Reading Unit of Study:
A Time Traveler’s Journey Back to the Past
in Historical Fiction

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District
Elementary Language Arts Department, Grade 3 - 5
A Time Traveler’s Journey Back to the Past in Historical Fiction

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LESSONS INCLUDED IN THE UNIT OF STUDY:

The following is a list of the first seven lessons that are included in *A Time Traveler’s Journey Back to the Past in Historical Fiction* unit. Each lesson has been assigned a number that correlates to a number found in the upper right corner of each lesson card, which signifies a suggested sequence or progression of the lessons.

After analyzing the grade level expectations, district curriculum, and student needs, teachers should customize the mini-lessons for their students. The mini-lessons are based upon the grade-level expectations found in the English Language Arts and Reading TEKS objectives.

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Minilesson: **Up Close and Personal: Genre Characteristics of Historical Fiction**

**Materials:**
- Historical Fiction Texts
- Sticky Notes
- Chart Paper

**Purpose:** Thoughtful readers use their knowledge of genre characteristics to navigate historical fiction texts

**TEKS:** 3.5 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 5.3, 5.6

**Connection:**
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Remind the students that all genres have distinct characteristics. Knowing the characteristics of a certain genre helps thoughtful readers know what to expect when they are reading. Tell the student that today they are going to explore the characteristics of a new genre: historical fiction.

**Teach:**
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Describe historical fiction as stories that are set in the midst of a real historical event. Tell the children that like other fiction stories, historical fiction features characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution. Explain to the children that many of the strategies that thoughtful readers use to interpret fiction texts come into play while reading historical fiction (i.e. envisionment, predicting, etc.) Explain that the primary difference between historical fiction and other fiction stories is that historical fiction is set in a historically significant time and place. Authors of historical fiction will often include author’s notes (as a text feature) to give the reader factual background information about that time period and place in history.

Continue to explain that while the main characters seem realistic, more often than not, the characters in historical fiction never really existed. In general, the main characters are fictional (although they may rub shoulders and interact with historically prominent people). Likewise the plot of the story comes mainly from the author’s imagination. Some historical events will appear in the story. These historical events may play some role in the plot, but the story’s focus is not on the events in history, rather the story is about a wholly imaginary plot that is accurately set during a particular period and place in the past.

Read the historical fiction text aloud with passion and enthusiasm. In the read aloud, demonstrate how the text has the ability to transport you to the distant past. Stop to point out historical fiction genre characteristics. Jot the feature on a sticky note and affix to the chart.

As I am pulled deeper into the story The Babe and I by David Adler, I am even more fascinated by these characters lives. It appears that the boy’s friend Jacob has job as a newsie. Today it would seem strange for a child to go to work each day instead of going to school, but here it seems fairly common. I’m starting to see that when reading historical fiction, the characters’ daily activities can give me insight into what life was like long ago. This is important, and I’m going to jot this on a sticky note.

Continue reading the text aloud, pausing to think about the historical fiction text features. Additional features that you might point out in your think aloud can be found in the next column.

**Active Engagement:**
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

After pointing out 3-4 features, invite the children to categorize the sticky notes as (a) things that are unique to historical fiction or (b) features also found in other fiction stories.

Have the children work in pairs to read a historical fiction text. As they read, they should work with their partner to find things that they are noticing about the text. You may choose to give the partnerships a reproduced version of the text that you have started reading, choose to use a document camera to display the text, or choose to have the children investigate new texts. Invite the children to record their observations on sticky notes. After listing other features, sort the sticky notes into one of the two categories. Compile a chart similar to the following.

**Characteristics of Historical Fiction**
- The story is set in a historically significant time or place.
- Authors sometimes include notes to provide factual information about the historical time period.
- The characters’ daily activities provide clues about what life was like in the past.
- The story contains characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution.
- Characters seem real and behave in realistic ways even though they are fictional, imaginary, and come from the author’s imagination.
- Historical events and prominent historical people appear in the story.
- The author uses language and phrases that are representative of the time period.
- The story sometimes jumps back and forth in time.
- The historical events affect the problem that the main character has to face.

(∗=Characteristics that are also found in other fiction texts.)

**Link:**
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind the students that when thoughtful readers pay attention to the specific characteristics of a genre, they are able to deepen their comprehension of a story, even when the story is set in a different time and place. Encourage them to use their newfound understanding of historical fiction to navigate this genre during independent reading time. Encourage the children to pay close attention to new features/characteristics.

**Sticky Note Option:**
I know this is historical fiction because...

**Possible Conference Questions:**
- What are you noticing as a reader today?
- Have you noticed about the genre features in your story?
- How does keeping track of the genre features help you as a reader?
### Minilesson: Inquiring Minds Ask Questions to Envision Life during a Different Time and Place

**Materials:**
- Historical Fiction Picture Book
- Chart Paper

**Purpose:** Thoughtful readers ask questions while reading HF to better understand life during a different time and place

**TEKS:** 3.8, 4.6, 5.6, Figure 19B

**Connection:**
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Remind the children that historical fiction stories take place during a different time and different place in history. Tell the children that while these historical setting may be slightly unfamiliar to the reader, in order to truly enjoy this type of fiction it is important that the reader attempt to envision what life was like in the past. Explain that you will teach them how to ask questions of the story to gain a better sense of life in this historically significant time and place.

Readers, today I want you to get that feeling of being swept away into another time and place by a book. As readers of historical fiction, we can ask questions to get a better sense of what life was like during a different time and place.

**Teach:**
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Explain that readers ask questions before, during and after reading a story. Tell them that asking questions of historical fiction helps readers better understand life during the time and place. Reveal that readers can figure out the answers to their questions by looking for clues in the text, by inferring, and/or by using an outside source.

Introduce a historical fiction text to the children. Demonstrate the process of forming questions about the text before reading.

**Today I am going to share a historical fiction story called The Lotus Seed with you. It is the story of a family who is forced to flee their homeland when a devastating civil war breaks out in their country. Looking at the cover of the book, I already have questions:**
- Where does this take place? What kind of place is this? Is it cold, alienating, isolating, and unstable?
- What is a lotus seed? Why is it so important?
- Why are people working in the fields? Is farming a major way of life in this place during this time?
- What was day to day life like for these people?
- How long ago did this story take place?

**Asking these questions is helping me begin to think about life in this time and place. As I read, I’ll pay close attention to the details to see if any of my questions can be answered.**

Begin reading the story aloud, thinking aloud about the events and details. Tell them that as you read, they should keep their eyes open for the answers to these questions.

**Wow! So far the text has mentioned people fleeing in fear and bombs being thrown. I’m envisioning that this place is filled with devastation and panic. I imagine that billows of smoke constantly fill the air, and that the village is constantly filled with sounds of war and the rushed stampede of screaming people. I imagine that life during this time was very dangerous and unsettled. I wonder where these people will go. How difficult will it be to uproot their lives and start over thousands of miles away from their familiar land?**

Restate the work that you just did: asking questions and analyzing details to get a sense of the time and place. Provide the children with a series of simple steps they can follow as they practice this work in their own reading.

Notice that as I read, I am alert to information about this place, especially information that will provide me with some of the answers to the questions that we’ve asked. I am also looking for details that suggest change or trouble.

**Possible Conference Questions:**
- What questions have you formed about the story that you are reading?
- Are you finding the answers to these questions within the text or do you think that you might have to use outside sources?
- How does asking questions help you envision the time and place during which this story takes place?

**Active Engagement:**
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Invite the children to share questions that they have about the text. Record any questions that students are forming about the story. Paying attention to these clues has spurred more questions for me. I’m sure that you have questions as well, turn and talk with your neighbor about a burning question that you have about this book so far?

Continue reading the story. Pause and allow the children to talk about new clues that provide information about the time and place of the story. Have the children analyze the types of details that the author is providing. (Do the details answer any of our questions? What type of place is this? How do we know?)

**Link:**
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Restate the work that you did: asking questions and analyzing details to get a better sense of time and place. Send the children off to read a historical fiction picture book with a partner. Remind them to form questions before, during, and after reading to get a better sense of the time and place.

Curriculum Department
Cypress-Fairbanks I.S.D. – DRAFT – November 2011

A Time Traveler’s Journey Back to the Past in Historical Fiction
Reading Workshop Unit of Study
Minilesson: Considering the Impact of Setting on the Characters’ Problems or Obstacles

Materials:
- Historical Fiction Text
- Chart Paper
- Markers

Purpose: Thoughtful readers recognize that time and place influence the central problem that the character(s) must overcome

TEKS: 3.8, 4.6, 5.6

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Revisit the idea that authors of historical fiction include details in the story that provide insight into what life was like in the past. The clues often uncover a theme of difficulty or struggle that characterized the time (i.e. Great Depression—poverty; Civil Rights Movement—inequality). Remind the children that historical fiction stories share many of the same elements as other forms of fiction (traditional literature, realistic fiction, etc.), including conflict. Reveal to the children that the time and place in which the historical fiction story occurs often plays a role in the obstacles that the character will have to face.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Reiterate that setting—time and place—is a particularly important element in historical fiction. Read aloud a portion of the historical fiction text that reveals a challenge that the character must face or the major conflict of the story. Point out details related to setting and conflict as you read. After reading a portion of text, think aloud and clearly pinpoint a difficulty that the character is facing. Talk about the things that you know you know about life during this time and place. Ponder what things about the time and place make life difficult for this character. Contemplate how this character’s problem/obstacle would be different in present day context.

On the anchor chart, record notes about the problem/obstacle and the influence of setting on this problem. Remind the children about the different types of (man vs. man, man vs. self, man vs. nature, man vs. society). Make a preliminary judgment about the type of conflict the character is facing.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Read more of the historical fiction until another conflict or challenge is revealed. Think aloud about the time and place in which these characters lived. Use the questions below to scaffold the discussion:
- What is the problem that the character is facing?
- What do you already know about life during this time and place?
- How is the setting affecting [character]?

What things about this time and place make life difficult for this character?
- Does the conflict or the problem seem to be escalating? How is the setting a factor?
- How would this character’s life be different if he would have been alive today? Would the same obstacle be present today? In what ways would it be the same/different?
- Would the problem be different if the story took place somewhere else?

Have the children discuss whether this difficulty is the central problem of the story. Ask the children to characterize what type of conflict the character is facing at this juncture.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Tell the children that overcoming obstacles in the shadows of difficult times make the accomplishments of the character(s) even more impressive. Tell them that as they are reading independently they will think about how their characters’ problems are affected by the setting (time and place) in which he or she lived.

Sticky Note Option:

Possible Conference Questions:
- How might the historical time period contribute to the challenges faced by the main character?
- How does noticing the impact of time and place in history help you better understand historical fiction?
Minilesson: Sifting Through Back-and-Forth Details to Keep Track of the Sequence of Events

**Materials:**
- Historical Fiction Text
- Sticky Notes
- Chart Paper

**Note** During this lesson you will be sharing and excerpt of historical fiction literature that features jumps in time. Excerpts that reveal a back story tend to work particularly well. Prepare for this lesson by recording each of the individual events from the excerpt that you will read aloud on sticky notes. You will use these during the lesson to demonstrate sorting through the sequence of events. These sticky notes will be placed along a timeline.

**Purpose:** Thoughtful readers use tools to sift through the important details and keep track of the sequence of events in historical fiction texts.

**TEKS:** 3.8A, 4.6A, 5.6A, Figure 19E

**Connection:**
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Remind the students that when starting to read historical fiction, it is important that readers pay attention to important story elements. Commend them on being able to read more complex stories. Explain to the students that readers of historical fiction use tools to keep track of significant events in the story.

Readers, as you get older, the books you read get more complicated. Often times the authors of these stories reveal events and details about the characters little by little. In fact some of the events in the story may be presented out of order, meaning the author might begin by telling you about a significant thing that is happening to the characters right in the moment, but then later in the story, the author might jump back in time and tell you about something important that happened to the character one week (hour, year) earlier to give you the back story of the character. As readers of historical fiction, it is important for us to keep track of these important events even when time seems to jump back and forth. Thoughtful readers can use tools, such as timelines to keep track of important events in historical fiction.

**Teach:**
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Demonstrate the complexity of time telling by sharing and excerpt of literature that features jumps in time.

Let me show you what I mean when I say that time can be represented in complex ways in historical fiction. I’m going to read the first few pages of Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco. This excerpt features jumps in time and gives us a bit of the back story for one of the characters. As I read this aloud, I’m going to try to think about the order in which these events occurred.

“I watched the sun edge toward…”

Think aloud while reading the text, attempting to make sense of the order of events. After reading, talk to the children about the difficulties that you encountered in trying to capture the sequence of events. Explain to the children that sorting through the events in historical fiction is not easy to do because sometimes the reader is learning what happens next and sometimes they are learning what has happened already.

Show the children each of the events written separately on sticky notes. Reread the excerpt aloud, pausing throughout to demonstrate how you would go about sorting out the sequence of events in the portion of the text. Place these events along a timeline.

**Active Engagement:**
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Reiterate the big work that you have been doing, reading the text and determining the order or sequence of events. Invite the children to join you in this big work as you share the next excerpt of text.

Let’s read a bit more of this story, Pink and Say. As we read, we are going to try to sort through the events, distinguishing between what is happening next and what has already happened. When we last left off, a boy is being carried through a dry field for a long distance. When we pick up in this next section, we find that the boy is waking up from his fever induced sleep. Let’s read a few more pages.

Show the children the events recorded on sticky notes. Ask the children to turn and talk to the partner about the sequence of events. Have the children come forward to add the sticky notes to the timeline. Reread the excerpt to check for accuracy.

**Link:**
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind the children of your teaching point, and emphasize the fact that thoughtful readers consider what is happening next and what has already happened when considering the events in complex texts such as historical fiction. Before sending the children off to work, invite them to record information on sticky notes and create a timeline of the events in their reading notebooks.

**Possible Conference Questions:**
- What has happened so far in your story?
- How are you able to distinguish between events that are happening in the moment and events that occurred long before?
- Is using this timeline helping you keep track of events even when the author is jumping back in time?
Minilesson: Thinking About the Impact of Historical Events on a Plot of the Story

Materials:
- Historical Fiction Text
- Chart Paper
- Markers

Note: In today’s lesson you will make two timelines. During the teaching portion of the minilesson you should be prepared to show the personal timeline of your life and how historical events are intertwined in the time in which you have lived. During the active engagement portion of the lesson, you and your students will work together to create a timeline of events that are unfolding in the story.

Purpose: Thoughtful readers consider how historical events affect the plot of the story

TEKS: 3.8A, 4.6A, 5.6A

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Tell the children that history is comprised of many big events, each altering the course of people’s lives and creating small personal stories. State your teaching point. Specifically tell the children that readers of historical fiction consider both the big historical timeline of events as well as the smaller individual timelines of characters’ lives that occur alongside the backdrop of a historically significant event.

Readers today I want to teach you that in historical fiction, there are many timelines. There is the main character’s timeline (a timeline of the fictional plot) and there is a historical timeline (the timeline of the big historical events that occurred during the time and place where the story is set). Today we will look closely at these two types of timelines and consider how the nonfiction historical events impact the fictional main character’s life.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Retell your personal timeline, or plotline, and a parallel historical timeline to provide a real-life example of how an individual’s choices (yours) are affected by historical context (i.e. JFK assassination, Challenger explosion, Internet invented, Columbine shootings, and 9-11). Sketch your personal timeline on chart paper, and then sketch the historical timeline alongside. Explain how your life was affected by the historical event.

Suggest that a historical timeline forms the backdrop for historical fiction stories. Show the children that you have started to make two timelines for the read-aloud—one of the events in the main character’s life, and one that represents big historical events that occurred during the time and place where the story is set. Point out places where the timelines overlap.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Invite the children to help record the information from the next portion of text that you will read aloud. Read the story aloud. Invite the children to add information to the timeline for the character’s life. Emphasize the fact that readers think about the connection between the historical event and the plot. They consider how the historical events affect the events in the story, including the characters’ actions and decisions.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Have the children add parallel timelines to their toolkit of strategies that they can use while reading historical fiction text. Encourage them to construct a historical timeline to keep track of significant historical events that are occurring alongside the plot of the story. While creating the timeline, have the children consider how the historical events affect the events in the story and the fictional character’s life.

Possible Conference Questions:
- What type of historical information is included in your story?
- Why is this information important to your story?
- How does this information affect the plot of your story? How does this impact the character?
- How would your story be different if the historical information was not included or was changed in some way?
Minilesson: Tracking Characters and Developing Theories

Materials:
- Historical Fiction Text
- Chart Paper
- Markers

Purpose: Thoughtful readers keep track of characters and pay attention to text clues that give them insight into the types of people they are.

TEKS: 3.8B, 4.6B, 5.6B

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Remind the students that historical fiction shares many of the same literary elements as other works of fiction. Tell the students that as they dig deeper into historical fiction, it will become even more important for them to pay close attention to the characters and clues that help them understand what types of people the characters are.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Tell the students that as readers of more sophisticated texts, like historical fiction, it is not enough to name/identify the characters in a story. Tap into character analysis work from the previous unit. Remind the students that as readers, we can develop theories about characters and the kinds of people they are. Tell them that a theory is a big idea based on an accumulation of evidence. State that developing theories about characters involves a bit of inferring. Inform the students that thoughtful readers pay attention to the characters’ speech, thoughts, actions, and feelings to develop theories about the character.

Today, I’m going to read aloud from The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco. As I read aloud, we will meet a cast of characters who live in a time and place that is entirely different from our own. As we read, we will gather information that will tell us things about the character. We’ll listen to our thinking and create an image of this person in our minds. We’ll visualize the characters and the way they look, talk, behave, think, and move. We will also pay attention to how these characters interact with others. Watch how I find evidence to form an initial theory about these characters and the kinds of people they are.

Read the text aloud. Pause throughout drawing the students’ attention to new characters who are being introduced in the story. Share the things that you are mentally noting about the characters.

Tell the children that during independent reading, they will continue reading a historical fiction text with a partner. Explain that they should pay attention to evidence about the way the main character looks, talks, behaves, thinks, and moves as well as what other characters think and say about the main character. Encourage them to jot down their thinking on sticky notes and hold on to their theories in their reading notebooks.

Sticky Note Option

Possible Conference Questions:
- What are some of the theories that you’ve developed about the characters in your book?
- How are your theories changing as you accumulate more evidence?
Minilesson: Recognizing How Behaviors are Influenced by Historical Context

**Materials:**
- Familiar Historical Fiction Text

**Note:** It is important to select a historical fiction text with which the children are already familiar. In this lesson, you will ask them to reconsider their theories about characters by thinking about the historical context.

**Purpose:** Thoughtful readers consider how character’s behaviors are impacted by the times in which they live.

**TEKS:** 3.8B, 4.6B, 5.6B

**Connection:**
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Connect to the students’ previous work in forming theories and opinions about characters in stories. Explain that readers of historical fiction also consider how the historical context shapes the character’s thoughts, behaviors and actions. Tell the children that when readers get to know the characters in historical fiction books, they are able to step into the period in which the character lived, and are able to see the world through the eyes of a person who lived during that time period.

We know that readers develop theories about characters while they read. As readers of fiction literature, we are able to develop theories about the kinds of people the characters are and develop theories about why characters behave in certain ways based on text clues. As readers of historical fiction, we should also consider how the setting (time and place) influences the character, the way he/she behaves, the way he/she treats other people, and the choices he/she makes. Readers of historical fiction try to understand the decisions that the characters make by keeping in mind that the character’s behavior is shaped by what is happening in the world in which he or she lives (the historical context).

**Teach:**
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Tell the students that you will revisit some of the work from the previous lesson and demonstrate how to develop theories about characters. Tell them that when forming your theory today, you will also consider how the character’s behavior is impacted by:
- his/her background and prior experience
- his/her culture, age, social, or political position
- power relationships that exist during the time
- his/her sense of morality (right/wrong)
- what he or she hopes to accomplish

Explain that these things are heavily impacted by the historical context—what was happening in the world during the time in which the characters lived. Reread a familiar scene from the historical fiction text. Ask the readers to reconsider why the characters are behaving in the way that they do. Include your thinking about how the historical context shapes their actions.

I’m going to reread a scene from The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco. It is the scene where Monique and her friend Denise are coming out of the candy shop and see the Nazi soldiers marching in the streets of their village. As I read, I want to you to pay attention to how I notice the characters’ behaviors and try to make sense of them in the context of their lives. I am also going to think about the things that I know about the power relationship, or the groups who hold the most power, during this time.

Reread the familiar scene aloud, pausing to share your thinking. Talk about how your theory about the characters shifted once you considered how the characters’ actions were influenced by the historical context. Record your thinking on chart paper.

When I read this first part, I found myself thinking that Monique and Denise must be nervous or jittery people who are easily frightened. After all, I thought, it’s sort of ridiculous to be afraid of soldiers. Soldiers are there to keep people safe. But now I’m realizing that I wasn’t truly imagining life from their perspective. Instead I was thinking about my own experiences and considering how I would respond to present day context rather than a historical context. During this time, instead of the soldiers serving as a symbol of protection, these soldiers represented terror and brutality.

**Possible Conference Questions:**
- What are you noticing about the way that these characters are behaving?
- How are their actions influenced by the historical context?
Minilesson: Developing and Revising Our Thinking about a Story

Materials:
- Historical Fiction Text
- Chart Paper

Note: It is important to select a historical fiction text that the children have not yet read. You will show the children how your thinking evolves over the course of the book as you learn new information. Divide the book into sections, finding logical stopping points where you will stop and share your thinking. Set up the chart paper by drawing a spiral in the center of the page.

Purpose: Thoughtful readers develop and revise their thinking about a story.

TEKS: 3.8, 4.6, 5.6, Figure 19C

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Share a personal example of changing your mind about something. Connect to the work that you have been doing while reading historical fiction texts: developing theories about characters and events. Tell the children that today you will show them how thoughtful readers revise and develop their initial ideas.

Have you ever had one idea about a person (or thing) and you totally changed your initial thoughts based on hearing or seeing new information. When I was kid, I wanted a new toy that I saw in a commercial on TV. It looked like the coolest thing. On TV, it could walk, talk, and do all sorts of cool stuff. I begged my parent for this toy—that is until the day I went to my cousin’s house. She’d just gotten the toy, and turns out—it was lame. It couldn’t even move like it did in the commercial. Based on this new information, I changed my mind. I didn’t want the toy anymore. Has that ever happened to you with anything? Yes, it happens all of the time. Sometimes we change our minds based on new information, even while we read. That’s okay. We have the right to change our minds. Over the past few weeks, we have been discussing historical fiction stories and have been developing theories around characters and big ideas. Today I will show you how as a thoughtful reader, you can revise and develop your initial ideas.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Tell the children that thoughtful readers recognize that our ideas change based on uncovering new information and by listening to others’ ideas. Thoughtful readers change their thinking based on new information. Thoughtful readers and thinkers recognize that it is smart to revise their thinking rather than holding on to original ideas just because they don’t want to admit that their initial thoughts were incorrect. Share with the children that thoughtful readers are open to information that supports changes in their thinking.

Begin reading the first section of the text aloud. Tell the children that you will stop throughout the text to share your thinking. Explain that when you pause you will use phrases like
- I’m thinking…
- I used to think___, but now I think…
- Now I understand why…
- I’m changing my mind about…
- My new thinking is…
- I’m beginning to think…

At your first pausing point, share your thinking/theories about characters and events in the story. Tell the children you will use spiral notes to record your thoughts as they evolve. Begin writing your first thought around the center spiral.

[from T. McGregor, Comprehension Connections (2007)]

Possible Conference Questions:
- What are you noticing about the way that these characters are behaving?
- How are their actions influenced by the historical context?

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Read more of the text aloud. Invite the students to join in on the thinking at the next pause point. Expect that there will be lots of conversations. Do not inhibit the conversations, as peer input/feedback is critical in helping the students revise their thinking. Ask the children to share their thinking and point to things in the story that helps support their ideas. Encourage the children to remain flexible with the theories. Use phrases similar to the ones introduced in the teach portion of the lesson. Read more the text aloud. Remind the children to consider the new bits of information when developing and revising theories about characters and events in the historical fiction piece.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Tell the children that they will create a synthesis spiral in their notebooks to record the evolution of thinking about the stories they are reading independently. Plan 2-3 opportunities during the independent time for the children to reconvene with partners to share their evolution of thinking. After allowing the children to ponder, jot, and revise their ideas for a period time, allow them to visit for a moment with their partner to read and share their spiral. Repeat this process.
Demonstrate this concept by displaying a short portion of text from a familiar piece of historical fiction. Model the strategy using either one paragraph or multiple paragraphs, depending upon the developmental progress of the students. Think aloud as you read the text and create a graphic organizer for your responses. Questions similar to the following could be used to guide your thinking:

**Questions to Identify Main Idea**

- Who or what is this section of text mainly or mostly about? When and/or where are the events happening? (Topic)
- When considering this, what information or details stand out as the most important in this portion of the text? (Supporting Details)
- What do all of these supporting details have in common? (Main Idea)

Record the responses using any appropriate main idea organizer.

**NOTE:** The main idea statement that is created from the supporting details should not be a regurgitation of sentences that already appear in the text.

Remind students how using the ways that they explored today to find the main idea of this type of text will help them as readers to comprehend the author’s message. Invite students to use this strategy on their own. Provide time for students to independently experiment with identifying the main idea using a selection of literary nonfiction texts for groups of students and completing the graphic organizer.

**Possible Conference Questions:**

- What are you noticing as a reader today?
- Who or what is this section of text mainly or mostly about?
- What do all of these supporting details have in common?

**Active Engagement:**

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Read another portion of text aloud. Direct the students’ attention to the first main idea question. Ask students to turn and talk to their partners to answer the question. Listen in on the student discussions and share good examples. Continue in the same manner with the remaining two questions. You may consider having students create a graphic organizer in their reader’s notebooks to complete as they answer each question. Repeat this step one additional time for a subsequent section of text.

After generating three main idea statements, have the children consider the three statements collectively to determine the main idea for the entire section of text.
Minilesson: Pinpointing Cause and Effect Relationships and Unveiling Events that Cause Changes in Characters

HF10

Materials:
- Familiar Historical Fiction Text

Note: This lesson may be divided over two days.

Purpose: Thoughtful readers look at cause and effect relationships in texts and recognize that characters change as a result of some pivotal event.

TEKS: 3.8, 4.7, 5.6B

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Applaud the students for engaging in deep thinking about historical fiction texts. Explain that today’s lesson has a two-fold focus. Tell the children that first they will investigate a particular structure that is common to fictional works: cause & effect. Then tell the children that they will learn to use their understanding of cause and effect relationships to recognize significant changes in a character’s thoughts, actions, and mindset. Talk about the fact that both of these processes are very important considerations for thoughtful readers.

Teach I:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Define cause and effect. Explain that the effect describes what happened while the cause tells why something happened. Tell the children that certain words tend to signal a cause and effect relationship (because, since, as a result, then). However caution the students against being overly reliant upon these signal words. Remind them fiction authors focus on telling a great story. They use vivid story language to do this. Sometimes within a piece of historical fiction writing, none of these signal words are used to alert readers to a cause and effect relationship. This forces the thoughtful reader to do the sophisticated work of considering connections between events in the story to figure out cause and effect relationships. Revisit a familiar text. Discuss the idea that certain story events prompt or cause other events to happen. Think aloud about a set of events from the story. This portion of text should have events that highlight a cause and effect relationship.

Readers, I know that many of you are reading The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis during your independent reading time. I’ve lifted a few paragraphs from this story to show you some of the types of thinking that all of us should be doing when reading historical fiction. I’m going to share a hilarious excerpt where one event caused another to happen.

Hah! While admiring his own image, Byron’s tongue gets stuck on the rearview mirror. I’m going to write that detail on my T-chart under effect: Byron’s tongue is stuck on the rearview mirror. But what specifically causes that to happen? Let me go back and reread to see if I can find the cause.

Unpack your thinking. Tell the children that you considered a particular story event and ask yourself what caused it to happen. Then you recorded this information on the chart.

Active Engagement I:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Invite the children to pinpoint other cause and effect relationships in the portion of text. Guide the student’s thinking by asking them to determine what happened (effect) and why this event happened (cause). Listen to their conversations. Recap some of the conversations you overheard. Record newly discovered relationships on the T-chart. Reiterate that authors sometimes use signal words, but thoughtful readers do not rely exclusively on signal words to determine a cause and effect relationship.

Teach/Active Engagement II:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Acknowledge the fact that often an important event causes a character within a historical fiction story to change in some way. Tell the children that in historical fiction, this change or transformation is usually a result of a big and pivotal event. Talk about the fact that sometimes authors of historical fiction use real life events as the pivotal event, acting as the catalyst or the cause of change in a fictional character. Share an example.

I’d like to talk about the Watson Go to Birmingham a bit more. At the beginning of this story, we met Kenny and his older brother Byron, who largely seem like two ordinary siblings, who play pranks on each other, goof off, get into trouble, and do very silly things. Things are very lighthearted in the beginning. However, as we approach the end of the book, things seem dark. We begin to notice a change in Kenny. He is suddenly silent and withdrawn. He spends much of his time alone behind the couch. Something caused that change. A pivotal event from the story and from history causes Kenny to react in this way. I don't want to spoil the story for those of you who are reading this book or who hope to read this book in the future, so I’m going to send you to continue your reading. For the rest of you, listen carefully as I share this pivotal event.

Share the turning point of the story. Record your thinking about the change in the character, and events that lead up to the turning point. Have the children point out the cause and effect relationships.

Possible Conference Questions:
- What cause and effect relationships do you see?
- How are you noticing that the character in your story is changing? Why do you think that is happening?
Minilesson:  Uncovering Universal Truths about People, Life, and the World

Materials:
• 2 Familiar Historical Fiction Text

Note: It is important to select a historical fiction text with which the children are already familiar. In this lesson, you will ask them to reconsider their theories about characters by thinking about the historical context.

Purpose: Thoughtful readers of historical fiction uncover universal truths about people, life, and the world.

TEKS: 3.5A, 4.3A, 5.3C

Connection:
• connect today’s work with our ongoing work
• explicitly state my teaching point

Talk to the children about the past work that they did in getting to know the characters in the historical fiction text. Share that authors of historical fiction can use characters and events to uncover a universal truth about people, life, and the world. Tell them that universal truths are generally true and applicable to all people. If the children are familiar, connect this idea to Gretchen Bernabei’s writing workshop technique, Truisms (Reviving the Essay 2005). Inform students that today, you will show how thoughtful readers dive into historical fiction to discover life lessons and ideas contained in the texts.

Teach:
• restate my teaching point
• tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
• think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Remind the children that a universal truth is a big idea or life lesson that the author wants us to think about after reading because the author believes that this idea applies to all people. Some examples of truisms that Gretchen Bernabei uses in her book are as follows:

- In life’s struggles, perseverance is key.
- Being in the public eye opens you up to criticism.
- It’s important to always remember where you came from.
- Even something so small can make a big difference.

Tell the children that it is rare for an author of historical fiction to simply state the universal truth. Instead he/she leaves a trail of clues about this important message. As thoughtful readers, it is important to pay attention to these clues and infer the life lesson by thinking:

- What important lesson does the author want me to ponder?
- What is the author attempting to say about the nature or what is at the core of all people?
- What commentary is the author making about life and the world around us?
- After reading this book, what lesson can I bring into how I live my life?

Revisit a familiar story. Briefly discuss the plot and characters. Think-aloud using the questions above to think about the universal truth.

Last week, we read The Butterfly, discussed what kind of person Marcelle Solliliage was, and talked about why she behaved in the ways she behaved. The plot of the story mainly centered around transporting a family out of Nazi-occupied France, but I believe that one of the things—a universal truth—that the author Patricia Polacco wants us to understand is how important it is to stand up for the rights of the most vulnerable people in society. Polacco doesn’t come right out and tell us this. We have to connect clues or evidence to figure this out. This is an important life lesson that is important and relevant even today. Some of the clues that helped me come up with this universal truth include...

Record your thinking on an anchor chart similar to the following:

| Universal Truth(s)-Inferred | Evidence to Support Thinking |

Active Engagement:
• involve students by asking them to turn and talk
• listen, observe, and coach active involvement
• share an example of what you heard or observed

Tell the children that a story can have multiple universal truths. Invite them to turn and talk about another life lesson from the text. Have the group work together to pinpoint text evidence of this lesson. Alternately, you could have the children discuss a universal truth in another familiar historical fiction text.

Link:
• restate the teaching point
• explain how the learning can be used in the future

Tell the children that certain universal truths are common or recurring in literature. During reading workshop, invite the children to think about universal truths in the historical fiction stories they are nearly finished reading or story that they have already finished. Ask them to consider what important lesson or message the author wants the reader to walk away understanding about people, life, and the world in general. Have the children use a two-column chart to record text evidence to support ideas about the universal truth. Gather at the end of the workshop time to create an ongoing anchor chart of universal truths and life lessons from the stories.

Possible Conference Questions:
• Now that you are (almost) finished reading and rereading the text, what universal truth has the author left you thinking about?
• What clues point you to this universal truth?
Minilesson: Pondering the Author’s Purpose in Historical Fiction

Materials:
- Historical Fiction Text

Purpose: Thoughtful readers ponder the author’s purpose for writing a piece of historical fiction literature

TEKS: Figure 19 D, E

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Remind students that authors have a wide variety of reasons for writing. They might write to persuade, to inform, to explain, to describe, and/or to entertain. Tell the students that often an author determines his or her purpose for writing even before the pen touches the paper. He or she must consider his/her intention and must decide what emotions to evoke from his/her audience. Thoughtful readers recognize that it is important to ponder (or think about) the author’s purpose when interpreting a text. Inform the students that today’s lesson focuses on considering the author’s purpose in a historical fiction text.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Reveal to the students that like most fiction texts, historical fiction is largely written for enjoyment. Authors of historical fiction are looking to entertain the reader by telling a riveting and compelling story about life in the past. Remind the children that the plot of the story has largely come from the author’s imagination, though historical details are interspersed throughout. Acknowledge the presence of this factual and historic information in the text. Talk about the fact that within historical fiction, writers often include an author’s note for the specific purpose of informing the reader about life during the time and place in the past.

Explain that while certain portions of the main story may appear to be written to share historical facts with the reader, this factual information is always shared in a manner that is reflective of the author’s primary purpose, which is to entertain.

Share a short portion of a familiar historical fiction text with the students. Think aloud about the text details that are shared and why the author chose to include these details. Using this information, determine the author’s purpose for this portion text. You may choose to record this information on a three-column graphic organizer similar to the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Details</th>
<th>The author likely shared these details to/because...</th>
<th>Therefore, I believe that the author’s purpose is...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Active Engagement:**
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Read another short portion of the historical fiction text aloud to the students. Have them turn and talk about the details and the author’s possible rationale for including these details. Remind the children that they should ponder these things to determine the purpose of this portion of the piece. Listen in on their conversations.

Recap some of the conversations you overheard. Express to students that authors write texts with a purpose in mind. The information they choose to share within the text supports their purpose. Remind the students that thoughtful readers must read critically and consider the reason the author may have written the piece of literature.

Tell the children that after considering each section of the text, thoughtful readers evaluate all of the details to consider the author’s overall purpose for writing the text as a whole. Tell the children that the majority of the time they will find that authors write historical fiction so that readers may enjoy an entertaining and informative story set in the past.

**Link:**
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Invite students to use this strategy on their own. Explain that they should be thinking (during their independent time) about how the author uses text details to support his/her purpose for writing. Students should be taking some type of notes as they read (see sticky note and reading response journal options).

**Sticky Note Options:**

This portion of the text was written to _____ (author’s purpose). The author shared ____ (text details) to/because ____ (how the text details support his/her purpose).

**Reading Response Journal Options:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Details</th>
<th>The author likely shared these details to/because...</th>
<th>Therefore, I believe that the author’s purpose is...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Possible Conference Questions:**
- What are you noticing as a reader today?
- What is your author’s purpose? What kinds of information does the author share with you? How does this information support the author’s purpose?
- How does recognizing an author’s purpose help you as a reader?
Minilesson: Making Predictions About the Future Actions of Characters We’ve Grown to Love (or Hate)

Materials:
- Familiar Historical Fiction Text
- Anchor Charts from lessons 6 and 7

Note: During this lesson, you will revisit charts created during lessons 6 and 7 to make predictions about a character’s future actions. You will need to revisit the same book used in lessons 6 and 7. It is important that the students have a strong sense of the characters from the story that you use in this lesson and have developed theories about these character.

Purpose: Thoughtful readers make predictions about a character’s future actions and consider whether these theories are consistent with his/her behavior.

TEKS: 3.8B, 4.6B, 5.6B, Figure 19 D,E, ELPS 4J

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Relate a personal experience of having read a book that you did not want to end. Talk about how you connected to the characters in the story and begin to make predictions about the character’s future actions, even though the story had ended. Tell the children thoughtful readers commonly make predictions about a character’s future actions even beyond the story. Explain to the children that today you will teach them how to anchor those predictions in what is already known about a character.

Readers have you ever read a book and simply wished that the author could have just kept writing a few more pages or a sequel? It’s like you begin to wish that you could linger a bit longer with the characters in the story. You wonder if they’re safe. You wonder what they might do next. You develop theories about their future actions. I know it might seem silly since the characters are fictional, but this happens to me all the time because I start to care about the characters. Has this ever happened to you? It’s normal thing that thoughtful readers do. As a thoughtful reader, I often think about characters from the story, even after the book has ended. I consider what I have learned about a character and predict what might happen after the end of the story. Today I will teach you how to make these kinds of predictions using what you already know about the characters.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Briefly revisit some of the types of thinking that the children have been doing while studying characters during the historical fiction unit. Revisit anchor charts from lesson 6 and 7. Tell them that today’s work revolves around making predictions about the future actions of characters met in the story. Explain that when thoughtful readers make these predictions and forecast future actions, they must consider whether these predicted actions, thoughts, and feelings are consistent to what is already known about the character, the character’s behavior, and the time during which the character lived. Explain that this means that the reader must think about whether their prediction is reasonable based on what is known.

Several weeks ago, we read The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco. In this story, we met lots of colorful characters that we grew to love and really connect with. We developed theories about these characters based on their thoughts, feelings, actions, and based on the historical context. We can revisit our theories and information about these characters to envision their future actions and make predictions about what might happen AFTER the end of the story.

Demonstrate this type of thinking using evidence from your anchor charts.

Let me show you how I might do this for a character. The story tells us that during this time, Marcelle Solilaghe (actions/evidence from story). Based on what I already know about this character, I predict _____. These actions would be reasonable because _____.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Explain the steps that you used: identifying specific details from the story, making a prediction, and stating why the prediction would be reasonable based on what is known. Invite the children to use these steps to make predictions about the future actions of characters within the story. Emphasize the importance of using text evidence to justify the prediction.

Listen to the conversations. Extend the children’s thinking by proposing both plausible and non-plausible predictions. Have the children evaluate whether or not the future action is reasonable based on the evidence from the text and the time and place during which the person lived.

Would it be reasonable to assume that (character name) would (action, thought, or feeling) in the future? Why or why not? Based on what we know about the character, would he/she likely (action, thought, or feeling)? How do you know?

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that imagining what happens after the end of a story is often fun for the reader, especially when they look back over the text to help them imagine the possibilities. Have students return to a book that they have previously read independently and ask them to consider story events that might happen in a sequel to this book. Students should be taking some type of notes as they predict. Refer to the sticky note and reading response journal options shown below.

Possible Conference Questions:
- What types of information from the story are you using to help you make predictions after the end?
- Would it be reasonable to assume that (character name) would (action, thought, or feeling) in the future? Why or why not?
- Based on what you know about the character, would he/she likely (action, thought, or feeling)? How do you know?

Sticky note option:

The story tells us that during this time, (character’s name) (actions/evidence from story).

Based on what I already know about this character, I predict _____.
These actions would be reasonable because _____.

Curriculum Department
Cypress-Fairbanks I.S.D. – DRAFT – November 2011

A Time Traveler’s Journey Back to the Past in Historical Fiction
Reading Workshop Unit of Study
Showing What You Know: Test Talk- Character Development

Materials:
- Sample multiple-choice or short answer questions focused on character analysis
- Chart paper
- Guided (or Independent) Practice

Purpose: Thoughtful readers interpret the unique language of formal assessments and use the knowledge of the language to respond to multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

TEKS: 3.13 A, 3.31 A, 4.11 A, 4.29, 5.11 A, 5.29 A, ELPS4 I, F, G

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Praise students for engaging in deep thinking while studying characters, and tell them that soon they will be asked to show what they know about the concept. Explain that you will be testing their understanding of character development by giving them an independent practice activity. Explain that tests are sometimes written in language that is different from the way that we speak to one another. Introduce the language that tests use as "test talk." Tell students that this language is a special language that takes some getting used to. Tell them that in today’s lesson you will demonstrate how thoughtful readers and thoughtful test takers think about the language of tests to answer questions.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Inform students that today they will learn that good test takers must first recognize what the question is asking. Display two questions—one representing an example of a character development question and one representing a non-example. Think aloud and differentiate between the two questions, pointing to key words and clues that help you recognize when a question is asking about things related to characters. Remind students that thoughtful readers think about characters, their role/function in the story, their traits and feelings, their interactions with other characters, and changes that the character undergoes. Use the questions stems to create a Character Development Test Talk anchor chart on chart paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Development Test Talk Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reader can tell that _____ was concerned that—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What evidence from the selection shows that ___ was well respected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which sentence shows that ___ tried to inspire others to ___?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students, I need to share some helpful information with you. This information will help you as test-takers. Thoughtful readers and test takers have smart ways of thinking about questions that relate to characters.

Display a multiple-choice-formatted character development question. You may use an item from the independent practice, if you don’t use it for student assessment. Look at the question stem and think aloud about the way in which the test writer is asking about a particular paragraph, series of paragraphs, or passage. Circle key words and clues and discuss how these items help you know what the test writers want you to think about. Model how you might write the name of the strategy being tested to help you remember what to do. Look over the answer choices and discuss the language of each of answer choices. Demonstrate using the following test-taking strategies to answer the question:

- Identifying and following directions
- Navigating test structure (paragraph numbers)
- Activating schema
- information
- Eliminating nonsense answer choices

As you demonstrate the test-taking strategies invite students to participate in thinking about and eliminating answer choices.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Ask students to look at additional examples of test-like questions – examples and non-examples. Have students turn and talk with their partners about which questions ask about character development. Students should identify and articulate key words within the question to justify their thinking.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that thoughtful readers and test-takers think about the language of test questions. Distribute copies of the independent practice. Allow students to work independently to answer the questions.

Possible Conference Questions:
- How is it going?
- What is the question asking? How do you know?
- What strategy will you use for answering the questions?
Minilesson: Showing What You Know: Test Talk—Main Idea

Materials:
- Sample multiple-choice or short answer questions focused on main idea
- Chart paper
- Guided (or Independent) Practice

Purpose: Thoughtful readers interpret the unique language of formal assessments and use the knowledge of the language to respond to multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

TEKS: 3.13 A, 3.31 A, 4.11 A, 4.29, 5.11 A, 5.29 A, ELPS4 I, F, G

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Compliment students for engaging in deep thinking while studying main idea & important details and tell them that soon they will be asked to show what they know about the concept. Inform students that they will be assessed on their understanding of main idea by completing an independent practice activity. Explain that tests are sometimes written in language that is different from the way that we speak to one another. Tell students that this language is a special language that takes some getting used to. Inform them that in today’s lesson you will demonstrate how thoughtful readers and test takers think about the language of tests to answer questions.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Inform students that today they will learn that good test takers must first recognize what the question is asking. Display two questions – one representing an example of a main idea question and one representing a non-example. Think aloud by differentiating between the two questions, pointing to key words and clues that help you recognize when a question is asking about things related to main idea. Readers can identify main idea in a selection or a paragraph(s) by using what they read about the main character or topic and the important facts and details as their guide. Remind students that thoughtful readers think about the most important ideas in the text because they know they can identify the main idea by paying attention to what the text is mainly or mostly about. Create a Main Idea Test Talk anchor chart by recording the question stems on chart paper.

Main Idea Test Talk Questions
- This story is mostly about...
- Paragraphs 13 through 19 are mainly about...
- What is the main message in the story?
- That is the theme/universal message of the story?

Students, I need to share some helpful information with you. This information will help you as test-takers. Thoughtful readers and test takers have smart ways of thinking about questions that relate to main idea.

Display a multiple-choice-formatted main idea question. You may use an item from the independent practice, if you don’t use it for student assessment. Look at the question stem and think aloud about the way in which the test writer is asking about a particular paragraph, series of paragraphs, or passage. Circle key words and clues and discuss how these items help you know what the test writers want you to think about. Model how you might write the name of the strategy being tested to help you remember what to do. Look over the answer choices and discuss the language of each of answer choices. Demonstrate using the following test-taking strategies to answer the question:
- Identifying and following directions

Navigating test structure (paragraph numbers)
- Activating schema
- Reading actively & rereading
- Using the author’s clues to recognize important information
- Eliminating nonsense answer choices

As you demonstrate the test-taking strategies invite students to participate in thinking about and eliminating answer choices.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Ask students to look at additional examples of test-like questions – examples and non-examples. Have students turn and talk with their partners about which questions ask about main idea. Students should identify and articulate key words within the question to justify their thinking.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that thoughtful readers and test takers think about the language of test questions. Distribute copies of the independent practice. Allow students to work independently to answer the questions.

Possible Conference Questions:
- How is it going?
- What is the question asking? How do you know?
- What strategy will you use for answering?
Minilesson: Showing What You Know: Test Talk—Author’s Message/Purpose

Materials:
- Sample multiple-choice or short answer questions focused on main idea
- Chart paper
- Guided (or Independent) Practice

Purpose: Thoughtful readers interpret the unique language of formal assessments and use the knowledge of the language to respond to multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

TEKS: 3.13A, 3.31A, 4.11A, 4.29, 5.11A, 5.29A, ELPS4 I, F, G

Connection:
- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Applaud students for engaging in deep thinking while studying author’s purpose and tell them that soon they will be asked to show what they know about the concept. Inform students that they will be assessed on their understanding of author’s message/purpose by completing an independent practice activity. Explain that tests are sometimes written in language that is different from the way that we speak to one another. Tell students that this language is a special language that takes some getting used to. Inform them that in today’s lesson you will demonstrate how thoughtful readers and test takers think about the language of tests to answer questions.

Teach:
- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Inform students that today they will learn that good test takers must first recognize what the question is asking. Display two questions—one representing an example of an author’s purpose question and one representing a non-example. Think aloud by differentiating between the two questions, pointing to key words and clues that help you recognize when a question is asking about things related to main idea. Remind students, that thoughtful readers analyze, make inferences, and draw conclusion about the author’s purpose using evidence from the text. Create an Author’s Message/Purpose Test Talk anchor chart by recording the question stems on chart paper.

Author’s Message/Purpose
- The paragraph above the title of the story is included to—
- What does _ hope to accomplish by writing?

Students, I need to share some helpful information with you. This information will help you as test-takers. Thoughtful readers and test takers have smart ways of thinking about questions that relate to main idea.

Display a multiple-choice-formatted author’s message/purpose question. You may use an item from the independent practice, if you don’t use it for student assessment. Look at the question stem and think aloud about the way in which the test writer is asking about a particular paragraph, series of paragraphs, or passage. Circle key words and clues and discuss how these items help you know what the test writers want you to think about. Model how you might write the name of the strategy being tested to help you remember what to do. Look over the answer choices and discuss the language of each of answer choices. Demonstrate using the following test-taking strategies to answer the question:

- Identifying and following directions
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- Reading actively & rereading
- Using the author’s clues to recognize important information
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As you demonstrate the test-taking strategies invite students to participate in thinking about and eliminating answer choices.

Active Engagement:
- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Ask students to look at additional examples of test-like questions—examples and non-examples. Have students turn and talk with their partners about which questions ask about the author’s message/purpose. Students should identify and articulate key words within the question to justify their thinking.

Link:
- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that thoughtful readers and test-takers think about the language of test questions. Distribute copies of the independent practice. Allow students to work independently to answer the questions.

Possible Conference Questions:
- How is it going?
- What is the question asking? How do you know?
- What strategy will you use for answering?