

Lesson 6: Determining Story Elements and Central Message: "The Ants and the Grasshopper"



CCS Standards

- **RL.2.1:** Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RL.2.2:** Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- **RL.2.3:** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- **RL.2.4:** Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.
- **RL.2.6:** Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
- **SL.2.2:** Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- **SL.2.5:** Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
- **L.2.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
- **L.2.4b:** Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word (e.g., *happy/unhappy*, *tell/retell*).
- **L.2.5:** Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- **L.2.5a:** Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., *describe foods that are spicy or juicy*).

C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- **D2.Civ.2.K-2:** Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can recount the fable "The Ants and the Grasshopper" using the story elements. (RL.2.1, RL.2.2, SL.2.2)
- I can determine the central message of "The Ants and the Grasshopper" based on how the characters respond to the problem/challenge. (RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.3, RL.2.6)

Ongoing Assessment

- During Work Time A, listen as students describe other things that could be described as "bright" and use the Language Checklist to gather data toward L.2.5.a (see Assessment Overview and Resources).
- During Work Time B, circulate as students engage in the Role-Play protocol and notice if they are demonstrating understanding of the story elements by observing the choices they make to act out "The Ants and the Grasshopper." (RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.6, SL.2.2)

Agenda

1. Opening

A. Song and Movement: “We Do What We Can” (5 minutes)

2. Work Time

A. Reading Aloud: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (10 minutes)

B. Role-Play Protocol: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (20 minutes)

C. Engaging the Artist: Watercoloring Technique (20 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning: Working to Contribute to a Better World (5 minutes)

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- Recall that students complete a cycle of instruction in Lesson 6–7 that is similar to those of Lessons 2–3 and 4–5. In Lesson 6, students work to understand the key details of the story elements and central message of “The Ants and the Grasshopper” by examining how the characters respond to the problem/challenge (RL.2.2, RL.2.3). They also role-play the story to better understand it.
- In the Opening, students continue to playfully work with the song “We Do What We Can” to examine how the use of the prefix *re-* can change the meaning of the lyrics. Recall that providing students with an opportunity to think about the effect of prefixes on the meaning of base words supports their development in written and spoken language (L.2.4b).
- In Work Time C, students participate in the first of four opportunities to paint with watercolors. The watercolor paintings are a tool to help students visualize story elements and more fully recount the fable. In this lesson, students are introduced to watercoloring materials and given time to explore techniques to create high-quality work using any lines, shapes, or designs they choose. In future watercoloring sessions, students create paintings based on the settings in fables read in class.

How this lesson builds on previous work:

- This lesson follows the same pattern as in Lessons 2 and 4. Students apply their understanding of story elements to orally recount and infer the central message of “The Ants and the Grasshopper.”

Areas in which students may need additional support:

- In Work Time B, continue to remind students how to take notes in words and phrases. As needed, refer them to the Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: *The Little Hummingbird* and *The Lizard and the Sun* for models of how to write notes.

Down the road:

- In Lesson 7, students will use their oral recounting as practice before writing a paragraph about the story elements and central message in “The Ants and the Grasshopper.”
- In Lesson 8, students will read “Bunnyarl the Flies and Wurrunnannah the Bees,” another version of “The Ants and the Grasshopper,” in order to compare and contrast the two versions of the same fable (RL.2.9).

In advance:

- Preview the watercoloring materials and agenda steps for Work Time C to familiarize yourself with their purpose and use in Lessons 6–9.
- Pre-determine:
 - Workspace for watercolor painting in Work Time C and pre-distribute materials for student use. Include a set of materials for teacher modeling.
 - Place to store students’ watercoloring paintings to allow them to dry.
- Post: Learning targets and applicable anchor charts (see materials list).

Technology & Multimedia

Consider using an interactive white board or document camera to display lesson materials.

- The open-source text and illustration of Aesop’s fable “The Ants and the Grasshopper” is available online: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19994/19994-h/19994-h.htm#Page_34. Consider projecting the online version of the text during the read-aloud in Work Time A as students listen to the text and respond to text-dependent questions.

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided by in part by CA ELD Standards 2.I.B.6 and 2.I.B.8

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs by providing opportunities for movement and for fluency practice during the Role-Play protocol.
- ELLs may find it challenging to process some of the language in “The Ants and the Grasshopper” because it contains some long sentences that are dense with information. Consider guiding students through the Mini Language Dive provided in Meeting Students’ Needs.

Levels of support

For lighter support

- During Work Time B, encourage students to be the “director” in their groups. Empower them to coach other students on the voices they use when they say their lines.
- The supports in this lesson and Lesson 7 are similar to the supports in Lessons 2–3 and Lessons 4–5 because the tasks mirror one another. Based on student performance in prior lessons, consider releasing students from some of the supports applied in those lessons to foster independence and to assess student progress.

For heavier support

- Before Work Time B, pre-assign students their roles according to proficiency. Cut out or highlight the excerpts assigned to them so it is clear which parts they will read.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** Continue to support students as they incorporate the most valuable information from the fable into existing knowledge. Before reading the text, activate background knowledge by previewing the questions you will ask.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** This lesson offers several opportunities for students to engage in discussion with partners. Continue to support those who may need it with expressive language by providing sentence frames to help them organize their thoughts.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** Continue to remind students of the goal for the work they are doing with their research. Returning to the learning goals lifts up their value and relevance to students.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

New:

- bustling, stored, humble/humbly (T)

Review:

- recount, story elements, central message, version, similarities, differences (L)

Materials

- ✓ “We Do What We Can” (from Lesson 2, one to display)
- ✓ “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (one per group and one to display; for teacher-read aloud)
- ✓ Fluency anchor chart (begun in Lesson 2)
- ✓ Role-Play Protocol anchor chart (begun in Lesson 2)
- ✓ Fables and Folktales response notebook (from Lesson 3; added to during Work Time B; one per student)
 - Story Elements and Central Message Student Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (page 7 of the Fables and Folktales response notebook)

- ✓ Fables and Folktales response notebook (from Lesson 3; example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (new; co-created with students during Work Time B; see supporting materials)
- ✓ Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ *The Lizard and the Sun* (one to display)
- ✓ Watercoloring supplies:
 - Paintbrushes (one per student)
 - Cup of water (one or two per table group)
 - Palette (one per student)
 - Paper (blank; 8”x5”; two or three sheets per student)
- ✓ Watercoloring Tips anchor chart (new; co-created with students during Work Time C; see supporting materials)
- ✓ Watercoloring Tips anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Unit 1 Guiding Question anchor chart (began in Lesson 1)

Opening

A. Song and Movement: “We Do What We Can” (5 minutes)

- Gather students whole group.
- Display the **“We Do What We Can”** song and invite students to sing the first verse chorally in a bee’s voice.
- Remind students that the addition of prefixes to words can change their meaning.
- Using a carat, insert the prefix *un-* to each *do* in the first verse.
- Turn and Talk:

“How does adding the prefix un- change the meaning of the song?” (Responses will vary, but may include: We undo what we can, doing the opposite of what the song says.)
- Listen for student responses to highlight and review the meaning of the prefix *un-* as needed.
- Sing the revised verse with the inclusion of the prefix.
- Reinforce that the students’ growing knowledge and use of prefixes improves their ability to understand what they read and to effectively express themselves.

Work Time

A. Reading Aloud: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (10 minutes)

- Refocus whole group.
- Display **“The Ants and the Grasshopper”** and read aloud the title.
- Share that fables have existed in different cultures all over the world for a very long time. They have many similarities, such as insects and animals as characters, common events, and *central messages*, or lessons, that readers can learn and apply to their own lives.

- Point out that because they exist in different cultures, there are many versions, or forms, of these common fables. These versions may have similarities because they tell the same story or have the same central message. They also have differences because they were written by different people in different places at different times.
- Direct students' attention to the posted learning targets and read them aloud:
 - “I can recount the fable ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper’ using the story elements.”
 - “I can determine the central message of ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper’ based on how the characters respond to the problem/challenge.”
- Review the definition of the prefix *re-* (again) and *recount* (to retell with only the most important details).
- Remind students that *story elements* include how the characters respond to the problem or challenge, and also that how the characters respond helps readers to understand the central message.
- Direct students' attention to the **Fluency anchor chart** and read aloud the fable, using voices to distinguish between the characters.
- Pause after reading the first sentence. Reread the first part of the sentence, “One bright day ...”, and say: “This word, bright, describes the sunshine.”
- Turn and Talk:
 - “What else can you think of that can be described as bright?” (Responses will vary, but may include: colors, lights, things that light up.)
- Continue reading, pausing to clarify the following vocabulary by inserting synonyms orally while reading:
 - *bustling*: moving rapidly; energetically
 - *stored*: gathered; kept for future use
 - *humbly*: modestly; without bragging or pride
- Tell the students that you will read the fable aloud a second time. Direct them to listen for details about the setting and how the ants show responsibility. Remind students that the setting can be related to where and when the story takes place.
- Model reading the fable aloud fluently a second time, inviting students to read the dialogue chorally with you in their best grasshopper and ant voices.
- After reading, Turn and Talk:
 - “Where or when does this fable take place?” (It takes place somewhere outside during the autumn and winter.)
 - “Why is it important to know that this fable takes place in the autumn and winter?” (The change in season affects the characters' food supply. It is a key detail connected to the problem/challenge.)
 - “What actions did the ants take that showed responsibility?” (They collected enough food so that they could feed themselves in the winter and worked to dry their wet food so they could eat it.)
- Tell students that they will now have a chance to read and act out the fable “The Ants and the Grasshopper” with their same group from Lessons 2 and 4.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Mini Language Dive. "One bright day in late autumn / a family of Ants / were bustling about / in the warm sunshine, / **drying out the grain they had stored up during the summer**, / when a starving Grasshopper, / his fiddle under his arm, / came up and humbly begged for a bite to eat."
 - Deconstruct: Discuss the sentence and each chunk. Language goals for focus structure:
 - *drying out the grain*: "What were the ants doing?" Drying food. (gerund to describe action)
 - *that they had stored up*: "What grain was this?" The grain they already collected. (past perfect tense; relative clause)
 - *during the summer*: "When did they collect this grain?" In the summer. (prepositional phrase)
 - Practice: "The grasshopper was ____ the fiddle he had ____ during the summer." (carrying; played)
 - Reconstruct: Reread the sentence. Ask:
 - "Now what do you think the sentence means?"***
 - "How does your understanding of this sentence add to your understanding of how the ants and the grasshopper each responded to challenges?" (The ants worked to collect food, and the grasshopper played music and begged.)***
 - Practice: Ask:
 - "Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? How?"***
- For students who may need additional support with active listening: Before the read-aloud, preview the questions to be asked during the Turn and Talk. (MMR, MME)

Work Time

B. Role-Play Protocol: "The Ants and the Grasshopper" (20 minutes)

- Tell students they will now participate in the Role-Play protocol to act out "The Ants and the Grasshopper." Remind them that they used this protocol in Lessons 2 and 4 and review as necessary using the **Role-Play Protocol anchor chart**. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Tell students that each group member will take a turn to read a section of "The Ants and the Grasshopper" aloud while the rest of the group listens and acts out what they hear.
 - Invite students to move to sit in their small groups from Lessons 2 and 4.
 - Distribute a copy of the story to each group.
 - Direct students' attention to the Fluency anchor chart, and remind them that they should work to read as fluently as they can while their group acts out the fable.
 - Encourage students to use different voices for character dialogue.
 - Invite students to begin the protocol.
 - As time permits, encourage students to read and role-play the fable multiple times.

- When 10 minutes remain, refocus whole group and invite students to return to their workspaces.
- Follow the same routine from Work Time B of Lesson 4 to guide students through discussing and completing the **Story Elements and Central Message Student Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper;”** on page 7 of their **Fables and Folktales response notebook**.
 - Tell students they will now work together to discuss and fill in their own student notes for key details related to the characters, setting, and the challenge.
 - Distribute Fables and Folktales response notebooks.
 - Circulate to support students as they write. Remind them to write their notes as words and phrases to help them remember the story elements, rather than as complete sentences. Refer to Fables and Folktales response notebook (example, for teacher reference) as necessary.
 - When 5 minutes remain, direct students to close their response notebooks and leave them at their seats as they gather whole group.
- Follow the same routine from Work Time B of Lesson 4 to guide students through co-constructing the **Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper;”**
 - Display the blank class notes.
 - Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “What is the beginning of ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper?’” (The ants and the grasshopper are outside in autumn.)*
 - “What is the middle of ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper?’” (The ants have grain, but it is wet. The grasshopper is hungry and asks for food to eat.)*
 - “What is the end of ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper?’” (The ants are drying out their food, and will not give the grasshopper anything to eat.)*
 - “What is the central message of ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper?’” (There’s a time for work and a time for play.)*
 - As students share out, clarify and capture their responses on each part of the Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper.” Refer to **Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (example, for teacher reference)** as necessary.
 - Say:
 - “Wow! All of your ideas helped us to collect the class notes. We will use the notes to write about ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper’ tomorrow.”*

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: (Leadership) Invite a few students who might normally shy away from participation to demonstrate their role-play in front of the class.
- For ELLs: (Home Language: Role-Play) Encourage students to use their home languages in addition to English.
- For students who may need additional support with motivation: Invite students to share how role-playing helped them better comprehend a fable in a previous lesson. (MME)

Work Time

C. Engaging the Artist: Watercoloring Technique (20 minutes)

- Refocus whole group and offer specific, positive feedback on role-play participation.
- Display “The Ants and the Grasshopper” and pages 1-2 of *The Lizard and the Sun*.
- Say:
 - “These are both stories that we have read. When I compare them, I find that they have similarities, or parts that are almost the same. For example, they both have pollinators as characters who have a challenge to overcome.”*
 - “When I contrast them, I can find differences, or parts that are not the same, too. They have different characters whose problems are not the same.”*
 - “One big difference I can observe with my eyes is that The Lizard and the Sun has beautiful, colorful artwork that helps me visualize and understand the story. ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper’ has less artwork, and the art it does have is much simpler.”*
 - “This week, we have a chance to become artists ourselves. We’ll learn and practice some tips and techniques to create beautiful artwork that helps us remember and recount the stories.”*
- Introduce the **watercoloring supplies** by showing and naming each one:
 - Paintbrushes
 - Cup of water
 - Palette
 - Paper
- Direct students’ attention to the **Watercoloring Tips anchor chart** and tell students you will share some artists’ tips that will help them create high-quality artwork.
 - Write “Tip #1: No bad hair days!” on the anchor chart.
 - Show the bristles of a brush. Explain that paintbrushes are very fussy about their appearance and need their “hair” to be neat and tidy to do their best work. Explain that if the bristles are not smooth, giving the brush a “bad hair day,” the paint strokes will not be as clear. Tell students that they will need to press lightly as they paint and add more drops of water to their watercolor well to remedy a bad hair day.
 - Write and read aloud “Tip #2: Start with light colors” on the anchor chart.
 - Point out that artists can always add dark on top of light, but not the other way around.
- Demonstrate Tip #1. Dip your paintbrush in the cup of water, gently tapping the brush on the edge of the cup to remove excess water, and let a few drops fall into one of the light watercolor wells from the palette. Repeat the “no bad hair days” tip aloud as you gently add strokes to your paper.
- Demonstrate Tip #2. Dip your paintbrush into the water and gently swish the brush back and forth to remove the first color. Tap your brush on the side of the cup to remove excess water, and repeat the demonstration with a new, darker color. Repeat the “start with light colors” tip as you gently add more strokes to your paper.
- Transition students to their workspaces and point out the pre-distributed watercoloring supplies.

- Invite them to begin painting, encouraging them to experiment with the thickness of lines and different amounts of water in their colors.
- Tell students that they may paint any lines, shapes, or designs they would like to today as they explore the materials. Emphasize that in future painting sessions, they will connect their paintings to the setting from fables they are reading.
- Circulate to support students and to observe for informal opportunities for student painters to share their own tips.
- When 5 minutes remain, refocus whole group and guide students through cleanup procedures.
- Gather students whole group and give them specific, positive feedback on their efforts to apply new watercoloring skills.
- With excitement, tell them they will have time in the next lesson to continue working on their technique while creating watercolor paintings inspired by “The Ants and the Grasshopper.”

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support with comprehension: Invite students to rephrase each tip in their own words. (MMR)

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning: Working to Contribute to a Better World (5 minutes)

- Direct students' attention to the **Unit 1 Guiding Question anchor chart** and read the question aloud:
 - “What does it mean to make the world a better place?”
- Briefly review the story elements and central message from “The Ants and the Grasshopper,” and then Turn and Talk:
 - “How did the grasshopper try to make his world a better place?” (by playing music and singing)*
 - “How did the ants try to make their world a better place?” (by collecting food for the winter)*
 - Conversation Cue: “Who can add on to what your classmate said? I’ll give you time to think.” (Responses will vary.)*
- Preview tomorrow’s work: writing about the central message and creating watercolor paintings inspired by “The Ants and the Grasshopper.”