



Close reading plan

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

Created by Jennifer Lizee-Hammer, 2014 Connecticut Dream Team teacher

What makes this text complex

Text and Author	<i>Owl Moon</i> – Jane Yolen	Where to Access Text	PPT version: http://www.ltps.org/webpages/mmutinsky/block2.cfm?subpage=1235443 ISBN#0-590-42044-5
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Text Description

This text is a narrative account, told in the first-person, of a young girl’s “owling” adventure with her father. The story is told in a unique structure, similar to verse and is rich with non-literal language. While the text is not long in terms of word count, the author has chosen her words carefully to create a mood, describe the setting, and illuminate the importance of this seemingly unimportant event (central message). This text naturally lends itself to the reader “making a picture” in his or her mind (visualizing) as a result of its rich figurative language.

This text could be used as part of reading or writing unit on “author’s craft”, or as a mentor text when introducing the personal narrative genre. In addition it could be a complementary fictional companion during a non-fiction study of owls.

Quantitative

Lexile and Grade Level	630 L – Grade 3	Text Length	
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Qualitative

Meaning/Central Ideas	Text Structure/Organization
The meaning and central idea of the text (anticipating something exciting: a right of passage/special time with a family member) is not explicitly stated and must be inferred by the reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written in verse (longer sentences broken up by commas and line breaks) = phrasing - Compound sentences connected by “and” and/or a comma - Illustrations “match” the text, occasionally extend the text - Repeated phrase “When/if you go owling...” - Italics
Prior Knowledge Demands	Language Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept of “owling” – observing nature - Owls as nocturnal animals - Personal narrative genre - First person “point of view” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of descriptive language to create a mood, illustrate a setting, etc. - Figurative/non-literal language (simile, metaphor, personification) - Multiple meaning words

Vocabulary

Tier Two Words (General academic vocabulary)	Tier Three Words (Domain-specific words)
<i>“Words that are far more likely to appear in written texts than in speech. [They] often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things—saunter instead of walk, for example.” (CCSS ELA Appendix A)</i>	<i>“[Tier Three words]...are specific to a domain or field of study (lava, carburetor, legislature, circumference, aorta) and key to understanding a new concept within a text.” (CCSS ELA Appendix A)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">• Pa <li style="width: 50%;">• meadow <li style="width: 50%;">• woolen <li style="width: 50%;">• stained <li style="width: 50%;">• shrugged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • owling

Potential Reader/Task Challenges

- Finding the central message, and subsequent theme of this text may be challenging since it must be inferred
- Using the figurative language devices to comprehend mood, understand setting, and infer important ideas

Text-dependent questions		
Question	Standard alignment	Page of this document
What is the setting of Owl Moon? What words/phrases did Jane Yolen choose to illustrate both the physical setting and the time setting in the beginning of the book?	RL.1	4
In Owl Moon Jane Yolen frequently uses non-literal language. One example is, “The trees stood still as giant statues”. Find another example of non-literal language and explain how it helps you understand the setting, characters, problem/solution and/or central message?	RL.4	7
In the text the author repeats, “When you go owling you have to...be brave.” Use the text to prove the little girl was brave.	RL.3	11
What is the central message of <i>Owl Moon</i> ? Explain how the words/phrases Jane Yolen selects “paint a picture” in a reader’s mind and help to illustrate the central message.	RL.2	14
The title of this text is <i>Owl Moon</i> and it is significant to the story. Thinking about the setting, characters, and central message create a new title for the text and use evidence to justify its significance.	RL.2	17
Target Standards		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. • RL.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. • RL.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. • RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. 		

Question 1

Question #1	What is the setting of Owl Moon? What words/phrases did Jane Yolen choose to illustrate both the physical setting and the time setting in the beginning of the book?	
Standard(s) covered:	RL.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	
	Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
	<p>The physical setting of <i>Owl Moon</i> is in the woods. Jane Yolen illustrated this when she said the little girl and her dad walked toward the woods. The time setting of <i>Owl Moon</i> is late at night, during the winter. Jane Yolen illustrated this when she said, “It was late one winter night.” I also know the setting is at night because it said the moon was really bright.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the difference between physical setting and time setting. • Identifying specific words/phrases that explicitly give details about the setting (not relying on the illustrations).
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:		
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to identify the setting by identifying descriptive words and phrases that give details about time and place.	
Prior knowledge to review	<p><i>Setting</i> – Students must understand that setting refers not only to the <i>place</i> in which a story takes place, but also a <i>period of time</i>. (R2.5)</p> <p>Students must be able to paraphrase (put text into their own words) or accurately “lift” and cite an author’s words using quotation marks.</p>	
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction	

<p>1) Reread the beginning of the text, noticing words that give “clues” about <i>where</i> and <i>when</i> the story is occurring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask yourself, “Where am I often introduced to the setting of a story?” • “Hmmm....I know the beginning of a fiction text often introduces a reader to the characters and the setting.” • “Let me reread the beginning (first 2-3 pages) of Owl Moon” • “Since I’m zooming in on the element of setting while I’m rereading I should pay careful attention to the words or phrases that give me a clue about <i>where</i> and <i>when</i> the story is happening. I’m going to stop and jot these time and place words as I encounter them.” • Begin rereading first page. • “Right here I notice the word <i>late</i>. That seems like a clue word. I should jot that down. • “Let me keep reading. I see... (<i>winter, night, woods</i>)
<p>2) Categorize the words into <i>time</i> and <i>place</i> words using a t-chart.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wow! The author left me a lot of clues about the setting through the words she chose. Now I need to decide whether each word is a clue about the time period that this story is taking place, or where this story is taking place.” • “I’m going to use a t-chart (Appendix A) to help me categorize my words. One side of my t-chart will be for <i>time</i> words, and the other will be for <i>place</i>. • “Let me look at the first word on my chart: <i>late</i>. Hmmm....<i>late</i> tells me when something happened, not where, so I’ll put it under time. • Repeat with the remainder of the words (<i>winter, night, woods</i>), thinking aloud about whether they are time or place.
<p>3) Use the completed t-chart to formulate your response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Great! Now that I’ve organized my text evidence and know which words help me identify the time setting and the place setting, I’m ready to answer the question!” • “The first part of the question asks me about the words/phrases that illustrate the physical setting, or place. If I look at the <i>place</i> side of my t-chart, I see the place is the woods. Therefore the first part of my response will be ...” • “The second part of the question asks me about the words/phrases that illustrate the time setting, or when it happened. If I look at the <i>time</i> side of my t-chart, I see the time is late, during the winter, and at night. Therefore the second part of my response will be ...”

Extension and practice

- **PRACTICE:** If students are having difficulty recognizing the setting “clue” words within the text, they can reference the illustrations on pg. 1 and 2. They should study the illustrations and brainstorm words based on the visual clues that describe *where* and *when* the story is taking place. They can then “match” these to similar words within the text.
- **PRACTICE:** If students are having difficulty determining whether the descriptive word/phrase describes time or place, provide them with an opportunity to sort a variety of setting specific words/phrases in isolation. Before sorting students should ask themselves, “Is this a *time* word? Is this a *place* word?”
- **EXTENSION:** If students quickly identify the words/phrases used to illustrate setting, they can be provided with portions of the text in which they have to infer information about the setting. For example: *the trees stood still as giant statues, our feet crunched over the crisp snow, Pa made a long shadow, the moon made his face a silver mask, the moon was high above us*, etc. After making inferences students can add their new information to the already started t-chart; *Time vs. Place* and use it to help support their response.
- **EXTENSION:** Have students apply these steps/strategy to a text in which the setting changes (ie. a longer chapter book). For *time* setting have students notice the words an author uses to indicate the passage of time.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to other *fiction texts* with strong settings illustrated with words.

See more examples of how to teach: *Answering questions about the setting by referring explicitly to the text as a basis for answers (RL 3.1)*

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to identify the setting by identifying descriptive words and phrases that give details about time and place.

1. Reread the beginning of the text noticing words that give “clues” about *where* and *when* the story is occurring.
2. Categorize the words into *time* and place words using a t-chart.
3. Use the completed t-chart to formulate your response.

Describe Setting Using Words from the Text

<http://learnzillion.com/lessons/1935-describe-setting-using-words-from-the-text>

Question 2

Question #2	In <u>Owl Moon</u> Jane Yolen frequently uses non-literal language. One example is, “The trees stood still as giant statues”. Find another example of non-literal language and explain how it helps you understand the setting, characters, problem/solution, and/or central message?
Standard(s) covered:	RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
<p>Another example of non-literal language I found was when the author said, “It was quiet as a dream.” The author was comparing the sounds of the outdoors, to the sounds you hear when you are sleeping and dreaming. This helped me understand the setting because I know in a dream it’s very quiet, calm, and peaceful. Therefore I know that when the little girl and her dad are headed into the woods it’s quiet and calm, almost dream like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriate example of non-literal language cited from the text (<i>quiet as a dream, he looked up as if searching the stars, he looked up as if reading a map, as if someone’s icy hand was palm-down on my back, the snow below it was whiter than the milk in a cereal bowl, etc.</i>) • An appropriate/thoughtful explanation of how the non-literal language helped the student understand the setting, characters, and/or central message.

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:

Objective	<p>In this lesson you will learn how to identify and describe characteristics of the setting by identifying and determining the meaning of non-literal words/phrases.</p> <p align="center">**This lesson could be modified and used for identifying and describing characters, plot, central message, etc.**</p>
Prior knowledge to review	<p><i>Story elements</i> – Students must be able to answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (R2.1)</p> <p>Students must be able to paraphrase (put text into their own words) or accurately “lift” and cite an author’s words using quotation marks.</p>
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction

<p>1) Reread the text noticing places where the author has used non-literal language (<i>comparison</i>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Words or phrases can have literal or non-literal meanings. A non-literal meaning is when a word or phrase means something other than the exact words in it.” • “Authors sometimes use non-literal language in their writing as a way to make a comparison, an exaggerated statement about something, or help the reader “paint a picture” in their mind. For example, an author writing that someone is a “night owl” is really saying that this person is awake and active at night <i>like</i> an owl (non-literal meaning) rather than stating that the person turns into an animal at night (literal meaning). • “When Jane Yolen said, “The trees stood still as giant statues”, she didn’t mean the trees were really statues. She was comparing the trees to statues so we would know that the trees stood tall, stiff, and unmoving like statues.” • “I’m going to reread the text and notice places where the author has included more non-literal language; places where the author doesn’t really mean what he/she says.” • Begin rereading. • “Hmmm...Here on page 2 it says, “And when their voices faded away it was as quiet as a dream.” • “It can’t really be a quiet as a dream because the little girl and her dad are awake. I think the author is using non-literal language. I’m going to jot that down and keep reading.” • Record this sentence on chart paper. • Continue rereading noticing examples such as: <i>little gray footprints followed us, he looked up as if searching the stars, as if reading a map, the moon made his face into a silver mask, I could feel the cold as if someone’s icy hand was palm-down on my back, they (the shadows) stained the white snow, the snow below it was whiter than the milk in a cereal bowl, but I was a shadow as we walked home</i>)
<p>2) Ask yourself, “If the author doesn’t really mean...What is the author trying to tell me?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wow! This author used a lot of non-literal language. Now I need to go back and ask myself, “If she doesn’t really mean...What does she mean?” • “Let me think about this example: <i>The moon made his face into a silver mask.</i>” • “Hmmm...the moon can’t literally make the dad’s face into a mask because the moon isn’t human. I think the author means that the bright white moonlight shining down, reflected on the dad’s face and made it like mask because his skin was covered with it.” • “Let me also look at the illustration. The illustration may help me confirm or revise what the author means by her words.” • “When I look at the dad’s face it does look like the dad’s face is really bright white. That must be because of the moon light.” • “Let me look at another example: <i>I was a shadow as we walked home.</i>” • “Well the little girl can’t really be a shadow because she’s a real little girl and a shadow is just a reflection. I think the author means that she followed her dad like a shadow; quiet and moving right behind him. • “Let me check the illustration again.” • “Hmmm...this illustration really doesn’t help me because it’s not capturing the part of the story where the little girl is walking home.” • If necessary, repeat with other charted example.

<p>3) Using the new information gathered from analyzing the non-literal language, decide what further information it gives you about the story elements (character, setting, problem, solution, events) or central message.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Now that I know what the author really meant by all that non-literal language, I realize that it really helps me “paint a picture” in my mind and gives me more information about the characters, setting, problem/solution, and/or central message.” • “Now that I understand how bright the moon was I know it must have been late at night. I also know that if the moon was that bright it was probably a full moon, not a crescent or new moon. That helps me understand the <i>time</i> setting.” • “Now that I know the little girl isn’t really a shadow, but a quiet follower, I know she must be taking owling really seriously. Even though she finally got to see an owl and she’s really excited, she’s still quiet and not talking. She’s following the rules of owling. That shows me something about the character; that she’s very serious and responsible. • If necessary, repeat with other examples.
<p>4) Choose one example and formulate your response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think I’m ready to answer the question. I’ve found quite a few examples of non-literal language. Now I’m ready to use the new information to build on my current understanding of the text.” • “I’ll choose an example of non-literal language that really helped me as a reader.” • Choose 1 example from your “think-aloud” and model writing an exemplar response.

Extension and practice

- **PRACTICE:** For students struggling to identify and understand non-literal language, read and discuss an *Amelia Bedelia* book. The illustrations in the text often support the literal/non-literal meaning of words. Students can begin predicting *how* the main character will interpret directions based on their growing understanding of literal and non-literal meanings.
- **EXTENSION:** Students who quickly grasp non-literal language can deepen their ability to understand future examples by studying homonyms; words that sound the same and are spelled the same, but have different meanings (ie. drew, tire).

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to other fiction texts rich with non-literal language.	See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)
<p>Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to identify and describe characteristics of the setting, characters, and/or central message by identifying and determining the meaning of non-literal words/phrases.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reread the text noticing places where the author has used non-literal language. 2. Ask yourself, "If the author doesn't really mean...What is the author trying to tell me?" 3. Using the information gathered from analyzing the non-literal language, decide what further information it gives you about the story elements (character, setting, problem, solution, events) or central message. 4. Choose one example and formulate your response. 	<p><i>Determine the Meaning of Unknown Words and Phrases</i> http://learnzillion.com/lessons/2036-determine-the-meaning-of-unknown-words-and-phrases</p> <p><i>Use Images in a Poem to Visualize the Setting</i> http://learnzillion.com/lessons/1816-use-images-in-a-poem-to-visualize-the-setting</p>

Question 3

Question #3	In the text the author repeats the phrase, “When you go owling you have to...be brave.” Use the text to prove the little girl was brave.
Standard(s) covered:	RL.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. RL.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
In the text the little girl has to be brave to go owling. I know she is brave because when she is in the woods and the trees are tall and black, she doesn't get scared and ask her dad what is hiding behind them. Another reason that she's brave is because even though her hands and face are cold from the snow and wind, she doesn't complain. The last reason I know the little girl is brave is because she didn't get scared and scream when the owl landed on the tree branch. Those are the reasons the little girl was brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3 specific examples from the text that illustrate the little girl behaving bravely

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:

Objective	In this lesson, you will learn how to describe a character's traits by analyzing the things a character says, or the way he/she behaves.
Prior knowledge to review	<p align="center">**This lesson could be modified for other characters in the text and/or other traits.**</p> <p><i>Story elements (particularly character)</i> – Students must be able to answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (R2.1)</p> <p>Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. (R2.3)</p> <p>Students must be able to appropriately <i>inference</i> (what “clues” is the author giving me?)</p> <p>Students must be able to paraphrase (put text into their own words) or accurately “lift” and cite an author's words using quotation marks.</p>
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction

<p>1. Think about the stated character trait. Decide what the trait means/ "looks" like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Fictional characters often have many traits. Traits can be outside/external (ie. how a character looks) and inside/internal (ie. how a character acts/personality). • "The question is telling me that one of the little girl's traits is brave." • "Hmmm...what does brave mean? What does it "look" like when someone is brave?" • "I think brave means doing something that you might be scared of. It might "look" like riding a roller coaster when you're afraid of heights or sleeping for the first time without a night light." • "I think brave also means showing courage; like even if you're scared, no one else knows."
<p>2) Reread the text noticing places where the character says or does something to illustrate the trait.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Now that I've decided what bravery is and what it looks like, I'm going to reread the text and notice places where the little girl is brave." • "I know that <i>brave</i> is an internal trait, because it's not something I can see just by looking at a person or an illustration. That means I'm really going to have to pay attention to what the character says, or what the character does. Noticing a character's words and actions will tell me a lot about my character." • "Here it says, "I didn't ask what kinds of things hide behind black trees in the middle of the night...". I think the little girl was scared of the dark and the creatures that live in the woods, but she didn't ask her dad about it." • "Her actions show she's brave because even though she's feeling worried and nervous inside, she's not letting anyone know." • "I think I found another spot...Here it says, "I could feel the cold, as if someone's icy hand was palm-down on my back. And my nose and tops of my cheeks felt hot and cold at the same time." • "WOW! Even though the girl was very cold, so cold she was almost burning, she didn't complain. That's another place where the character's actions illustrate bravery." • "Let's see if I can find one more place...Oh, right here...After the huge owl landed on the branch it says, "For one minute, three minutes, maybe even a hundred minutes, we stared at one another." • "I can't believe the little girl came face-to-face with a real owl and didn't scream. Now that's bravery! (<i>reference illustration</i>) Look at those sharp talons, huge wings, and beady eyes. I'd be scared of that!"
<p>3) Answer the question by citing the evidence you found in the text and explaining how it demonstrates the specific trait of a character.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I think I'm ready to answer the question and prove the little girl was brave." • "I've found quite a few places in the text where the little girl acted in a brave way." • "I'll start by choosing one piece of evidence and explain how it demonstrates bravery." • <i>Model writing the thinking piece from your previous "think aloud"</i>. • "Then I'll repeat the last step with my other examples from the text. I want to make sure I <i>prove</i> she was brave!"

Extension and practice

- **PRACTICE:** If the students are having difficulty understanding the stated trait (ie. brave), have them look up the term in the dictionary and provide them with additional examples of how someone can be (brave). Share a true story about a time you were (brave) and allow them to identify and share a time that they were (brave). Students can then compare/contrast their brave words/actions with the words/actions of the main character.
- **PRACTICE:** If the students are having trouble with citing directly from the text, write sample quotes on the board, emphasizing the use of the quotation marks. Model for the students how the quotation marks go around the words that are DIRECTLY from the text. Return to the text, and guide the students to see where the words are exactly in the text. This proves that these are the author’s words. Review with them how you write the same quote, but with the quotation marks around the phrase.
- **EXTENSION:** If students are quickly able to support the stated trait, encourage them to independently identify another trait of a chosen character and justify/support their decision with text evidence (ex. patient)

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to a fiction text with *strong* characters.

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson, you will learn how to describe a character’s traits by noticing the things a character says, or the way he/she behaves.

1. Think about the stated character trait. Decide what the trait means/ “looks” like.
2. Reread the text noticing places where the character *says* or *does* something to illustrate the trait.
3. Answer the question by citing the evidence you found in the text and explaining how it demonstrates the specific trait of a character.

Describe a Character’s Traits Using Key Events

<http://learnzillion.com/lessons/1917>

<http://learnzillion.com/lessons/1976>

Describe a Character’s Traits Using Clues in the Illustrations

<http://learnzillion.com/lessons/2002>

Question 4

Question #4	What is the central message of <i>Owl Moon</i> ? Explain how the words/phrases Jane Yolen selects “paint a picture” in a reader’s mind and help to illustrate the central message.	
Standard(s) covered:	RL.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.	
Example response that meets standard		Look-fors
The central message of <i>Owl Moon</i> is: “Good things are worth waiting for”. I think this is the central message because the little girl and her dad had been waiting patiently, not talking to each other, complaining about the cold, or being scared all for a chance to see an owl. One place where the author used words to “paint a picture” to help illustrate this is when the text said, “All of a sudden an owl shadow, part of the big tree shadow, lifted off and flew right over us. We watched silently with heat in our mouths, the heat of all those words we had not spoken.” These words “paint a picture” of how serious, quiet, and patient the little girl and her dad were even though they had just seen and heard an owl; the one thing they’d been looking and waiting for all night!		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriately inferred central message • Descriptive words and/or a phrase “lifted” from the text that illustrate/support the inferred central message
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:		
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to support the central message by locating and analyzing key details in a text.	
Prior knowledge to review	RL.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. **The central message could vary based on prior knowledge and past experience** RL.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot. (Students must be able to identify descriptive words/phrases and nonliteral language. See TDQ #2) Students should also be able to “lift” or quote specific words/phrases directly from the text.	
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction	
1) Determine the central message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Now that I’ve finished reading <i>Owl Moon</i>, I should determine that central message. • “I’m going to ask myself, “What lesson did the author want me to learn that could help me in my own life?” “ • “By paying attention to the story elements, the characters’ words and actions, and the events in the story I think the central message is: <i>Good things are worth waiting for.</i>” 	

<p>2) Find key details that support the central message.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I can’t just <i>guess</i> at a text’s central message. A central message is revealed by noticing and analyzing key details in a text.” • “I’m going to go back and reread the text looking for the specific words and phrases that helped me “uncover” the idea that: <i>Good things are worth waiting for.</i>” • “Since I know that Jane Yolen frequently uses words and phrases to help “paint a picture” in a reader’s mind, I bet I will find some carefully chosen words, maybe even nonliteral, to help support my idea about the central message.” • “Hmmm...Right after the little girl and her dad see the owl for the first time it says, “We watched silently with heat in our mouths, the heat of all those words we had not spoken.” • “That phrase “paints a picture” in my mind of how serious, quiet, and patient the little girl and her dad were because even though they had just seen an owl they weren’t talking to each other.” • “This detail “matches” my idea about the central message because it shows that waiting patiently and not talking to each other paid off. Their voices didn’t scare away an owl, instead it attracted one they finally got to see! <p>(Depending on students’ understanding, you may want to “think aloud” with another 1-2 corresponding key details: <i>“I had been waiting to go owling with Pa for a long, long time.”</i> <i>“Pa shrugged and I shrugged. I was not disappointed. My brothers all said sometimes there’s an owl and sometimes there isn’t.”</i> <i>“And my nose and the tops of my cheeks felt cold and hot at the same time. But I never said a word .If you go owling you have to be quiet and make your own heat.”</i> <i>“I didn’t ask what kinds of things hid behind black trees in the middle of the night. When you go owling you have to be brave.”</i> <i>“I listened and looked so hard my ears hurt and my eyes got cloudy with the cold.”</i> <i>“I almost smiled, too.”</i> <i>“For one minute, three minutes, maybe even a hundred minutes, we stared at one another.”</i> <i>“I knew then I could talk, I could even laugh out loud. But I was a shadow as we walked home.”</i></p>
<p>3) “Lift” text to support thinking and formulate your response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Now that I’ve determined the central message and have located the key details that helped convey it, I’m ready to write my response.” • “I’ll start by recording my idea of the central message.” • “This question asks for a <i>specific</i> example. That means they don’t want me to put the idea into my <i>own</i> words, they want me to use the <i>author’s</i> words.” • “I’ll support my response by “lifting” the phrase, “We watched silently with heat in our mouths, the heat of all those words we had not spoken.” • “Now I’ll explain how this phrase helped me “paint a picture” in my mind.” • “Last I’ll connect this phrase to my idea about the central message and explain how this key detail helps convey it.”

Extension and practice

- **PRACTICE:** If students are having difficulty inferring/determining the central message/lesson use *fables* in small group. Because fables have the central message/lesson/moral explicitly stated at the end of the text, students can work “backwards”, finding evidence in the text to support the stated moral. This should help them become more proficient at noticing the key details that convey a central message/lesson.
- **PRACTICE:** If students are having difficulty using words to visualize (“paint a picture” in their mind), provide them some practice by asking them to illustrate certain pairs of words/phrases (ie. cat vs. a long haired cat with fur as black as midnight *or* tree vs. a tree with strong arms reaching toward the sky). Ask students to reflect on the difference between illustrations, in addition to the frustrations experienced when drawing the *general* word (ex. what kind of cat? what color is it?) versus the descriptive phrase. Students should realize that the more descriptive the words/phrases the better “picture” a reader is able to “paint”.
- **EXTENSION:** For students who quickly identify the central message and support it with key details from the text, introduce them to the concept of *theme*. Students can work to identify the theme of the text based on the identified central message and story elements.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to a fiction text with an identifiable central message.

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to support the central message by locating and analyzing key details in a text.

1. Determine the central message.
2. Find key details that support the central message.
3. “Lift” text to support thinking and formulate your response.

Determine the Author’s Message by Noticing What Characters Say and Do
<http://learnzillion.com/lessons/1945>

Question 5

Question #5	The title of this text is <i>Owl Moon</i> and it is significant to the story. Thinking about the setting, characters, and central message create a new title for the text and use evidence to justify its significance.	
Standard(s) covered:	RL.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. RL.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.	
	Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
	A new title for this text could be <i>Rite of Passage</i> . This title is significant to the story because the owling adventure the little girl and her dad went on was like a rite of passage; a special event the little girl had waited a long time for. I know this because the text said, "I had been waiting to go owling with Pa for a long, long time." I know it's also something special that her older brothers had done before her because it said, "My brothers all said sometimes there's an owl and sometimes there isn't." The last reason this title could fit is because there are usually "rules" for rites of passage, and there were "rules" for owling; you have to be quiet, you have to make your own heat, and you have to be brave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriately generated "new" title • 2-3 specific/explicit references to the text that support the "new" title
If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:		
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to create a "title" for a text by analyzing and synthesizing a text's key details and central message.	
Prior knowledge to review	<p align="center">**This lesson is a culmination of the previous 4 TDQs. In previous questions students have considered author's craft (word choice) and non-literal language, supported a character's internal traits, and identified key details that convey the central message. In order to create a new "title" students must analyze and synthesize all these elements simultaneously!**</p> <p>RL 2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. RL 2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. RL 2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.</p>	
Steps to achieve objective	Think aloud for direct instruction	

<p>1) Determine the significance of the text's current title.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The title of this story is <i>Owl Moon</i>. I know authors carefully title their stories to reflect important characters, big events, the setting, a central message and/or the theme of the story.” • “I think the title <i>Owl Moon</i> is significant to the story because the little girl went owl hunting for the first time with her dad. I bet the “owl” part came from the important event of searching for and seeing a real owl; that’s what the whole story was about! The “moon” part probably came from the time setting, which was late at night under a bright full moon.” • “The title <i>Owl Moon</i> captures all the important story elements in just two short words!”
<p>2) Analyze key details from the text looking for a theme/“big idea”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Jane Yolen captured many important elements in her title. She captured the story’s important event and the setting of the story.” • “There are other details I noticed while reading that could have been incorporated into the title such as the little girl’s feelings/emotions about the event and the story’s central message. • “A few details I noticed showed that the little girl had been waiting a long time for this opportunity to go owling. It says right here in the text, “I had been waiting to go owling with Pa for a long, long time.” The fact that the author repeated the word <i>long</i> highlights just how patient she’s been and just how long she’s waited.” • “Another key detail I noticed was that her brothers have had a chance to go owling. I know this because it said, “My brothers all said sometimes there’s an owl and sometimes there isn’t.” Not only has the little girl had to wait a long time, but she must be so jealous that her brothers have had the chance and she hasn’t!” • “Lastly the author kept mentioning these “rules” for going owling such as being quiet, being brave, and making your own heat when it’s cold. These “rules” make owling seem really serious and really important. • “Hmmm...I found details that convey patience, jealousy, and seriousness. That matches the central message, <i>Good things are worth waiting for</i>.”
<p>3) Create a new title for the text reflective of the theme/“big idea”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Thinking about the details I found and analyzed and the central message I inferred, I think another title for the text could be <i>Rite of Passage</i>.” • “A right of passage is a special moment in someone’s life that marks a turning point or shows that someone is growing up. Some examples from my own life include losing my first tooth, getting my license, graduating college, and buying my own house.” •
<p>4) Justify the significance of your new title by citing specific details from the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think this “new” title is significant to the story because it seems like going owling is a right of passage that shows the little girl is growing up and can handle being out late at night, in the dark, and can follow the “rules” even when coming face-to-face with a scary owl.” • “She’s growing up because the author said she’s waited a long time.” • “It’s a special moment because her brothers have all had a chance to go owling.” • “She’s also able to follow the important rules of being quiet, being brave, and making her own heat.” • “I think I’m ready to write my response!”

Extension and practice

- **PRACTICE:** If students are having difficulty creating a new title for the text, have students use text evidence to justify the significance of a text’s existing title. You can explicitly model using *Owl Moon*, or another familiar text, and then students can practice with a shorter text that they read and analyze independently.
- **PRACTICE:** If students are having difficulty creating a new title for the text engage them in a sort; possible titles that could be supported by the text vs. titles that could not be supported by the text. As students sort the possibilities they’ll need to justify/discuss why they fit in that particular category by citing text evidence (or lack thereof). After sorting students can select one of the “correct” possibilities and use it to formulate their response.
- **EXTENSION:** If students quickly and successfully generate a new title, they can use their analysis and synthesis of the text to create a *epilogue* for the text, capturing what might/could happen to the little girl and/or the father the next day, the next time they go owling, etc. In essence if the text ended: “To be continued...”, they’ll write the continuation.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students’ independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to a fiction text with strong story elements.

See more examples of how to teach (name skill and standard)

Objective: In this lesson you will learn how to create a “title” for a text by analyzing and synthesizing a text’s key details and central message.

1. Determine the significance of the text’s current title.
2. Analyze key details from the text looking for a theme/“big idea”.
3. Create a new title for the text reflective of the theme/“big idea”.
4. Justify the significance of your new title by citing specific details from the text.

Interpret the Title of a Poem

<https://learnzillion.com/lessons/1814-interpret-the-title-of-a-poem>

TIME words

PLACE words

