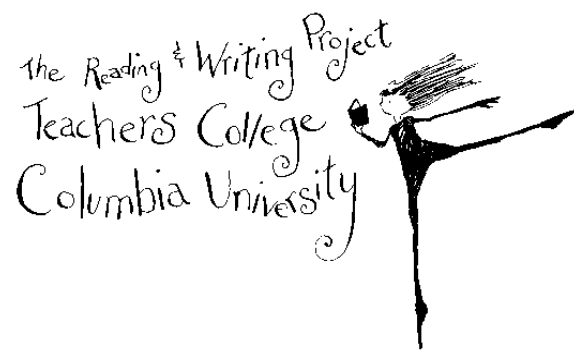


Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

**Summer Institute
on the
Teaching of Reading**



**Grade 4
Reading Curriculum
Selections
Summer 2016**

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story

A User's Guide for *Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story*

September/October
Benchmark Reading Level: P/Q

Introduction

We recommend that you launch the year for your fourth graders with *Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story* and *The Arc of Story: Writing Realistic Fiction*. Some of you may choose to begin the year with a mini-unit on writing notebooks and personal narrative, and can find more about this in the user's guide for *The Arc of Story*. The first two units of the year will be essential in helping you build a classroom community where reading and writing are valued. In particular, this first reading unit places an emphasis on building a literate community in the classroom and helping students extend that work to create their own reading identities and goals. The far-reaching impact of your teaching in this unit will show itself again and again in the independent decisions your children make as readers, across the year.

Then, too, this unit is about getting students to read with deep engagement and rapt attention. Nothing can accomplish this better than a character study, as the heart of any good story is the character. You will rally students' enthusiasm for building big ideas that are grounded in the books they read by telling them that this year is *not* going to be like other years. *This year*, students will build substantial ideas that are grounded in evidence, not lightweight ideas, and will build on the work they did in the third grade *Character Studies* unit and others.

Prerequisites/What to Do If Students Aren't Quite Ready to Start This Unit

This unit stands on the shoulders of the third-grade *Character Studies* unit. If your students experienced the *Units of Study in Reading* last year, they learned to pay attention to what characters say and do, to determine a character's traits, to think about characters' motivations, to notice patterns of behavior across a book, and to determine lessons and themes that a text might be teaching. Your teaching within this unit draws on and advances these skills.

If your students have not received this earlier teaching, or your initial performance assessment reveals that students need additional support with inferential skills, you might choose to draw on the third-grade *Character Studies* unit and revisit a few, key lessons. Below, and within our description of each bend, we've detailed specific ways you might modify the unit if you notice your students need additional support with foundational skills, literal comprehension, or developing stronger ideas about characters.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story

Materials/Getting Ready

This unit does not require many special materials. You'll need to make sure the fiction section of your library is ready for students to check out books starting on Day 1. Kids can be reading any just-right, high-interest fiction books during this unit. There are no special books needed! You'll probably ask students to select two to four books each time they visit the classroom library, so they always have a book they are reading and a book on deck.

In addition, your students will need reading notebooks and post-it notes to use to write about their reading. We particularly like post-it notes because they're movable and kids can see them in their books, but kids can also jot in their notebooks if you do not have access to post-its. If kids are jotting in their notebooks, be sure they include page numbers to signal where they got their information from. This will help them be able to refer back to specific parts of the book during partner conversations.

Students will also need reading logs. You'll see a sample reading log in the online resources for the unit, but you can modify the log as needed. What's most important is that kids come to understand that reading logs aren't just about proving to the teacher that you read. Instead in this unit, reading logs are introduced as tools for kids to get to know themselves as readers. They learn how to collect accurate data on their log and how to analyze that data to determine who they are as readers. This careful analysis can lead to goal setting and working toward goals.

By Session 6, you'll set students up with their long-term reading partners. Up until that point, you'll want to match students more informally based on their end-of-year reading levels and your knowledge of them as readers. Children will meet to talk with these partners almost every day for about 5 minutes. In order to match students with these partners, you'll need to have completed your initial running records by the end of Session 5. See *Special Concerns* for more ideas about how to keep this work brief.

Ideally, reading partners will read duplicate copies of the same books during Bend II and III. This allows them to have deeper conversations since both partners know the books well and can avoid retelling as a form of conversation. If this is not possible, you might group students into swap-book partnerships. In swap-book partnerships, students will often decide on one kind of book to read. They might read books by Andrew Clements or books with animals as main characters. When one student finishes a book, it goes into the partner's bin to be read. This way, when partners meet to discuss their books, most of the time they are familiar with the book that is being discussed. Survey your library to see if you'll group students into same-book or swap book partnerships.

You'll also want to prepare your read aloud. We suggest using *The Tiger Rising* by Kate DiCamillo, which is a particular favorite and has been a part of our community for a long time. In this unit, and in every unit, you may find it really helpful to tag your copy of the read aloud book in advance to help you keep pace with the lessons. A read-aloud pacing guide has been included in the unit to support this work (see page xvi). You might use one color post-it notes to tag the pages or chapters you'll read aloud during a separate read aloud period in the day, and then you might use another color to flag the pages you'll read or revisit during your minilessons.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story**

You'll see that the amount of pages you read during your read aloud and minilesson varies from day to day. Before Session 1, for instance, you'll only need to read aloud pages 1-4, but other days you'll read two chapters of the text.

You might find it useful to prepare some resources to carry as you confer. To do this, many of the teachers we work with choose to print favorite pieces of student work from the online resources in the unit and compile them into a binder. Here are some of our particular favorites:

What It Is	Page Numbers
Reading Log Pages	p. 20, p. 29
Great Jots and Notebook Pages	p. 40, p. 59, p. 72, p. 78, p. 80, p. 81, p. 86, p. 98, p. 100, p. 107, p. 108, p. 111, p. 112
Powerful Envisioning Work	p. 47, p. 68, p. 71

Bend I

In Bend I, you set out to help your students establish powerful reading lives, and you support them in shoring up their literal comprehension of the books they are reading.

You'll get several reading habits going from the very beginning of the unit. From the first session, students will be selecting books they want to read and then reading those intensely and alertly, just as you are reading aloud *The Tiger Rising*. You'll want to move heaven and earth to ensure that all your kids are matched with books as quickly as possible. Pay particular attention to two charts in the unit: *Finding Books We Want To Read* (p. 25) and *Finding Books That Resistant Readers Will Want to Read* (p. 27). These can give you great tips about how to match your readers with books.

You'll want to see students stopping their reading to write a quick jot on a post-it note. During your conferences, you'll want to regularly ask students to tour your through their post-it notes or jots in their notebook. This will help you determine whether students are reading alertly or dozing off. You'll also want to launch reading logs and teach kids how to do deeper work analyzing their reading logs and setting goals.

Keep in mind that a good deal of this important work is included in the shares in Bend I. If you skip the share sessions, your students will miss out on some of the opportunities they need to build a solid reading life and you might feel like some of the tools you've given kids, like reading logs, aren't really being used. Make a point to get to the shares in this bend whenever you can.

Bend I also places an emphasis on foundational reading skills. You'll build off of the retelling and envisioning skills your students developed in third grade in *Building a Reading Life* and in *Character Studies*. If your students are having trouble with literal comprehension, you'll want to quickly provide some support.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story**

If you notice....	Then you can...
Children aren't able to retell the timeline of their story	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) First, make sure that students are matched to books. Sometimes, kids are holding a text that is too-hard, which makes comprehension more difficult. 2) Teach another minilesson on retelling. You can draw on Sessions 7 and 11 from <i>Building a Reading Life</i> (Grade 3) for ideas about how to design these sections. You can also look to the Retelling/Summary strand of the Learning Progressions to identify where breakdowns are occurring for specific students. 3) Repeat the conferring suggestions on pages 38 and 40. You might repeat these with students a few times across the first bend of the unit and even beyond if they still need support.
Students are having trouble monitoring for meaning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reference the <i>Monitoring for Meaning</i> strand of the Learning Progression to get ideas of what's expected of kids. You could use teaching points from the progression to support your students. 2) Use the <i>Conferring and Small-Group Work</i> sections on p. 75 to 76. You might reteach this work a few times until kids have it down. 3) Teach students to give themselves a comprehension checkup. See p. 71 in <i>Building a Reading Life</i> (Grade 3) for the illustrated version of the chart.

Bend II

As the title communicates, the goal for Bend II is for students to think deeply about characters. You'll notice that the majority of the strategies introduced in the bend help kids work toward this goal. Keep in mind that the goal is not for students to master each of these strategies, nor is the goal for students to perfect these strategies within a single workshop period. Rather, the goal is that students be able to think deeply about characters by the end of the bend. You'll want to keep a laser focus on that goal as you're conferring with students and supporting them in small groups. Expect the bulk of jotting students do within this bend to be geared toward character.

By the end of Bend II, students should be developing much stronger ideas about the characters in their books. These ideas should be grounded in the text and well supported by the text evidence. They should be precise, with students reaching for the perfect words to say what they're trying to communicate. To develop these ideas, you'll expect to see students sorting through their post-it notes early in the book to determine which jots fit together and then developing ideas based on their observations. Then, you should see students reading on with their ideas in mind, revising their ideas when they encounter new information.

Session 7 and 8 are particularly important ones within this bend, and they're the most foundational. They build off the work started in the third-grade *Character Studies* unit. In Session 7, you'll teach students that they can develop rich and defensible ideas about their characters by noting what they do and considering why they're taking those actions. In Session 8, you'll teach students to pay careful attention to the details in their stories that reveal information about the characters' desires, obstacles, and struggles. These sessions will be particularly important ones to target with your students reading below grade level in small groups and conferences. You might even add an additional session from the third-grade *Character Studies* unit if you find most of the kids in your class need additional support in these areas.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story**

If you are pressed on time because you've added an additional session or two that your students needed, then you might skip Sessions 12 and 13. These two sessions spotlight work on debate, which you'll teach in *Reading History: The American Revolution* unit later in the year. However, if you have the time, do keep them, as these sessions are real favorites. Preparing for a debate requires students to ensure their ideas really are evidence based, as they have to identify lines and passages that will convince their partner of their idea.

Bend III

As you approach Bend III, think carefully about your pacing. If you've added additional whole-class minilessons around retelling and other foundational skills, you might need to make cuts to this bend to stay on pace. You could skip Sessions 17 and 18, which address helping students build central interpretations and then strengthen those interpretations by finding meaning in recurring images, objects, and details. Of course, if you make the decision to cut those sessions from this unit, you'll want to think about where you'll address that teaching. You could decide to add those lessons into your historical fiction or interpretation book clubs units, to address the work with students during literary essay, or to do the work with your strongest readers through strategy groups.

Whatever you decide, be sure you address the work of building stronger interpretations with students during read aloud. *The Tiger Rising* is an ideal text to practice this with. Look to Sessions 17 and 18 and to the Determining Themes/Cohesion strand of the Narrative Reading Learning Progression for ideas about what to model. Fourth graders, for instance, are expected to generate possible ideas about what a text might teach *as* they read, and then to carry those ideas with them as they read on through a text. You'll want to give students an opportunity to do this during your read aloud. You might stop one-third of the way through the book and ask students, "What might the author be teaching us?" Then, you'll want to teach kids how to track their possible ideas as they read on, perhaps creating theory charts to record their theories and their evidence. Push your fourth graders to consider themes that are true for most of the text.

Insights Gleaned From Other Teachers Who Have Taught This Unit/Special Concerns

One of the big things we hear from teachers who have taught the *Interpreting Characters: The Heart of the Story* unit is that book choice matters. Investment in this unit was sky high when kids had opportunities to select the fiction books they most wanted to read, and when they received some teaching about how to choose books that are just right for them.

Volume matters. You'll want to see kids reading up a storm, and you'll want that reading work to be intense and alert, just like you are modeling in the read aloud. Because volume is so critical, we've suggested that students write about their reading on post-it notes or with quick jots in their reading notebooks. These jots should be brief, just a minute or so, and then you should channel students back into their reading. You'll want to regularly scan students' reading logs to see that volume is

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story**

high and address any concerns as needed. Plan to meet with any students who is not reading at a high volume, about $\frac{3}{4}$ -page per minute, or whose volume is varying from day to day.

Finally, relationships around books matters. It matters in this unit, it matters in our classrooms, and it matters in our students' lives as readers. As adult readers, we rarely finish a book and put it directly back on the shelf without mentioning it to someone. Instead, we talk with others about the books we've read, particularly with our friends who have shared reading interests. Because of this, it is critical that you match your students with partners based both on reading level and reading interests/needs. It's also critical that you preserve partner time. If your kids aren't talking well in partnerships, you can't cut partner time out of the day and out of the unit. Instead, you need to be sure you're providing students with multiple opportunities to practice partner talk each day. For example, kids should be turning and talking off of the read aloud each day, and they should be engaged in whole-class conversations off the read aloud at least twice a week.

Specific Concerns

Below we have laid out some special concerns when teaching this unit and offered our best advice for addressing these issues.

Volume/Developing a Stronger Relationship with Reading

You might notice that students are not reading with the volume you'd hope. Fourth graders who are matched with books and reading above level L should be reading about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page per minute. That means, a child who is reading 40 minutes in school and 40 minutes at home should be reading about 60 pages a day. At that rate, she would finish a 180-page book in three days. If you see students who have far lower volume, here are some things you could try:

- Get kids to set goals for themselves or for the class. An individual kid could work to read more pages during reading workshop. A class might work on reading more minutes each day or week. Post goals publicly, and track (and celebrate!) progress toward them.
- Study reading logs yourself, and teach students to study their own reading logs. Get kids to notice patterns in their reading. They might ask, "When do I read the most? What conditions let me read more? When do I read the least? What conditions led to that?" Then, they can make plans for how to read more.
- Be sure kids are taking their books home each night. Sometimes reading volume drops because kids don't have the books they need to read.
- Study your own teaching. Are your minilessons running beyond 10 minutes? If your minilesson are longer than 10 minutes, kids are losing time to read. Make it a priority to keep your minilessons to 10 minutes to preserve time for students to read independently. We recommend setting a timer to help with this.

If your students don't have a good relationship with reading, you'll want to really lean on Sessions 1 and 2 in the unit. These sessions include ideas about building relationships with books that can weave across this unit and across your year. They give examples of how you can build a reading culture in your classroom. You might look at ways to give students more of a say in how the library is organized (see p. 25), how to get students recommending books to each other (see p. 29), or how to get students talking more about their books, goals, and reading logs. You'll also want to look closely at the chart on p. 7, which looks at ways to help kids to choose books, and the conferring and

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story**

small-group work session on p. 9, which gives tips about how to channel students to be nose-in-the-book readers.

Reading Assessments Are Taking Too Long!

Your initial reading assessments need to be finished by Session 6, so you can match students with long-term reading partners on their level. To facilitate this, you'll want to make your assessments as brief as possible and rely on information about your students' end-of-year reading levels and summer reading to help you gauge what level to start at. The conferring and small-group work section on page 17 in the unit, *Making Assessments as Efficient as Possible*, will provide you with particular support in this area.

Students Need Support With Foundational Skills:

You may find your students need more support with foundational reading skills. Here are some tips for how to support them by drawing on third grade units of study and the learning progressions:

If your students need support with...	Then you can...
Tackling difficult words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult the Third Grade Unit 1, <i>Building a Reading Life</i>, and study Session 14: <i>Figuring Out Hard Words</i>. Since third grade teachers will be using this book, you'll want to write your own session based on this session. • Study the chart on p. 162 of <i>Building a Reading Life</i> titled "Readers Climb the Hurdles of Hard Words By..." to get ideas for how to support your students. Use these strategies in conferences or in strategy groups. • Study the chart on p. 153 of <i>Building a Reading Life</i>, which looks at how to help students figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. This chart has been used whole class and with small groups of students from grades 3-8, which much success. • Use the Word Solving thread of the Word Work strand of the Learning Progression to identify needs and form small groups.
Reading fluently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw upon the Fluency and Punctuation strand of the Learning Progression to identify needs and form small groups. • Consult the share on p. 165 of the Third Grade <i>Building a Reading Life</i> unit for ideas of how to support fluency. • Get partnerships working together on fluency. Partners could identify key scenes and work on reading and rereading those scenes as fluently as possible.

Students Are Not Writing About their Reading/Using Post-It Notes

Fourth graders should be doing some writing about reading as they read. If you see students not post-it noting, ask them to set goals for how many post-it notes they'll jot in a reading workshop

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpreting Characters: The Heart of Story**

period. Celebrate when they meet their goals, and ask them to set new ones. During the link of a minilesson, you might ask kids to make a plan for their jotting. You could say, "Make a plan for the writing about reading work you'll do today. Do you need to take post-it notes? Write about a theory? Add to a chart? Collect evidence to support an idea? Make a plan, and tell your partner what it is. Or, if you see many students are not jotting while they are reading, you might use your mid-workshop teaching point to give students a reminder. You could say, "If you haven't jotted yet, stop and jot now!"

Kids are most likely to write about their reading when they see the purpose of it. To help them understand the purpose, you can teach them to use post-it notes in their partner conversation. For example, they can use post-it notes to start the conversation, choosing one of their ideas and trying to talk a lot off of it.

Kids are Having Difficulty With Self-Assessment/Goal-Setting Work:

You might notice that students are having trouble self-assessing and setting goals, and that might make you think about skipping the parts of sessions that ask kids to do this work. We strongly encourage you not to do this, and instead to jump in and give them a try. There is a lot of work around self-assessing and goal-setting embedded into this unit. You'll give your kids a performance assessment, invite them to score their initial attempts, and then ask them to work with those rubrics across the unit. This is important work as it lays the foundation for the work students will do across the remainder of the year, and it is not surprising if the initial work they do is an approximation at best. Embrace those approximations and teach students to make them better!

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading the Weather, Reading the World

A User's Guide for *Reading the Weather, Reading the World*

October/November
Benchmark Reading Level: Q/R

Introduction

Reading the Weather, Reading the World is the first information reading unit of study for the fourth-grade school year, and provides the groundwork for the skills readers will need for later information text units in fourth and fifth grade. The unit also builds off of the work readers did in third grade. In many ways, *Reading the Weather, Reading the World* is a higher level version of those third-grade units, with the first half of *Reading the Weather* emulating *Reading to Learn* and the second half of it emulating *Research Clubs*.

This unit supports students in the essential skills they will need to be strong readers and researchers of informational texts. Specifically, they will learn to read for main ideas and supporting details, to identify text structures and use this information to understand texts more fully, to summarize, and to figure out meanings of unknown words and academic vocabulary. The Informational Learning Progression in *Reading Pathways* on pages 193-208 will be very helpful as a guide for the work you will want your students to work toward and in subsequent units of study across the year.

Teachers and students have found *Reading the Weather, Reading the World* to be both fun and challenging. The unit allows students to work together to research highly engaging topics such as extreme weather and natural disasters, but it also pushes students toward complex skills like synthesis and analyzing author's craft. Fourth grade presents a particular challenge because most world-class standards display a big step up in skills between third and fourth grade. While this unit is foundational in many ways, there is big work for you and students in this unit. The goal of this user's guide is to help you teach the unit in the most effective way possible.

Prerequisites/What to Do If Students Aren't Quite Ready to Start This Unit

To determine what ways you may need to differentiate your instruction to tailor the needs of your readers, begin with the pre-assessment to the unit, which can be found on the Online Resources at heinemann.com. See page xviii of *Reading the Weather, Reading the World* for more information about how to access the Online Resources.

You will see directions for how to administer the pre-assessment in the Online Resources. You will need to provide one period for this assessment. Teachers have found it to be most helpful to provide student with half-sheets of lined paper on which to write their responses. If students are not at the benchmark level that the passages are written at (Q and above), you will want to read the passages aloud to those students, as you are assessing students' listening comprehension, not their word recognition (as you are assessing in a running record).

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**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading the Weather, Reading the World**

After you administer your assessments, you will want to score them against the Informational Learning Progression in *Reading Pathways* with your colleagues. You can also use the Student Checklists and Sample Student Responses to help your team norm the rubrics. If your students used the checklist the previous year and are familiar with how they work, you could also channel students to self-assess their responses against the Student Checklist. Either way, you will want to assess students yourself to get a sense for how to support your class across the unit. To learn more about how to administer the pre-assessments and how to use the checklists, see chapters 7 and 8 of *Reading Pathways* in your Units of Study for Teaching Reading kit.

Materials/Getting Ready

To best teach this unit, you will want your own copy of *Reading the Weather, Reading the World*, one that you can mark up with Post-its and notes to yourself as you teach. This user's guide is designed to work in tandem with *Reading the Weather*, not stand alone. The basic materials you need for this unit, or any unit, can be found in Chapter 6 of *A Guide to the Reading Workshop*. For *Reading the Weather* in particular, however, you'll want copies of the information texts *Everything Weather* by Kathy Furgang, *DK Eyewitness: Hurricane and Tornado* by Jack Challoner, and *Hurricanes* by Seymour Simon. These texts are used in minilessons across the unit. You could, however, choose different mentor texts. If you do, you'll want to choose a mentor text that is engaging, and reveals several different text structures for students to analyze. In Bends II and III, you will be setting up research teams, so you will want to choose topics that can be researched and compared/contrasted. We have chosen extreme weather and natural disasters, although you may choose a different topic, such as animals, for student research teams. (Be aware that this is the topic of study for the third grade unit devoted to nonfiction research.)

You will also need to get text sets of a particular topic of study for students to research in teams. The unit suggests hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, tsunamis, and earthquakes, although you could allow students to study other extreme weather/natural disaster events. If your students are far below benchmark, you could channel students to study animals. If your school is low on books, we encourage you to purchase the Reading the Weather shelf from the Classroom Library Project, which will fully support a range of reading levels and interests.

To get ready for Bends II and III of the unit, you will also want to set students up in research teams. Many teachers also found it helpful to give students some say in the selection of their research teammates and possible topics. Of course, you will make the final decisions when putting students into these research teams, but it's important to take into account student interest. The teams will switch topics of study from Bend II to Bend III in order to compare and contrast extreme weather/natural disaster events. For more information, read pages xvi-xvii in *Reading the Weather*.

Teachers have also found it helpful to channel readers who struggle to study the same topic that they model in the minilessons. For example, in Bend II, you model your teaching with by studying the topic drought. Channel strugglers to study that topic, too.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading the Weather, Reading the World

Insights Gleaned From Other Teachers Who Have Taught This Unit/Special Concerns

Keep in mind that this unit (and every unit) is designed to last between 4-6 weeks. Your goal is to streamline the unit so that you can focus on the skills students especially need to develop: main idea and supporting details, summarizing, synthesizing, and comparing and contrasting. Know that any skill that students don't completely master will be addressed again in the next information text unit of study, *Reading History*. Teachers have found it helpful to plan the celebration date for the unit and to vow to stick to that celebration date in order to keep momentum within the unit.

We have acknowledged above that this unit is fun, but challenging. Some of the minilessons in this unit are humdingers, to say the least. Specifically, teachers found Session 3, "Text Structures Help Accentuate What Matters" and Session 9, "Synthesis" to be doozies for students (and teachers themselves!). That said, some teachers have found it helpful to include sessions from the third grade informational text reading units of study as a way to help "ramp up" their students' skills. Specifically, teachers have found that the sessions on reading for text structure (chronological, compare & contrast, cause & effect, problem & solution) in *Researching Clubs* have been helpful in supporting students' analysis of text structure. They also found the lessons on synthesis in *Reading to Learn* were helpful as well.

Then, too, some teachers have swapped extreme weather/natural disaster topics for Bends II and III and inserted topics that are more at their student's reading levels, interests, (such as animals) or are texts that comprise much of their current classroom library. If you make changes to the topics of study for your research teams, remember that Bend III is largely an opportunity for compare and contrast across two related topics, so you'll want to be sure that your research teams are set up accordingly. For example, if one team is studying an animal in Bend II that team will need to study a different animal in Bend III. Or if a team is studying a famous person in Bend II, they will need to study a different famous person in Bend III. If a team chose to study a country or continent in Bend II, they will need to switch to a different country or continent in Bend III.

It is also important to remember that in Bend I students are NOT just reading extreme weather/natural disaster topics; students are reading a variety of high-interest nonfiction on ANY topic. Some teachers who taught the unit last year didn't realize this, and they channeled their students to read extreme weather and natural disaster books in Bend I. By the time they got to Bend II, kids had read all the weather/disaster books! To prevent this, it would be wise to cull the weather/disaster books beforehand and put them aside during your teaching of Bend I.

It is important to note that this unit is taught alongside another foundational unit, *Boxes and Bullets: Personal and Persuasive Essay*. We strongly encourage you to keep the pace of the Overview and to teach *Reading the Weather* unit alongside that one. We know it doesn't quite fit as tongue-in-groove as some of our other reading/writing workshop unit of study pairings, but teachers have found ways to be creative with this. As students study extreme weather and natural disasters in reading workshop, they write persuasive essays about weather/disasters in writing workshop. In other words, there is a way to finesse the natural reciprocity between reading and writing, even when on the face of it the units seem mutually exclusive.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading the Weather, Reading the World**

Finally, many teachers have found it important to add a minilesson about the reading skill we call “part to whole.” While the pre- and post-assessments gauge this skill, teachers have found that their students need more explicit teaching to address this work and have therefore added a session on this topic. If you’d like to do this in Bend I, we suggest doing this after Session 3, or in Bend II, we suggest making the addition after Session 8.

In this document we provide a map for the kinds of work kids will be doing. For more specifics on your teaching, look to the unit itself. This user’s guide will provide you with some key pointers for teaching the unit well.

Bend I

One of the best things about Bend I is that it serves as an excellent introduction to nonfiction reading skills and strategies. Students begin by reading all kinds of high interest nonfiction—reading easier nonfiction texts that you give them in baggies, and then gradually moving toward “within reach” books, texts that are at their just-right reading level.

Across the unit, but beginning here in Bend I, you’ll guide students to read nonfiction with a high degree of volume and engagement. Just as in your first unit of study for reading workshop, you’ll want to be sure that students are invested in the work they are doing. For many students, you’ll see that they are able to sustain independent reading of nonfiction, but if you see that this is a challenge because your students are not reading on benchmark or you do not have enough books to sustain their reading, you may choose to have students also continue their fiction reading during this unit. Ultimately, though, your goal is to help students read lots of nonfiction.

In the third session of the unit, “Text Structures Help Accentuate What Matters,” students are taught to read for various text structures. That is, they will read, alert for main ideas and supporting details, and they will also identify whether the text is structured as chronological, compare & contrast, cause & effect, or problem & solution. Many teachers who taught this unit found key sessions in the third grade *Research Clubs* to help support students who struggled with the session.

By Session 4, “Embracing the Challenge of Nonfiction Reading,” students begin a suite of strategies for tackling the various ways nonfiction gets hard. They’ll practice figuring out unknown words, transitioning between narrative, expository, and hybrid texts, and determining ways to tackle sections of text that are confusing or complex. By the end of Bend I, students will practice summarizing information texts with clarity and brevity. Keep the “Main Idea(s) and Supporting Details/Summary section (p. 200) your *Reading Pathways* book handy to help you support readers. It’s important to see the way these sessions connect to one another and you’ll want to guide your students to use these strategies flexibly as they move forward in the unit.

Bend II

This next half of the unit channels students to get into research teams to study a particular topic. At this point the unit focuses on researching extreme weather and natural disasters. We suggest that

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading the Weather, Reading the World

you divide your class into six research teams: one each that studies hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, earthquakes, droughts, and floods. You could choose any extreme weather or natural disaster events (volcanoes, forest fires, mudslides, blizzards) for teams to study, and you could, of course, offer up other topics for research teams to study (i.e. animals). When choosing these topics, keep in mind that in Bend III your research teams will swap topics. For example, the group that studies hurricanes in Bend II will study Tornadoes in Bend III and vice versa.

For your demonstration teaching in this bend, you'll likely follow our model and use droughts as the class topic in order to make use of the demonstration texts set forth in the minilessons. Teachers who have taught this unit found it helpful to guide struggling or below benchmark readers to study the whole class topic in order to provide additional support.

Bend II is short, designed to take no longer than a week and a half. Readers begin by getting into research teams and previewing the texts in their bins, sorting them from easiest to hardest. Then teams decide on the subtopics that they will study (causes, effects, history, famous examples, stories). Students will then begin reading and researching the subtopic that they have chosen (and then moving onto researching the other subtopics when their notebooks are brimful with that first subtopic).

Teachers have found Session 9, "Synthesis," to be a whopper. If you read it and find that it will be the case for your students as well, we encourage you to look at the synthesis sessions in *Reading to Learn* in the third grade information reading unit of study. Those sessions provide a great primer to synthesis, an important skill to master in this age of high-stakes assessment and world-class standards.

In Bend II, students will also practice reading various types of texts, and learn more ways to tackle the hard parts of nonfiction reading, including how to tackle statistics and numbers. Then, too, readers will practice not only saying back the main ideas of texts, but will also practice growing ideas off of the information they are reading. By the end of the bend, students will begin preparations for a mini-celebration which provides an opportunity for the research teams to teach one another.

Keep in mind that the mini-celebration for Bend II is also designed to be a springboard for Bend III. In that last bend, research teams will study a new topic. That is, the drought group will study floods, and vice versa. Hurricanes and tornadoes will swap topics, and earthquakes and tsunamis will swap, as well. For more information, see Sessions 13 and 14 in *Reading the Weather*.

Bend III

As explained above, this bend is designed for students to take on a second, related topic, and to compare and contrast it with the first. As outlined in the paragraph above, research teams will swap related topics. Given the study of droughts as the whole class topic in Bend II, we switch to a study of floods for whole class study in Bend III. You'll want to provide no more than a week and a half for this bend, and if you are finding yourself short on time and need to finish the unit, teachers have found it helpful to cut a session or two from this bend. We've highlighted the most important sessions below.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading the Weather, Reading the World**

In Session 14, “Reading and Thinking Across Two Topics,” research teams will swap topics and begin the research process all over again: sorting books, previewing them, and researching subtopics. They will also begin comparing and contrasting right from the get-go. In subsequent sessions, students will read texts closely so that they can continue to grow ideas about their research. In Sessions 16 and 17, students will begin pursuing their own agendas as they research, whether it be the effects of global warming or safety tips for disaster events.

One popular minilesson is Session 17, “Evaluating Sources.” In it, students will look at the author of a nonfiction text and analyze the author’s credibility and trustworthiness. This is an important skill, one that will be addressed in later units. While students have enjoyed learning this content, it isn’t inherent to the teaching of the unit, and if you are running out of time, you might consider making it a mid-workshop or a share for another day.

Two sessions that students will definitely want to practice are “Reading Closely, Thinking Deeply,” and “Analyzing Craft,” sessions 19 and 20, respectively. In these sessions, students begin studying authors’ craft moves. In these sessions, students will be introduced to the ‘Goals & Techniques’ cards, which can be found in the Digital Resources. Students have found them to be helpful in identifying and analyzing author’s craft. These sessions provide students with a fresh perspective on reading nonfiction, and will give them exposure to many of the kinds of questions asked on standardized reading assessments.

The unit culminates with celebration options that span a day or two. For example, students could write quick information texts, create public service announcements and record them on video, create posters and march around their neighborhood, write letters to the editor or the mayor. We also outline an option of celebrations that helps kids transfer the work they did in the unit to the kinds of questions they might see on a state test. There are many possibilities, and you will want to discuss with your team the best way to celebrate. See pages 209-213 for more information on this topic.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

Interpretation Book Clubs

January/February
(Level 3 Reading Benchmark: R/S)

Welcome to the Unit

As you enter this unit, you are most likely in one of two places. Your students may have done a fair amount of interpretation work so far this year, beginning with the character unit, where they learned to develop ideas about the themes and lessons stories teach, and then followed by the historical fiction unit, where students learned to develop more nuanced interpretations, study story elements (like repeated images, setting and plot) more closely, and discuss interpretations in the company of clubs. Alternately, you and your colleagues may have chosen to postpone Bend III of *Interpreting Characters: The Heart of the Story* and are ready to teach those lessons now, as a precursor to this unit. Either way, this unit will be about taking the foundational work students *do* have in interpretation, shoring them up, and helping them to use these skills in service of doing even more sophisticated analytical work.

In this interpretation unit, therefore, you will help your readers to draw upon, transfer, and apply all of this past learning to sharpen their interpretation skills. You will reinforce an integral idea—that the stories they are reading are about more than just plot and characters, and that careful, close analysis of the text and an author’s choices allows one to uncover the deeper, central ideas a text conveys. You’ll move your students to think and talk about the ideas their chapter books suggest.

It’s an easy job to tell young readers what the ideas are in a novel; it’s easy to tell them a theme and have them find evidence for that theme in a text. It’s easy, that is, to hand over a piece of literature as content to your students and have them hunt and peck for answers to questions you devise. It is much more challenging to teach students to think for themselves. We want to teach (and the Common Core State Standards expect) this sort of thinking; this ability to interpret and analyze a text and determine multiple ideas and themes. To meet this call, your readers will need some specific strategy instruction in analytical reading practices, or else they will remain ever dependent on collaborative, teacher-led understandings.

You’ll show students, pretty much immediately, that good books are about more than one idea, and you’ll teach them to keep more than one idea afloat in their minds. You’ll teach your readers that just as their books are about more than one idea, ideas, or themes, live in more than one text. Once your students are recognizing themes, you’ll teach them to compare how themes are developed in different texts. All the time, you will be training your students to back up their ideas with evidence from the texts.

It is important to know that we designed this unit to stand side-by-side with *The Literary Essay* in writing workshop. In writing workshop, you will channel students to write about fiction in ever more sophisticated ways: beginning with character-based ideas in Bend I, then moving to interpretive thesis statements in Bend II, and finally, comparing and contrasting themes across stories in Bend III. This means that students will have time to hone their abilities to analyze themes as readers before being asked to apply this complex work to their essay writing. In fact, if you keep

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

the two units in sync, this ‘learn in reading then apply to writing’ structure will continue to hold true. For instance, in Bend II of this unit, you’ll teach students to compare themes across multiple texts. Then, in Bend III of *The Literary Essay*, you’ll teach students to take what they know about comparing and contrasting themes and use it to write a literary essay in which they discuss how a theme is handled similarly and differently in two texts.

This year we have again envisioned Interpretation Clubs as a book club unit, for many reasons. Giving students the opportunity to do close reading across texts in the company of others will enable them to grow stronger as readers. Students will have the opportunity to harness all of the teaching you’ve done up to this point in the year and can work together to transfer and apply all they have learned about comprehending, synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting across genres. In addition, book clubs offer students the chance to work within structures which inherently hold them accountable for supporting their thinking. “What part in the text makes you think that?” one club member might ask another and the club together will proceed in hashing out whether or not an interpretation is supported by the text.

Then too, working in clubs will help your fourth graders to continue to work toward meeting speaking and listening standards. It is important to note that in fourth grade, students are expected to “review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion” (SL 4.1).

Overview

Essential Question: How can I heighten my skills at interpretation so I see themes that thread through a text and that sometimes thread across many texts? How can I think about ways in which different authors approach the same theme differently?

- **Bend I: Interpretation: Discussing Themes and Issues in the Company of Clubs**
How can I read with the lens of looking for themes, learning to spot places in a text where the theme shines through?
- **Bend II: Comparing Themes—and How Characters Relate to Them—Across Texts**
How can I compare and contrast the way a theme is handled similarly and differently in different texts?
- **Bend III: Reading Closely to See How Themes Are Shaped By Authors**
How can I look at how different authors approach the same theme?

A Summary of the Bends in the Road for this Unit

This unit has three main bends, each one leading students towards increasingly more nuanced thinking about interpretation, while also guiding students so that they can do the work independently, rather than simply following their teacher’s thinking. The skills and strategies taught in each bend will set the stage for the work you then ask students to apply to their literary essays in writing workshop.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

To achieve this, Bend One begins with students revisiting familiar texts, thinking about the ideas these texts suggest. You'll teach students ways to think about themes and lessons learned in familiar read aloud texts, and you'll teach them that stories are never about just one idea.

In Bend Two, you'll guide students to more nuanced reading and thinking by teaching them to lay texts with similar themes alongside each other in order to investigate how different texts speak similarly and differently about the same ideas. Rarely are the settings, characters, or events exactly matched, and it is in these fine differences and their implications that students, with your instruction, will learn to unpack a text, analyzing how ideas that at first glance appear the same, may be different either in their development, or in their details. Once students can see that texts often address the same theme, then you can help students notice differences in nuances of the message or in each author's treatment of the message. Students will be able to contrast how authors present or develop a meaning, theme, or character—first in conversation, and then in writing. Imagine how this thinking will help your students later in life, as they learn to ask colleagues, leaders, and co-citizens, "Wait, I think that these ideas are similar, but somewhat different in their implications or applications."

Finally, in Bend Three, you'll offer your students analytical lenses for interpretation that focus on literary craft, so that students are alert to the word and image choices and metaphors in the texts that they encounter. This ability to think metaphorically enriches students' experience of literature, it hones their thinking in new directions, and it will enhance their own language and expressiveness. Your students will emerge from this unit more alert to the metaphoric allusions and rhetoric in the texts they encounter, whether it is the idea that the dog is a pivotal character in *Because of Winn-Dixie*, or that the suitcase is more than a suitcase in *Bud, Not Buddy*.

Supporting Skill Progressions

As with any unit, you'll want to make sure that you plan your instruction and assessments with your learning progressions closely in hand. In this unit, you can look closely at the *Narrative Reading Learning Progression*. This unit addresses multiple standards but there are a few in particular that we especially want to highlight. Much of this unit works to support students in thinking about the ways that different authors approach themes and this is work which addresses and extends what is expected of fourth graders. In this unit, students are supported in reading closely to study authorial intent in terms of perspective, structure and craft and consider how those choices help convey themes. Thus, the unit also supports students in considering language (RL 4.4) and structure of texts (4.5). Students will also learn to consider perspective as a craft choice. Not only will students look at the point of view of the narrator (RL 4.6), they will consider how who tells the story affects how it is told (RL 5.6), which helps to convey the larger themes of the story. (Bend III addresses standard 5.4 as well). This is often very difficult work and introducing students to this work now can better prepare them for success next year.

The unit will also continue to support students in describing characters, setting, and plots in-depth, as expected by Standard 4.2 and to refer to specific examples and details from the text as they explain what the text has said explicitly and make inferences (the work expected by Standard 4.1). In addition, as the unit is designed to be a club unit, students will be supported in working to meet

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

Speaking and Listening Standard 4.1 as they come to discussions prepared, draw on those preparations and consider their own ideas in light of their ensuing conversations.

Assessment

You'll know your students are ready for this teaching if, as you look over their Post-its and listen to their partner conversations, you see that they are regularly inferring about the characters in their stories, and are synthesizing the narrative elements in the stories they read. If, for instance, your students are mostly able to read a book like *Because of Winn-Dixie* and have little trouble keeping track of the characters, figuring out where the story is taking place, then, that student is ready to also realize that *Because of Winn-Dixie* is the kind of novel that suggests important themes—it's a book that teaches us how to live. This interpretation unit makes the most sense for readers who are reading books, at minimum, at level P and above, and who are regularly inferring about the characters' emotions, traits, and changes in their books. Ideally, the bulk of your readers will be level R and above when you embark on this unit. That said, you will want the goal of your teaching to be to help all of your readers reach and exceed grade level expectations so however you adapt the unit you will want to keep that goal in mind.

Once you've determined that your students are ready for this unit, you'll want to begin with assessment. In every unit, you'll want to identify three of four aspects of reading on which you'll predominantly want to focus. In this unit, for example, you might choose to assess: "Determining Themes/Cohesion," "Analyzing Author's Craft," "Analyzing Perspective," and "Comparing and Contrasting Story Elements and Theme." You might return to the data you gathered at the end of the historical fiction unit to study what your students seemed to grasp about making larger interpretations.

As you did within prior units, you could provide students with a set of paired, thematically related short texts. For example, you might ask questions which push students to compare and contrast the different craft moves authors make, asking, "What are some different things each text points out about the same idea?" and "How does each author craft their writing to convey a theme?" At the end of the unit, you'll likely plan to repeat this same assessment (or a similar one) to measure student growth. Work with your colleagues to design a pre-assessment for this unit.

After you have collected your children's responses, you will want to lay them alongside the *Reading Narrative Learning Progression* and assess students' written responses using it as a guide. At the end of the unit, you'll likely plan to repeat this same assessment (or a similar one) to measure student growth. The learning progression will help you see the progression of growth most children undergo as they learn to infer, interpret, and draw on textual evidence.

As you did in earlier units, you will likely rally students to self-assess their work against the different strands of the *Reading Narrative Learning Progression*. Units One and Three lay out additional suggestions for how this self-assessment might go. Alternatively, you might rally colleagues to study student work, establishing common baselines for the work at various levels. It will be important to know where the majority of your class falls so that you can be ready to meet their needs in your minilessons and read aloud, as well as where your outliers stand (so that you

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

can plan thoughtfully for the small group instruction and teaching of individuals you will do throughout the unit).

Keep in mind that while this unit has specific skill emphases, all units are intended to teach the *whole reader*. That is to say, you are apt to find that some students, especially those that are reading far below the benchmark reading levels, are in need of foundational reading work like monitoring for sense, fluency, synthesizing, and word solving. And students who move up a level are likely to need to spend some time applying those foundational skills to this new, more challenging work. The learning progression has strands that you can reference to help students shore up these foundational skills, and will help you plan for the teaching you'll do now, and across the year.

Getting Ready

Preparing Your Classroom Library

This unit will not require any special new texts. Universal ideas (i.e., literary themes) are universal because they are important in a great many texts. You will not need specially constructed text-sets in order for readers to think about how different authors convey the same theme. So you don't have to make a basket labeled 'struggle against nature' and fill it with *Skylark*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Out of the Dust*, and so on. The unit is going to lead students to do much more intellectual work than simply find evidence in support of a pre-named theme. We recommend that students have a steady supply of novels, picture books, and short stories.

Make sure that you've gathered narratives that are as suggestive and complicated as possible, for your readers of every level. *Dragon Slayer Academy*, for instance, at levels N-O, offers wild complexities and provocative themes, whereas it may be hard (but not impossible) to develop thematic understanding in *Magic Tree House*. They are both terrific series, but you will want to steer students to one over the other in this unit of study. Look over your library with that lens; imagine yourself doing the work of this unit in the books that are available. Your students will, though, as mentioned, want to do this work collaboratively in clubs—so you and they should definitely gather texts of which you have multiple copies.

You may make it easier to tackle this work by having copies available of your prior read aloud texts. It will be important for your class to have a set of shared texts to mine in this unit—and presumably those will be the texts (novels, picture books, short stories, and so on) you have read aloud all year. If you have not done much reading aloud and your class does not have a shared repertoire of texts, then begin reading aloud now! Helping your students to revisit texts which you have already read together can offer them the chance to do the complex work of laying these texts against each other and looking for themes, symbols, and metaphors that run across them all. And as you engage in new read alouds during this unit, you will want to help students continue to make connections, compare, contrast and analyze across all of those previous read texts.

For the first part of this unit this unit, we recommend you read aloud Sharon Creech's *Love That Dog* (Lexile Level 1010, Fountas and Pinnell Level T) and then bring in a paired text such as a short story from *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant (Lexile Level 870, Fountas and Pinnell Level R). The text of *Love That Dog* is not complex. The fact that it is a narrative told in verse, however, does

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

invite (even require) more interpretive reading. Of course we find it most important that your read aloud decisions are data-based, so choose texts that will match the instructional level of complexity of most of your students. This means you might select a text at a lower or higher level, depending on the current assessment of your class.

Bend I: Interpretation: Discussing Themes and Issues in the Company of Clubs

This unit builds on the fiction units that have preceded it—namely, *Interpreting Characters* and *Historical Fiction Book Clubs*. At the start of this unit, you'll want to make sure that students realize that although this *is* a new unit, they'll need to draw on many of their burgeoning skills and strategies from the previous units. (Of course, your goal is for them to *always* modify and build on their learning from previous years and previous units, to help them realize this is helpful to remember at the start of every unit!) Share with students that the work of this unit stands on the shoulders of the work they did in the launching unit and historical fiction book clubs. You might even want to remind children of what they have learned by pulling out charts and other tools from these earlier units, reminding students that they can once again be helpful.

To begin this unit, you'll re-invite your students into interpretation work and immediately provide opportunities for lots of scaffolded practice. Now, you'll ask them to do this work in new texts and more sophisticated ways. This is no automatically-achieved feat. Taking time now to support this kind of transference will also be of use in schools where standardized tests are approaching, as great test preparation is about learning to use what you know under different conditions and in new contexts. (After focusing on this transference work, by the end of this first bend, you'll be adding new strategies and pushing children into new work with interpretation.)

Another early goal for this unit is for kids to realize that they are already interpreting life and texts all the time, and that any one event or story will have lots of different interpretations—though not all of them will be equally supported by evidence. So, this part of the unit aims to help kids know that interpretation is what thoughtful people do all throughout our lives, and it is within grasp for us all. By inviting kids to feel at home interpreting, we expect they'll become accustomed to this way of thinking and this way of talking about texts; their interpretations will get far better just from immersion. During this first bend in the road, welcome much of what they offer as interpretation, and try not to be unduly stressed by what may seem to be shallow or off-center. Remember, interpretation work necessarily starts this way, and practice will allow students to outgrow these initial ideas and also—more importantly—these initial, less skilled ways of reaching interpretations.

If you postponed teaching Bend III of *Interpreting Characters* in October, now will be the time to teach those lessons. We recommend beginning this unit with Session 14- Session 18 from that book. Alternately, if you taught that bend but worry that children still need added practice, you might consider re-teaching these five sessions using a different text. This will reinforce the work of building interpretations before you launch fully into this unit. Of course, if you taught Bend III in the fall and students are poised and ready to move on, you'll begin with the teaching described below: Bend I of *Interpretation Book Clubs*.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

In your first lesson of this unit, then, you could invite students to focus on interpretive work by explaining that readers don't read just to find out what characters do, or what happens in stories. Powerful readers also realize that stories are about ideas—they can advise us on how to live (CCSS RL 4.2). Invite students to think about a familiar, recently read book together, probably one you've read aloud. Then, you might say something like "Today I want to teach you that readers use all they know, from all their other reading work, to think about what the story they are reading might be teaching readers." Remind them of the work they have already done around this in earlier units and be sure to pull out the corresponding charts and hang them prominently in the classroom. Help children remember how their thinking has gone.

"Today I want to teach you that readers use all they know, from all their other reading work, to think about what the story they are reading might be teaching readers."

Thinking About Theme

- * A theme is an overall message the story conveys
- * Themes are often about courage, cooperation, kindness, acceptance, compassion, loyalty, perseverance, honesty, or individuality
- * Themes are also about what the story is saying *about* the topic

If starting there seems too much of a stretch, and likely to frustrate more than excite children, instead, demonstrate for students how you yourself look back and think about not just the characters, but about what life-lessons the text might be teaching to those characters, and hence to us. For example, if you demonstrated with *Bridge to Terabithia* you could think aloud about lessons Jess may have learned: "If I think about what Jess learned about another character—say, Leslie—I could say, 'While at first Leslie seemed like someone he wouldn't like, Jess learned that he judged her too quickly.' That could help me think more about life lessons in general. I could say something like, Jess learned... 'People in life are not always what they seem' or 'Jess learned that he could be friends with a kind of person he didn't think he'd like.'" Write these lessons in front of your students, emphasizing that you are thinking about *more than one possible* lesson.

After a short demonstration like this, you might ask them to work further on the same read aloud with the person sitting next to each of them. You might remind them that one way to find a lesson or the start of an interpretation is to ask:

- * What did the main character learn?
- * What made the good things in the story happen?
- * What could have prevented the bad things in the story from happening?

If children are still struggling, you might coach partners to try one of these sentence starters to help them frame their ideas as interpretations:

- "The character learned that..."
- "This story teaches us that..."
- "[Good things] happen when people..."
- "[Bad things] happen when people don't..."
- "The moral of the story might be..."

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

Remind them that even as they are just starting to talk about their ideas with their partners, they need to use specific text evidence to double check or revise your ideas.

If students found it somewhat easy to find and talk about lessons in books, then as they get started reading in their clubs, you might suggest they think and jot about possible lessons, right from the start of their book, using all they have learned so far in life about interpretation and reading. They'll need to be prepared to revise (or even discard) these initial ideas as they read further.

Alternatively, some students could spend this first day rereading copies of read aloud books or going back to independent books they have already completed, marking them up with this new thinking. There is value in giving students opportunities to reread texts; teach this small group to thumb through pages for remembered moments, reconsidering those more analytically, jotting down ideas those parts suggest.

If your kids have a lot of trouble interpreting, you will want to do a lot more work reading aloud, and show them how you begin to think interpretively. We recommend you watch Kathleen Tolan's work with *The Giving Tree* on the DVD that accompanies *Units of Study for Teaching Reading* (Heinemann, 2010), and watch the active moves Tolan makes as she demonstrates and supports kids to move from reading actively to reading interpretively. Notice that she slows down the process of thinking interpretively, saying, "Hmmm....I'm just wondering...what *could* this be teaching me? Hmmm...I'm thinking about..." (Then she recalls, rereads.) "What *could* that mean....Could it maybe mean....Or could it mean....?" You can do similar work, stretching out and slowing down the process of interpreting so that kids begin to climb up on their knees, saying, "I know! I got an idea!" And then, if their ideas are not particularly strong, try to accept them anyhow, listen to them, and find better ideas within those flawed ones.

For homework or for an additional session, you might invite students to do this same work on the television programs they watch, or the books they are reading on their own, or the events that happen in their days. Students will love the invitation to watch a TV show, each of them, thinking, 'What does this character learn? What can the character teach?' You can help students ask this question using other phrases or terms as well, which is a wise thing to do as standardized tests will ask them this same question, and there are a lot of different ways to word the question. Alternately, students could be invited to think about the people in their families who are always drawing life lessons from things that happen. Perhaps it is a grandparent who comes from an event saying, "See what I mean? I always tell you—families have to stick together." That's interpretation.

Another session you will probably want to teach very early in this unit is that while one way to get started interpreting is through finding lessons characters learn, another way is through finding issues that start popping up in a book. Once readers notice the issues, preferably issues that recur or seem to them to be laden with meaning, they can pay attention to how characters relate to those issues. To demonstrate reading this way, you might refer students back to the first pages of the book you've been reading aloud—for us it is *Love that Dog*—noting that one issue that comes up right away is that the character Jack doesn't want to be seen as doing "girl stuff." Another issue is that Jack seems to find school work really hard to do. You might write these on a chart: "*Some kids think there is 'girl stuff' and different 'boy stuff,'*" and "*School work is too hard sometimes.*" As a teaching point, you might say, "Today I want to teach you that to interpret or learn from books, readers can look for issues—especially issues that recur or issues that seem particularly important

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

to the characters—and then consider how the main character relates to that issue—what does he or she think about it, feel about it, how does he or she react to it?”

“Today I want to teach you that to interpret or learn from books, readers can look for issues—especially issues that recur or issues that seem particularly important to the characters—and then consider how the main character relates to that issue—what does he or she think about it, feel about it, how does he or she react to it?”

You could say, “I found the issue ‘*girl stuff versus boy stuff*.’ Jack connects to this by trying to avoid anything he thinks is girl stuff. He would rather not work at all than have people think he is a girl. Maybe in this book Jack will learn that... boys and girls can like and do the same things, and there is no boy stuff versus girl stuff. Or maybe he is going to learn that when you pretend not to like stuff that you really like, you have no fun in life. Or maybe...turn to your partner and see what you think Jack might learn if this issue turns out to be important in the story.” After some students have shared out their predictions of what the story might teach, or what the character might learn, you will need to remind them to keep flexible and open-minded about their ideas. “I’ll have to read on, closely, to see if any of these ideas holds up as a lesson the book seems to teach. That is a really important thing that readers do—hang onto their ideas loosely, so the ideas can change as they read on and think more.”

Then, you might invite students to think about the other issue you raised “*Schoolwork is too hard sometimes*.” and push them to talk briefly with their clubs about how the character of Jack relates to that topic. Or, ask them to point out other issues in the text and think about the way Jack relates to it. As students talk, listen in and use what you hear to decide how the next few sessions and how your conferring for the next few days might go.

You may have found that students, now after several months of club work, were quick to jump into thinking about lessons in familiar texts. If this is the case, you might move ahead to helping them refine those interpretations. To do this, you might say something like, “Today I want to teach you that readers carefully consider key scenes in stories —when characters experience strong emotions and/or make critical choices. Readers think extra hard about these scenes because they are usually related to the lessons in the book. To find these lessons, readers will unpack those scenes—maybe free writing about them or talking about them with others.” To help students study these scenes closely, you might invite them to join you in sketching a pivotal moment in the read aloud or acting it out to gain a deeper understanding of it. You could also suggest they free write about the scene, using thought prompts to help them figure out what could be going on in it. You’ll want to remind readers that at each of these pivotal moments in a story, readers can construct more than one idea that may turn out to be significant. As always, remind readers to try out this work in their book clubs as needed to help them do interpretive work.

“Today I want to teach you that readers carefully consider key scenes in stories —when characters experience strong emotions and/or make critical choices. Readers think extra hard about these scenes because they are usually related to the lessons in the book. To find these lessons, readers will unpack those scenes—maybe free writing about them or talking about them with others.”

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

Check in with book clubs—in your conferring, it is likely you'll need to remind readers that it is essential to remain open as you keep moving through a book, letting go of some ideas when it turns out that they are not particularly important to the book, revising and holding onto others as they seem to more and more important and complicated as the story goes on. This part of interpreting may call for a minilesson as well—you'll need to determine what your class needs.

This is a great time to revisit the *Reading Narrative Learning Progression* with your students, targeting past strands from Units One and Three. You'll ask students to revisit their earlier assessments on the learning progression with their new writing about reading work in hand. Study the work alongside your students. Do your students push themselves to multiple interpretations of the text? Do the interpretations students generate sound like they could apply to any book, or do they choose precise words that are specific to their texts? Be prepared to act alarmed if students' work does not look dramatically different than the work they were doing during Unit Three, playing the situation up as a big deal and rallying students to quickly and dramatically improve their work (See Units One and Three for additional information on helping students self-assess their work against the *Reading Narrative Learning Progression*).

Over the next few days, it's likely you'll want to teach students that readers design reading plans to develop their interpretations further, as they read. You may want to go to your current read aloud text and talk about some of the ideas the text is suggesting to you so far—you might go back to your idea that you predict the book will teach that boy stuff and girl stuff is the same. Then, you could demonstrate reading on in the book, aloud, jotting down page numbers and quick notes when the story offered up evidence to support your idea. You'd also want to revise your idea according to developments in the story. "Hmm...maybe Jack won't learn that—it doesn't seem to be going that way here... Hmm...I may have to abandon that idea and think again about what this book will teach."

If readers are able to gather evidence and settle into some ideas about what the book teaches, you could suggest that club members give a little boxes-and-bullets-type speech to club members, to convince them of his or her idea of a lesson the book might teach. (You might do it first, from the read aloud book.)

Another day, you might teach start the teaching like this, "Today I want to teach you that since good books are about more than one idea, readers follow more than one idea as they go forward, supporting their ideas with evidence from the text, or revising their ideas, when the evidence isn't there." You might offer up an example of someone from the class who is following several ideas, and ask that student to share ways she is collecting evidence for (and thinking about) all of them at once, as she reads on.

You might also coach readers to point to or paraphrase passages that support their developing ideas about lessons their book is teaching. You might also coach children to find better and better examples to support their ideas, saying something like, "Does the connection between that bit of evidence and your idea hit you over-the-head, seem totally obvious, or is it a bit hard to see? If it is not hit-you-over-the-head obvious, usually it helps to think of another example from the text, or to say more about why this example supports your point of view. Perhaps your idea is more complicated than you thought at first."

By the end of this first bend, you'll want to come back to the crucial idea that powerful readers revise their ideas while reading. You'll want to explain that sometimes the ideas readers have

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

develop into more complicated ideas as they read on. And, sometimes the ideas end up being flat out wrong; other ideas take their place. Sometimes ideas that seemed important at first come to seem small and it's not really worth studying them for long. Because of this, readers have to be flexible and alert while they read, not just seeing what goes along with what they think but also what shows they aren't quite right or on the best path of thought. Readers, you can say, expect to keep validating their ideas or revising them. As an example, you might show students that at first *Love That Dog* seems to be the story of a boy who doesn't like writing poetry. But then the story takes a new turn, and it tells about how Jack's relationship with his old dog seems to change how he feels about writing poetry, maybe even how he feels about himself.

You can scaffold children to take on this flexibility by offering this sentence framework for them to use in their clubs: "First when I started to read this, I thought that it was about...but now as I read on, I'm finding that it is really about..." Clubs can do this same work, taking up one student's interpretation and then reading on to see what the text offers, revising as they read.

After finishing this bend, we recommend keeping any charts, sentence frames, lists of strategies and examples of themes close at hand. While you will be moving to cross-text work in reading, students will now attempt this same reading work in writing workshop, as you teach them to craft interpretive thesis statements to write about. The more supports you can offer them, the better!

Bend II: Comparing Themes—and How Characters Relate to Them— Across Texts

Your goal during this portion of the unit is to support students in comparing and contrasting different texts that share similar themes. This bend supports one way of looking at themes across books, by comparing and contrasting how characters and narrators relate to the lessons and issues within the text (CCSS RL 4.6) and paying attention to how the events of the stories unfold similarly and differently (CCSS RL 4.9).

At this point, take stock of the pace at which your students are moving through their book club books. Students should maintain a pace relatively close to that with which they normally read, considering they may be slowed just a bit to stay on pace with one another.

There is a good chance you will have finished *Love That Dog* by now or quite soon—it is a fast read—and so you might move to a read aloud that will offer you lots of opportunities for comparison with it, such as a short text from *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant. If you select other, longer texts, your comparative work can still happen between the book you've chosen and previous ones.

There is a good chance that, even when you were doing the early work of this unit, students began to see how lessons and themes live across multiple texts. You are likely to have already heard things like, "Jess learns to believe in himself more in *Bridge to Terabithia*, and so does the character in my book!" At the start of this bend you could remind students of those connections they've already made, or invite them to make some with you now. You could point out that just as stories are about more than one idea, many times ideas also appear in more than one story. This, you may

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

explain to them, if they do not know already, is the notion of theme—an idea that appears in more than one story.

You could compliment your readers for noticing how themes live in more than one text, and suggest that readers also think about how different books handle these themes in different ways. You could say that readers often compare and contrast the ways characters in different books relate to similar themes. “Today I want to teach you,” you might say, “that while some of these stories have similar themes, there are also a lot of differences in these stories—so many different viewpoints centered on the same theme. One way readers study those differences is to look at how different characters handle (or connect to) the same theme or issue.” Now, you’ll ask your readers to open up the conversation. They’ll continue to read the books they are choosing for their clubs, but they’ll analyze and talk about those books in the context of other books with similar themes that they’ve read before this.

“Today I want to teach you that while some of these stories have similar themes, there are also a lot of differences in these stories—so many different viewpoints centered on the same theme. One way readers study those differences is to look at how different characters handle (or connect to) the same theme or issue.”

You could demonstrate talking between *Love That Dog* and a prior read aloud with a similar theme, saying something like, “Wow, I’m realizing that *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Love That Dog* both have boys that don’t want other people to think they are doing ‘girl stuff!’ Now that is interesting. Let me think, though, about how each character handles that. Jess tries to hide his favorite hobbies. Jack is not really like that, though, is he? No, he keeps writing poems and starts to like that other people see him doing it. Hmm...I need to think and talk about this more—I wonder if there are ways they are exactly alike about this and why sometimes they are different about it...” Let students know they can try this work in their book clubs as well, not only keeping their lines of inquiry going, but also jotting about other texts with related themes.

If your ongoing assessments reveal that your students are having trouble making connections beyond the obvious, your next lessons might offer up ways that readers can foster depth in comparison and contrast. You could, for example, suggest that one way readers can compare a treatment of a theme in two different books is to focus in on a key scene that deals with the theme. Readers can ask themselves: How did the two characters each react to a similar event? Or, how did a similar idea come to each of two different characters? Students can reread the two scenes, side by side, paying close attention to what characters say, do, and the ways the author describes them (CCSS 4.3).

To support richer club conversations about themes across books, you could provide clubs with “starter cards” with talk phrases on them, ones they can “play” during the conversation to push club members (or themselves) to say more. The cards might have phrases on them like these:

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

A lesson this character might be learning is... which is similar to a lesson a character in another book is learning...	In this book the characters acts like... But in this other book the same situation makes him/her act differently, like...	For example this text says... while that one says...
These lessons are similar but the characters learn them differently. For example...	I think the two ways of seeing it are both right/wrong because...	One piece of text evidence that matches this idea is... But one that doesn't is...

Again, this work is very similar to what you will be asking students to do in writing workshop in a few days' time. Provisioning students with a chart like the one above will go a long way towards helping them transfer what they have been practicing in reading to writing about reading. Make these connections clear to students and help them transfer strategies they've used in reading workshop to writing workshop.

At the end of this bend of the unit, you will probably want to teach a repertoire lesson—that is, rather than laying out a new strategy, you'll show your students the ways they have increased their repertoire of reading practices, and remind them to access that repertoire for any situation they may meet. Not only is this DOK 3 and 4 work, but it is precisely the sort of support they'll need as they venture into Bend III of *The Literary Essay*. You may tell your students that—just as a basketball player who has been practicing dribbling and throwing finds in a game that he or she does all that work automatically, while simultaneously processing who is where on the court, the amount of time left, and where the ball is going—as readers they now take in more parts of the story as they come in, now with increased alertness and expertise and thus increased responsiveness. Now, they have learned to ask early on, “What is this story beginning to be about?” collecting moments along the way that support or call for revision of those ideas. Now, you might say, “I want to teach you that readers recall other stories and think and talk about how the stories compare; readers weigh our own lives and decisions with those characters make, finding possible life-lessons that books leave us with.” If that seems an easy-to-take-in lesson for your readers, you might add, “Moreover, as the books we read get more complicated, things are not always what they seem. Characters that appeared trustworthy may not be, and so their relationship to themes and lessons they demonstrate will shift. But with our training, we are that basketball player, weaving with grace and power through complicated courts, full of blocks and false starts!”

“I want to teach you that readers recall other stories and think and talk about how the stories compare; readers weigh our own lives and decisions with those characters make, finding possible life-lessons that books leave us with.”

Bend III: Reading Closely to See *How* Themes Are Shaped By Authors

The largest work of this bend is what your students have already become quite adept at in writing workshop but often feels new in reading workshop to fourth graders: looking closely at how authors have shaped the novels they are reading (CCSS 4.4, 4.5, 4.6; 5.4, 5.9). In the literary essay unit, students began to study how authors develop themes and now you can push that work even further in this last part of the Interpretation Clubs unit. This is work that will build across grade

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

levels into middle school where students should begin to not just describe these elements but analyze their use. Across this bend, if you find students struggling to describe what they see, be sure to refer them often back to what they've done in writing workshop.

You'll also want to find a way to make the entry into this bend feel fresh and new so you might gather your students and let them know that this work will feel very different from what has come before. You might say, "Up till now, I've been taking you through this interpretation work step by step. But that's going to change, starting today. From now on, you're going to be in charge and take yourself and your club through the work of determining themes and looking at patterns across texts. Meanwhile, we'll be beginning to look at how authors develop those themes." You might involve students in a different type of work today—perhaps showing them how a few different artists have interpreted literature and then asking them to create some notebook pages on books they have already read as a club. Students might make webs, sketches, character charts, and so on—you'll let them know what matters most is that they are interpreting and thinking about the themes of the stories. The point is to rally their energy and enthusiasm and show them how much they already know about this thematic work.

All of the read alouds you have done across this year can be re-studied with students to see how the author has crafted a book to develop its theme. Across this bend, you'll want to plan to go back to *very* familiar sections of texts first with your fourth graders, so plan to revisit sections you have already read (and read new text(s) —perhaps from Cynthia Rylant's *Every Living Thing*). Students will continue to work with their clubs on complex interpretation work and you can give them different genres—poetry, drama, fiction, even nonfiction.

The books your students are reading at this time of year in their book club are largely rife with challenging vocabulary and figurative language. To begin this new focus on craft, you'll want to return students to the "zooming in" work you took up as a part of Bend Two. This time, you can add a layer of complexity to the work. You might phrase it like this: "Today I want to teach you that not only do readers read closely by looking at the details of how characters talk and act and letting that push them to understand more about the characters, they also read closely by thinking about why an author may have chosen the precise words and phrases and images used in the stories to forward a theme or life lesson."

"Today I want to teach you that not only do readers read closely by looking at the details of how characters talk and act and letting that push them to understand more about the characters, they also read closely by thinking about why an author may have chosen the precise words and phrases and images used in the stories to forward a theme or life lesson."

You'll need to show students how studying an author's craft, digging into particular words and phrases in pivotal sections, can lead them to see more about the character and also about the book's life lessons and themes. Invite them to apply this same kind of close analysis of craft to the conversations about themes across books that they are already having. Invite them to jot about word choices and image choices in key scenes, to think about them in relation to the characters and themes and life lessons in their books. Then, of course, they will need to bring these thoughts and notes back to their club conversations for further consideration. You can let them know that readers need to consider how an author's choice of words, images, and phrases add to the themes.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

You will be teaching similar kinds of work in Bend III of writing workshop, and you'll want to help students see how the close, analytical reading strategies they learn in reading can help them write more in their literary essays. Then too, you'll teach strategies in writing workshop that students can apply to their reading work, as well. The reciprocity between these two units will give children many opportunities for repeated practice, and ultimately, mastery.

Coach students to use this newfound focus on craft to feed into all the observations, theories and conversations they have had so far this unit. They can go back to any theory, and conversation, and add this layer of craft study to it by asking questions such as:

- What kinds of words/images/phrases does the author use to convey a character or theme; in other words, can you find a pattern in the language?
- How do the words/images/phrases one author chooses to convey a character or theme **compare** to the kinds of words/images/phrases that another author uses to convey a similar character or theme? (Does one author use knives while one uses empty alcohol bottles to show how characters make themselves unapproachable? How are the two ways different and does that reflect differences in the themes of each story?)

Another way you can help your readers learn to study an author's craft is to teach them about symbolism. You might say, in this case, "One thing I want to teach you is that one way readers are moved by literature and understand literature more deeply is that they let objects in the stories have symbolic importance—they connect objects to bigger meanings, letting a simple thing stand for a more complex thing." Usually, for students to grasp how symbolism works, you'll simply want to offer up a stream of examples from familiar texts, and invite students to add in. The fence in *The Other Side* can symbolize a divide in society for example. Move from obvious, nearly explicit symbols to ones that may be less obvious and more metaphoric—perhaps the hat that can symbolize gang acceptance in Eve Bunting's *Your Move*.

"One thing I want to teach you is that one way readers are moved by literature and understand literature more deeply is that they let objects in the stories have symbolic importance—they connect objects to bigger meanings, letting a simple thing stand for a more complex thing."

As has been your mantra in this unit, refrain from telling your students symbols and your interpretation of what they mean, and instead, issue an invitation to explore symbolism. Your students can return to old favorite books and begin to dig into symbols in the texts they are reading. Show them how to use their pencils and notebooks to articulate their ideas about symbols. Expect sketches and excitement, expect your students to notice first the grand and obvious symbols, expect to lament that they seem to miss the smaller, more subtle ones—and then decide whether to alert them to some of these, perhaps through disguised book club conversations, "I'm just wondering about the pitcher of water too...have any of you wondered about that?" or by showing how readers sometimes return to old favorites and pore over them again, reconsidering the significance of objects and moments that seemed mysterious before. You will want to teach students that readers know that in carefully constructed, good stories, details matter. Students who take to this work readily will be excited at the idea of comparing and contrasting symbols across texts with similar themes. What symbolizes loneliness, for example, in each book can be vastly different and can again reveal layers of nuance in the book's treatments of themes.

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

In some next sessions in this bend, you'll turn to another craft element that may be surprisingly new to students—the notion that titles can be symbolic as well. You'll teach your readers that often a moment comes in our reading when we realize that the title may have significance beyond its obvious, literal meaning. Sometimes it is at the end of the story and sometimes it is earlier in the story when we'll come upon a line, or a scene, that seems to directly refer back to the title. In a minilesson about titles, you might invite your readers to consider what the titles of familiar books might mean on a deeper, more symbolic or interpretive level. *The Other Side*, and *Fly Away Home*, and *Tiger Rising* are good titles to choose, if your children know these stories. What can the titles mean in the context of each story? For an extra push, you might invite children to consider why the book's title is *Because of Winn-Dixie* and not simply Winn-Dixie. Usually titles have metaphoric significance, often deeply related to possible meanings of the story—what the story may be about. For example—and you may decide to offer this as an example in a demonstration—Rob gains courage, he emerges from a deeply hidden self, he is a brave and strong Tiger, Rising, he shows us that we too, can become tigers, rising.

Your book clubs will hopefully be zealots about returning to their conversations and arguing and defending with evidence what the titles of books they have read might mean for the themes of their books.

In the following couple of sessions, you have some choices about how to increase your students' flexibility and skill with analytical thinking and synthesis in complex texts. One option is to teach them about literary devices, such as foreshadowing, repetition, and perspective, and how these devices help an author develop and complicate themes. Essentially, for students this age, we say something like, "I need to teach you this one thing today: powerful readers know that in good stories, details matter, and readers think hard and ask themselves about details that seem to be in the text for no clear reason—because there will be a reason, and readers find it."

"I need to teach you this one thing today: powerful readers know that in good stories, details matter, and readers think hard and ask themselves about details that seem to be in the text for no clear reason—because there will be a reason, and readers find it."

You might go on, saying, "For example, if there is a cat, and you are wondering why the cat is in that scene, that is the same literary device as Chekov's guns in writing—if there's a gun in act one, you know it will go off in a later act—it's probably there as foreshadowing." Often, we understand how events have been foreshadowed, when we finish a text—so you may demonstrate how we return to the beginning of a story sometimes, seeing more and delighting in how clever the author was to lay down a trail of breadcrumbs. *Harry Potter* readers are expert at this kind of synthesis—they can connect clues and events across literally thousands of pages of texts, and they are alert to twists. Small scenes along the way alerted *Harry Potter* readers to the theme that characters are not always what they seem, that Snape might be cruel but also heroic, that small character flaws may not mean the impossibility of greatness.

Return to the beginning of *The Tiger Rising* and you'll find so many clues there about Rob's character, troubles, and potential, that didn't really make that much sense when we read the chapter the first time—it's only later that we recall them or revisit them. *Edward's Eyes* also demonstrates the significance of foreshadowing beautifully. Even before you begin the story, you're

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

pretty sure there's something special about Edward. And you're pretty sure that he's dead. There are two aspects of understanding foreshadowing that help readers navigate more complex texts. One aspect is that it teaches a discipline of rapid, on-the-run rereading. Anyone who has tackled a complicated text knows that we often turn back quickly, recalling something that seems connected, that was perhaps foreshadowed earlier, and that we now recognize as being significant. So we turn back, rapidly. A second aspect of understanding the potential significance of foreshadowing is that we are alert to details that might otherwise seem random. It's the Chekov gun maxim. If the author inserts a detail that seems somewhat unexplained, chances are that the reader will find that it matters later, both to what happens in the story, and to what the story may mean or be about. Analyzing foreshadowing well means that readers must synthesize across many, many pages of texts, and that they must be comfortable holding on to some unexplained questions as they read, having faith that later, the answers will be revealed. To continue to push club conversations to act as tools for analytic thought and growing new ideas, members can discuss unexplained details together, drawing conclusions that they can then take to their own reading and revise in future conversations. Members can push each other to notice when a detail seems somewhat unexplained or when there is potential foreshadowing and ask themselves and other club members: why is this here?

Another literary device that is worth teaching in reading and analyzing literature is repetition. Teach your readers, for instance, that it's not just objects that may be repeated in a text. Sometimes it is lines, and sometimes there are parallel scenes, or moments—when things are almost the same but perhaps slightly different. In *Number the Stars*, for instance, the moment comes in the text when that actual line appears—more than once. An alert reader realizes that there is probably significance in that repetition. You might return to familiar read-alouds, to show your readers that sometimes, a bell goes off in the reader's head, and we say to ourselves—this is here more than once, I wonder if it's important? In *Fly Away Home*, for instance, the narrator speaks repeatedly about the blue clothes they wear—the blue shirts, the blue jeans, the blue bags. The character is, clearly, not just wearing blue clothes, he is blue. But it's the repetition that alerts us to the character's mood—that the author chooses to make so many things blue; it's repetition that alerts the reader that blue may matter. Ultimately, the boy perhaps shows us that we may feel blue, but we can still hold onto hope.

You might invite your students to find the words, phrases, lines which seem to have the most meaning in their stories—helping them to see how a phrase which is repeated or seems to be placed in a pivotal moment can have great significance for determining a theme of a text. By this time of the year, students have likely engaged in write arounds (such as in Unit One) where a symbol or object or photograph is placed in the middle of chart paper and students all write thinking around this symbol, drawing lines and arrows to show when their comments built off of the comments of others. Now, you can use that same method to push their abilities to analyze words and phrases, pushing clubs to jot words, phrases, and lines which seem particularly significant in the middle of chart paper and writing around these lines. Teach students to consider the multiple nuances of meaning of a word as well as its meaning for how it is used in the context of the story. Fox has “haunted” eyes. Students may decide to consider that term and why the author has chosen to describe Fox in that way. They might write about the multiple meanings of haunted and how that term is used to forward and develop ideas in this particular story.

Finally, you've undoubtedly taught your students before to analyze characters' perspectives and points of view, but this may be an apt time to return to that teaching and show them how to analyze

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

and compare the significance of character’s perspectives to the possible meanings of a story. For instance, the narrator in *Fly Away Home* has a different perspective on airports than the other travelers in the story do—and thus he teaches us that places can seem very different, based on your condition. In doing this work, students are pushed to consider the relationship of craft to content and working to meet Standard 5.6 for Reading Literature which expects that fifth graders will “Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.” This is often difficult work and supporting students in beginning to do that work now can better prepare them for next year.

You will want your students to realize that the teller of the story influences how the story is told. This is heady, complex work. How can students realize how a narrator influences the description of events? How might they see the deliberate crafting which has gone into the text to create a character’s point of view and how that view shades events? To determine this crafting, you will remind students to first draw upon their learning from earlier units, when they learned to “compare and contrast the point of view from which stories are narrated, including the difference between first-and third-person narrators” (RL 4.6).

Building on what they already know—that texts will be told very differently when they are told by a character within the story or a removed outsider—you will then help them to see that the choice of who tells the story is a deliberate one made by the author and for good reason. You might involve readers in revisiting and studying texts in which the narrator is a clear and interesting choice—*Edward’s Eyes*, for example. You will help your students to discuss why the author has chosen Jake to tell the story. What does the choice of Jake as narrator do for the mood and tone of the story? Isn’t *Edward’s Eyes* so very moving because of the way it is told by Jake, Edward’s brother, who has loved and lost him? The events are colored by a feeling of sadness that would never be present if Jake was not the narrator, and how interesting that he tells the story after the main events have passed. The choice to have Jake recount the events from a time somewhere later on rather than watch them unfurl before him in the moment means that the reader, along with Jake, can experience the events and be moved in a way we would not have been otherwise. Simple ordinary family moments become incredibly meaningful when told from the point of view of Jake. Events take on double meaning because we know in our hearts and guts they are times that will never come again for this family. You might ask your readers to consider how the story might have been told otherwise if a third person narrator had told it or if Edward himself had told parts. What would be changed? What would be lost or gained in those different choices?

To end this unit, you’ll need to decide what kind of celebration best highlights, cements, and celebrates your students’ learning about interpretation. Readers in the world share their interpretations in many ways—in comments on amazon, in essays, in book club conversations, in letters to authors and other readers, in book reviews and perhaps most lastingly, in a few simple ways readers change their own lives as a result of having read a book deeply. You might invite your readers to try a variety of these ways to mark this point in their learning, or you might decide to choose one way to celebrate, collectively. In any case, be sure that readers do have a chance to reflect on what they have learned and share some of it, in both writing and speaking.

- How has the author set up relationships to help show themes?
- How do characters’ choices help show themes?
- How has the author used language to help show themes?

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs**

- How do the setting(s) help show themes?
- How does the perspective of a part or of the whole book help to show themes?

Coaching Into Clubs

Throughout this unit, some of your clubs will need coaching in choosing books. They may, for instance, think that as they finish one book, in which they have talked long about a theme—such as that kids sometimes crack under family pressures—they may begin to search for a second book by expecting that theme to be listed on the back cover! You’ll want to remind your students that good books are about many ideas, and that they should trust that as they begin a second book, pretty much any good book is going to be full of ideas, and some of those ideas will turn out to be related to those in their first book. If you know that there are one or two texts that will undoubtedly turn up some of the same ideas, of course, you could steer some of your club members in that direction—especially a club of more struggling readers, who may benefit from seeing obvious links between their two texts. Check in with club members as they finish their first novel and are about to begin their second novel. The more readers are tracking multiple ideas, rather than one single idea, the more they’ll be ready to see thematic connections across novels. Could clubs be posting for each other the different themes or big ideas found in the short text, information texts and novels so the clubs can get suggestions from each other?

You may also find that readers move easily into seeing that books are related by theme, but they then don’t seem to expect that the books will also have many differences, and these differences will also affect the meaning of the story. Visit with clubs as they are having conversations, and if needed, push them to look at the ways in which the time or place of the novels they are discussing are different, or the characters’ traits are different, and how those differences affect the ideas these books suggest.

In order to scaffold some of our students in their club conversations, you might try using a large index card that on one side says “Talk,” and on the other side says “Essayists.” This tool can be placed in between the club to support them as they reach to talk like essayists. Readers might begin talk by sharing out lots of ideas, and when once they reach a place where they think, “Oh! That’s it, we need to talk long about this one,” readers can flip over the card to a series of prompts that support talking like essayists. Some prompts might include:

One idea this book suggests is....

One example that shows (this idea) is...because...

Another example that shows (this idea) is...because...

This makes me realize/think that...

Or

I used to think this text was about...because...

Now I think this text is about...because...

This makes me realize/think that...

Or

These two texts are similar because they both teach that...

On the one hand, though, in the first book...

On the other hand, in the second book...

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading Curricular Calendar, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Interpretation Book Clubs

This makes me realize/think that...

A Big Question for readers to ask in club conversations is, “How do two or three different texts advance the same theme differently?” These conversations will help when you have readers rehearsing and writing multiple fast-draft “Compare and Contrast” essays on texts that seem to address similar themes. Many teachers found the prompts in the *Writing from Sources* document very helpful to support students in moving from quoting the text to analyzing it (this document is available on Treasure Chest to schools who work with the Project closely).

Authors may send their characters on strikingly (or at least somewhat) different journeys toward addressing and resolving a similar issue, or have them (and readers through them) learn variations of the same life lesson. In both *Those Shoes* and *Fly Away Home* the main characters must learn to go without something they desperately want. Both belong to families that struggle financially. And both boys learn to give up—at least for now—the dream of having something. For one boy it’s a pair of designer shoes, for the other it’s a home. The latter may seem much larger a want, but to Jeremy, those shoes mean so much more than a pair of shoes. And yet the paths these two boys follow toward dealing with not having what others around them have diverged. Jeremy comes close to getting what he wants, only to discover that it isn’t really possible to use the shoes himself (they are a size too small), and instead, gives them to his friend, for whom the shoes are a perfect fit. We might say that Jeremy learns (and we learn, too) that making someone else’s dream come true may not take away our own longing but can fill something else inside of us.

Meanwhile, in *Fly Away Home*, Andrew never comes close to getting out of the airport; he and his dad scrape together money for small things, like food, but aren’t anywhere near to having the money to rent an apartment. But Andrew finds hope in a little bird that manages, after many tries, to free itself from the airport, and he begins to take small steps toward helping his dad save. One lesson here might be that working toward a dream is sometimes enough to keep you going. The point is that both of these stories address some of the same themes, but the journeys the characters take are different. Rehearsing and writing flash draft essays will help your students become adept at this kind of thinking, reading, and writing work.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

A User's Guide for *Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life*

April/May

Benchmark Reading Level: R/S

Introduction

These two units are designed so they can be taught together or so you could teach just one or the other. It has been our experience that teaching the units together works best. Still, it takes finesse to align them so this document will save you time and trouble by drawing your attention to key lessons and parts of the units that complement each other nicely. Pay special attention to the challenges inherent in sequencing these two units and the suggestions provided in this user guide.

In reading workshop, students will start by embarking on a research project about the events leading up to the American Revolution. As their knowledge of the time period grows, they will then participate in a debate questioning our independence from Great Britain, gathering and angling evidence to support their side, and reenact the Second Continental Congress. By the end of the unit, students will conduct a new research project in partnerships on the time period after the Second Continental Congress.

Meanwhile, in writing workshop, students will write informational texts on the American Revolution. They will first write an overview about the American Revolution and draft chapters on one focused topic that you've already taught into within your content area instruction (i.e. the Boston Tea Party or Boston Massacre). They are taught that informational texts are often conglomerates, containing a lot of other kinds of texts and are encouraged to include a variety of these various genres of writing into their books. After completing a small book in the first part of the unit, students then narrow in on a subtopic of their choice creating a new book using what they learned from the first part of the unit. Students end by moving from organizing information to developing their own ideas about the information they are writing about.

Prerequisites/What to Do If Students Aren't Quite Ready to Start This Unit

Assuming your students were taught *Research Clubs* in third grade and/or *Reading the Weather, Reading the World* in 4th grade and can read the resource materials you provide them about the American Revolution (or whatever alternate topic you comb through the unit), they will be ready for this nonfiction reading unit.

The writing unit should be appropriate for your students regardless of their background with writing workshop, but the third grade information writing unit does provide a strong foundation for this unit and if your students didn't experience the third grade unit, you may choose to adapt that unit and teach it in place of this unit. In Bends I and II of *The Art of Information Writing*, students write one all-about chapter book on a topic of personal expertise—soccer, jazz, golden retrievers—and the teacher meanwhile writes about cockroaches. You could alter that unit so that

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

each fourth grader writes an *All-About-The American Revolution* book alongside the first and second bend of the reading unit, and then writes *All-About a More Focused Topic* (i.e. the Boston Tea Party) alongside the third bend of the reading unit. Meanwhile, you could write about a similar topic instead of cockroaches, which is the demonstration text for *The Art of Information Writing*.

Substituting the third grade information unit for this unit would decrease the level of expectation for students, and we don't recommend it if your students are fairly strong writers (no matter what prior units they have been taught.) But if your students struggle with writing, this may be a reasonable choice and we recommend you read the third grade User's Guide for *The Art of Information Writing*.

Both of these units apply to the new C3 (College, Career, and Civic Life) Standards for content area studies. If you aren't teaching the American Revolution in social studies, you can insert the content area topic of your choice into these units, taking structure of the unit and the teaching points and applying them to your alternate content. This is much easier to do than you may think, and if you want help, ask for it on the Writing Units of Study Facebook page as many others have done this before you and will likely be happy to share tips and resources. For example, many people substitute in Colonial America or the Gold Rush and the units work very well.

When you substitute in another topic, one big challenge will be to think about a debatable issue that can become your Bend II of the reading series. For example, if your new topic is Colonial America, you could suggest kids have a debate in which they research and argue whether the biggest challenges people faced in this time were disease, starvation or relations with other groups of people. Alternatively, the children could research whether life was easier for settlers in Jamestown or in Plymouth, or which of the colonies were most important to the British kingdom. If your new topic is the Gold Rush, you could suggest kids have a debate in which they research and argue what the biggest challenges were that the people faced during this time period or whether it was a good idea for people to leave their homes in search of riches.

Then, too, if you substitute in a new topic instead of the American Revolution, you will need to create an exemplar text that takes the place of the American Revolution book on The Boston Massacre. In making the new exemplar, stay very close to the example of The Boston Massacre as the particulars of that book are important and support the work students do across the unit.

Materials/Getting Ready

You will ideally need to have a class collection of 30-50 books on the American Revolution (or the alternate topic selected) and they all need to be within levels of text complexity that your kids can handle. The TCRWP Classroom Library Project has a shelf devoted to this unit that you can order. Some teachers who have taught this unit have managed their resources by sharing across a grade level which works if different classes can use the materials at different times of the day. If you are working with a smaller number of books (30) you will need to tap into the digital resources that accompany the unit available via the Heinemann website. This resource gives you access to charts, student work, suggested websites, primary sources and texts. Books and printed digital resources can be organized into bins according to the subtopic of the American Revolution they address. This will allow students and partnerships to have easy access to books that address the focus of their research.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

We strongly recommend you develop a bank of videos that can be used as resources for kids' research (it is easier for many students to write at length about a video than about a written text.) See the digital resources for a list of videos that you can watch with your class.

Insights Gleaned From Other Teachers Who Have Taught This Unit/Special Concerns

Not surprisingly, the writing unit will go much better if your students have some content preparation before you begin. You can accomplish this by frontloading the content during your social studies time. Many teachers have found it helpful to use videos to help students quickly gain background knowledge on the material. Some suggestions for resources include using *Schoolhouse Rock* videos or the *Liberty Kids* videos on the Revolutionary war.

Just as you want to keep an eye on the volume of reading during the reading unit, you will also want to keep an eye on the volume of *writing* during the *writing* unit. If you are teaching this unit as a stand-alone unit, it is very important to keep the text sets students are using to research manageable so that students can research independently and are thereby able to write about the content they are learning.

In addition, many teachers found that for the writing unit it was important to help students find a specific audience and purpose for their writing. Some classrooms created a bookshelf in their library specifically for the students' final publications.

Early on, think about scheduling. Most people begin the reading unit 2-3 days prior to the writing unit, and most take a break from the writing unit while teaching Bend II of the reading unit (while kids in a reenactment of the Second Continental Congress debate.) Therefore, the writing unit lasts longer than the reading unit. If you teach every session of both books, this can lead to the combined reading and writing units taking 30 days—and that is without you dividing a single day into two days or skipping a day. That is probably longer than you should spend on any one unit, so we've set forth some advice regarding pacing and particular sessions below.

First, **do not** let any one day's work or teaching span two days. Move these sessions along, and convey to kids that they have deadlines—this has to be read or has to be written today, so they can't waste a minute. Use homework as a time for kids to accomplish substantial work.

Second, know from the start that there are sessions you might decide to skip, depending on your students' needs. Below, we note sessions that could be skipped or replaced and suggest reasons why you would or would not skip a session.

One part of the reading unit that was very successful in schools was the reenactment of the Second Continental Congress in Bend II. Many teachers have reported back to us that they have never seen their kids so engaged and motivated before. Preparing to present their work publicly really raises students' investment and energy in the work, so please don't skip these sessions. Further, many teachers have reported that the lesson on primary sources and text features helped students tackle

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

some of the questions that were asked not only on SBAC but on the ELA as well. Of course, the most important reason to keep these sessions is that they help students become more flexible and knowledgeable readers.

The most obvious way to shorten the two units is to teach just selected sessions of Bend III from writing. The teaching in that bend is heady, high-level work about bringing ideas into information writing, so you won't want to skip it if your kids are advanced writers. If this is the case, one possible option is to transfer that teaching into your social studies time and address it there.

In the reading unit, students should be reading as many books as we can get in their hands in class. The books could be both fiction and nonfiction. The unit suggests they read fiction at home to maintain reading volume. If you find that you do not have enough texts at students' levels to keep kids immersed in reading for the entire workshop, then you might decide to devote part of the workshop to students' independent reading of fiction so they can maintain reading volume. You will want to find a few minutes for students to talk about their fiction reading during the day, to check students' logs, and to remind students to study their logs as a way to keep attention on reading volume.

Bend I for Reading and Writing

In Bend I of *Reading History: The American Revolution*, students begin their research by studying the events that led up to the American Revolution—the causes of the Revolution. They launch this work studying a broad overview of this time in American Revolution history before choosing a more focused subtopic to research in Session 4. It is important to encourage students to transfer the research skills they learned in the first nonfiction unit, *Reading the Weather, Reading the World* to help them navigate this new research project, while teaching new skills that emphasize the special challenges inherent in the reading of history texts. The bend culminates with students bringing history to life and celebrating all they've learned about their subtopic with their peers.

One session in this bend that feels particularly challenging is Session 5. This lesson teaches students about synthesizing information on a subtopic from across two or more texts. Some teachers are caught off guard by it, thinking, 'Whoa! They are just reading their first text on this subtopic. How can they synthesize across texts?' We'd assumed they already had notes on the subtopic of choice. One solution to the challenge is for them to watch an informational video on their chosen subtopic – a fast way to deluge kids with accessible information so they do have notes from one source on the subtopic and can work on this synthesizing across sources. Also, guide them to zoom in on specific relevant sections of more general books. Alternatively, they can synthesize from several parts of one book. Or you can choose to postpone this session.

Meanwhile, in Bend I of *Bringing History to Life*, students work to create informational writing that draws upon all that they've learned from previous units and highlights the fact that many informational texts are conglomerates, texts containing a mix of genres. After studying a mentor text to see how it is organized, students draft chapters for their own American Revolution book. They draw upon the work they have done in previous years by writing two "all about" chapters: "All About the American Revolution" and "All About..." a subtopic of their choice. As the bend progresses, you will teach students how to incorporate other genres into their book: a chapter

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

containing a small moment historical fiction narrative and a chapter that includes an essay highlighting the importance of their subtopic.

One thing to keep in mind about Bend I of this writing unit is that the writing they do is not intended as a masterpiece! It can have holes in it—question marks, even flat-out errors. Students can return to it later to fix it up. Don't postpone the flash drafting of chapters, and don't expect the sort of masterpiece that requires several days to write. Allow for a day of drafting each chapter (one writing workshop session and possibly finishing their draft for homework). Students will do more polished writing in Bend II. As mentioned earlier, starting the writing unit a few days behind the reading unit allows kids a little more time to read about the topic before they flash draft which will help them feel more prepared for this fast paced writing.

Another suggestion that you might consider within this bend of the writing unit would be flip the sequence of Session 5 and 6 in writing so Session 6, a day on which kids draft their small moment story, precedes 5, which becomes a day for revising that story by adding in details. You would need to alter the Small Group Work and Mid-Workshop of Session 5 so it aligns with this switch. Instead of focusing on note taking in these parts of the session, you might instead focus on adding detail by looking quickly at notes or texts then incorporating them into your writing. This switch will allow students to use the work they are doing in reading workshop of acting out an historical fiction vignette to support their small moment historical fiction narrative chapter.

Here is a chart that provides an overview of the work that takes place in reading workshop and writing workshop during Bend I:

Reading Workshop <i>(Reading History: The American Revolution)</i>	Writing Workshop <i>(Bringing History to Life)</i>
Administer Reading Pre-Assessment and Information Writing On Demand before launching the units.	
<p>Launch Bend I: Researching History</p> <p>Students work in research teams of 4—two matched-level partnerships—to study an overview of the events leading up to the American Revolution and take notes on these topics.</p> <p>On Day 3 of the unit, students self-assess the pre-assessment from the very start of the unit. Even if they don't complete this, they can benefit from it and set goals for themselves. Then move on!</p>	<p><i>Delay launching Bend I of the writing unit for 3 days.</i></p> <p>You might want to use your writing workshop periods during these days for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Writers assess their On Demand Information writing and set goals. ● Writers may spend additional time reading, studying, and taking notes on the American Revolution to prepare for the launch of the writing unit. <p>Launch Bend I- Informational Books: Making a Conglomerate of Forms</p> <p>Students launch this bend by studying the organization of a mentor text in small groups</p>

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

In Session 4, partnerships will choose a subtopic from the causes of the American Revolution as a focus for their research and begin to take notes that support this more focused topic.

As students move along the rest of the bend they prepare for teaching this subtopic to others in the class with a focus on bringing history to life. First by role-playing an historical fiction vignette about a person's experience in their subtopic in Session 8, and then by presenting all they've learned about their subtopic in Session 9.

and use their notebooks to plan for how they will organize their own information writing.

In Session 2, students draft their information writing outside of the notebook writing an "All About the American Revolution" overview chapter using the notes they have been collecting during reading workshop over the past few sessions.

As they move along the rest of the bend, students draft additional chapters outside of the notebook on a focused subtopic, trying out various genres within their writing (e.g. an informational "all about" their subtopic, a small moment narrative about their subtopic, a persuasive essay about the importance of their subtopic).

Bend II for Reading

The second bend of reading takes your students into the Second Continental Congress and the world of argument and debate. Students spend a few days getting ready for a reenactment of the debate that occurred in the Second Continental Congress over whether the colonies should separate from England. There are mini lessons that set students up to research one position (Loyalist or Patriot) with helpful hints on how to get your kids to be willing to assume the Loyalist position and how to support them in researching this more challenging claim found in the prelude of Session 11.

For the next few days, you might write in the service of reading, pausing the writing unit. You might revisit note taking strategies from the first bend or have students flash draft essays as a way to prepare for debate.

This is meant to be a quick bend— 4 or 5 days at most. You may find you need to add an additional day in between Session 11 and 12 to allow your students to gather and angle evidence before debating, but resist the temptation to add any other additional days. Another solution could be to use your read aloud time to bolster your students' knowledge base, and don't forget about using your writing workshop time wisely to allow for extra practice with this work. Make sure you leave ample time for the Share in Session 12 to ensure students have practice debating before the main event in Session 13.

Here is a chart that provides an overview of the work that takes place in reading workshop and writing workshop during Bend II:

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

Reading Workshop (Reading History: The American Revolution)	Writing Workshop (Bringing History to Life)
<p>Bend II: Preparing for Debate</p> <p>Students will begin this bend by studying the different perspectives of the colonists by reading and rereading primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>Sessions 11 and 12 have reading with their claim in mind, gathering compelling evidence to support their side, and practice debating with their partner.</p> <p>The bend ends with readers staging the Second Continental Congress as a class, debating in a whole class structure. Each side gives an opening statement. Then they present their positions.</p>	<p><i>Do not continue on to Bend II. Pause the writing unit and use this time to write in the service of reading.</i></p> <p>You might consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revisit note taking strategies from Bend 1 and have students collect notes that support both sides of the argument. ● Have students reread sources and gather information that supports their point of view. They may lay out all of the information to rank it, suggesting the strongest pieces to include in their arguments. ● Students might flash draft their position writing quick essays. ● Revisit lessons from the Grade 3 Opinion Writing Unit <i>Changing the World</i>. The first part of this unit leads students through learning how to write and deliver persuasive speeches.

Bend III for Reading and Bends II and III for Writing

Bend III of the reading unit begins on what will be approximately Day 15. You'll want to look ahead at your calendar and make some decisions regarding your pacing. There are seven sessions left in Bend III of the reading unit and a total of fifteen sessions left in Bends II and III of the writing unit. How many more days can you devote to these units? Which of the following choices best fit the needs of the readers and writers in your class?

Most teachers choose to move into bend two of the writing unit, *Bringing History To Life*, at this point. In this bend, students pick a new subtopic to write another information book with increased independence. This complements the work happening in the reading unit where ideally students are now switching gears and researching new subtopics on the events beginning after the Second Continental Congress.

You may choose to replace one or two writing lessons in Bend II with lessons from Bend III. One suggestion is to replace Session 17, "Self-Assessment and Goal Setting," with Session 22, "Editing." Or, you might decide that in order for your students to develop a universal message in their writing you want to include Session 19 "Digging Deeper Interpreting the Life Lessons that History Teaches" in place of Session 13 or 15. Use your data to help you determine which choices would be the best fit for your writers.

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life

You may decide to dedicate enough time in your calendar to fully teach Bend III of the writing unit, which focuses on layering information writing with ideas, and will then wish to lengthen the reading unit. You may choose to revisit some of the reading sessions your students found most difficult. You might return to Sessions 16 and 19 from the reading unit as they fit with the goals for the third bend of writing. Or, you might take the share from Session 4 of the reading unit and return to it as a mini lesson, emphasizing the ranking of main ideas so that students might transfer this skill to their own writing. Finally, you might choose to just continue teaching Bend III of the writing unit during your content area instruction while moving on to the next reading and writing units.

Here is a chart that provides an overview of the work that takes place in reading workshop during Bend III and writing workshop during Bends II and III:

Reading Workshop (Reading History: The American Revolution)	Writing Workshop (Bringing History to Life)
<p>Bend III: Engaging in a Second Cycle of Research</p> <p>Readers pick a new subtopic to research and begin by reading easier texts in that topic so they are prepared for reading harder texts. They work with topic-based partners to make a plan for what and how they will read.</p> <p>Sessions 15-18 support students in learning strategies to help them tackle more complex texts.</p> <p>The bend ends by students transferring the interpretation work they've done in other units to the topic of the American Revolution. They celebrate by teaching others what they've learned from all of their research.</p> <p><i>If you choose to lengthen your reading unit to run alongside your writing unit, you might consider the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repertoire lessons: Students look back on all that they have learned and make a plan for the reading work they need to do that day. ● Revisit some of the reading sessions that your students found most difficult. ● Reteach a share or mid-workshop as a minilesson. 	<p>Bend II: Writing with Greater Independence</p> <p>Writers will begin a second information book on the subtopic they began researching in reading. They make a plan for how the book will go and gather the information needed to draft their book. Students will be paired with their topic-based partnerships at the end of Session 9 to support each other in this process.</p> <p>In Session 11, writers use all they know about information writing to flash draft their books outside of the notebook.</p> <p>The rest of the bend has writers simultaneously drafting and revising already drafted chapters of their books for structure, craft, elaboration, and point of view.</p> <p>Bend III: Building Ideas in Informational Writing</p> <p>Writers begin large scale revision, growing ideas they will add to their books. They read and reread texts, annotating them to grow bigger ideas about the time period. They explore these in their notebooks.</p> <p>Writers add these ideas into their books, drafting a new chapter or revising existing chapters. They continue the revision process by asking questions still unanswered about their</p>

**Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Reading User's Guide, Fourth Grade, 2016-2017
Reading History: The American Revolution and Bringing History to Life**

	<p>topic and adding to parts that feel thin or inaccurate.</p> <p>The bend ends with writers celebrating their pieces and sharing what they learned about the historical topic in an Expert Fair. They present a few chapters of their texts to an audience.</p>
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Administer the Reading Post-Assessment and Information Writing On Demand Post-Assessment at the conclusion of the units to allow you to determine progress and next steps.