

# THEMATIC UNIT

## Related to ELA Prototypes



Theme: **Integrity**

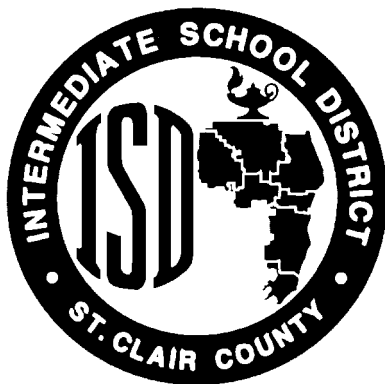
Suggested for: **Fourth Grade**

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## **~Thematic Units~**

Dear Colleagues:

The purpose of this project was to organize thematic units related to previously published MEAP ELA prototypes using best practices in reading and writing.

These were developed by, **real teachers**, just like you! We worked to make them teacher friendly for easy implementation in your classroom. Teachers from school districts across St. Clair County gathered the material. The units are a representation of what each group of teachers thought was important to your grade level and to the themes in the prototypes.

Every packet includes **THEME RELATED TEXT SETS**. These are titles that can be used in a variety of ways to develop a deeper understanding of themes. We have noted the **PAIRED TEXTS** (look for the #2) and **LISTENING TEXT** (#3) that are included in the prototypes. We also noted the title(s) we used for **FRAYER'S MODEL** (#1).

A **PROFUNDITY MATRIX** was developed for each set of paired texts in the prototype to help in identifying possible themes. The matrix also helps look across text to make cross text connections. Blank copies of this chart are included and can be used in your classroom to help students make connections between other texts.

**CROSS TEXT QUESTIONS** were written and answered to aid in responding to both the multiple choice questions and the provocative question given in the second writing piece of the ELA MEAP assessment.

Many packets include one or more **WRITING MODELS** for the second writing piece. We suggest you use these before or after student writing to exhibit a well written constructed response.

The **TEACHER SUGGESTION PAGE** is a personal response by the individuals involved in the project. Some contain anecdotes from the use of the material in their classrooms. Others contain a plethora of ideas to implement. We hope these help.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES** (#4) are poems, plays, articles, reader's theater presentations and related suggestions to further develop understanding of the themes.

It is our sincere hope these packets are useful to you and your students.

Happy reading and writing!

## Teacher Suggestion Page – Integrity

Dear Colleagues:

Here are some notes and ideas that we hope you can use.

We have included a reader's theater activity and a play for you.

In the play "The Country Torn Apart" you need to use Act 3-Surrender at Appomattox to discuss the true meaning for the theme of integrity. General Grant treats General Lee with the utmost respect when Lee asks Grant to provide his men with food and water because they were very hungry. Grant responds, "Certainly, sir." We use this during Social Studies to integrate curriculum and to save precious reading instruction time.

Every month at our building, teachers and staff choose students who have exhibited traits that build integrity. These students are given a certificate and their names are put on display on a public bulletin board. Discussing the good points of these children that others observe would help internalize the theme.

The picture books can be included at any grade level. Our fourth graders plant seeds and care for them in different ways to tie in *The Empty Pot*. You could easily do a Science, Math and Economics integrated lesson with *Kermit the Hermit*.

When we read *Stone Fox* we discuss the integrity (or lack of) of all the characters. The children love the book and easily understand that the main characters take responsibility seriously. We also show the movie and compare it to the book (ELA Standard 9, Benchmark 1).

## ELA Prototype Materials

- **Thematically related texts**
- **Frayer’s Model examples**
- **Writing from knowledge and experience using narrative strategies**
- **Profundity examples**
- **Cross Text Question examples**
- **Writing in Response to Reading example**

These materials were designed to provide examples of instructional approaches that will help you and your students prepare for the ELA assessment. The examples are all possible answers; they are not to be considered the “right” answers. We wanted to provide examples of other teachers’ thinking through Frayer’s, Profundity and cross text questions to help guide you through your own thinking.

The sequence of instruction would be to introduce the theme through using the Frayer’s Model of concept attainment. Have students write from knowledge and experience. Think through each reading selection using the profundity scale to create a matrix by which cross text questions can be posed and answered. Examples and blank copies are provided to help you in planning instruction.

## Thematically Related Text Sets – Integrity

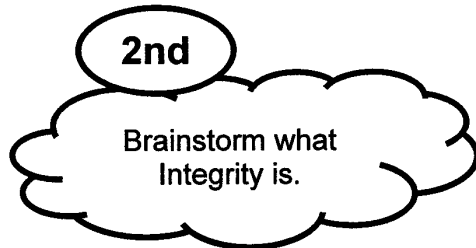
CODE	TITLE	AUTHOR
	A Big Fat Enormous Lie	Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
2	A Day's work	Eve Bunting
	Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express	Margaret Wetterer
	Kermit the Hermit	Bill Peet
4	The Country Torn Apart – Play	Dallas Murphy
1	The Empty Pot	Demi
3	The Summer My Father Was Ten	Pat Brisson
2	Too Many Tamales	Gary Soto

**Code Key:**  
**Suggested Uses**

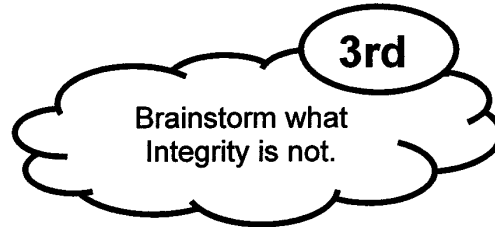
- 1 – Frayer's Model
- 2 – Paired Text
- 3 – Listening
- 4 – Other

# How to Use Frayer's Model to Develop Student Understanding of Themes

**Integrity is...**



**Integrity is not...**

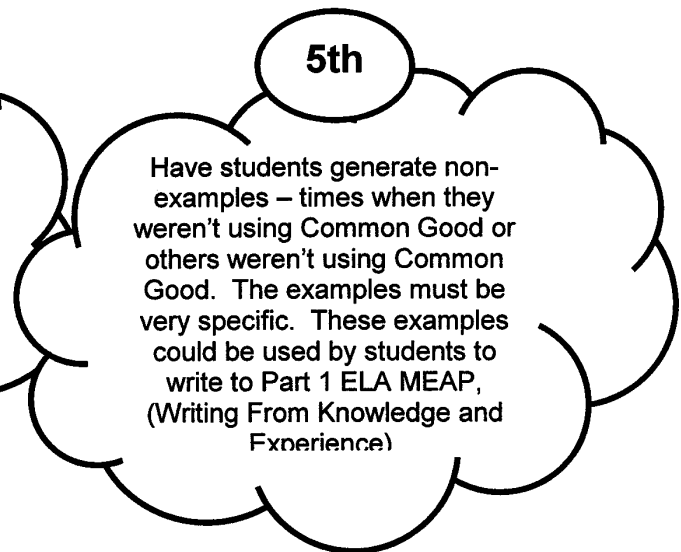
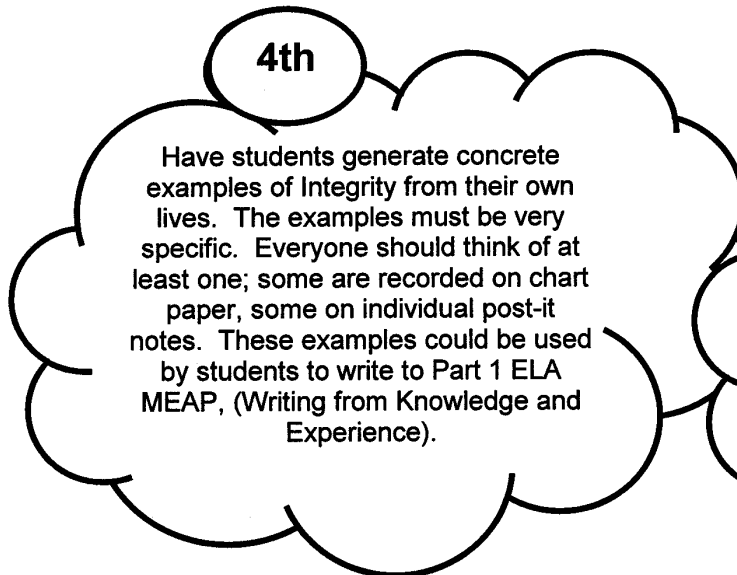


State theme in center oval



**Examples:**

**Non-examples:**



- 6<sup>th</sup> Read a book about "Integrity" that is not in the prototype. Have students listen for clear examples and non-examples of Integrity. Use names and situations specific to the reading selection, when recording the examples.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Have students identify clear examples from the 1<sup>st</sup> reading selection to record on the chart.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Have students identify clear examples from the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading selection to record on the chart.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Have students listen for clear examples and non-examples of Integrity during part three of the prototype to record on the chart.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Students who need help can use the clear examples from this chart when writing to Part II ELA MEAP, Response to Reading.

# Example of Frayer's Model

## Integrity is...

Taking responsibility for your actions

## Integrity is not...

Ignoring what is expected of you



## Examples:

Paul always tells the truth about where he is going and what he will be doing.

## Non examples:

Sally's mom drives faster than the speed limit if she thinks the police aren't around.

...from *The Empty Pot*, by Demi

## Examples:

Ping worked hard to grow the plant.

Ping was honest about the plant not growing.

Father told Ping his best was good enough for the Emperor.

## Non examples:

The other children used different seeds.

Ping's friend made fun of Ping's plant.

...as you continue through the prototype add examples from each of the reading and listening selections

**Integrity is...**

**Integrity is not...**



**Examples:**

**Non examples:**

## Writing From Knowledge and Experience

The English Language Arts MEAP assessment requires students to write from knowledge and experience. Students may choose the style or genre of writing that suites them best. However, the majority of students choose to write personal narratives. Dr. Elaine Weber, Barbara Nelson and Ray Woods, the authors of *Profiles in Writing 2002*, have granted us permission to offer you some information from the book. This may help you instruct students in personal narratives.

These resources will provide you with:

- Description of the four qualities of writing the MEAP assessment used to evaluate student writing;
- A model for creating writing prompts;
- Examples of well written student papers;
- Attributes of writing that commonly appear at this grade level;
- Strategies used by narrative writers; and
- Examples of student papers with the narratives strategies highlighted.

# *attributes of* **writing**

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## **Note**

This year the Profiles Project has reorganized the attributes of writing to align with the 4-trait rubric most widely used by Profiles Network members:

### **Focus on Content and Ideas**

**Organization**

**Voice/Style,**

**and**

**Conventions.**

### **foCus** on content

Focus refers to concentration on the content and ideas of the piece of writing and to the development of the content and major ideas with appropriate details, examples, etc.

### or gan i za tion

Organization refers to the structure of a piece of writing with logical sequence; beginning, middle, and end; flow; cohesion, coherence, unity, effective leads; transitions and conclusions; sense of wholeness, etc.

### **Voice/style**

Voice refers to the writer's ability/attempts to engage and interest the reader through stylistic elements and techniques such as: descriptive detail, precise word choice, sentence variety, strong verbs, humor, figurative language, personal reflection, etc.

### **con-ven·tion(s)**

Conventions refer to a writer's presentation of a piece of writing through accurate and effective use of writing form including: directionality, spacing, mechanics (capitalization, punctuation), grammar and usage, spelling, etc.

## **Note**

See *Attributes*, pages 30-42, for more details.

# profiles prompt

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## Topic

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A Special Place

## Thinking About The Topic

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Do you have a favorite place that is important to you?

- Where or what is this place or space? (indoors, outdoors, your bedroom, closet, tree house, a place you like to visit, etc.)
- What is it like there?
- What do you do there
- Why is it special to you?

## Writing About The Topic

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Write about a special place.

You might, for example, do one of the following:

- describe in detail a place that is important to you.
- or ■ tell what you like to do in your special place.
- or ■ tell why your special space is important to you.
- or ■ write about the topic in another way.

You may use examples from real life, from what you read or watch, or from your imagination. Your writing will be read by interested adults.

# grade four (A Special Place)

## My Special Place

My special place is on top of a hill in Ypsilanti. It has beautiful flowers and two trees next to one another. It also has soft, fluffy grass that I like to lay on. The trees shade me and they hide me when I climb them.

At the bottom of the hill there is a lake. It is called Ford Lake. It is clean, clear, and cool. I like to go swimming there.

I go to my special place when I have been working too hard and need to relax, when I'm sad, or when I need to be alone and away from my family or friends.

One day when I went to my special place I got to spy on my dad from the trees. I hid and then jumped out and said "Boo!" I scared my dad out of his wits!

My special place is special to me because I can be alone, there is no one to annoy me and I can have endless fun. Furthermore my special place is special because I can run, play and watch my dog try to amuse me.

Sometimes I bring friends and play tag or swim. I also tell secrets with my best friend.

That is why it's my special place.

### **focus** on content

- ✓ focuses on topic
- ✓ develops with specific and logical reasons

### **organization**

- ✓ strength of piece is in organization
- ✓ cohesive

### **Voice/style**

- ✓ clarity and effective use of language
- ✓ concrete, vivid, and detailed
- ✓ writer tells of world around him, feelings, personal experiences

### **con-ven-tion(s)**

- ✓ control of conventions
- ✓ accuracy in paragraphing

# grade four (A Special Place)

## My Favorite Place!

My favorite place is my barn. I like it because there are animals in it. I like to hold my rabbits, play with the dogs, or ride and pet the horses. I also like to play in the barn. There is a huge swingset that when I am on it, it feels like I am flying. My father recently finished building the barn. I have also had many emotional experiences in it. About a month ago, we had to euthanize our dog, Dollie. Sometimes when I am alone in the barn, it seems like I can feel her. Our family still has two other dogs. My dog Rufus is a Lab. He is very large for his age. Rufus has a big silly looking boy head, and he loves little kids, and he is very gentle. My sister's dog, Frackles, is the same breed as Dollie was. She is a Queensland Heeler Hearing Dog. But let's go back to the barn again. If you a guest at my house, you won't be used to the smell in our barn! Some of the work involves the smell, such as, the cleaning of stalls or cages! We have put lots of work into the barn. I love our barn, and it would tear me up emotionally, if anything were to happen to it. *Fufn Page* →

We have huge parties in it every Friday night. We have a huge heater for in it for cold night parties in the winter. My favorite place to hang out is the loft. It's 19<sup>th</sup> off the ground. I have to climb a big ladder, then there is just hay. Doesn't sound like much fun, but wait until you read on! My sister and I go up to the loft and build huge tunnels in the hay. Unfortunately, they always collapse on us. Sometimes I make traps for my sister. I fill out about three or four bails of hay to where it is just a plain ditch. Then I pull a bail out to cover the hole. But it always ends up to be me falling into the traps I've set! Thank you for taking the time to read my story. The End

## focus on content

- ✓ focuses on topic
- ✓ develops one point with an anecdote
- ✓ recounts detail through description

## organization

- ✓ organized and developed with details
- ✓ natural paragraph breaks

## Voice/style

- ✓ strong voice
- ✓ incorporates emotions
- ✓ writes from experience
- ✓ imagery and sensory detail
- ✓ irony and humor
- ✓ binoculars

## convention(s)

- ✓ experimentation with punctuation
- ✓ moving toward conventional spelling

# attributes **grade four**

## **focus** on content

- ✓ central idea evident/focused
- ✓ responds to prompt
- ✓ emphasis on recounting everything in detail through description
- ✓ exhibits clarity
- ✓ incorporates well-developed ideas
- ✓ uses universal theme
- ✓ includes a moral
- ✓ develops strong characters
- ✓ includes title which catches the attention of the reader
- ✓ uses abstract/sophisticated topics
- ✓ conveys knowledge of subject
- ✓ develops with specific and logical reasons
- ✓ develops one point with anecdote

## **organization**

- ✓ organizes with beginning, middle, and end (introduction, transition and conclusion – sense of wholeness)
- ✓ uses attention-catching lead sentences
- ✓ opening paragraph “sets stage”/good introductions and setting of scene
- ✓ reaches closure
- ✓ includes reflective ending
- ✓ uses comparison
- ✓ cohesive
- ✓ uses an expository format
- ✓ evidence of mapping/brainstorming
- ✓ uses topic sentence/supporting details

## **Voice/style**

- ✓ demonstrates strong sense of voice (varied/elaborated vocabulary and skillful word choice)
- ✓ incorporates emotions (use of adjectives and adverbs)
- ✓ demonstrates originality
- ✓ explains in a concrete, vivid and detailed manner
- ✓ gives the reader a sense of being there
- ✓ has sense of audience
- ✓ uses humor and irony
- ✓ uses complex sentence structure/sentence variety
- ✓ flow of conversational language
- ✓ writes of world around them, feelings, personal experience
- ✓ uses figurative language (metaphors, similes, personification and analogies)
- ✓ uses imagery
- ✓ uses sensory detail
- ✓ uses strong and effective verbs
- ✓ uses questions effectively
- ✓ uses historical reference
- ✓ uses descriptive adjectives and adverbs
- ✓ effective use of parenthetical remarks
- ✓ concrete, vivid, and detailed
- ✓ snapshots
- ✓ literary allusion
- ✓ mature and creative
- ✓ effective repetition
- ✓ effective use of poetic form
- ✓ vivid language

## **con-ven-tion(s)**

- ✓ demonstrates growing control of grammatical and mechanical structure
- ✓ uses accurate punctuation for dialogue
- ✓ correct use of ellipses
- ✓ pronoun use and agreement
- ✓ uses appositive
- ✓ spells with increasing accuracy to convey meaning
- ✓ writes legibly

# *strategies used by* **narrative writers**

*The next step* in the Profile process, after selecting the most effective writings and holistically scoring the papers with a rubric, is to identify writing strategies used by the authors of the effective papers. The following list of writers' strategies is a combination of the original list that came from the New Standards Project shared by Sally Hampton and modified by Barbara Nelson to include the writing strategies of Barry Lane. These writing strategies can be taught in focused lessons. It is also a way to talk about narrative writing with students during writing conferences. The list of strategies used by narrative writers follows:

1. forecasting
2. flashback / flash forward
3. foreshadowing
4. compressing - shrink a century
5. naming (specific names of people or objects quantities, number)
6. describing visual details of scenes, objects, or people (size, colors, shapes, feature, dress) binoculars
7. describing sounds or smells of the scene - snapshots
8. narrating specific action (movements, gestures, postures, expressions) snapshots
9. creating dialogues, interior monologues, or expressing remembered feelings or insights at the time of the incident - thoughtshots
10. slowing the pace to elaborate the central moment in the incident - explode a moment
11. using syntax to support meaning
12. creating suspense or tension - explode a moment
13. including the element of surprise
14. comparing or contrasting other scenes or people
15. detailing subjects' routines habits or typical activities - binoculars
16. humor or irony
17. repetition / recurring events, objects, phrases
18. using various characters' voices to narrate a story
19. inserting historical or factual information into a story
20. figurative language - simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration
21. effective lead
22. effective conclusion, ending
23. literary allusion
24. creative, insightful word choice/word order (eg. active not passive voice, strong verbs, interesting or unusual use of or combination of words, etc.)
25. transitions
26. engaging audience intentionally and effectively (questioning, conversational tone)

# strategies used by narrative writers (cont.)

## Fourth Grade

### My Favorite Place!

My favorite place is my barn. I like it because there are animals in it. I like to hold my rabbits, play with the dogs, or ride and pet the horses **word choice**. I also like to play in the barn. There is a huge swingrope that when I am on it, it feels like I am flying **simile**. My father recently finished building the barn. I have also had many emotional experiences in it. About a month ago, we had to euthenise **word choice** our dog, Dollie. Sometimes when I am alone in the barn, it seems like I can feel her. Our family still has two other dogs. [My dog Rufus is a Lab. He is very large for his age. Rufus has a big silly looking box head, and he loves little kids, and he is very gentle. My sisters dog Freckles, is the same breed as Dollie was. She is a Queensland Heeler Hearing Dog. But let's go back to the barn again.] If you a guest at my house, you won't be used to the smell in our barn! Some of the work involves the smell such as the cleaning of stalls or cages! We have put lot's of work into the barn. I love our barn, and it would tear me up emotionally, if anything were to happen to it. **syntax** We have huge parties in it every Friday night. We have a huge heater for in it for cold night parties in the winter. My favorite place to hang out is the loft. Apx. 18ft off the ground. I have to climb a big ladder, then there is just hay **visual detail**. Doesn't sound like much fun but? wait until you read on **engaging audience intentionally**! My sister and I go up to the loft and build huge tunnels in the hay. Unfourtuantly **transitions** they always always collapse on us. Sometimes **transitions** I make traps for my sister. I pull out about three or four bails of hay to where it is just a plain ditch. Then I pull a bail out to cover the hole **snapshots**. But it always ends up to be me falling into the traps I've sett **humor**! [Thank you for taking the time to read my story, The End.]

NOTE: There are numerous examples of good writing in this piece; there is also writing that could be used as good examples for revision lessons:

- first set of brackets ([ ]) — This is extraneous information and distracts the reader; it could just be eliminated.
- second set of brackets ([ ]) — This writing disengages the reader; the piece would have ended more effectively without this. Compare with "...read on..." above which is an example of conversational tone which engages the reader.

## Using Profundity in Grades 3-12

To get third through twelfth graders to think about books at the theme level we use an activity that is systematic, based on the Profundity Scale, and dependent upon group discussion. The activity must be presented using the to, with and by format. First the teachers model the entire activity to their students. Next, teachers will share the responsibility of the activity with their students. Then teachers will guide students working in small groups through the use of the activity. Finally, students will independently work in small discussion groups to complete the activity or independently complete the activity. Following are the directions we give to teachers to guide students working in small groups. From these directions you should be able to model and share the activity and to help students move to independent use of this activity. The directions will be followed by some hints to help you do that. Depending upon the age of the student, adjust how much direction is needed.

To prepare for the activity you need the following materials for each small group working on the activity; sets of eight different color markers, large sheets of unlined chart paper: two sheets for the teacher and one sheet for each small group. You will also need a great book. There is a list of thematically linked text at the beginning of this unit. If they are books that you and your students have enjoyed over time they are probably good books with good lessons to be learned.

We are going to demonstrate the use of the activity using the book, *Elmer*, by David McKee. *Elmer*, is the story of a patchwork colored elephant. He is always the center of attention until one day he mistakenly gets the notion that the other elephants are laughing at him, not with him. He leaves the herd to find a berry bush that has elephant colored berries. He covers himself in berry juice until he looks like any other elephant. When he rejoins the herd he is unnoticed by the others. He stands there seriously still until he can't stand it any longer and yells, "Booo!" The other elephants think it is a great joke and make the remark that Elmer should have been there to enjoy the joke. In the next moment a rain cloud showers Elmer back to his normal patchwork color. All the elephants think that what Elmer did was his best joke ever and they decide to have a parade each year to celebrate Elmer's best joke. So, every year Elmer comes to the parade looking like a normal elephant and all the other elephants color themselves patchwork.

To begin, hang two sheets of chart paper up where everyone can see them. Devise a way for students to gather the material they need. We usually have them count the number of buttons on their person. The one with the most buttons gets to come up and get the markers and sheet of chart paper. Once everyone is situated in small groups, four to a group seems to be a workable size, and has the materials they need you tell the students to listen for the actions of the main character in the story as you read. Profundity depends on following the actions of one character throughout the story.

Tell the students to listen for the actions of Elmer as you read the story. Remind them that actions are the things Elmer does. Read the story aloud to the class. As a class cooperatively build a list of important actions on the first piece of chart paper. **This list goes along with the Physical Plane: the reader is aware of the physical actions of the character.** Choose the three actions the class feels are the most important being sure that one of them is the turning point of the story (the turning point is often the clearest example of the theme in stories). Then explain that they will be working in co-operative groups, which means we will listen to each person talk and each person will have an opportunity to talk. The person with the most buttons needs to pick up the black marker and draw this shape (a rectangle divided into three equal parts) in the middle of their group chart paper. Then they write one of the three actions chosen by the class in each of the boxes. As they are writing the teacher also draws the boxes and writes one of the three actions in each of the boxes (on the second sheet of chart paper), as a model.

We always have the students use the markers as their talking sticks. That means when you have the marker in your hand it is your turn to talk and everyone should listen to what you have to say. It is very important to establish this procedure from the very beginning especially if this is the first time the student will be working in cooperative discussion groups. The first student in each group to have a marker is the one with the most buttons on his or her person. We always start there and then have the students exchange the use of the marker by the order they are sitting in, moving clock-wise around the group. So, moving clock-wise around the group the next person needs a red marker to draw a red bubble that connects to the first action box. We are going to use the example for *Elmer* to help explain the next steps. What the group is going to be thinking about is “Why did Elmer think the other elephants were laughing at him?” **This question goes along with the Mental Plane: the reader is aware of the intellectual actions of the character.** The person with the red marker tells why first, then passing the marker clock-wise, everyone gets to share his or her reason why. When everyone is done sharing, the group synthesizes the information and the person with the red marker writes their response in the red bubble. The next person takes a blue marker and draws a blue bubble that connects to the red bubble. What the group is going to be thinking this time is “was it right or wrong for Elmer to think the other elephants were laughing at him and tell why?” **This question goes along with the Moral Plane: the reader is aware of the character in light of an ethical code.** Repeat the process of sharing and writing shared response in the bubble. The next person takes a green marker and draws a green bubble that connects to the blue bubble. What the group is going to be thinking this time is “What did Elmer get from thinking the other elephants were laughing at him?” **This question goes along with the Psychological Plane: the reader is aware of the psychological forces influencing the character.** It is important to remember that Profundity begins with the actions of the character and always goes back to the actions. It is also important to remember that for the third bubble you must stay specific to the action, you can never go beyond the next action. Students repeat this process for the next two actions on their own. As they are working you wander from group to group monitoring the group discussion, giving advice, modeling discussion behavior, prompting for deeper discussion and giving evaluative feedback that students can use to help monitor their own discussion groups.

Next, the teacher explains to the students that they will understand stories and theme better when they attempt to identify with the characters of the story. Every group now turns over their large sheet of chart paper and makes a list of how these are like a character in the story. Think about the ways you are the same as Elmer to make your list. This typically starts out as a list of physical characteristics; such as, we are both animals. Teachers should get students to think deeper by posing situations from the story to consider while they are filling out the chart. One such situation is pointing out that when Elmer was standing with the herd still, quiet and serious, he yelled, “Booo!” If you would do that then you are like Elmer. Teachers want students to see how their thinking is the same as Elmer’s. Do they do the same things as Elmer? Do they think the same things are right or wrong?

An example of the power identifying with characters has in helping students get to the theme level came about one day as while presenting this activity in a third grade classroom in Memphis, Michigan. We walked into the classroom and were immediately able to identify at least one Elmer, in the room. You can always identify the Elmers in classrooms very quickly. He was a very vivacious, very blond boy seated with a group of about 10 students and he was keeping them very entertained as we were preparing for the activity. He did stop long enough to become thoroughly engaged in the activity. However, when we got to the part where they had to think about “Why did Elmer yell, “Booo!” he stood up, threw his arms in the air, in very Elmer fashion, and announced, “Nobody needs to think, I know the answer, Elmer was addicted to attention, just like me!” It was a very easy jump for him to get from that understanding to the theme of “Be true to yourself.”

Go back to the person with the most buttons and have them turn the chart paper back over to the bubbling side. He or she needs to draw a large brown bubble. What the group is going to be thinking about here is “What is the theme of this story?” **This question goes along with the philosophical plane: the universal truth the author is trying to expound.**

Then you finish up the activity by having everyone draw a square and respond to one of the prompts listed on the three ways reading can transform your thinking page. This illustrates to students that universal truths are generative. This step often takes you beyond the theme level to the ideas in action level. Now that you know this to be true what can or are you going to do about it. This is the social action level that is described well by Terri and Randy Bomer in their book, *Reading and Writing for Social Action*, (1999) and by Paula Rogovin in her book, *The Research Workshop, Bringing the World into Your Classroom* (2001).

Here are some helpful hints to help you manage the activity in the classroom. This activity takes a few hours to do with the children so think of creative ways to break it down and spread the instruction over several days. You could do all the red bubbles one day, the blue bubbles the next day and then the green bubbles another day or you could do the first action one day or you could do the first action one day the second action the next day and then the third action another day. We recommend that the book be reread each day before resuming the activity. Since it takes a great deal of time to complete the activity, be sure to select text carefully. The teachers we have worked with always stress that they would never have students complete this activity with a book they themselves had not personally analyzed. They want to make sure they are able to help students through the tough spots and they want to make sure that the theme the students infer is reasonable and justifiable given the evidence in the story.

Here are some helpful suggestions to help you present this activity in a to, with, and by format. When modeling the activity the teacher will do all the talking and will be demonstrating how to draw the boxes and bubbles and how to think about the questions before filling in the bubbles. A time or two of modeling should be enough for most classes. When sharing the activity the teacher will share the talking and thinking about the questions with the students. The teacher still draws the boxes and bubbles and fills them in with synthesized answers. It looks and sounds like this when a teacher is sharing, the teacher draws the red bubble and poses the question, “Why did Elmer think the other elephants were laughing at him?” He or she then asks for responses from several students. The teacher then shares their own response and shows the children how to synthesize the several responses into a statement that can be written into the bubble. The teacher continues to share the talking and thinking until the activity is completed. Again, a time or two of sharing should be enough for most classes. When independently completing the activity, the students are to work alone. The teacher’s job becomes one of facilitator and evaluator. As they are working, you wander from group to group, monitoring discussion, giving advice, modeling discussion behavior, prompting for deeper discussion, and giving evaluative feedback that students can use to help monitor their own discussion groups. The ultimate goal is to have kids either using the Profundity Scale in small discussion groups or individually to understand text at a deeper level.

It is very helpful to repeat this process with a second thematically related book. A book that I often pair with *Elmer* is *Stand Tall Molly Lou Mellon*, by Patty Lovell. The theme of both stories is “Be true to yourself,” however; both characters accomplish this through entirely different means. By repeating the process with thematically related books students can compare and contrast one characters understanding of the theme with the other characters understanding of the theme and with their own understanding of the theme. It also demonstrates to students that theme is inferred. It is the teacher in this case who is inferring the theme of both books, declaring them thematically related and then asking students if they agree or disagree with the theme that the teacher has inferred. To answer that question effectively students will need to provide clear examples from the text to support their position. Looking at two thematically linked books will lead students to a deeper understanding of both texts.

As mentioned before, our ultimate goal is to have kids either using the Profundity Scale in small discussion groups or individually to understand text at a deeper level. We hope, by now, that it is becoming clear to you how useful the Profundity Scale is in helping students discuss and think about text. Hopefully, students will be able to choose text about which they are curious, get with interested others and successfully start and sustain a discussion group around that text. Hopefully, individual students will have enough experience with thinking this way that it will become internalized and students will think this way about all text. One teacher during a workshop remarked, “Now I have all the questions I need to discuss texts with my students.” She was referring to the questions asked at each plane during the bubbling activity.

Another adaptation was to use the Profundity Scale Matrix as shown on the next page. Teachers should read two thematically linked texts. Then on a greatly enlarged version of the matrix they would lead children through a group discussion about each box of the matrix. You complete the matrix one book at a time. When you have completed the matrix for both books you can then lead discussions that compare and contrast the two characters’ understanding of the theme to your own understanding of the theme. Students then can agree or disagree if the theme of both stories really is the same. Of course, to effectively answer that question, they will need to provide clear examples from the texts to support their position. Using this matrix truly helps students develop a deeper understanding of both texts.

## Profundity Matrix - Integrity

Titles of paired texts	List three important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?
<p>Title: A Day's Work</p> <p>Author: Eve Bunting</p> <p>Character: Abuelo</p>	<p>Abuelo agrees to do gardening work.</p> <p>Abuelo refused to take the money.</p> <p>Abuelo and Francisco replaced the flowers on Sunday.</p>	<p>The family needed money because Francisco's father had died.</p> <p>Abuelo picked the flowers instead of the weeds.</p> <p>Abuelo wanted to keep his word and do a good job.</p>	<p>It was right of Abuelo to earn a living and help out his children.</p> <p>He was right because he had not done the job correctly.</p> <p>It was right for Abuelo to keep his word.</p>	<p>Abuelo got a job for \$6.00 a day.</p> <p>He kept his pride and personal honor. He earned Ben's respect.</p> <p>Abuelo earned a regular job and felt a sense of pride.</p>		<p>It is important to be responsible for your actions.</p> <p>Follow through when you make a promise or agreement.</p> <p>Honesty is best.</p>	
<p>Title: Too Many Tamales</p> <p>Author: Gary Soto</p> <p>Character: Maria</p>	<p>Maria lost mother's ring while making tamales.</p> <p>Maria and cousins ate 24 tamales and couldn't find the ring.</p> <p>Maria confessed to mother that she lost the ring.</p>	<p>Maria wanted to feel grown-up and she was not paying attention.</p> <p>Maria realized she had to find the ring.</p> <p>Maria knew she had to tell the truth and be responsible.</p>	<p>It was wrong to take someone else's things without asking.</p> <p>It was wrong to eat the Christmas dinner.</p> <p>It was right to take responsibility for her actions.</p>	<p>Felt grown up for a short time then got guilt feelings.</p> <p>Maria felt badly both physically and emotionally.</p> <p>Maria got relief from her fear and learned a lesson.</p>		<p>It is important to take responsibility for your own actions.</p> <p>Honesty is best.</p>	

**Thematically Related Text Sets**  
**Integrity**  
**Profundity Matrix**

Titles of paired texts	List three important actions of one character	Why did the character act this way?	Was it right or wrong for the character to act this way?	What did the character get from acting this way?	How am I like the characters in this story?	What is the lesson learned from this story?	How has this lesson learned changed the way I think?

## **CROSS TEXT QUESTIONS FOR “ABUELO” AND “TOO MANY TAMALES”**

**Q. Did Abuelo and Maria do the same kinds of things? How were their actions similar or different?**

A. Abuelo and Maria both made mistakes, but Abuelo accepted his responsibility as soon as he realized his mistake. Maria tried to find the ring without telling her mother.

**Q. How are their reasons for acting the way they did similar or different?**

A. Grandfather did not understand what he was supposed to do so he picked the wrong plants. Maria wanted to feel grown up so she tried on the ring.

**Q. Did you agree more with how Abuelo acted or how Maria acted? Why?**

A. We agree with Abuelo more than Maria because he told Ben right away he would finish the job correctly. Maria avoided telling the truth.

**Q. Did Abuelo and Maria get the same thing for their actions? Why or why not?**

A. They both got the satisfaction of knowing they did the right thing.

**Q. If both of the characters learned the same lesson what was the lesson?**

A. It is important and good to take responsibility for your actions.

**Q. If each of the characters learned a different lesson what were the lessons learned?**

A. Maria learned that honesty is best. Abuelo learned that good character is rewarded.

**Q. Do you agree or disagree that the theme of these two stories is “integrity.”**

A. We agree.

**Simple Graphic Organizer  
to Help Students  
Organize Writing Ideas  
for Writing in Response  
to Reading**

# House Organizer

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**State  
Your Position**

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**Support from Selection 1**

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**Support from Selection 2**

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**Make a Connection**

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## Reading and Writing, (Part 2b) Applying Ideas to a Task

### Directions:

During Part 2a of this text you read *A Day's Work* and *Too Many Tamales*. You may look back at the reading selections to help you answer the following question.

Is it a good idea to wait to take responsibility for your own actions? Yes or no. Tell why you agree or disagree. Use examples from both texts to support your thinking. Tell how the two reading selections are alike or connected.

When finished writing fill out this checklist.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I state a position (agree or disagree)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I tell why?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I use examples from both texts?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I show how the texts are connected or alike?

## Writing – Integrity (Model)

I disagree that it is a good idea to wait to take responsibility for your own actions. What if someone else gets blamed for some mistake you made? That is not fair. Waiting to take responsibility for your actions can lead to trouble. I have found people are much more forgiving if you admit a mistake quickly. You also earn people's respect by showing integrity. For example, at our school the principal's award is given to a fifth grade student who has been an example to others because he or she has consistently taken responsibility in schoolwork, activities, and in social situations.

In *Too Many Tamales*, Maria not only felt badly about losing her mother's ring, she also got sick from eating the tamales to find the lost ring. If she had gone to her mother and taken responsibility right away, she would have learned that her mother had the ring all along. Abuelo in *A Day's Work* admitted his mistake and told Ben he would replant the flowers before he would accept any pay. He did not wait to take responsibility for his actions. Abuelo's integrity earned Ben's respect and "more than just a day's work!"

Both of the books talk about integrity. In the future, I will follow Abuelo's example and take responsibility for my actions quickly even though I may have to admit I made a mistake.

# **Related Language Arts Activities:**

## **Before, During and After Prototypes**

# Rate Your Words

Directions: Write each word that appears in the first column in the column that matches your understanding of the word.

**4** = Words you know and can use correctly

**3** = Words you almost know but the meanings are foggy

**2** = Words you think you have seen or heard before

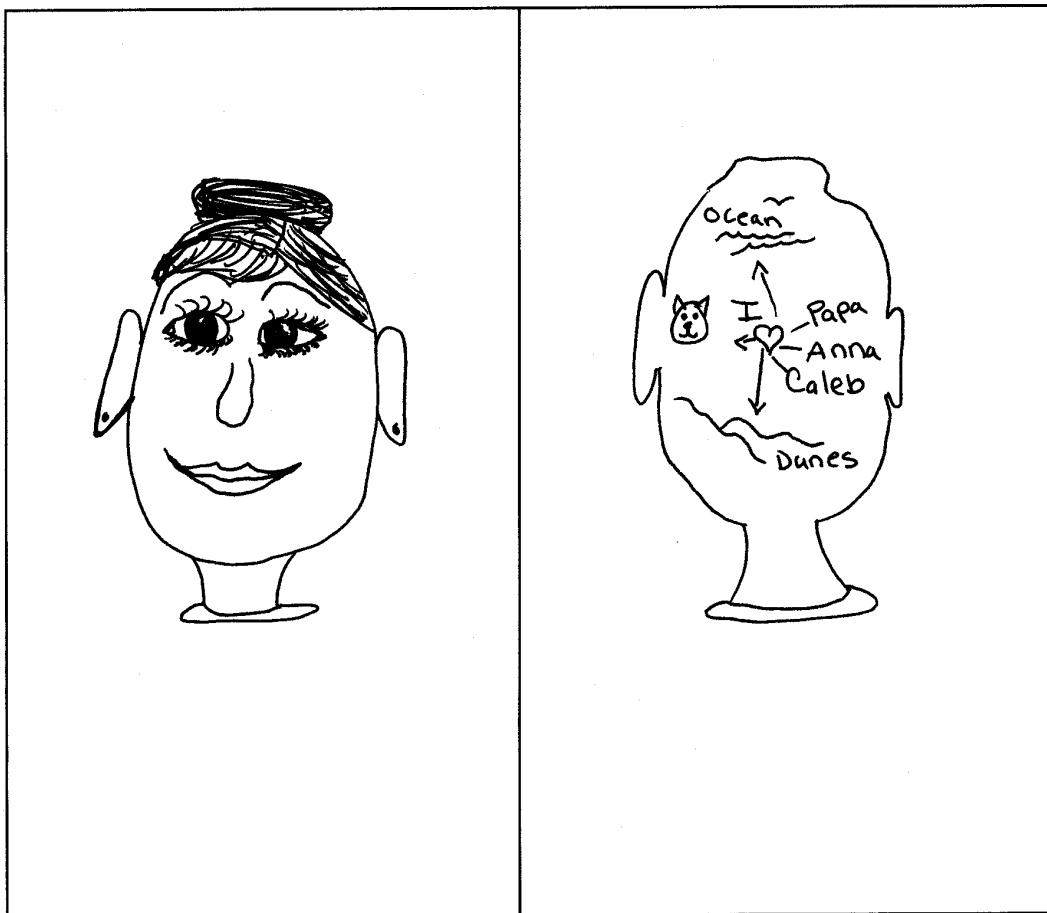
**1** = Words you do not know at all

Words	4	3	2	1

## Open Minded Portraits

Students will think more about a character and see the story from the character's point of view. Students draw an open minded portrait of the character. These portraits have two parts: First page is the face of the character and then the mind of the character on the second page. It is useful for students to draw several mind pages to show the mind set of the character at certain parts of the story. As the students create these pictures they are telling his or her thoughts about the character.

The two pages of a student's open-minded portrait about Sarah, the mail-order Bride in "Sarah, Plain and Tall" (MacLachlan, 1983), is shown below. The drawings and writing on the "mind" page show what she was thinking at the end of the story.



# Cubing

While cubing, students ponder a topic from six points of view. The name “Cubing” is appropriate, due to the fact that cubes have six sides. The six sides to cubing are as follows:

1. Describe the topic, such as shape, color and size.
2. Compare the topic to something else. Think about the similarities and differences.
3. Associate the topic to something else and tell why the topic makes you think of this.
4. Analyze the topic and explain how it is made.
5. Apply the topic and tell how it is used.
6. Argue; take a stand, for or against the topic. List the reasons for your argument.

Use these simple steps when utilizing the cubing exercise:

1. Choose a topic
2. Divide the students into six groups; invite each group to look at the topic from one of the six points of view. (Each student in the group can create his/her own point of view, if you wish, each six member group can create it's own cube.)
3. Students should think about ideas within the point of view of the group. Do a drawing or outline of ideas that were collectively gathered.
4. The students now will share their ideas with the class and attach their group ideas to a box. (Students may choose to construct a cube by folding and gluing cardboard or paper into a box.)

**Application:** Cubing can be used for across-the-curriculum thematic units. Middle and upper grades can cube topics such as Antarctica, endangered animals, the Underground Railroad, and the Nile River. Cubing is also useful in analyzing the characters in a story. A group of students wrote this cubing about Annemarie, the girl who helps to hide her Jewish friend Ellen in *Number the Stars* (Lowry, 1989):

**Describe:** Annemarie is a Danish, Christian, ten-year-old girl. She has blond hair and blue eyes and is very intelligent and athletic. She is a good friend.

**Compare:** Ellen and Annemarie are both intelligent Danish girls, and are both good friends. They are both good students as well. They are different because Annemarie has blond hair and Ellen has brown hair. Annemarie is thinner than Ellen and she can run faster than Ellen. They are also of different religion, which is the biggest difference in this particular story. During WWII religion was a factor in the safety of Ellen and the struggles of Annemarie.

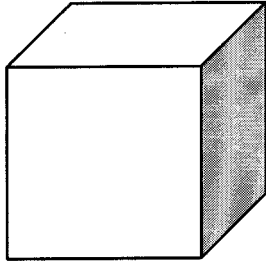
**Associate:** Annemarie is just like the rest of us. She would fit right in with our class.

**Analyze:** Annemarie is a normal girl but she had to be brave because of the war, if we lived through a war we might become strong like Annemarie. If a friend is in trouble you should try to help them, even though it might be dangerous.

**Apply:** It is a very smart thing to do, to pretend to be dumb. During the war, it can be dangerous if you know too much.

**Argue:** Annemarie decided to be brave. She could have left Ellen to take care of herself, but she didn't. Ellen had to be brave, if she hadn't she would have been sent to a concentration camp or she could have been killed.

## Cubing ( make a box)



	Apply it	
Argue (for or against)	Describe it	Associate it
	Compare it	
	Analyze it	

# Retelling Steps Using the GO! Chart

[Adapted from *The Power of Retelling - Developmental Steps for Building Comprehension*, by Vicki Benson and Carrice Cummins]

## Standard Retelling Steps:

### Day 1 1. Predictions / Vocabulary

Before reading have students make predictions based on title and the cover of the book.

Give children vocabulary that is used in the story to help guide predictions.

A prediction should be logical, derived from the given information. The teacher should always ask the child why and refer to story structure i.e. setting, characters, problem and solution.

Then children should be able to add vocabulary words that they think they may see in the text. (READ STORY)

### Day 2 2. Confirm or disconfirm predictions based on the reading.

#### 3. Understandings / Interpretations / Connections

In these two columns the students will be analyzing and organizing the story.

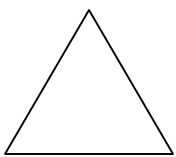
**Understandings:** The teacher should challenge the students to support their understandings from the story and continually refer back to the book.

**Interpretations:** When interpreting the story the children will reach a deeper understanding by questioning the story. Some questions will be what they were wondering during reading but others will extend beyond the story.

**Connections:** In this column children will relate the text to a personal experience, another text or a worldview.

### Day 3 4. Retelling

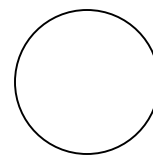
Now it is time to put the story back together. The shapes will help guide the students in analysis and organization of the story. (Teacher may have to work with the shapes prior to this story.)



The triangle symbolizes the beginning, because we usually find the characters, the setting, and the problem there. Each point represents one of the story elements.



The rectangle symbolizes the middle, because we usually find the events that take place that lead to the resolution of the problem. Insert one event for each corner.




The circle symbolizes the end and the idea, "what goes around comes around." This is where the solution to the problem is discovered.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Title

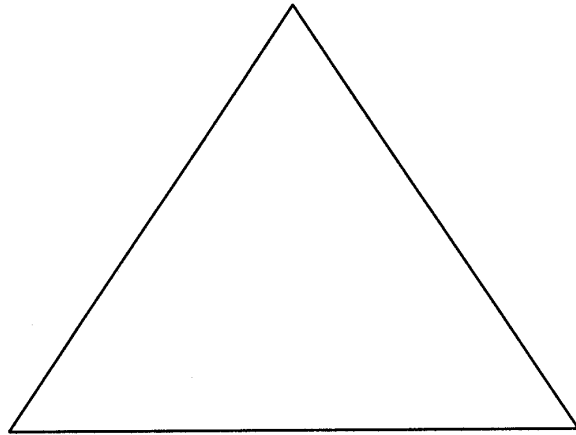
\_\_\_\_\_ Author

Predictions	Vocabulary	Understandings	Interpretations	Connections	Retelling
					

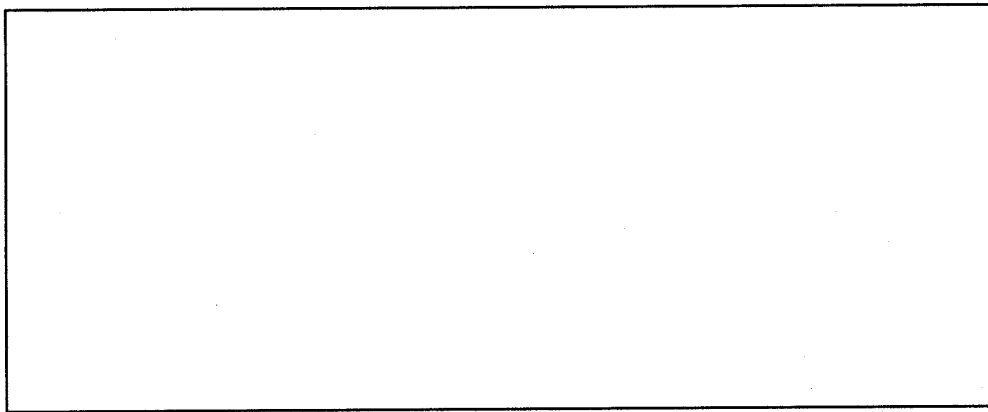
# Go Map

Name \_\_\_\_\_

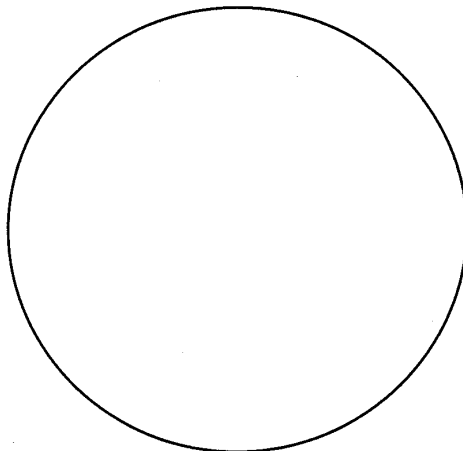
Story \_\_\_\_\_



**Beginning**



**Middle**



**End**

# Grand Conversations

A discussion about a story that includes student exploration of the characters and thoughts and feelings about the book can be acquired with Grand Conversation. The students can face each other and talk more openly in a circle; they can see each other better.

How to conduct a Grand Conversation:

1. Have the class read the story or read the story to the class.
2. The students will respond with a Quick Write or they may write their thoughts in a reading journal.
3. Bring all the students together in a group to participate in a discussion about the story. Smaller groups may be used.
4. During the discussion the students will share their ideas about the story.
5. Encourage the students to share their thoughts about the illustrations and the characters.
6. Use Questions to begin the conversation. "Who would like to begin?" What did you think about this part?"
7. Allow them to read from their Quick Writes or journals.
8. Leave the story available to the students so they may look up a certain point in the story that interested them.

## Applying the Grand Conversation

This procedure only takes about twenty minutes. If a novel is being read, a discussion could follow every chapter. Students should be encouraged to participate but observing others in this process might prompt participation for next time, therefore, no grade is necessary. If a student is more comfortable writing in their reading journal or drawing pictures about the story encourage them to show their work.

# What is Reader's Theater?

Reader's Theater is minimal theater in support of literature and reading. There are many styles of Reader's Theater, but nearly all share these traits:

No full memorization. Scripts are held during performance.

No full costume. If used at all, costumes are partial and suggestive, or neutral and uniform.

No full stage sets. If used at all, sets are simple and suggestive. Narration provides the framework for dramatic action. Reader's Theater was developed as a convenient and effective means to present literary works in dramatic form. This is still its primary use, though many scripts now published are original dramatic works rather than literary adaptations.

Originally popular on college campuses, Reader's Theater has now moved to the lower grades, where it is seen as a key tool for creating interest in reading. Kids love to do it, and they give it their all – more so because it's a team effort, and they don't want to let down their friends! And if the script is based on an available book, they will definitely want to read it. What's more, Reader's Theater is a simple activity for the teacher, since it requires no setup apart from the reproduction of scripts.

Reader's Theater has been found effective not only for language arts, but for social studies as well. Performing multicultural literature is one of the best ways for students to become interested in and familiar with other cultures.

## Internet Resources:

[www.lisablau.com](http://www.lisablau.com)

[www.aaronsherp.com](http://www.aaronsherp.com)

For more Reader's Theater, visit [Aaron Shepard's RT Page](http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt)  
at  
[www.aaronsherp.com/rt](http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt)

(*The Princess Mouse* is recommended for this unit. The written script can be found at the above web address.)

If you would like another excellent example of Reader's Theater, *A Country Torn Apart (1861-1865)* is thematically related to this unit and is a very well thought out piece of literature. It can be found in *10 Easy to Read American History Plays*, by Scholastic Books.

## Excellent Resources of Activities That Build Understanding of Themes

Tom Jackson offers three useful resources to encourage active participation. I have used these activities in my classroom and the students not only enjoyed participating, they gained valuable insight into some of life's lessons. These lessons encourage active learning through role-playing, games, demonstrations, and problem solving. Skills taught are transferable to other tasks. Students learn to analyze, draw conclusions, and assume responsibility. These lessons can be used as an anticipatory set for theme in the ELA Prototypes.

*Activities That Teach*, by Tom Jackson  
*More Activities That Teach*, by Tom Jackson  
*Still More Activities That Teach*, by Tom Jackson

To order any of these books or other materials:

Active Learning Center, Inc.  
3835 West 800 North  
Cedar City, UT 84720  
[www.activelearning.org](http://www.activelearning.org)