

Lesson 7: Writing about Literature: The Central Message in "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.
- **W.2.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- **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*).



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 write a paragraph describing the central message from "The Ants and the Grasshopper." (RL.2.2, SL.2.2, W.2.2)

Ongoing Assessment

- After the lesson, review student work on the Entrance Ticket: "We Do What We Can" to measure progress toward RL.2.4 and L.2.4b.
- During Work Time C, circulate as students work on the watercolor paintings and notice how they are connecting their paintings to story elements from "The Ants and the Grasshopper." (RL.2.1, SL.2.2)

Agenda

1. Opening

- A. Entrance Ticket: “We Do What We Can” (10 minutes)

2. Work Time

- A. Oral Recounting: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (10 minutes)
- B. Independent Writing: Story Elements and the Central Message of “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (15 minutes)
- C. Engaging the Artist: Painting Scenes from “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (20 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment

- A. Sharing Our Artwork: Similarities and Differences (5 minutes)

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- Lesson 7 marks the end of the third cycle of oral recounting and paragraph writing based on the story elements and central message in a story that students have read and heard multiple times (RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.3, W.2.2).
- In the Opening, students complete an entrance ticket to assess their understanding of prefixes and the role of repeated lines in understanding the meaning of a text (RL.2.4, L.2.4b).
- In Work Time C, students participate in the second of four watercolor painting sessions during which they practice adding visuals inspired by story elements from “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (SL.2.5).

How this lesson builds on previous work:

- Students apply their understanding of key details about story elements to orally recount and determine the central message from “The Ants and the Grasshopper.”
- In Work Time B, students continue developing their paragraph writing skills as they recount “The Ants and the Grasshopper” and describe the central message from the fable.

Areas in which students may need additional support:

- In the Opening, some students may need additional time to complete the entrance ticket. Consider working with a small group to provide additional support or allowing students to finish as an exit ticket during the Closing.
- In Work Time C, students may be challenged to organize the painting materials and resources at their workspace. Consider providing specific instructions to help students organize their workspaces. (Example: “Put your paper in the center of your workspace. To the side, place your watercolor paints and brush. Put the cup of water in the middle of the shared workspace so that you and your table partners can access it easily.”)

Down the road:

- In Lessons 8–9, students will continue the cycle of reading, role-playing, painting, orally recounting, and writing about a new fable. Then, in Lesson 10, they will compare and contrast the two fables.
- The increased rigor and student responsibility for reading and note-taking serves as a scaffold for the Unit 1 Assessment in Lessons 11–12.

In advance:

- Pre-distribute the Entrance Tickets: “We Do What We Can” at student workspaces.
- Pre-determine a workspace for watercolor painting in Work Time C and pre-distribute materials for student use. Include a set of materials for teacher modeling.
- 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.

- Continue to use the technology tools recommended throughout Modules 1–3 to create anchor charts to share with families; to record students as they participate in discussions and protocols to review with students later and to share with families; and for students to listen to and annotate text, record ideas on note-catchers, and word-process writing.

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided by in part by CA ELD Standards 2.I.B.6, 2.I.B.8, and 2.I.C.10

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with opportunities to prepare for writing by using key details of story elements to orally recount a story.
- ELLs may find it challenging to write their paragraphs independently after recounting “The Ants and the Grasshopper” only once. Provide additional opportunities for students to practice recounting to prepare for writing. Provide sentence frames and additional models to support independent writing (see Levels of support and Meeting Students’ Needs).

Levels of support*For lighter support*

- During Work Times A and B, invite students to mentor those who need heavier support as they recount “The Ants and the Grasshopper” and write paragraphs.
- The supports in this lesson and Lesson 6 are similar to those in Lessons 2–3 and in 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

- During Work Time C, distribute a version of pages 8–9 of the student notebook with sentence frames to support writing the paragraph. Refer to Fables and Folktales response notebook (example, for teacher reference) to determine useful sentence frames.
- During Work Time C, consider working closely with a group of students to complete their paragraphs as a shared writing experience.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** Continue to support comprehension by activating prior knowledge and scaffold connections for students. Continue to provide visual display of questions and student responses on a chart or the board during discussions.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** Continue to support strategy development during independent writing by modeling how to physically touch the spaces on the paper and draw lines for the words you wish to write.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** Continue to foster collaboration and community by providing prompts that guide students in knowing when and how to ask classmates or teachers for help.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

New:

- inspire/inspired (L)

Review:

- recount, paragraph, central message, similar, different (L)

Materials

- ✓ “We Do What We Can” (from Lesson 2; one to display)
- ✓ Entrance Ticket: “We Do What We Can” (one per student)
- ✓ Entrance Ticket: “We Do What We Can” (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (begun in Lesson 6; added to during Work Time A; see supporting materials)
- ✓ Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (begun in Lesson 6; example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Fables and Folktales response notebook (from Lesson 3; added to during Work Time B; one per student)
 - Independent Paragraph Writing Page: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (pages 8–9 of the Fables and Folktales response notebook)

- ✓ Fables and Folktales response notebook (from Lesson 3; example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (from Lesson 6; 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 (begun in Lesson 6; added to in advance; see supporting materials)
- ✓ Watercoloring Tips anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)

Opening

A. Entrance Ticket: “We Do What We Can” (10 minutes)

- Display the “**We Do What We Can**” song and invite students to sing the first verse.
- Remind students that they have been learning about how prefixes change the meaning of words. Tell them that today they will complete an entrance ticket to check their understanding of prefixes and the central message in the song. Tell students that, like the ants, they’ll do their work now instead of putting it off until another time!
- Point out the pre-distributed Entrance Ticket: “**We Do What We Can.**” Review the directions and answer clarifying questions.
- Invite students to complete their entrance ticket, circulating to support them as needed. Refer to **Entrance Ticket: “We Do What We Can” (example, for teacher reference)** as necessary.
- Collect entrance tickets and refocus whole group.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For students who may need additional support with recording their ideas in writing: Provide a partially filled-in entrance ticket that contains sentence stems or frames as scaffolds. (MMAE, MME)

Work Time

A. Oral Recounting: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (10 minutes)

- Direct students’ attention to the posted learning targets and read the first one aloud:
“I can recount the fable ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper’ using the story elements.”

- Review the meaning of *recount* (to retell with only the important details) as needed.
- Use the same routine from Work Time A of Lesson 3 to guide students through orally recounting “The Ants and the Grasshopper” with a partner. Remind them to use the **Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes**: “The Ants and the Grasshopper.” Also confirm the central message written on the class notes in advance. (There’s a time for work and a time for play.)
- Circulate to support students and refer to **Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (example, for teacher reference)** as necessary.
- Tell students that they are now prepared to begin writing their paragraph based on the story elements and central message and, like the ants, they won’t put off their work for another day!

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs: (Finger Recounting) Recount the story on fingers to help keep track of the story elements.
- For students who may need additional support with organizing ideas for verbal expression: Before sharing, invite students to briefly draw a few illustrations as visual supports for their oral recount of the story. (MMAE, MME)

Work Time

B. Independent Writing: Story Elements and the Central Message of “The Ants and the Grasshopper” (15 minutes)

- Direct students’ attention to the posted learning targets and read the second one aloud:
“I can write a paragraph describing the central message from ‘The Ants and the Grasshopper.’”
- Review the meaning of *paragraph* (a group of sentences that develop an idea) and *central message* (a lesson you can take away from reading a story to apply to your own life) as needed.
- Use the same routine from Work Time B of Lesson 3 to guide students through writing a paragraph of their recounting on the **Independent Paragraph Writing Page: “The Ants and the Grasshopper,”** which is pages 8–9 of their **Fables and Folktales response notebook**. Refer to **Fables and Folktales response notebook (example, for teacher reference)** as necessary.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs: (Recalling Language Dives) Invite students to adapt language drawn from the Language Dive in Lesson 1 and from the Mini Language Dives in Lessons 4 and 6 to write their paragraphs.
- For students who may need additional support with fine motor skills: Offer choice by providing a template that includes additional space for each section. (MMR, MMAE)

Work Time

C. Engaging the Artist: Painting Scenes from “The Ants and the Grasshopper”

(20 minutes)

- Refocus whole group. Offer kind and specific feedback on students’ focus and effort while writing their paragraphs.
- Tell students that now they will have more time to practice their watercolor painting skills—this time connecting their painting to settings inspired by “The Ants and the Grasshopper.”
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“How can painting the settings help us better understand the fable?” (It can help us to visualize the setting.)
- Tell students that today they will use their understanding of the story elements and central message from “The Ants and the Grasshopper” to make a watercolor painting inspired by the setting as they imagine it.
 - Share that when their artwork is inspired by a story, it means that their ideas for the artwork come from their understanding of the story elements.
- Direct students’ attention to the **Story Elements and Central Message Class Notes**: “The Ants and the Grasshopper” and review the notes in the first box related to the setting of the fable.
- Display **“The Ants and the Grasshopper”** and point out that this version of the fable does not have artwork reflecting the different settings.
- Remind students that the fable takes place in different seasons, but that the author does not describe a specific location. Explain that when stories don’t tell exactly where the setting is, readers use their imagination and clues from the fable to visualize the physical setting.
- Invite students to think of a picture in their mind where they can imagine the fable taking place. Remind them that when they use their understanding of the fable to create a picture in their mind, they are using the fable to inspire their ideas of what to paint.
- Invite students to give a thumbs-up when they have an idea of the setting in their mind.
- Turn and Talk:
 - “Where do you imagine this fable takes place?” (Responses will vary.)*
 - To support students who need help imagining the setting, highlight a few setting ideas that they might choose from for their watercolor painting.

- Review the **watercoloring supplies**:
 - **Paintbrushes**
 - **Cup of water**
 - **Palette**
 - **Paper**
- Direct students' attention to the **Watercoloring Tips anchor chart** and review Tips #1 and #2:
 - “Tip #1: No bad hair days!”
 - “Tip #2: Start with light colors.”
- Reveal and read Tip #3 aloud. Refer to **Watercoloring Tips anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)** as necessary:
 - “Tip #3: Wet mixes with wet.”
- Explain and demonstrate that if the colors touch on the paper, they will bleed together. If you don't want the colors to mix, let a brushstroke dry before you paint right next to it.
- Transition students to their workspaces and point out pre-distributed watercoloring supplies. Invite them to begin their watercolor paintings.
- Remind them that the painting does not need to be realistic or detailed like a scientific illustration, and that it might even be abstract colors or shapes that give the viewer the feeling of that setting.
- When 5 minutes remain, refocus whole group and guide students through cleanup procedures.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support with planning: Use a timer to support planning and time management. (MMAE, MME)

Closing and Assessment

A. Sharing Our Artwork: Similarities and Differences (5 minutes)

- Refocus whole group.
- Tell students they will now share their artwork with an elbow partner. Remind them to be kind and empathic when discussing each other's work.
- Invite pairs to share their artwork with each other, and ask:
“What do you notice that is similar about your watercolor paintings? What do you notice that is different?” (Responses will vary.)
Conversation Cue: “Who can tell us what your classmate said in your own words?” (Responses will vary.)
- Circulate and listen in for similarities or differences to highlight with the whole group, as time permits.
- Preview tomorrow's work: reading a new fable, and creating artwork inspired by it!

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with expressive skills: (Modeling: Similar and Different) Briefly model comparing and contrasting two pieces of artwork to prepare students for partner discussion. (MMR, MMAE)
- Support communication and engagement by pairing students with strategic partners to ensure they have a strong, politely helpful partner to support their efforts at sharing their artwork. (MME)