

Overview

The book *Tops & Bottoms*, by Janet Stevens, is a great resource for teaching a variety of standards. You could easily wrap in the first three reading literature standards during the read aloud portion of the lesson. This lesson will focus on teaching students to pay attention to the author’s word choice AND the details of the illustrations to form a more complete picture of characters.

Connection

(What will you do to connect what you are teaching today to other teaching and/or knowledge outside of reading/writing? You can use this one, or make it your own.)

“How many of you share a bedroom with your brother or sister? I had to share a bedroom with my sister until I was nine. We even shared a bed! We weren’t supposed to talk after my mom turned out the lights, but...we usually did anyway. Sometimes it was tough to talk to her in the dark. I could hear what she was saying, but sometimes I couldn’t tell if she was upset, frustrated, or just joking. It was tough because I couldn’t see the look on her face. I could tell a lot about my sister by looking at her face. Have you ever had a hard time understanding something because you couldn’t SEE it?”

Teaching Point

(State the point in a clear and concise manner. This can be reworded to fit lingo or vocabulary that works for your students.)

Today, we are going to learn how strong readers use important words from a story AND illustrations help them REALLY understand the characters in a story.

Teach

(How will you teach students to do this work [model, demonstrate, inquiry, coach]? Will you use an anchor chart, book, sample writing, etc.?)

- During the first few pages of the read aloud, stop to point out some word choice and punctuation choices that the author made.

Grade Level: 1 - 3

3 - 5 (there is an extension that might work for your students in which you would contrast two texts)

Subject Area: ELA

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Materials:

Tops & Bottoms by Janet Stevens
Anchor chart paper OR a document camera to display your jots as you read
Sticky notes
Root box
Root vegetable seeds

Standards:

Reading Literature Standard 7

- deals with using illustrations and details in a story to describe characters, setting or events

- Example on third page of text:
 - Bear didn't just wake up, "Bear opened his eyes and grunted." What does the author want us to see and know here?
 - Bear's eyes aren't even open in the picture, yet Hare is holding his cheeks and looks so serious. What can we tell about the characters from that picture? Share your interpretation with your students—think out loud for them.
- As you think out loud for them, put a sticky note in the book, draw an arrow to the words you noticed, and then write what you're thinking or learning about the characters.

Active Engagement

(How will you teach students to do this work [model, demonstrate, inquiry, coach]? Will you use an anchor chart, book, sample writing, etc.?)

- Now it's your students' turn to try this analysis work. They need time in their own books to look for important words and details to help understand their character.
- As they read, students can track on sticky notes, like you modeled during the read aloud. If you want students to look at a common text, allow them to read and analyze collaboratively.
- As a product, they can create a character sketch where they draw their character out and include items, word/thought bubbles that **SHOW** what the character is like.
 - For example, if their character was angry, they could draw steam coming out of his ears. If the character was kind-hearted, they could have a heart on their sleeve. If their character was mischievous, they could draw a thought bubble over his head with the words, "I am going to trick you."
- The product you have students create can vary based on their needs.
- With students, plant a variety of root vegetable seeds in the root box, but do not identify (to the students) what seeds are being planted. Observe the seeds as they germinate and develop into vegetables. Students should use their observations to help identify the vegetables. How does the development of the vegetables compare with character development. Does it happen overnight or slowly over time?

Link

(Remind students of the strategy and when students will use this.)

“Remember readers, today, and every time we read, it’s important to pay attention to the words author’s use AND the illustrations they include. We can learn a lot about our characters by paying attention to both.”

Possible Modifications

- Younger students will not be able to write on sticky notes. Instead, allow them to do this analysis with you as you read, and keep track of their ideas on chart paper as you read together.
- Active engagement can be done with individual student-selected books (if students are using fiction picture books) OR with a common text.
- Common texts can vary by table/group as well.
- Include a gallery walk to showcase students’ drawings and character interpretations.

Extension

- Use the end of the book to reinforce theme and moral.
- Discuss author’s craft by using their schema to determine why the author might have selected a bear to be the sleepy, lazy character, and why the hare was the fast, hard-working character.
- Upper grades--Read the book *Bear and Bunny Grow Tomatoes*, by Bruce Koscielniak, to contrast character types. In this text, the bear is the hard worker and the bunny is an unorganized mess. The message and topic are similar, but structure and characters are different.
- Plan and/or plant a Tops & Bottoms garden.

Your Notes & Ideas