In lieu of a culminating performance task, students will complete a total of four shorter "Narrative Writing Tasks," which require students to continue, adapt, or build upon a story they've already read and analyzed. The phrasing and demands of these writing prompts match the rigor and task types of PARCC, based on recently released test items. Teachers should supplement these writing task prompts with graphic organizers and mini-lesson that meet their particular students' needs. Ideally through modeling and repeated practice, students will build greater familiarity and proficiency with narrative form and its unique elements.

Unit 6.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Essential Questions	Genre and Standards-Based Vocabulary	Cutting to the Core
<p>I. What intentional choices do authors make while writing? How do these choices around craft and structure help authors convey their story's meaning?</p> <p>II. How do story elements (setting, characters, and plot) interact and impact one another?</p> <p>III. How does an author's language and word choice affect our understanding of events, characters, and situations?</p> <p>IV. How do authors develop the narrator's (and/or their own) point of view?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional • Craft • Word choice • Dialogue • Point of view <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First-Person ○ Third-Person Limited ○ Third-Person Omniscient • Perspective • Connotation • Emotion • Figurative Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Simile ○ Metaphor ○ Imagery • Literal • Character • Conflict (internal and external) • Setting • Plot • Context • Interpretation • Description • Narrative elements • Theme • Attitude • Opinion • Foreshadowing 	<p>I: Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>"Students need to be grounded in information about the world around them if they are to develop the strong general knowledge and vocabulary they need to become successful readers"</i> <p>II: Reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>"Quality text-based questions, unlike low-level "search and find" questions, require close reading and deep understanding of the text"</i> <p>III: Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>"The ability to comprehend complex texts is the most significant factor differentiating college-ready from non-college-ready readers. This shift toward complex text requires practice, supported through close reading"</i>

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Common Core State Standards *(Including how the standards progress across grade levels)*

<p>RL.5.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.</p>	<p>RL.6.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p>	<p>RL.7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.</p>
<p>RL.5.3: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).</p>	<p>RL.6.3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.</p>	<p>RL.7.3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).</p>
<p>RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes. (See grade 5 Language standards 4–6 for additional expectations.)</p>	<p>RL.6.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone</p>	<p>RL.7.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.</p>
<p>RL.5.6: Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.</p>	<p>RL.6.6: Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.</p>	<p>RL.7.6: Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.</p>

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W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

- a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- c. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

W.6.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

W.7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

R.5.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.6.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

W.7.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

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Collection of Short Stories

"Stray" by Cynthia Rylant	Important Considerations for Instruction
<p>Mr. and Mrs. Lacey and their daughter, Doris, are stranded at home following a severe winter storm. Doris notices an abandoned puppy on the snowy road and brings it indoors. She knows and is reminded by her parents that the family cannot afford a pet. They tell her that she can keep the puppy only until the roads clear up enough for Mr. Lacey to drive it to the pound. Doris forms a bond with the puppy and is heartbroken when the time comes for her father to take it away. To Doris' surprise, Mr. Lacey could not stand the conditions of the pound and returned the dog home to his daughter.</p>	<p>I. Text Complexity: This story's plot is straightforward, as is its language and structure. It will be important to ensure students understand the meaning of "stray," the title, in order to connect it to the story's bigger ideas.</p> <p>II. Big Ideas/Themes: This story teaches that doing what is right sometimes requires overcoming obstacles or challenges. It also suggests that people can surprise you, and emotion and compassion can overpower logic at times.</p> <p>III. Text Structure: The story is told from third-person point of view. The events unfold chronologically over the course of about a week. It is a traditional narrative in the sense that it incorporates description/narration with dialogue, and has a clear beginning, middle, and end.</p> <p>IV. Real World Connections: This story of a disagreement between a child and her parents is common and relatable. Its themes about "doing what's right" and showing compassion are also important.</p>

"The Scholarship Jacket" by Martha Salinas	Important Considerations for Instruction
<p>The narrator, Martha, has worked hard for years to be at the top of her class. She eagerly anticipates receiving the school's "Scholarship Jacket," awarded to the student with the highest average at 8th grade graduation each year. The jacket is especially significant to Martha; since she knows she'll never get a jacket for athletics because her family cannot afford registration fees and other costs associated with sports; this is her "only chance." The story's conflict arises when she overhears one teacher, clearly motivated by prejudice and his own gain, explaining to another teacher why they're not going to give the jacket to Martha, even though she has earned it rightfully. The rest of the story follows Martha as she deals with the hurt of this injustice and eventually overcomes it with the help and advice of her grandfather.</p>	<p>I. Text Complexity: This text requires students to make inferences in order to understand the plot. They also may not be familiar with the concept of a "scholarship jacket" which is essential to understanding.</p> <p>II. Big Ideas/Themes: The story teaches that we should always maintain our integrity even when we are confronted with cruel injustices. Giving in to the pressure of injustice will not solve the problem; stay true to what you know is right.</p> <p>III. Text Structure: The main character, Martha, narrates the story from her first-person perspective. The story takes place over the course of a few days and is centered on two main events: when Martha overhears her two teachers arguing about the jacket, and when she learns a lesson from her grandfather.</p> <p>IV. Real World Connections: This is a story of a young person overcoming prejudice and injustice by demonstrating integrity, a lesson that is relevant for all people.</p>

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"Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

Rachel wakes up on her eleventh birthday feeling as if she's still ten—and nine, and eight, and all the ages that came before. At school, what should be a happy day turns gloomy when the teacher insists that an ugly, unclaimed sweater belongs to Rachel. Mrs. Price puts the sweater in an embarrassing pile on Rachel's desk. Worse yet, she makes Rachel put the sweater on. It smells bad, it itches, it is full of germs, and Rachel, feeling all her years of childhood rattling around inside her, cries in front of the whole class. The classmate who is the real owner of the sweater finally claims it, while Rachel longs for the day to end.

Important Considerations for Instruction

- I. Text Complexity: This story's sentence structure and heavy use of figurative language make it complex. However, it takes place in a school and has relatable events and themes; students' background knowledge should help them access the story.
- II. Big Ideas/Themes: Rachel's story teaches that we all carry with us the years that come before, sometimes reverting to the child within us through our actions and/or emotions. It deals with big ideas of growing up, feeling like an outsider, and shame.
- III. Text Structure: Rachel tells the story from her first-person point of view. It revolves around one event at school that the author "stretches" and describes in great detail to emphasize how significant it is to the narrator.
- IV. Real World Connections: The setting of this story – school – is familiar. Themes of growing up and feeling vulnerable are common feelings young adults experience as well. We all have moments of embarrassment that we remember long after we experience them and in greater detail than anyone around us does.

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"The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov

Set in the future, "The Fun They Had" imagines a world where teachers are machines, students learn in isolation, and physical books no longer exist. The story is constructed of a conversation between its two characters, Margie and Tommy. Margie doesn't know how things used to be, and Tommy explains to her, sometimes condescendingly, the ways of the past. The story closes with Margie daydreaming about "old schools" when children learned together in physical buildings, revealing the author's warning about the dangers of relying too heavily on technology.

Important Considerations for Instruction

- I. Text Complexity: The story's futuristic setting makes the text qualitatively complex. It also may be tricky for students to navigate the story's flashbacks and to follow Margie's train of thought. Most vocabulary should be accessible to 6th grade students.
- II. Big Ideas/Themes: Big ideas include technology, education, and community. He warns readers about his vision of a future where we've come to rely so heavily on technology that it deteriorates personal, human connections.
- III. Text Structure: The story takes place during one day. It begins with Margie writing in her diary about finding a "real book" with Tommy. The rest of the story contains Margie and Tommy's earlier conversation, along with Margie's thoughts, reactions, and reflections. Dialogue makes up a significant portion of the story.
- IV. Real World Connections: Even though this story was written in the early 1950s, its themes and ideas around technology are still relevant. After identifying the author's attitude towards these things, allow students to discuss their perspectives on the issues. Are Asimov's warnings correct and legitimate, or did he get it wrong? Is there a middle ground?

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"Charles" by Shirley Jackson

As the narrator sends her son Laurie off to kindergarten, she fears that her sweet child has become a "swaggering character." Every day Laurie regales the family with stories about the misdeeds of his classmate Charles and the punishments he receives (which seem to embolden rather than subdue him). Laurie speculates that Charles may be thrown out of school. In the third and fourth weeks, Charles reforms, but he breaks out again with "evil word" mischief. While Laurie's parents worry that Charles is having a bad influence on their son, they grow increasingly curious about him. At the PTA, Laurie's mother discovers from Laurie's teacher that there is no one named Charles in the class. The story raises many questions for students: why Laurie lies, why "Charles" acts out, and what role the narrator-mom plays in the events and in readers' perception of them.

Important Considerations for Instruction

- I. Text Complexity: There are some challenging vocabulary words that are essential to understanding, including "insolent" and "fresh" (in context). The narrative structure is straightforward and should be accessible to most students. The topic is also familiar, which makes background knowledge likely for all students.
- II. Big Ideas/Themes: This story's big ideas include the relationship between parent and child, the impact of one person on others, and the consequences of deception and lying. It also warns that we may not always know people as well as we think we do, and suggests that things we can overlook what's happening under our noses more easily than we may think.
- III. Text Structure: Laurie's mother is the first-person narrator of this story, and her limited perspective greatly influences our experience as readers. She tells us the story chronologically over the course of her son's first few months in school. There is a significant amount of dialogue and descriptions of her son's behavior at home. The story ends with a twist.
- IV. Real World Connections: As "Charles" explains a child's experience at school, all students will be able to connect to this story's setting and characters. They may also relate to the characters' curiosity about other people and why they behave the way they do.

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Instructional Calendar

Weekly Focus	Teaching Points	Texts and Resources	Suggestions for Implementation
<p>Week 1:</p> <p><i>Days 1-2: "Stray"</i></p> <p><i>RL.3</i> <i>RL.6</i></p> <p><i>Day 3: Narrative Writing Task #1</i></p> <p><i>Days 4-5: "The Scholarship Jacket"</i></p> <p><i>RL.3</i> <i>RL.6</i> <i>RL.5</i></p>	<p>I. "Stray" by Cynthia Rylant</p> <p>Day 1 Focus: Analyze how differences in characters' points of view creates conflict (<i>RL.3, RL.6</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the Purpose: One essential component of most great stories is a central conflict. There are many potential sources for conflict in stories, but one common cause is when characters have different points of view about the situation. Today we'll read to describe this story's conflict and how it stems from differences in point of view, or how characters see things. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: To orient and engage readers, conduct a fluent read-aloud with minimal stops for the first-read. A full understanding of the story's beginning, middle, and end will better equip them to describe the conflict and analyze differences in POV. • Big Question: Describe the story's central conflict. How do differences between Doris's and her parents' point of view cause this conflict? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sub-Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>How does Doris feel about the dog? Why does she take it in?</i> ○ <i>How do Doris's parents feel about the dog? What from the text makes you think that?</i> ○ <i>Make inferences about the family's financial situation. How does this shape Mr. and Mrs. Lacey's point of view about the dog?</i> ○ <i>What evidence can you find that supports the idea that Doris is attached to the puppy?</i> ○ <i>How does Doris react when Mr. Lacey drives away with the puppy?</i> ○ <i>What do Doris and her parents disagree about? How do her parents explain their reasoning to Doris?</i> 	<p>Stories (Appendix B):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Stray" by Cynthia Rylant - "The Scholarship Jacket" by Martha Salinas <p>Supplemental Resources (Appendix D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Stray" Annotated Text (teacher copy) - "The Scholarship Jacket" Annotated Text (teacher copy) - CCSS Unpacked Standards and Question Stems - Blank Story Mountain - Online Writing Resource: WriteAlong RL.3 resources on Learnzillion.com: https://learnzillion.com/resources/57245-writealong-for-4th-grade (Note: Although these are linked to 4th grade standards, many of our MS students still 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "set the purpose" section is meant to help with framing to students. Some may initially wonder why we're reading the same story multiple days; make sure to message the value in this so students internalize why and how we reread. • The "sub-questions" can be used as a guide and starting point for during-reading or analysis text-dependent questioning. <i>You will need to supplement, modify, and scaffold these for your students.</i> • Stories should be read aloud to students from start to finish at least once to support them with comprehension. Gradually release reading responsibility to students once they've

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Week 1 (cont.)

Days 1-2: "Stray"

RL.3

RL.6

Day 3: Narrative
Writing Task #1

Days 4-5: "The
Scholarship Jacket"

RL.3

RL.6

Day 2 Focus: Analyze how the setting impacts characters and plot (RL.3)

- **Set the Purpose:** All stories have many more layers than you may think. It is impossible to uncover all of the layers of meaning unless we practice careful rereading. Today we're working with the same story as yesterday, but you'll leave with a completely new and deeper understanding. The lens we will read through is the story's setting. We need to figure out what role the setting plays in "Stray."
 - Decide whether you will conduct another fluent read aloud, or if students will reread for today's purpose collaboratively or independently. Encourage and model slow, purposeful rereading for a new purpose.
- **Big Question: How and why does the story's setting influence its characters and plot?**
- Sequence of TDQs (add or modify based on student needs):
 - Describe the setting in the beginning and middle of the story, when Doris finds the stray puppy. Include details from the text.
 - Why does Doris wish that the weather would never change?
 - How does the setting impact Mr. Lacey's decision to let Doris keep the puppy temporarily?
 - How might the story's plot change if it were set during a different season?
 - Describe the setting of the dog pound using details from the story.
 - How does the setting of the pound impact Mr. Lacey's decision to bring the puppy home?
 - How might the story's plot change if the pound's conditions were different?
 - How does Mr. Lacey's point of view and attitude towards the dog change? What does this change reveal about his character?

Day 3 Focus: Narrative Writing Task #1 ("Stray")

- **Prompt: Starting after Mr. Lacey drives away with the dog in the middle of page two, write an alternate ending to the story using details about the characters and events from the passage. You should include dialogue and develop the characters' motivation in your new ending.**

need modeling and support with narrative elements including developing characters. Also explore other video lessons in additional grades to meet your and your students' needs.)

- been exposed to the story through read-aloud; by day 2, students should be doing at least some of the re-reading and analysis work independently or collaboratively.
- Throughout the unit, students should have opportunities to write and talk about the text daily. You can decide how students will demonstrate their understanding of the big idea by the end of each class (writing, discussion, etc.).
- As you introduce literary elements and terminology, build living anchor charts with definitions and examples that students can refer back to throughout the unit. Connecting a hand motion to new vocabulary words ("TPR") will help these literary terms stick.
- The length of these stories makes it

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Week 1 (cont.)

Days 4-5: "The Scholarship Jacket"

RL.3

RL.6

II. "The Scholarship Jacket" by Martha Salinas

Day 1 Focus: Identifying the central conflict and inferring the theme conveyed by its resolution (RL.2, RL.3)

- **Set the Purpose:** Like "Stray," "The Scholarship Jacket" is driven by a central conflict. Let's read to infer what this conflict is, where it comes from, and how it is resolved. Later, we'll think about how its resolution teaches readers a lesson.
- **Big Question: Describe the story's central conflict. How does this conflict's resolution develop a theme about integrity?**
Sub-Questions:
 - Describe the story's central conflict. What is the main problem?
 - Break it down: Infer multiple reasons why Mr. Boone doesn't want to give Martha the scholarship jacket, even though she earned it.
 - Why doesn't Martha's grandfather give her the money for the jacket?
 - Break it down: What does Martha's grandfather mean when he says, "If you have to pay for it, then it's not a scholarship jacket, is it?"
 - How is the story's conflict eventually resolved?
 - Based on the story's ending, what did Martha learn about integrity, especially in the face of injustice? What does the author likely want readers to learn?

Day 2 Focus: How word choice develops a narrator's point of view (RL.4, 6)

- **Set the Purpose:** All words have a "connotation," or idea or emotion/feeling invoked by the word, attached to them. Authors know that certain words make readers feel positive or negative emotions, so they strategically choose words when portraying characters, settings, or events. In "The Scholarship Jacket," the author's word choice helps develop the narrator's point of view about herself and the scholarship jacket.
- **Big Question: What does the author's word choice convey about the narrator's feelings about herself and the scholarship jacket?**
 - As you reread the story, model identifying and annotating for words/phrases with a strong connotation, that invoke a strong

possible for you to read and reread them in their entirety multiple times, even within one class period. Repeated exposure to the same text will encourage students to build their understanding and refine/improve ideas and analysis.

- As in previous units, continue modeling and encourage purposeful annotation directly on the text. Consider having students color code their annotations to distinguish purpose between days.
- For the narrative writing task, provide a planning graphic organizer like the "story mountain" provided in Appendix D to help students plan, modeling as necessary. Encourage students to use the short story texts as examples for punctuating dialogue.

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Week 1 (cont.)

- emotional response or feeling, then release students to do it.
- Ex: "Despaired" in paragraph 3 – the strength of the negative emotion attached to this word emphasizes how low the narrator's confidence is regarding her physical appearance. Her POV would not have been conveyed as clearly if she'd chosen something like "was sad." Same with "pencil thin," etc.
 - After rereading the story for this purpose, zoom in on the following passages to consider the big question, through discussion or writing. Also consider the inverse of the big question: *How would our understanding of the narrator's POV change if she'd used a word like ___ instead of ___?*
 - Zoom-In Passage #1: Paragraph 2 "My oldest sister" → Paragraph 5 "cruel coincidence that I had overheard the conversation."
 - Zoom-In Passage #2: (page 2) "I walked back to the house" → "I stood up and faced him."

- Supplement writing instruction with video lessons and resources from www.learnzillion.com. In particular, the 4th grade "Write Along" curriculum has videos that may support students in early stages of developing narrative technique that are still relevant for many middle school students.

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Week 2:

Days 1-2:
"Eleven"

RL.2

RL.4

RL.6

Day 3:
Narrative Writing
Exercise: "Eleven"

W.3

Days 4-5:
"The Fun They Had"

RL.3

RL.4

RL.6

"Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

Day 1: Determining theme by analyzing how a character responds to challenges (RL.2)

- **Set the Purpose:** Last week we talked a lot about conflicts and challenges. Today we'll focus on how our main character, Rachel, responds to a challenge she's presented with. Her reaction develops and builds over the course of the whole story. We can learn a lesson by noticing and thinking about her response.
- **Big Question: How does the author use Rachel's reaction to her situation to develop a theme about age?**
 - Track how Rachel's feelings and emotional responses to the teacher putting the red sweater on her desk escalate throughout the story.
 - Through sequenced questioning and inferring why Rachel responds the way she does, lead students to grapple with: *What does the author want readers to understand about age and getting older?*

Day 2: Analyzing how word choice and figurative language develop a narrator's point of view (RL.4, 6)

- **Set the Purpose:** (building on "Scholarship Jacket's" Day 2 focus) Last week we analyzed how the connotation of the narrator's words developed her point of view. Today we'll practice that again, with the added challenge of interpreting and analyzing how figurative language also develops point of view. The figurative language (*simile, metaphor, descriptive imagery*) Sandra Cisneros includes works to emphasize a particular quality, characteristic, or emotion of the narrator.
- **Big Question: How does the author's word choice and figurative language develop the point of view of the speaker in "Eleven?"**
- Questioning Sequence (*repeat, adapt, and/or modify for specific examples of figurative language throughout the story*):
 - *What connotation does this word have? What is the meaning of the word/figurative language in this context? (illustrate or explain)*
 - *What does this word/figurative language emphasize or reveal? Why did the author include it?*
 - *How does this word/phrase make us think about the narrator? How does it help us to understand her better?*

Stories

(Appendix B):

- "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros
- "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov

Supplemental Resources (Appendix D)

- "Eleven" Annotated Text (teacher copy)
- "The Fun They Had" Annotated Text (teacher copy)
- Online Writing Resource: WriteAlong RL.3 resources on Learnzillion.com: <https://learnzillion.com/resources/5724-5-writealong-for-4th-grade> (Note: Although these are linked to 4th grade standards, many of our MS students still need modeling and support with narrative elements including developing characters. Also explore other video lessons in additional grades to meet your and your students' needs.)

- On day 1, students should determine a theme along the lines of: *We all carry with us the years that come before; sometimes situations cause us to revert to the child within us through our thoughts, actions, and/or emotions.*
- The "sub-questions" can be used as a guide and starting point for during-reading or analysis text-dependent questioning. You will need to supplement, modify, and scaffold these for your students.
- If needed, review what figurative language is and why authors typically include it before launching into Day 2's lesson.
- Sometimes, having students visualize and illustrate the literal meaning of figurative language helps them make connections to its

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Week 2 (cont.):

Day 3:
Narrative Writing
Exercise: "Eleven"

W.3

Days 4-5:
"The Fun They Had"

RL.3

RL.4

RL.6

Day 3: Narrative Writing Exercise (Analyzing Point of View)

- As a class or in small discussion groups, consider/discuss:
 - Whose point of view is the story told from? Why did the author likely choose this person to tell the story?
 - How might the story be different if it were written from a different character's point of view? For example, the teacher's? Or from a classmate's? Give specific examples.
- Narrative Writing Exercise: Students should complete this independently in class after they've had time to plan and brainstorm using the text and support from teacher or peers.
 - **Prompt: Continue the story "Eleven" from Rachel's point of view, once she returns home for her birthday celebration. Make sure your style of narration and characterization of Rachel is consistent with the story.**

"The Fun They Had"

Day 1 Focus: Analyzing the impact of setting on characters and plot (RL.3)

- **Set the Purpose:** Today's story's setting is very unique. It is part of the "science fiction" genre, which imagines a world, usually in the future, that has been greatly affected by technological or scientific advances. Because the setting is so unique, we will investigate how it impacts the characters.
- **Big Question: How does the story's setting (in the future) impact the characters?**
 - *Sub-Questions (add/modify as needed):*
 - *Describe the story's setting. How is it different than our world today? Explain using details.*
 - *Based on the text, what are the differences between "old" books and "future" books?*
 - *Based on the text, what are the differences between "old" schools and "future" schools?*
 - *How does Margie feel about the book the children discover? How does the setting impact her reaction?*
 - *Why does Margie hate school? How does the setting impact her feelings about school?*
 - *How does learning about the way school "used to be" impact Margie? How does the story's setting impact her reaction?*

deeper meaning and what it's emphasizing/ revealing about the narrator.

- This narrative writing prompt uses the same language & content as the PARCC released narrative writing task item for 6th grade. Students need practice imitating the style and characterization of authors.
- The opening of "The Fun They Had" is a "hotspot" for student misunderstanding. Model and support as students infer the setting – not only the year, but what life is like based on character words and actions.
- The "sub-questions" can be used as a guide and starting point for during-reading or analysis text-dependent questioning. You will need to supplement, modify, and scaffold these.

Unit 6.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Week 2 (cont.):

Days 4-5:
"The Fun They Had"

RL.3

RL.4

RL.6

Day 2 Focus: How word choice reveals an author's POV (RL.4, RL.6)

- **Set the Purpose:** We've talked about how word choice reveals a character's point of view in two stories. Word choice can also reveal an author's point of view, or opinion, about the topic they're writing about. Today we'll analyze how the Asimov's word choice hints at his opinion of the futuristic education system he imagines in the story.
 - To investigate the big question, we will zoom in on two passages, focusing on word choice. (see below)
- **Big Question: What does the author's word choice reveal about his opinion of the futuristic schools he describes?**

Close Reading Passage #1: Description of 2157 schools

- *What words does the author and Margie use to describe the 2157 teacher and computer? (They should pull out words like "mechanical," "ugly," "hated," "made her learn," "calculated," "with a sigh" that invoke cold, detached, negative feelings in the context)*
- *What is the connotation of the words ___ and ___ used to describe the "teachers" and schools of the future? Infer the author's attitude towards them based on his descriptions.*

Close Reading Passage #2: Description of traditional schools

- *What words does the author use to describe the traditional school environment? ("all the kids," "whole neighborhood," "laughing and shouting," repetition of "together," "help each other," "loved it," and the title: "The Fun They Had" - warmer sense of community that Margie imagines and longs for)*
- *What is the connotation of the words ___ and ___ used to describe the traditional school Margie imagines? Infer the author's attitude towards them based on his descriptions.*

Comparing the Two Passages:

- *According to the author, what are the biggest differences between traditional school/learning and futuristic (2157) school/learning?*
- *Compare the two descriptions. Based on his word choice, does the author prefer these futuristic computer schools or traditional schools? What evidence do you have to support your claim?*

- It is likely that some students may share the author's attitude, while many others may strongly disagree with him. Remind students that if they first isolate and understand the author's point of view, their own arguments (for or against him) will be more informed and persuasive.
- Consider supplementing text-dependent questions with a note-catcher or graphic organizer where students can a) record strong or interesting words, b) identify their connotation, and c) jot down initial ideas about why the author chose those words.

Unit 6.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Week 3:

Day 1: Narrative
Writing Task #3
(The Fun They Had)

W.3

Days 2-3:
"Charles"

RL.5

RL.6

Days 4-5:
Complete Narrative
Writing Task #4

W.3

W.5

I. Narrative Writing Task #3: "The Fun They Had"

- **Prompt:** In the first line of the story, the narrator explains, "Margie even wrote about it that night in her diary. On the page headed May 17, 2157, she wrote, 'Today, Tommy found a real book!'" Based on the events in the story, imagine what that journal entry might have sounded like, and write a journal entry from Margie's first-person point of view. Use details from the story to describe what happened and the emotional effect the day's incidents had on Margie.
 - For planning purposes, provide students with a two-column organizer where they can create a "crosswalk" between the story's events (as told from the 3rd person narrator and through dialogue) and how Margie might represent each in her own voice/diary.

II. "Charles"

Day 1 Focus: Text Structure (foreshadowing) (RL.5)

- Set the Purpose: (quick, build interest) Today's story, "Charles," is unique and memorable for many reasons. When we read it for the first time, pay attention to the narrator's son Laurie's experiences at school. We'll talk more after the story about what the author's doing and why.
- **Big Question** (reveal after the first read-through so you don't give away the twist!): **Identify the instances where the author foreshadows the story's surprise ending. Why did she choose to structure the story in this way?**
 - *Break It Down:* How does this structure both preserve the surprise and ensure the ending feels plausible? How does it affect readers and play with their emotions?
- After the initial fluent read-aloud (and brief discussion/unpacking of the story's ending), students should go back and either independently or collaboratively reread the entire story. They should annotate specifically for instances of "foreshadowing," when the author gives us a hint or clue that Laurie actually *is* Charles.
 - Teachers should explicitly teach what foreshadowing is, and model identifying it at least for the first page.
 - After they identify the foreshadowing, student groups should discuss and/or write about the big question.

Stories

(Appendix B):

- "Charles" by Shirley Jackson

Supplemental

Resources

(Appendix D)

- "Charles" annotated text (teacher copy)

- As an extension discussion or writing prompt for "Charles," have students consider if and how Laurie's mother contributes to her son's deteriorating behavior. How do you interpret the mother's perception of the situation – is she ignorant, in denial, apathetic, or something completely different?
- Day 2 of "Charles" is based around writing (from another character's point of view), but students will need to reread carefully and closely too in order to be successful at this task.
- When writing narratives, students tend to include "surprise endings" that come out of nowhere and are not realistic or connected to the story. "Charles" is a great model text to use (during the revision

Unit 6.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

Week 3 (cont.)

Day 2 Focus: Analyzing Point of View (RL.6)

- **Set the Purpose:** The fact that we hear this story from the mother's point of view shapes our experience as readers. The information we learn about characters and events would be very different had the author told the story from Laurie's perspective. Today we'll explore what *that* story, told from an alternative point of view, might sound like.
- **Big Question: How might the story "Charles" change if it were told from Laurie's point of view?**
 - Select 2-3 brief, specific scenes to focus on. The best options are scenes where Laurie is blatantly lying to and deceiving his mother and father.
 - First, discuss the big question in the context of your selected scene.
 - Then, model re-writing the first scene from Laurie's point of view. Consider what type of words and tone he might use, or what his inner thoughts and feelings might sound like. What motivates him? Stay consistent with the author's depiction of Laurie's character.
 - Finally, students (independently or collaboratively) re-write another scene, using the modeled strategies.

III. Narrative Writing Task #3: "Charles"

- **Prompt: "In the final paragraphs of "Charles," Laurie's mother discovers that there is nobody in her son's class named Charles. Write a narrative in which you continue the story of "Charles." Your story should be a believable continuation of events, and it should continue to be narrated from the mother's first person point of view. Reflect the characterization of the passage, and include dialogue to reveal Laurie's father's reactions to the news once the mother returns home."**
 - On the first day, students should plan a logical continuation/sequence of events using a story mountain or other graphic organizer, and begin drafting. They may benefit from modeling writing from the mother's point of view. Encourage them to return frequently to the text in order to imitate the author's narration and characterization as much as possible.
 - On the second day, students should revise and edit to include

process) for students who may struggle with this problem.

- Note: There is no MCLASS Assessment or culminating performance task (no Appendix C) for this unit.

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dialogue and to add transitional words and phrases to make their narratives flow. If time permits, allow students to share their narratives by reading aloud. Another alternative is to post them around the room, and conduct a silent gallery walk. Students can even leave positive feedback using terminology from the unit using sticky notes.

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Appendix A: Unpacked Standards Guide

Source: Public Schools of North Carolina NCDPI Collaborative Workspace

Standard	Explanation and Example
<p>RL.6.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p>	<p>Sixth grade students learn how to summarize texts by evaluating key details in which the central idea or theme is located. They develop the ability to distinguish key (thematic) details from all other details. To do this work, teachers first guide students in evaluating recurring ideas and changes in the characters and plot over the course of the text. Students will learn to monitor and keep track of such developmental changes through the use of graphic organizers. In this way, sixth graders are able to collect and effectively organize key thematic details within a text and create unbiased summaries withholding personal opinion and judgment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the theme of the text? Cite evidence to support your identification of the theme.• Give an example of how the theme is developed in the text. Which details best support the theme?• How does the development of character/setting/plot contribute to the theme or central idea?• What lesson does the character learn? How does this relate to a theme?• How does the author use the way ____ responds to his/her situation to develop a theme?• Write an objective summary of the scene/story.

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RL.6.3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Sixth grade students will observe & analyze how story characters and plot interact throughout a given text. Students will develop the ability to read and evaluate texts with the goal of understanding how the story's events and setting impact and shape the characters in different ways. In order to do this work, students may use graphic organizers to determine how particular episodes may trigger various responses in characters, revealing one or more of the characters' traits. By doing this, students have a broad overview of all characters and corresponding plot developments, prompting students to further examine why such change occurs and at the same time, they observe how these changes add to the overall momentum of the story. Teachers will need to guide students in this thinking process at first, and then provide a gradual release of responsibility to students.

- Describe the sequence of events in the story.
- Describe how a character evolves or changes in response to events.
- Describe the problem/conflict. What causes it? How is it resolved?
- How does the story's setting impact what happens in the plot?
- How would you describe character X based on the story's events so far?
- How do the character's feelings about _____ change throughout the story?
- What do we learn about character X when he/she _____?
- How does character X respond to the challenge presented by _____?
- What internal conflict is character X battling during _____?
- What can you infer about ___ from ___?
- The character's reactions in paragraph ___ tell the reader that _____.
- In what ways does the character change?
- What does the character realize at the end of the story, and why?

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RL.6.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

As students read texts in sixth grade, they are expected to determine and interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words. To do this work, teachers may model how to interpret word meanings using contextual clues. Teachers may also provide students with opportunities to discuss new word meanings with a partner, in a small group, or within a whole-class setting. Students should begin to understand what impact word choice has on the text as a whole. They learn to recognize and analyze the importance of choosing specific words to create meaning and tone. Mini-lessons on figurative language assist sixth graders as they apply this skill during independent reading.

- What does the word/phrase _____ mean in the context of the story?
- What feeling or emotion is associated with the word ____ in this context?
- How did the author use word choice to impact meaning?
- Which words reveal the character's feelings or traits?
- What is the meaning of the figurative language _____? What does it convey or emphasize about _____?
- What/who does the narrator compare _____ to? What characteristics do they share?
- What does the narrator mean when he/she says ____?
- What do the words ____ and ____ tell you about the story's tone and the speaker's attitude?
- What do you think the character/author means by saying _____? How does the author's choice of words affect our understanding of the text?
- What two things are being compared in the metaphor, _____? What does the comparison convey about _____?
- What is the connotation of the words _____? How does this connotation impact the story's tone?
- What does the word/phrase/description _____ make you think about the character?

Unit 6.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

RL.6.5: Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

Sixth grade students are expected to determine how individual elements of a work (section, chapter, scene, or stanza, etc.) contribute to a text's overall scope. Students develop the ability to recognize how form relates to function and how a part relates to a whole. Teachers may use graphic organizers to assist students with the practice of identifying part to whole and whole to part relationships. Students also observe how the individual components of the text add to the development of the theme, setting, and plot. For example, students may observe how a pivotal scene within a work may alter the course of the plot, re-shaping the story. As students hone this skill, they see with greater clarity how individual elements of a text contribute and influence the development of the theme, setting, and plot.

- How does the theme, setting, or plot develop?
- How does ____ help the development of the theme, setting, or plot?
- How does the sentence, chapter, or scene fit into the overall structure?
- Describe a text's structure. Explain why the author chose to write it this way.
- How does the sentence ____ contribute to the development of the story's plot?
- How does the scene where ____ discovers ____ fit into the story?
- How does the sentence ____ develop the setting of the story?
- Why do you think the author chose to describe the ____ scene in such detail?
- Why is the scene ____ important to the plot's development?
- How do ____ words help develop the story's setting?

Unit 6.3: Analyzing an Author's Craft and Structure

RL.6.6: Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Students are able to understand how the author develops the point-of-view of the narrator or speaker in the text. To build this understanding, teachers may provide students with discussion or writing tasks prompting them to reflect upon certain scenes within a text and imagine how their content/style would change if the narrator's point-of-view shifted to an alternate point-of-view. For example, students could reflect upon a particularly personal, introspective scene described in first-person point of view and wonder: *"Would this scene evoke the same reaction in the reader if told from 3rd person point of view? How does 1st person allow one to peer more deeply into a character's psyche than perhaps other viewpoints?" How does the author's word choice help develop the narrator or speaker's point of view?"*

- How does the author develop the narrator or speaker's point of view?
- How does the author's word choice help develop the narrator or speaker's point of view?
- Who is the narrator? How would you describe the narrator's perspective on _____?
- From whose point of view is the story told?
- What is the narrator's point of view about _____?
- How might our understanding of the scene/story be different if another character told the story?
- How does _____'s point of view of _____ change throughout the story?
- How does telling the story from _____'s point of view affect what the reader learns about characters and events?
- What is the most likely reason the author decided to tell the story from Mike's point of view? Was it effective? Why or why not? Use examples from the text to support your claim.