

THEMATIC UNIT

Related to ELA Prototypes



Theme: **Working Together**

Suggested for: **Third Grade**

Developed by:

Julie McDowell, 3rd Grade Teacher,
Yale Community Schools

Deborah Werth, Language Arts Teacher,
Landmark Academy

Edited by:

Jeff Beal, Language Arts Consultant



499 Range Road
P.O. Box 5001
Port Huron, MI 48061-5001
Phone: (810) 364-8990
Fax: (810) 364-7474
www.sccisd.org

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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!

ELA Prototype Materials

- **Thematically related texts**
- **Fruyer’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 Fruyer’s Profundity and cross text questions to guide you through your own thinking.

The sequence of instruction would be to introduce the theme through using the Fruyer’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 – Working Together

CODE	TITLE	AUTHOR
2	City Green	DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan
2	Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen	DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan
1	Mrs. Mack	Patricia Polacco
1	Come Back, Salmon	Molly Cone
1	Mirette on the High Wire	Emily Arnold McCully
1	The Lily Cupboard A Story of the Holocaust	Shulamith Levey Oppenheim
4 – Play	Barnyard Valentine	Jane Tesh Drama Magazine Plays Vol. 61, No. 4
4 – Magazine	To the Rescue: Special Heroes	Summer Success Reading Magazine, Vol. 4, Issue 5
4 – Reader's Theatre	The Great Big Enormous Turnip	Alexi Tolstoy
4 – Reader's Theatre	The Bundle of Sticks	A Fable by Aesop
3	The Wednesday Surprise	Eve Bunting
4 – Poetry	Helping	Shel Silverstein – <i>Where the Sidewalk Ends</i>
4 – Poetry	Atons	Shel Silverstein – <i>A Light in the Attic</i>
1	Cesar Chavez	Ruth Franchere
1	A Chair for My Mother	Vera B. Williams
1	Frannie's Fruits	Leslie Kimmelman
1	For the Love of Our Earth	P.K. Hallinoia

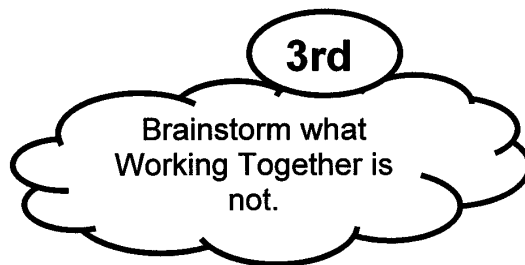
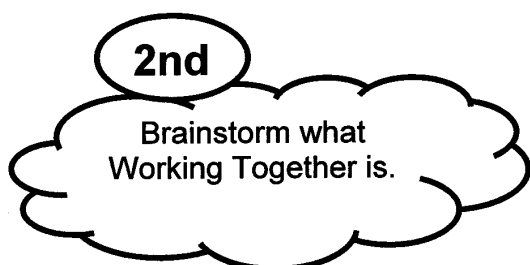
Code Key:
Suggested Uses

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

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

Working Together is...

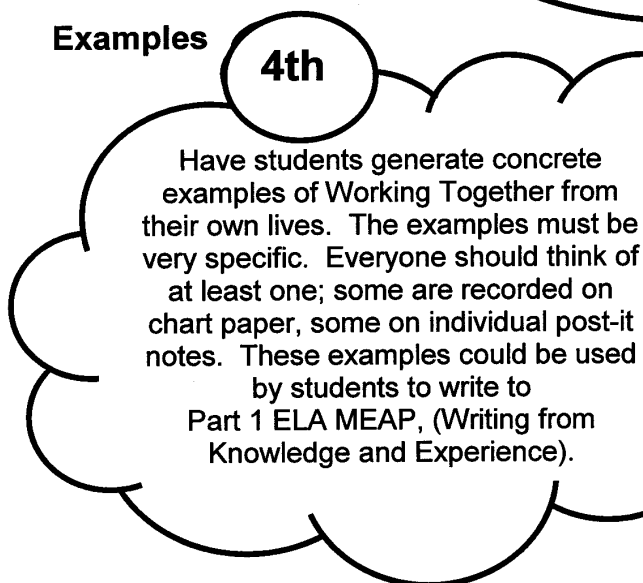
Working Together is not...



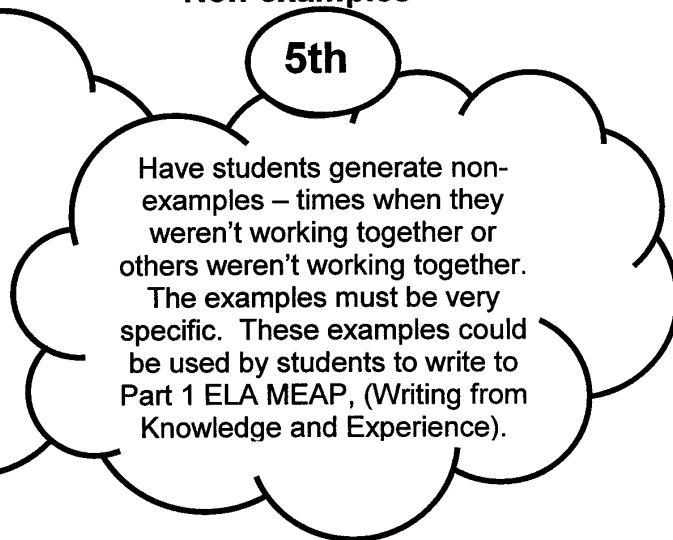
State theme in center oval



Examples



Non-examples



6th Read a book about “Working Together” that is not in the prototype. Have students listen for clear examples and non-examples of Working Together. Use names and situations specific to the reading selection, when recording the examples.

7th Have students identify clear examples from the 1st reading selection to record on the chart.

8th Have students identify clear examples from the 2nd reading selection to record on the chart.

9th Have students listen for clear examples and non-examples of Working Together during part three of the prototype to record on the chart.

10th 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

Working Together is...

Taking turns
Listening to others
Not always easy
Communicating
Compromising
Harmony

Working Together is not...

Taking turns
Listening to others
Easy
Communicating
Always getting your way
Arguing

WORKING TOGETHER

Examples:

In Girl Scouts we work together to clean the park.

Our church group adopted a highway and once a year we clean it together.

At school we work together using inquiry in science.

Non examples:

I do all of the cooking and no one volunteers to help.

Debbie refused to help the family with the housework.

Julie would not listen to anyone else's ideas.

...from *Come Back Salmon*, by Molly Brown

Examples:

The students wrote letters to the city.

The students made the community aware of how important the river was.

All the grades at Jackson School worked together to clean up the creek.

Non examples:

Some residents said the students were wasting their time bringing salmon back to Pigeon Creek.

The Port Officials wanted to build a log storage facility at the mouth of Pigeon Creek to the dismay of the Jackson School.

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

Working Together is...

Working Together is not...

Working Together

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 information may help you as 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**

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.

profiles prompt

Topic

A Special Place

Thinking About The Topic

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

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 three (A Special Place)

My Grandma and Grandpa Harris' cabin

Every summer my family goes to my Grandma and Grandpa Harris' cabin.

The cabin is about a half a mile away from Houghton Lake. We like to go to Annie's art and craft store, look at boats, go to get ice cream and go to Houghton lake and swim.

Every morning we'd wake up and look for deer in the yard. The cabin is almost in the woods. Almost every morning we see some.

Then I'd usually go back to sleep.

Then around 8:00 I wake up, all rested and I would smell the yummy eggs, bacon, toast, and pancakes. I'd say to myself, "Well off to another great day, and boy does breakfast smell good!" Then I would run out for breakfast.

After breakfast we'd start a little campfire. We would walk out in the dewy woods and get firewood.

About 20-30 yards out into the woods is an icky swamp. But it's cool! The swamp

is much more different than the woods that it's in.

If it's hot during the afternoon we would go swimming in the shimmering lake. When we get there we'd stare at the water sparkling in the sunlight. After I get my sunscreen on I jump in the water, and it's cold!

I yell, I run out and wrap my towel around me. After a long swim we'd go get ice cream, go to Annie's art and craft store, or look at beautiful boats, jetskis, and snowmobiles.

In the woods sometimes we pick fresh, lovely, wildflowers, and set them on the table.

At night we start another campfire and have yummy s'mores.

Going to my Grandma and Grandpa Harris' cabin makes me feel good inside because of all of the fun things we do together.

So that's my real story about my special place.

focus on content

- ✓ maintains focus
- ✓ develops with details

Voice/style

- ✓ good voice
- ✓ uses thoughtshots
- ✓ uses descriptive language
- ✓ uses some dialogue

organization

- ✓ sequences with beginning, middle, and end
- ✓ wonderful ending (but, delete the last sentence)

convention(s)

- ✓ good use of conventions

grade three (A Special Place)

The Best Place I Know

Places are very important to every one including me.

My favorite place has to do with school, unice, huh?

The school playground is my favorite place in

the world! This is a place where I can play, exercise,

chat, help people, make friends practice math and some-

times play soccer with Jody, Ashley and Shaina.

This is one playground out of atleast one thousand,

and this is the playground I like the most. The playground

is a large play space with

a slider, jungle-jim, rings, climbers, swings, bars, soccer

field, and a some sort of house in the sand pit.

Out of all my favorite activities, I enjoy playing with

my friends Jody, Erin, Kayla, Kayli, Shaina, Ashley,

and grand friend, Felicia. My friends are always

there for me and will not let me down.

The Play ground seems as if it is mine.

Though its not even near being mine, but it still

will feel as if it is because I love it.

focus on content

- ✓ focuses on topic
- ✓ develops with relevant details

Voice/style

- ✓ style is emerging
- ✓ humor
- ✓ effective use of descriptions
- ✓ figurative language - simile

organization

- ✓ organized with beginning, middle, and end
- ✓ use of paragraph form
- ✓ use of comparison
- ✓ effective lead

con-ven-tion(s)

- ✓ effective use of conventions
- ✓ commas in a series

attributes **grade three**

focus on content

- ✓ sticks to topic/clearly focused
- ✓ effective use of examples
- ✓ attends to details
- ✓ demonstrates original ideas
- ✓ title relates to the piece
- ✓ makes inferences and uses abstract thinking
- ✓ presents a problem and solves it
- ✓ gives definition
- ✓ includes picture to extend meaning
- ✓ shows sophisticated thinking
- ✓ developed through anecdote

organization

- ✓ includes introduction, middle, conclusion
- ✓ shows clear sense of organization/sequencing
- ✓ beginning and ending linked
- ✓ logical progression of ideas
- ✓ closes with definite and logical ending
- ✓ uses more defined story structure
- ✓ uses transitional words for chronological sequence
- ✓ sentences flow one to another

Voice/style

- ✓ demonstrates strong sense of voice (use of humor, varied vocabulary and skillful word choice)
- ✓ develops more sophisticated sentence structure
- ✓ evokes emotion
- ✓ emerging sense of style
- ✓ wows the reader
- ✓ creates a picture with words
- ✓ creates "slice of life"/realistic
- ✓ use of third person is effective
- ✓ uses variety of sentence structure
- ✓ uses showing sentences not just telling sentences
- ✓ shows conviction
- ✓ weaves facts into fiction
- ✓ uses introductory adverbial clauses
- ✓ uses technical vocabulary
- ✓ uses fantasy genre effectively
- ✓ personalizes
- ✓ develops narrative imaginatively
- ✓ uses dialogue
- ✓ builds suspense
- ✓ creates picture through imagery
- ✓ uses descriptive vocabulary
- ✓ uses strong verbs
- ✓ uses poetic language
- ✓ uses sound effects
- ✓ uses thoughtshots
- ✓ uses snapshots
- ✓ explodes a moment
- ✓ involves the reader
- ✓ effective use of humor

con-ven-tion(s)

- ✓ developing awareness of grammar and mechanics
- ✓ evidence of proofreading and editing
- ✓ demonstrates developing sense of paragraph (topic, sentence, conclusion)
- ✓ accurate use of capitalization and punctuation
- ✓ spells most words conventionally
- ✓ takes risk with spelling of difficult words
- ✓ edits and spells high-frequency words correctly
- ✓ correct usage and agreement of pronouns
- ✓ correct use of punctuation for dialogue
- ✓ uses legible handwriting: cursive and manuscript
- ✓ uses an expository format
- ✓ evidence of mapping/brainstorming
- ✓ uses topic sentence/supporting details

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's 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.)

Second Grade

My favirot place is Chicago **naming** . I like to go shopping at the american girl store. My apartment room wasn't all that big. But I still liked there apartments. I think Chicago has a lot of entertainment. Like dolphin shows. But when I stayed there I didn't want to leave. Why? Because I was so use to hearing the taxies and the trains going by **snapshot-sound** . There was nice air that blew against my face and hair. When I put my hand up high and walked at the same time it felt like I was being blowen away **specific actions** . I thought like it was almost a permanet home **simile** to me even though I was on vacation **thoughtshot** . Sometimes I got so used to it I said home sweet home or mom dad can we live here like stay forever. But they would always say. No! I had a weary feeling in my stomach. That this is the place I'll live when I grow up **foreshadowing** . I couldn't help of thinking of what I thought. So then the day came to leave my favirot place **compressing time** . I was very sad but I had to go home nobody in my family was as sad as me. I don't think they called it there favirot place but I knew I did. So that's how it became my favirot place **effective conclusion** .

Third Grade

The Friendship Trick (prompt: Friendship)

One day I heard my dad say we were going to Ceter Point **naming** with our best friends the Cronkcrights. When we got their we whent on some rids. Then our firnd decided to go on the Geminy. I Thought it looked big But they told me it was a calm ride. When we started down the first hill my friend Adam who was riding with me started telling me what the ride was rilly like. I curled up by my Adam with a chile down my spine **snapshot** . Adam was trying to calm me down. I clushed my hands on his shirt **snapshot** as if ther was no chain holding the roller coster **explode a moment, simile** . I was screaming at the top of my lungs as my friend worked so hard calm me down. On the thried hill I was laying on Adam crying and screaming like we were going to crash **humor** . On the finel drop I started to calm down. When we got off I was still cyring and everyone looked at me in fright as if the same thing would happen to them **specific action, comparing** . When we got back together with our parents I was still frightend. They asked me wats wrong. I told them what happened and they felt bad. Sometimes he trickes me But we are still friends **effective ending** .

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.

Thematically Related Text Sets
Individual Rights
Profundity Matrix-Teacher Example

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 changed the way I think?
<p><u>Old Henry</u> by Joan W. Blos</p> <p>Henry</p>	<p>Henry moves to the neighborhood.</p> <p>He refuses to fix up his house.</p> <p>He moves to Dakota</p>	<p>It had all the things he wanted.</p> <p>He wants to live this way.</p> <p>He acts this way so that he won't receive fines, letters, or have unhappy neighbors.</p>	<p>It is right because it is his right to do so.</p> <p>It is right since it is his individual right.</p> <p>It is wrong because he let others force him out.</p>	<p>He is content with what he has.</p> <p>He lived in his house the way he wanted to.</p> <p>Relief from the pressures of the neighbors but becomes lonely.</p>		<p>Everyone is entitled to live the way they want</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Individual rights</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Acceptance of Others/ Tolerance</p>	
<p><u>The Ballot Box Battle</u> by Emily Arnold McCully</p> <p>Mrs. Stanton</p>	<p>Mrs. Stanton teaches Cordelia how to ride a horse.</p> <p>Mrs. Stanton promises her father to be all that her brother was after his death.</p> <p>Mrs. Stanton jumps on the wagon to vote.</p>	<p>To help her and because Cordelia feeds her horse.</p> <p>Because her father was so unhappy when his only son died.</p> <p>She is determined that it is her right to vote.</p>	<p>It is right because they help each other.</p> <p>It is right because she is trying to make her father feel better.</p> <p>It is right because she wanted to make a change that would enable all citizens to vote.</p>	<p>She gets friendship and companionship.</p> <p>She went to school with boys and won an academic award.</p> <p>She is ridiculed by men, but discovers more determination to stand up for her rights.</p>		<p>Individual Rights</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Courage</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Determination</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Equality</p>	

**Thematically Related Text Sets
Determination
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 “UNCLE WILLIE” AND “CITY GREEN”

Q. Did Uncle Willie and Marcy do the same kinds of things? How were their actions similar or different?

A. Yes, Uncle Willie and Marcy are similar because they both volunteered to make a difference.

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

A. Willie’s reasons for working together were to help feed the poor. Marcy’s reasons for working together were to improve the city lot and involve the whole community.

Q. Did you agree with the things that Uncle Willie did more or with the things Marcy did more? Why?

A. We agreed with both, but believe Marcy did more because there was more community involvement. Marcy created community involvement.

Q. Did Uncle Willie and Marcy get the same thing for their actions? Why or why not?

A. They both enjoyed their volunteer work and gained satisfaction in helping people in need.

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

A. They both learned that working together could make a difference in others lives.

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

A. Both learned the same lesson.

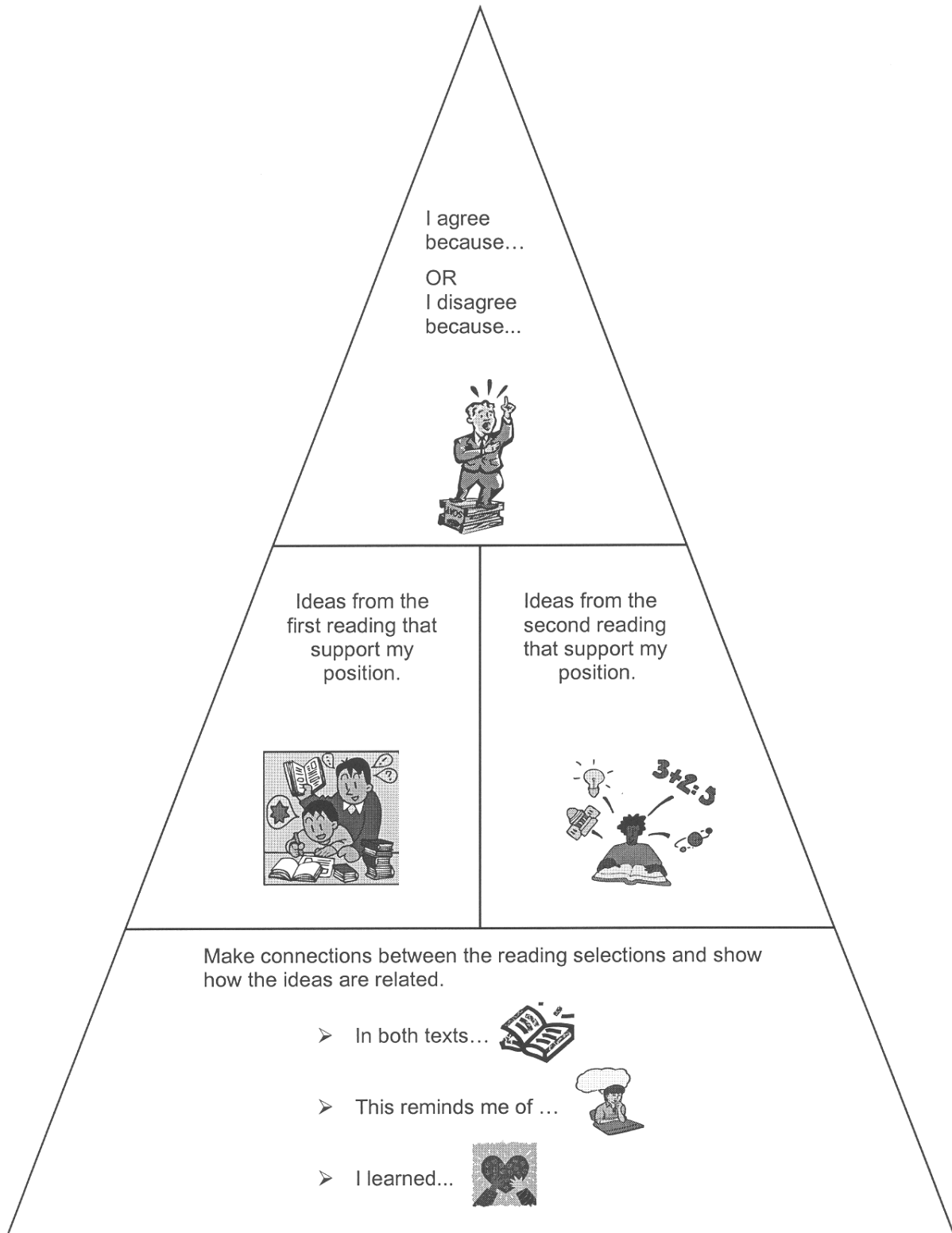
Q. Do you agree or disagree that the theme of these two stories is “working together?”

A. We agree.

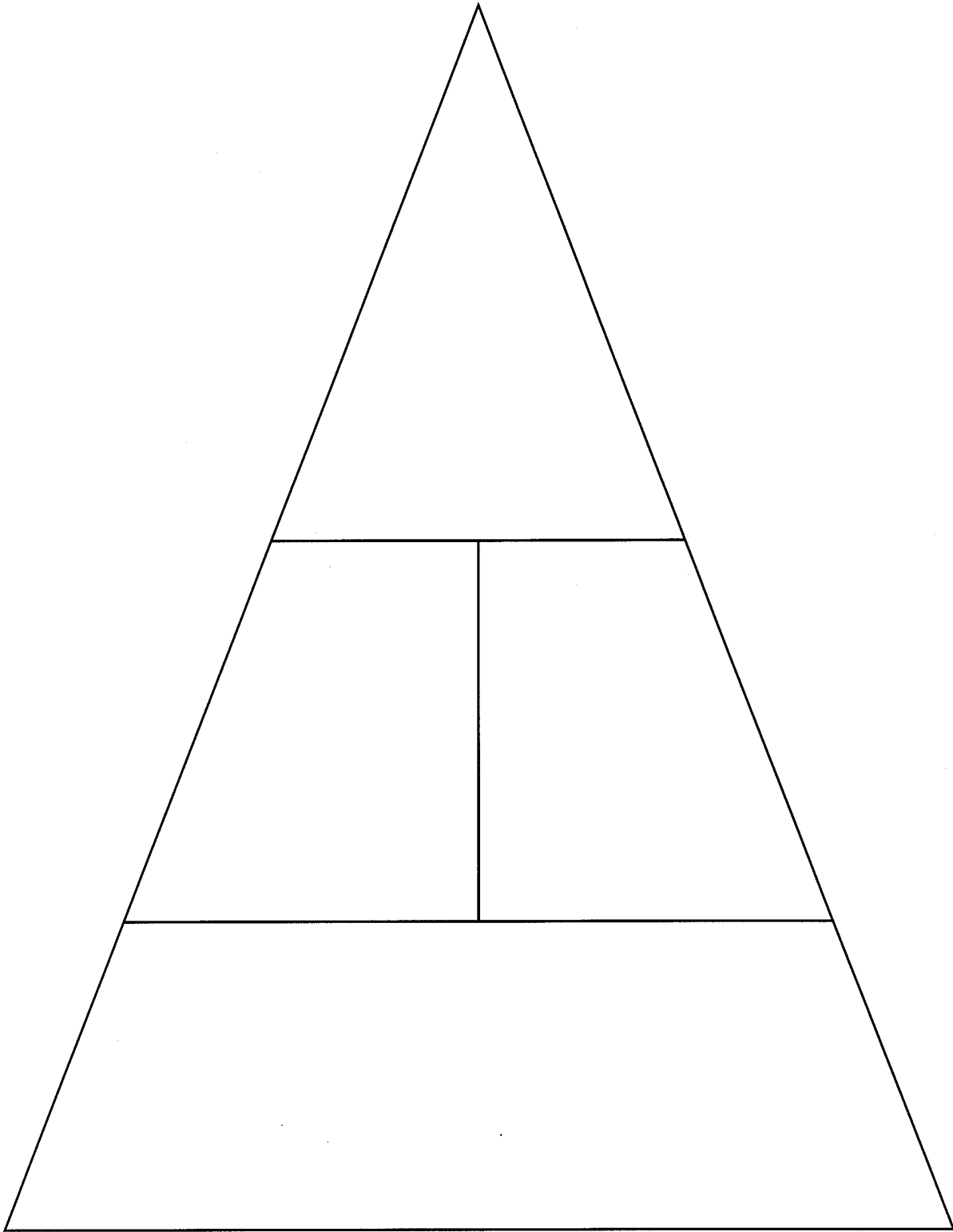
**Simple Graphic Organizer
to Help Students
Organize Writing Ideas
for Writing in Response
to Reading**

Writing in Response to Reading (Part 2)

Individual Rights



Writing in Response to Reading (Part 2) Individual Rights



Related Language Arts Activities:

Before, During and After Prototypes

Extension Activities

Theme: Working Together

Prewriting-Part 1 Writing from Knowledge and Experience

- Create a collaborative book. Each student contributes one page on their idea or gives an example of how they have worked together in their own life.
- Teacher models a “Think Aloud” about a time when they have worked with someone or worked to help someone. (*Think Aloud Strategies*, by Jeff Wilhem)
- Complete a flow diagram to show why it is important to have individual rights. Flow charts are useful for showing cause and effect.

First Reading Selection Activities Part 2A

City Green , by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

- Write predictions before reading. (See Worksheet 1)
- Encourage students to respond to a *Read Aloud* by Think, Pair, and Share strategies.
- Visual Responses-Create/draw pictures of before or after a situation that involved people working together. (See Worksheet 2)
- Write a daily newsletter about Marcy’s Garden and describe each character’s contribution created by community leaders.
- Write a letter to the local community leaders to find out how to create a garden program.
- Encourage students to use Quick Writes or Quick Draws about a situation they would like to change by working together. Students will create labeled pictures to explore and develop ideas from the story.

Second Reading Selection Activities Part 2B

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen, by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

- Teacher reads the story to students. Students create a story map to identify story elements. Select a memorable portion of the story. Use Reciprocal Questioning. Students will think more deeply and critically about actions of Uncle Willie. (*50 Literacy Strategies*, by Gail E. Tompkins) (See Worksheet 3)

- Uncle Willie meets new friends through his volunteer work. Have students interview someone new and share what they learned about them. (See Worksheet 4)
- To help students reflect and think deeply, draw an open mind portrait of the character Uncle Willie. You can use several mind pages to show a character's mind at pivotal points in the story. (*50 Literacy Strategies*, by Gail E. Tompkins) (See Worksheet 5)
- Vocabulary activity: Use “Word Theater” to investigate words from the story. Have students dramatize the words in a way that observers will have to guess their words. (*Revisit, Reflect, Retell*, by Linda Hoyt) (See Worksheet 6)

Applying Ideas to a Task Part 2 B

- Brainstorm projects or situations in which working together is necessary. (See Worksheet 7)
- Create a scenario in which you have to work with a group of people.
- Divide students into groups and assign roles.
- Describe how others will participate to complete a project.
- Identify problem situations and solutions that may arise when working with others.
- Make a list and discuss how people need other people.
- How is our world a better place when we work together?

Listening Activities

- Select interesting conversational sections for oral reading.
- Present a puppet show.

Additional Enrichment Activities

- Walk to a local park for community clean up as an activity for “Make a Difference Day.”
- Invite guest speakers such as a local landscaper or a local land management officer from the DNR.
- Use related videos.
- Set up a field trip to the local recycling center on or around “Earth Day.”
- Choral Sing the song – “We’ve got the Whole World.”

- Create an art project such as a habitat diorama or poster.
- Children will write a wide variety of poems about the environment. Such as haiku, cinquain, limericks, acrostics, and free form.

The Great Big Enormous Turnip

By Alexi Tolstoy

A Reader's Theater Script by Lisa Blau
[For Classroom Use only]

Narrator #1
Old Man
Dog

Narrator #2
Old Woman
Cat

Narrator #3
Granddaughter
Mouse

Narrator #1: Once upon a time an old man planted a little turnip.

Narrator #2: And the old man spoke to his little turnip...

Old Man: Grow, grow little turnip.
Grow Sweet.
Grow, grow little turnip.
Grow strong.

Narrator #3: And the turnip grew sweet and strong and big and...

All: ENORMOUS.

Narrator #1: Then one day the old man went to pull up his enormous turnip.

Narrator #2: He pulled and he pulled.

All: But he could not pull it up.

Narrator #1: So the old man called out to the old woman.

Old Man: Come and help me pull up my big, sweet, strong, and enormous turnip.

Narrator #1: So the old woman pulled the old man, and the old man pulled the turnip.

Narrator #2: They pulled and pulled again.

All: But they could not pull it up.

Narrator #1: The old woman called out to the granddaughter...

Old Woman: Come and help us pull up this big, sweet, strong and enormous turnip.

Narrator #2: So the granddaughter pulled the old woman.

Narrator #3: And the old woman pulled the old man.

Narrator #1: And the old man pulled the turnip.

Narrator #2: They pulled and pulled again.

All: But they could not pull it up.

Narrator #1: The granddaughter called out to the big black dog...

Granddaughter: Come and help us pull out this big, sweet, strong and enormous turnip.

Narrator #1: So the dog pulled the granddaughter.

Narrator #2: And the granddaughter pulled the old woman.

Narrator #3: And the old woman pulled the old man.

Narrator #1: And the old man pulled the turnip.

Narrator #2: They pulled and pulled again.

All: But they could not pull it up.

Narrator #3: The dog called out to the lazy brown cat...

Dog: Come and help us pull out this big, sweet, strong and enormous turnip.

Narrator #1: So the cat pulled the dog.

Narrator #2: And the dog pulled the granddaughter.

Narrator #3: And the granddaughter pulled the old woman.

Narrator #1: And the old woman pulled the old man.

Narrator #2: And the old man pulled the turnip.

Narrator #3: They pulled and pulled again.

All: But they could not pull it up.

Narrator #3: The cat called out to a wee little mouse...

Cat: Come and help us pull out this big, sweet, strong and enormous turnip.

Narrator #1: So the mouse pulled the cat.

Narrator #2: And the cat pulled the dog.

Narrator #3: And the dog pulled the granddaughter.

Narrator #1: And the granddaughter pulled the old woman.

Narrator #3: And the old woman pulled the old man.

Narrator #2: And the old man pulled the turnip.

Narrator #1: They pulled and pulled again.

Mouse: And you know what happened to that great big enormous turnip?

All: No! Please tell us!

Mouse: Well...it came UP, of course!

All:(sighing) WHEW! THE END!

Worksheet 1

PREDICTIONS

BEFORE READING

DURING READING

AFTER READING

Worksheet 2

Visual Responses Working Together

Visualize while reading your story.

Draw a picture before reading: _____

Draw a picture during reading: _____

Draw a picture after reading: _____

Story Retelling

Educators can tell if a student has comprehended a story by the way they retell it. A student may retell a story in writing or verbally. Oral communication of the retelling process is very valuable when working with an emergent reader. The teacher asks the students to retell with puppets or other animation. A felt board and story boards will help to prompt the student into retelling the story the way they remember it. The educator should then lead the child to remember more about the reading, such as, “What else do you remember about that part of the story?” “What happened next?” The teacher should then write down how many key ideas the student has remembered.

When the students retell with drawings or in writing they should make a three page book. On the first page is the beginning the middle page is the middle of the story and the last page is the end. This will encourage writing the story in their own words.

Retelling Steps:

1. Have a notebook ready and organize it to record what the children remember
2. Give several interesting ways to explore the story after reading the story to the class.
3. Give the option to retell in writing or verbally. Allow them to choose puppets or other items to help them retell.
4. Here are some questions to help the student discuss the story and retell their ideas in their own words.

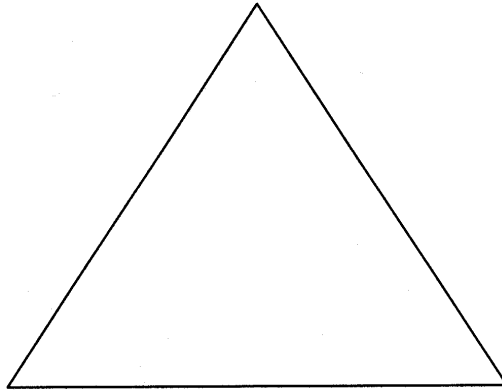
What happened first?
Who was this story about?
When do you think this story took place?
What time of year?
Where did the story happen?
What did the character do?
How did the story end?

These questions may help with written retelling or oral retelling.

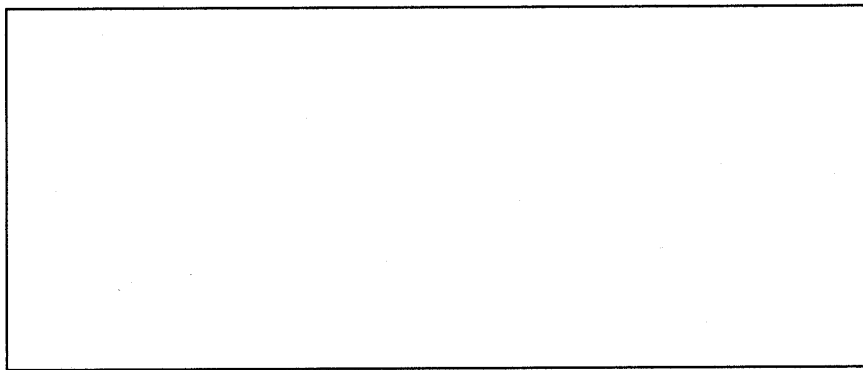
Go Map

Name _____

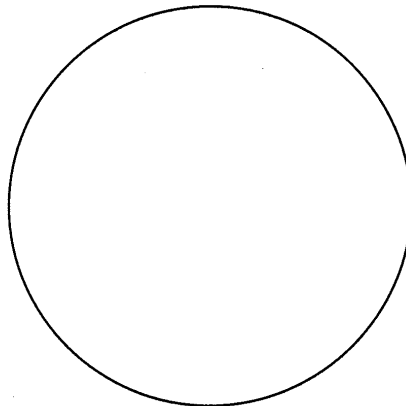
Story _____



Beginning



Middle



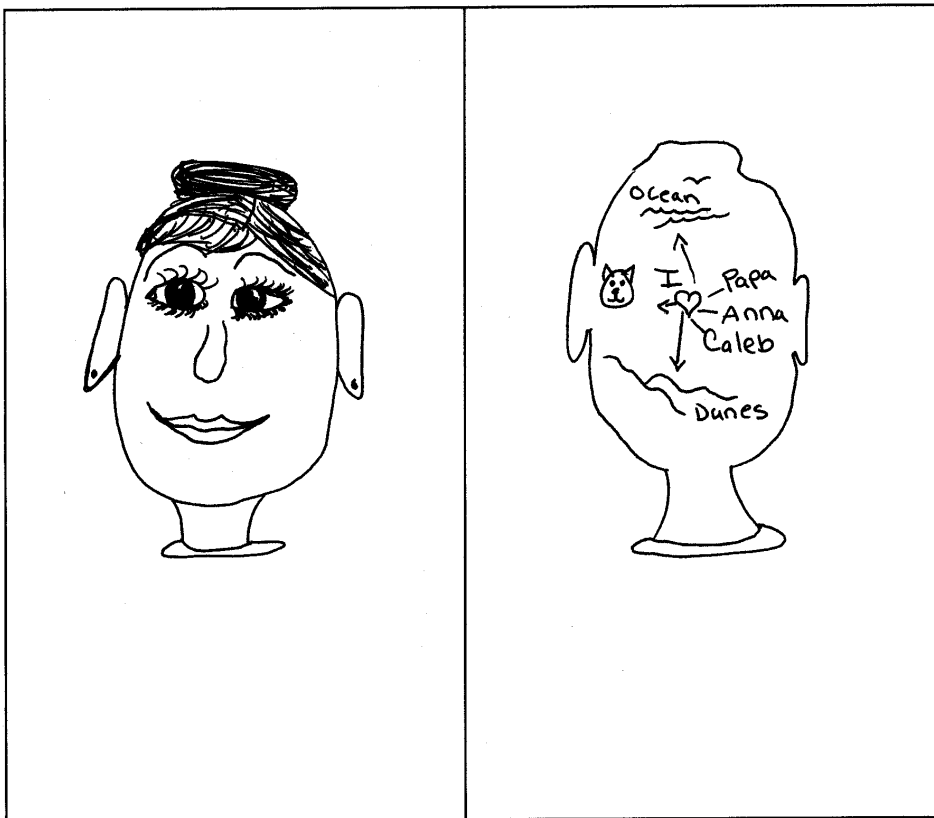
End

Interview Page

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.



Mind Portraits

Choose three actions. Write about the character actions during three parts of the story. What are their reasons for acting this way?

Word Theater Worksheet

Title:

Actors:

Focus word:

Page numbers:

Our plan for dramatization:

Brainstorming Ideas:

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