

Harvey “Smokey” **Daniels**

Nancy **Steineke**

Texts **AND** Lessons

for TEACHING LITERATURE

with

65

Fresh Mentor Texts from

Dave Eggers • Nikki Giovanni

Tim O'Brien • Jesus Colon

Pat Conroy • Judith Ortiz Cofer

and many more

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GREETINGS, COLLEAGUES. We are Smokey Daniels and Nancy Steineke, joining you again with a new resource that we hope you'll find useful.

Over the past several years, we have worked with students and teachers in twenty-two states, conducting reading workshops and giving demonstration lessons in middle and high school classrooms. Nancy's day job is at Victor J. Andrew High School in suburban Chicago, where she has taught language arts (and once upon a time, home economics, but that's another story) for thirty-five years. Since Smokey no longer has a classroom of his own, he now logs frequent-flier miles as a cross-country guest teacher, including stints at schools in Chicago, Appalachia, Arkansas, New York, Texas, New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Hawaii (someone has to do it), along with writing books and leading workshops.

In 2011 we published *Texts and Lessons for Content-Area Reading*, which included collaborative comprehension lessons and kid-friendly nonfiction articles from a crazy array of sources (*Rolling Stone*, the Discovery Channel, the *New York Times*, etc). Since that book came out, English language arts teachers have been requesting a companion volume that uses *literature* instead of informational text to teach deep comprehension and collaborative discussion. They wanted a book that's just for us ELA folks, not those greedy history and science teachers served by the previous book. Our first love is literature, too. Who are we to refuse?

So here's the product of our two-year search for the best, freshest, and most engaging short literature for young people—and a collection of new, step-by-step lessons that guide kids into, through, and beyond these texts. As with the nonfiction edition, these lessons use engaging short selections to teach close reading and deep comprehension through collaborative conversation and lively debate. And every lesson in the book is correlated with the Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading—as well as many standards for Speaking and Listening, Language, and Writing.

Meeting and Exceeding the Common Core State Standards

The experiences provided by our upcoming thirty-seven lessons closely parallel the readings and tasks recommended by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as well as the performances required in tests from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The main difference is that our lessons put student curiosity and engagement first. The experiences are highly active and student centered, unlike so many of the CCSS prep materials being developed around the country.

In recent years, the Common Core Standards have had a dramatic and sometimes unsettling impact on schools and teachers. We have plenty to say about the challenges of the Core, but luckily for you, we are not going to do it here. This book is about addressing the standards, not critiquing them. Smokey and our colleagues Steve Zemelman and Arthur Hyde recently released the fourth edition of *Best Practice: Bringing Standards to Life in America's Classrooms* (Heinemann 2012). That book offers an extended and balanced treatment of the CCSS—and the many other standards documents and research studies that, together, provide a full vision of what excellent teaching and learning look like today.

For now, we'll just show how this resource can help you engage your kids and meet the CCSS for the English Language Arts, and in particular the Reading Standards for Literature 6–12. To begin with, here are the anchors:

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

RANGE OF READING AND LEVEL OF TEXT COMPLEXITY

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
(www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

When you think about this list, you realize that any good reading lesson should incorporate *all* of these goals. Why would we ever design a lesson in which kids *didn't* take all text details into account, pay attention to the author's craft, build knowledge, and gain proficiency with challenging materials? Students deserve it all. So every lesson in this book helps students gain practice with most or all of the reading anchor standards.

While our main aim in this book is to enhance the reading of literature, we also address other Common Core Standards in Speaking and Listening, Language, and Writing, and these correlations are prominently noted. For example, every lesson includes both small-group and whole-class discussion, as explicitly called for in the Speaking and Listening Standards. And, since all sixty-five of the reading selections reproduced here model excellence in language use, the lessons also help students meet key Language Standards. And finally, most lessons require some kind of student writing or note taking. While the written assignments are mostly brief and informal, each one helps to build the fluency, skills, and process knowledge students need to meet the Writing Standards.

Prominent sidebars will help you see which Common Core Standards and skills are receiving special focus and attention all the way through the book. Then, in the appendix, we offer a chart that helps you correlate the lessons with all relevant standards.

About the Readings: What's Fresh in the Market?

Sometimes it seems as though the same fifty short stories and the same fifteen poems are anthologized over and over. Partly, that's because the major textbook companies want to offer students time-tested readings from celebrated authors. But there are plenty of other works of great literature out there, if you know where to look for something fresh.

So where do *we* look? Both of us are inveterate and passionate collectors of short-short fiction and short poems, in both their tree-based and digital forms. If you looked at our voluminous email correspondence, or eavesdropped on our weekly Saturday morning phone calls, you'd mainly hear us trading and reading aloud great short pieces.

We are also inveterate and passionate teachers of reading comprehension, thinking, and discussion strategies. That means we need a constant supply of short texts to use in quick, lively, in-class lessons. When we introduce our students to almost any literary idea or device, it's only natural to pull out a short literature piece from our collections. We came to call these texts "one-page wonders" (OPW in shorthand) because we shopped for kid-friendly reading selections that could be photocopied on one or two pages.

The reading selections we've collected here cover the genres of short stories, poems, drama, and novels, with some essays and accompanying nonfiction pieces appearing in the text sets (see Chapter 10). When choosing OPWs, we favor selections that:

- are engaging, complex, and mostly contemporary
- feature newer, up-and-coming writers (or, if written by famous authors, are not widely anthologized)
- are fresh to us teachers, too, so we can have the joy of discovery right along with our kids
- have sufficient sensory detail and rich language to conjure up vivid images of places and characters
- have enough depth and craft to reward second, closer readings
- address themes that can stimulate lively discussion and debate among students
- are short enough to be read during class, so that a whole lesson can be completed in one period or less
- allow photocopying, so kids can annotate their own copies
- help students practice key comprehension and thinking strategies
- can be extended into more days, or tied into broader literature units

We want to be especially clear about *text complexity*, a key focus of the Common Core Standards. A few of our chosen readings are intentionally easy to enter, enjoy, and talk about. And why not? As the standards say, “Students need opportunities to stretch their reading abilities but also to experience the satisfaction and pleasure of easy, fluent reading, both of which the Standards allow for” (2010, p. 39).

But our main job, year in and year out, is to lead our students up a ladder of challenge, building their stamina and pushing them along to literature that requires more intentional thinking. But along that ladder, it's also our duty to provide just the right amount and type of support to keep kids progressing.

Every class period is not a high-stakes test; it is one more step upward toward college and career readiness. So, even as we respect the CCSS focus on complex text, we also think carefully about what makes that text accessible to young readers along that upward path of their growth. Here are the considerations we keep in mind:

FACTORS THAT MAKE COMPLEX TEXT MORE ACCESSIBLE

- The text is shorter rather than longer.
- The reader has chosen the text, versus it being assigned.
- The reader has relevant background knowledge.
- The topic has personal interest or importance.
- The text evokes curiosity, surprise, or puzzlement.
- The text has high coherence, meaning that it explains itself (e.g., “John Langdon, a farmer and signer of the Constitution . . .”).

- The teacher evokes and builds the reader's background knowledge.
- The teacher teaches specific strategies for monitoring comprehension, visualizing, inferring, connecting to background knowledge, questioning, determining importance, and synthesizing.
- Readers can mark, write, or draw on text as they read.
- Readers are encouraged to talk about the text during and after reading.
- Readers can hear text read aloud by the teacher, by a classmate, or in a small group.
- Readers have experience writing in the same genre.

Still, make no mistake about it: 90 percent of the pieces in this collection are plenty complex. That's because they are *full-strength adult literature*, which we think middle and high school students should be engaging with regularly. So we didn't worry so much about Lexiles; instead, we picked selections that grown-up, lifelong readers have paid to read. Trust us, there are plenty of pieces here that give us English majors a run for our interpretive money, but are still intriguing enough to keep teen readers digging and thinking.

Which brings us back to the question in our subhead, What's fresh in the market? You hear that expression a lot on those TV cooking shows when the cameras follow a Famous Chef through the farmer's market, right? She is looking for the dewiest veggies, the most exotic meats, the strangest grains (*freekeh*, seriously? *kamut berries*, really?), the revelatory ethnic treats. Great cooks seek the latest, the newest, the weirdest. They want challenge. They want to create a dish they've never cooked before. They want to work on the edge, take some risks, and dazzle their diners.

If we literature teachers are chefs too, then we really need some fresh produce. To begin with, you just get tired of teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird* for the twenty-third time (unless you're Nancy). More importantly, when we teach a novel or story to our students, they too often see us "read" texts we have read many times before, thought about, talked about, maybe even written about. We know it cold from all our previous encounters.

But this is not the same job we ask kids to do when they come in the classroom each day. We place unfamiliar text in front of them and ask them to read it "cold." They almost never see *us* encountering unknown text, working to build meaning the first time through. Well, if reading unfamiliar text is the students' actual task, then we teachers better be demonstrating that job, early and often. That means we need new texts to refresh and challenge *ourselves*.

Now, these sixty-five little jewels won't be our favorite literary clips forever; we're always finding and adding new ones to the repertoire—and you should, too. As you work with these pieces, you'll start to internalize what makes a one-page wonder, and start collecting your own. Hope you get as geeky about finding them as we are.

So, shall we move on to the nuts and bolts of the lessons?



Coming right up, Chapters 3 through 9 present thirty-seven strategy lessons for improving students' literary comprehension and discussion, using very short texts. In Chapter 10, we offer eight text set lessons, thematically connected assortments of pieces designed to be studied, compared, and debated together. Then, in Chapter 11, we bring forward three commonly taught whole-class novels and show how you can use selected lessons from this book to teach those works—and countless others—in a highly interactive, engaging way. And finally, in Chapter 12, we explain how to grow your own inventory of special texts for teaching literary thinking. Here's the rundown.

Chapters 3–9: Strategy Lessons

The strategy lessons are each accompanied by at least one “one-page wonder”—an enticing poem, short-short story, essay, or image that engages students in close reading, thinking, and discussion. We selected these pieces with literary quality and student engagement foremost in our minds. They cover a wide range of genres and themes; only a few are abridged. The lessons accompanying these readings offer specific suggestions and language you can use to teach them. They are written as generally as possible, so you can use (and reuse) the steps and language with any compatible text you choose. And the strategy lessons are quick: they are designed to be completed within ten to fifty minutes.

We have grouped the lessons into seven families based on their thinking focus as well as their standards connections.

Sharing Literature Aloud

Smart-Reader Strategies

Lively Discussions

Closer Readings

Up and Thinking

Literary Arguments

Coping with Complex and Classic Texts

The strategy lessons appear in what we'd call a “mild sequential order.” For example, kids can't do arguing both sides unless they first know how to pair share with a classmate. Very generally, the lessons become more complex and socially demanding as they unfold. But, that being said, use them in whatever order you like; so far, no fatalities have been reported due to reordering. You can also mix and match—any lesson with any reading selection, ours or yours. If a piece looks too easy or hard for your kids, don't give up on the lesson—find an alternative text elsewhere in the book or in your own collection, and carry

on. And remember, always study any potential lesson text carefully to be sure it is appropriate for your students and the community where you would like to continue teaching.

Chapter 10: Text Set Lessons

The text sets follow a similar lesson format, but each one offers multiple coordinated reading selections. Now students can range through two to five texts representing different genres and authors, each of them taking a different angle on a common topic or literary theme. This formula includes nonfiction selections and various media in the mix, much as PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments do. Among our themes:

Memory

Citizenship

Life Stories

Mothers and Daughters

Narcissism

Labels

Abuse

Soldiers and Heroes

Text set lessons about these rich topics offer multiple points of entry for different students, and provide for a deep and sustained engagement in reading and thinking. They can easily lead to multiday units in which students do their own research to shed further light on the theme.

The suggested sequence of activities for a text set is built from strategy lessons in the first part of the book. Therefore, the instructions for text sets are more compact, since the necessary lesson steps are given in earlier chapters. Don't worry, we'll clearly signal where you should look for each lesson step.

Chapter 11: Keeping Kids at the Center of Whole-Class Novels

Whole-class novels are still a big part of the English language arts curriculum in most middle and high schools (thank goodness). But now teachers are wondering: How can I teach these great books in a way that's harmonious with the Common Core Standards? How do I ensure my students are grasping all important details, noticing the author's craft and structure, improving their academic vocabularies, and always stepping up their thinking skills? All while still being deeply engaged with the story and with each other?

We looked up the most commonly taught novels in middle and high school, and three of the top titles were:

The Giver, by Lois Lowry

To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee

The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Literature Selection:

Each lesson is accompanied by a short piece of fiction or poetry, a historic image, or an excerpt from a longer work. For most lessons, you may copy and distribute the pieces to students. (For four selections, the authors were unable to grant classroom copying rights, and we indicate this on the footers for those texts.) Kids must be able to write and mark directly on the page, so *make copies for everyone*—not just one set that gets passed from class to class. Also keep in mind that you can substitute your own selection and adapt our language to teach—or revisit—these skills.

Title: Names the teaching strategy.

Introduction: This brief introductory note gives background on the strategy, structure, or text being used, and explains its value for students.

Time: Tells the expected length of the lesson. Most strategy lessons range from 10 to 50 minutes, averaging 30. Each text set lesson fills at least one 50-minute class period—and we give you steps and language to dig deeper over several additional periods.

Grouping Sequence: Tells how lesson shifts among pairs, small-group, and whole-class configurations.

Used in Text Sets: Lists the text sets in Chapter 10 that use the lessons.

Steps & Teaching Language: This is the core of the lesson, where all the activities and teacher instructions are spelled out in sequence and in detail. Text that appears in regular typeface indicates our suggestions for the teacher. Text in *italic* is suggested teaching language that you can try on and use. If you substitute your own selection, check to see where the language might need to be adapted.

Choices Made
Jim O'Loughlin

Part 1

Later, he would be able to consider all that he had left behind and never saw again: the wedding album, the birth certificates, the kids' favorite toys, even the laptop. In the moment though, with the storm surging and blow back peeling off the roof like masking tape, he only had time to grab what he could on the way out.

Part 2

Still, even as he ran to the car, dripping sweat and bleeding from the gash in his forehead, with the river already up to the wheel wells, he realized that the choices he had just made said something about who he was. In his arms, he held a phone book, the cantaloupe that had just turned ripe, and a gallon of milk. And he had made sure to lock the front door.

CHAPTER
3

SHARING LITERATURE ALOUD

Wise classroom practices—and the Common Core Standards—recognize the importance of both teachers and students reading short literature selections aloud, and paying close attention to the language, the ideas, and their own thinking as they do so.

LESSON 3.1

TEXT ▶ "Choices Made,"
by Jim O'Loughlin

TIME ▶ 10 Minutes

GROUPING SEQUENCE ▶ Pairs,
whole class

USED IN TEXT SETS ▶ 3, 8

Pair Share

This fifty-five-word story embodies a classic conversation starter: if you had to suddenly flee your home, what three things would you take?

Well, it does happen. Every August, hurricane season begins in earnest. People who live near the Atlantic coast must face the weather predictions with a combination of dread, fear, and distrust. As we all know, for every prediction that is dead-on, it seems like the previous ninety-nine—or more—have fizzled. In the Midwest, we don't have hurricanes; we have tornadoes, mostly tornado watches and warnings that seldom become tornadoes. But when those storms do make a direct hit, it's often with little or no advance notice—especially if it's the middle of the night and people are sleeping. In the rest of the country, depending on where you live and the season, you might be worrying about floods, mudslides, brush/forest fires, or earthquakes. So, unlike the unwary character in this story, be prepared!

PREPARATION

Copy the two-paragraph story and cut it in half. Good news: if you have a class of thirty, you'll only need to make fifteen copies! Be sure to put all the beginnings in one pile and the endings in another.

Steps & Teaching Language

STEP 1 Organize pairs. Whenever kids will be working in pairs, they need to know who their partner is *beforehand*, and they need to move into a good conversation position—face to face, eye to eye, knee to knee (probably not cheek to cheek). This setup encourages the use of "indoor voices" and prevents noisy, time-wasting shuffling around mid-lesson. For pairs, we like to have the kids simply push their desks together or sit directly across a table from each other. In this lesson, sitting side by side works best because both students will be reading from the same page.

Shoptalk: Here we offer comments about when to use the lesson, how to coordinate it with your textbook (if you have one), and other teaching topics we'd like to share.

Common Core Standards Supported: Lists CCSS skills and principles addressed in the lesson.

Shoptalk ▶

If you are using a basal or anthology, it probably tells you little or nothing about how to set up successful partner or small-group work in your class. (You may find some notes about social skills in the teacher's edition). If you skipped our Chapter 2, check it out: there's some helpful information about training kids for small-group work back on pages 10–13. Making these crucial advance moves, such as setting up partners first and making sure they are positioned to communicate, makes a huge difference with our lessons—or the ones in your textbook. Still have kids who don't want to work with each other? Tell them that *your* standard is that “everybody works with everybody in here.” Then form partners daily, by random drawing, so the pairing is not about you—and so that everyone eventually does work with everyone else. Acquaintance builds friendliness.

STEP 2 Turn and talk. Pose the question that we previewed earlier: *If you had to escape from your house with only three things (assuming your family and pets are OK), what would you take? Turn to your partner and share your answers. Don't forget to explain why these items are important to you. What do they symbolize or represent?*

STEP 3 Introduce and pass out the story. Each pair receives two handouts, the beginning and the end of the story, face down. *OK, first figure out which of you two has the earliest birthday in the year. Got it? OK, the person with the earliest birthday gets the first half of the story, and the other gets the ending. As I pass this story out to you, I want you to keep them face down for the time being. No peeking!*

STEP 4 Give instructions. *Early birthdays, ready? When I say go, turn your paper over and begin reading aloud. Make sure you put the story in the middle so that your partner can follow along. Once you finish reading, stop and talk. Share your reactions, talk about what's going on and why the character chose not to take those items. Be sure that both you and your partner contribute and that you actively challenge each other to go into detail and really explain your thoughts.*

When you are finished discussing the first half, the late birthdays should turn their sheet over, put it between you, and then read aloud as your partner follows along. After reading, have another discussion following the same guidelines. Except this time, you need to talk about what the character did take with him.

STEP 5 Concluding pairs discussion. *I see that most of you have finished. Before we share in a large group, I want you to recall the items you would have taken in an emergency and compare yourselves to the story character. What did you have in common? What things were different?*

STEP 6 Share with the whole class. *How did you explain what this character actually took versus what he might have taken when he thought about it later? What might these items symbolize? How did your “emergency items” compare with the character's choices?*

Don't prolong the sharing. Just get a few quick responses to each of the questions. The important conversational work took place as the pairs discussed together.

Even simpler: While we usually complicate things in these variations, this lesson actually has some fun wrinkles already. So we'll just mention a *simpler* version for this one. Eliminate the cutting in half and just let partners gobble the story in one gulp (thirty seconds?), then get into that turn-and-talk.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS SUPPORTED

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. (CCRA.R.1)
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative meanings. (CCRA.R.4)
- Assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text. (CCRA.R.6)
- Participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations. (CCRA.SL.1)

◀ **Variation**

Variations: In this section you'll find specific ways you can vary, modify, or extend the lesson. Some of these variations can extend the lesson into the following class period.



Web Support: All the charts, lists, or forms that need to be projected for any lesson are on our website, www.heinemann.com/textsandlessons/literature.

PROJECTION

When we started teaching, there was one tool for displaying documents to a whole class: the overhead projector. Today, there are a million ways of projecting material: document cameras, smart boards, whiteboards, iPads, you name it. Many of our lessons use instructions or images or short chunks of text, which, though they are included in the book, work much better if projected for the class. So we have placed these on our website and provided additional links that were active at the time of publication (www.heinemann.com/textsandlessonsliterature).

So we chose these three books as “exemplar texts” in showing how you can use our lessons to teach a novel. Basically, you’ll see us stringing together a logical sequence of strategy lessons from Chapters 3 through 9, with bits of connective tissue added where needed. Of course, the point of this chapter is not these three specific books, but the process by which you can build an engaged, interactive, and standards-friendly approach to *any* novel.

Chapter 12: Extending the Texts and Lessons

While this book provides sixty-five great reading selections, there are about 180 days in most of our school years! Hmm, doing the arithmetic, you could run out of text around New Year’s and be hungry for more. In this short chapter, we give away all of our secrets for finding more short, kid-friendly literature selections. We offer bibliographies for the short-short story genre, for poetry, and for images and artworks. We also explain how you can write your own one-page wonders for kids. Really, you can.

Working in Groups

These lessons are all highly interactive and collaborative, because that’s what part of what engages kids and gets them thinking. The Common Core Standards also push pretty hard for us to get students working with each other. The Speaking and Listening anchor standards are quite general, and most of our lessons address many or all anchors.

But just for fun, let’s drill down into the more specific Speaking and Listening Standards for grades 9–10 as an example. Students should:

1. *Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.*
 - a. *Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.*
 - b. *Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.*
 - c. *Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.*
 - d. *Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.*

In every one of our lessons, students are interacting in just these ways.

If you worry that your students might not be ready to collaborate as the CCSS requires, you are not alone. For a variety of reasons, teenage students may find it hard to manifest the focus, friendliness, and support that these face-to-face meetings require. So we have designed our lessons to enhance on-task conversations.

- The readings are interesting.
- The instructions are explicit.
- Every kid-kid meeting is highly structured.
- Every lesson follows a “socially incremental” design. Kids typically begin working with just one other person (more controlled than starting in groups of four or five).
- Once collaboration is established, kids can move from pairs to small groups.
- Finally (and always) lessons finish in a whole-class discussion, orchestrated by the teacher.

As you can already see, we rely extensively on *pairs* or *partners* in these lessons—and in all our work with young people. When students are meeting with just one other learner, they experience maximum “positive social pressure.” That means both persons totally need each other to complete the task. There’s no chance to slough off and hope other group members will pick up the slack. There are no other members—you two are it! So you have to pay attention, listen carefully, speak up, and take on your share of the work. With pairs, there tend to be fewer distractions, sidetracks, and disputes of the kind we sometimes have to manage in larger groups.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

These lessons are generally pretty low-tech. Mostly, you just photocopy the articles and prepare kids to have meaningful conversations. But there are a few supplies we like to have around:

- Post-it notes of various sizes
- Index cards, 3x5-inch and 4x6-inch varieties
- Large chart paper or newsprint and tape
- Fat and skinny markers in assorted colors
- Clipboards: When kids are working with short selections, they may be moving around the room, sitting on the floor, meeting in various groups. They’ll need to bring a hard writing surface. A weighty textbook works, but feather-light clipboards were made to be portable desks.
- A projector that allows you to show the lesson instructions we’ve parked for you on our website, as well as images, work samples, and web pages related to the lessons.
- In our ideal classroom, kids would also have individual tablet computers, on which we can preload great text and images, and then kids can annotate and write about them, joining in digital conversations in live or online settings. However, every student must have the exact same device and be able to use it as fluently as paper and pencil, or the technology can actually distract from the brisk pace of these lessons.

In almost every lesson, you'll have to decide how to form pairs (or groups of three or four), and there is a lot to think about. You already know what happens when you let friends work with each other; lots of kids get left out, while the friend partners have plenty to talk about, other than your lesson. Instead, keep mixing kids up, arranging different partners for every activity, every day. This is part of your community building. Everyone gets to know everyone. No one gets to say, "I won't work with him." Let's learn from kindergarten: write each kid's name on a popsicle stick and keep them in a coffee mug. When it's time to pick partners, students draw from the mug. This way, pairings are random; it's never about you personally forcing certain kids to work together. No arguments and no groaning allowed. As the weeks unfold and kids' collaboration skills are honed in pair work, we feel more comfortable putting them in small groups during our lessons. And later in the year, kids will have partners or groups that stay together over many days, as in book clubs, writing circles, and inquiry circles.

Maybe you have a class that needs even more support to succeed at student-led discussion. In such situations, the key is to explicitly teach the social skills kids need, *before* they head off into small groups. This is a topic we have treated extensively in other books, and won't re-spout our wisdom here. But for those who want more information on explicit social skill lessons, we have posted some links on the book's website.

Below is a chart showing seven key collaboration strategies kids need to develop, adapted from Smokey and Stephanie Harvey's *Comprehension and Collaboration* (2009). As you can see, the chart gives both positive and negative examples of each skill. Maybe you will recognize some of your own students there, hopefully not in the right-hand column.

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES/ACTIONS	SOUNDS LIKE	DOESN'T SOUND LIKE
1. Be responsible to the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared: work completed, materials and notes in hand • Bring interesting questions/ideas to the discussion • Fess up if unprepared • Focus on the work and members • Establish and live by your group's ground rules • Settle issues within the group 	<p>"Does everyone have their reading? Good, let's get going."</p> <p>"I'm sorry, guys, I didn't get the reading done."</p> <p>"OK, then today you'll take notes on our conversation."</p>	<p>"What? There's a meeting?"</p> <p>"I left my stuff in my locker."</p> <p>"Teacher, Bobby keeps distracting our group."</p>
2. Listen actively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use names • Make eye contact • Nod, confirm, look interested • Lean in, sit close together • Summarize or paraphrase 	<p>"Joe, pull your chair up closer."</p> <p>"Fran, I think I heard you say . . ."</p> <p>"So you think . . ."</p>	<p>"I'm not sitting by you."</p> <p>Huh?"</p>

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES/ACTIONS	SOUNDS LIKE	DOESN'T SOUND LIKE
3. Speak up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join in, speak often, be active • Use a moderate voice level • Connect your ideas with what others just said • Overcome your shyness • Ask lead and follow-up questions • Use your notes or annotations, or drawings 	<p>“What you said just reminded me of . . . ”</p> <p>“What made you feel that way?”</p>	<p>(silence)</p> <p>Not using/looking at notes when conversation lulls</p>
4. Share the air and encourage others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take turns • Be aware of who’s contributing, and work to even out the airtime • Monitor yourself for dominating or shirking the conversation • Invite others in • Receive others’ ideas respectfully • Use talking stick or poker chips if needed 	<p>“What do you think, Wendy?”</p> <p>“I better finish my point and let someone else talk.”</p> <p>“That’s a cool idea, Tom.”</p> <p>“Can you say more about that, Chris?”</p>	<p>“Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah . . . ”</p> <p>“I pass.”</p>
5. Prove your point/support your view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain, give examples • Refer to specific passages • Read aloud important sections • Dig deeper into the text, reread important parts 	<p>“I think Jim treats Huck as a son because . . . ”</p> <p>“Right here on page 15 it says that . . . ”</p>	<p>“This book is dumb.”</p> <p>“Why open the book?”</p> <p>“Well, that’s my opinion anyway.”</p>
6. Disagree agreeably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be tolerant of other’s ideas • Speak up—offer a different viewpoint and don’t be steamrolled • Use neutral language: “I was thinking of it this way” • Celebrate and enjoy divergent viewpoints 	<p>“Wow, I thought of something totally different.”</p> <p>“I can see your point, but what about . . . ”</p> <p>“I’m glad you brought that up; I never would have seen it that way.”</p>	<p>“You are so wrong!”</p> <p>“What book are <i>you</i> reading?”</p> <p>“No way!”</p>
7. Reflect and correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific behaviors that helped or hurt the discussion • Talk openly about problems • Make plans to try out new strategies at the next meeting and then review their effectiveness 	<p>“What went well today and where did we run into problems?”</p> <p>“OK, so what will we do differently during our next meeting?”</p> <p>“Let’s write down our plan.”</p>	<p>“We rocked.”</p> <p>“We sucked.”</p> <p>“It was OK.”</p>

These seven strategies are embedded over and over again in this book’s lessons. As you teach them, your kids will be getting plenty of practice and becoming better partners and group members—and meeting the Speaking and Listening Standards for the Common Core or your state.

How Proficient Readers Think

Here’s a question: How do effective, veteran readers *think* when they are reading stories, poems, literary essays, or plays? What goes on in their minds? Exactly how do they turn those little marks on the page into understanding and knowledge in their brains—especially when the text is hard or old or boring? If there are some effective patterns and strategies, we need to know what they are, so we can teach them to the kids. Like ASAP.

Happily for us, some reliable and well-replicated research (Pearson and Gallagher 1983; Pearson, Roehler, Dole, and Duffy 1992; Daniels 2011) give us a very pretty clear picture of the key cognitive strategies in play. Powerful readers:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Monitor their comprehension | Draw inferences |
| Connect to background knowledge | Determine what’s important |
| Visualize and make sensory images | Synthesize and summarize meaning |
| Ask questions of the text | |

ALL IN THE FAMILY



This resource stands on its own, offering immediately usable readings and language for collaborative lessons in thinking about literature. But it was also created to be used with several recent books by our “family” of coauthors. Over the past ten years, our own collaborative group has created a library of books focused on building students’ knowledge and skill through the direct teaching of learning strategies in the context of challenging inquiry units, extensive peer collaboration, and practical, formative assessments.

Among these books are:

- *Best Practice: Bringing Standards to Life in America’s Classrooms*, 4th edition (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde 2012)
- *Best Practice Video Companion* (Zemelman and Daniels 2012)
- *Comprehension Going Forward* (Daniels 2011)
- *Texts and Lessons for Content-Area Reading* (Daniels and Steineke 2011)

- *Assessment Live: 10 Real-Time Ways for Kids to Show What They Know—and Meet the Standards* (Steineke 2009)
- *Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action* (Harvey and Daniels 2009)
- *Mini-lessons for Literature Circles* (Daniels and Steineke 2006)
- *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher’s Guide* (Daniels, Zemelman, and Steineke 2005)
- *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher’s Guide to Content-Area Reading* (Daniels and Zemelman 2004)
- *Reading and Writing Together* (Steineke 2003)



Chapter 4 offers seven lessons, each dedicated to one of these cognitive strategies, in the above order. But these seven core reading strategies are fully incorporated throughout the book; kids will practice each one repeatedly as you lead them through the readings, activities, and conversations.

Assessment

If you are going to devote ten minutes or twenty-five minutes or a whole class period to one of these lessons, the question naturally arises: How do I grade this? After all, in today's schools, it seems like we have to assess, or at least assign a grade to, almost any activity kids spend time on.

It is important to recognize that these lessons, by themselves, do not lead to final public outcomes, such as polished essays or crafted speeches. They can and often do serve as *starting points* for just such projects, which require extra time and support for their completion. But as they stand, our lessons are more like guided practice, opportunities for kids to read and write and talk *to learn*. That requires an appropriate approach to assessment.

Participation Points

You can certainly give kids points or grades for effective participation in these lessons. But if you start *qualitatively* grading every piece of kids' work on activities like these, trying to defend the difference between a 78 and a 23, you're going to give up huge chunks of your own time marking, scoring, and justifying. Maybe this is some of our old Chicago "tough love" creeping in, but for smaller everyday assignments, we use binary grading: yes/no, on/off, all/nothing. We give 10 points for full participation and 0 points for non-full participation. No 3s, no 7.5s. Ten or zero, that's it.

Our colleague Jim Vopat has brought some poetry to this kind of grading in his book *Writing Circles* (2009). Jim calls this "good faith effort." If a student shows up prepared to work, having all the necessary materials (reading done, notes ready), joins in the work with energy, and carries a fair share of the work—that's a "good faith effort" and earns full points. From a practical point of view, this means we only need to keep track of the few kids who *don't* put forth that GFE, and remember to enter that zero in our gradebook later on.

Still, let's be honest. Giving points is not assessment, it's just grading. When we want to get serious and really scrutinize kids' thinking in these activities, we have to take further steps.

Collect and Save Student Work

As kids do the activities in these forty-five lessons, they naturally create and leave behind writings, lists, drawings, notes, and other tracks of their thinking. So why pop a quiz? Instead, collect, study, and save the naturally occurring by-products of kids' learning. These authentic artifacts, this residue of thinking, are far more meaningful than a disembodied "72" in your gradebook. The kids' own creations are also far more relevant in a parent conference or a principal evaluation than a string of point totals in a gradebook.

OBSERVATION CHART

STUDENT NAME	"GOOD FAITH"	QUOTE	THINKING	SOCIAL SKILLS
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Observe Kids at Work

The form on page 16 is a tool we use when sitting with a group of kids, watching them work on a lesson together. As you can see, this form incorporates Vopat’s good faith idea and then goes much further. As we listen in on kids, we jot down one memorable quote from each student and reflect on what kind of thinking this comment or question represents; we also take notes on any conspicuous use (or neglect) of the collaboration skills called for in the lesson.



Offer Meaningful Performance Opportunities

When the time comes to assign grades for kids’ work over long stretches of time and big chunks of content, we traditionally make up a big test and add that score to the points kids have earned along the way. Even as we do this, we quietly recognize that this assessment system invites cramming, superficiality, and the wholesale forgetting of content.

Instead, we like to devise authentic events at which kids share or perform their learning for an engaged audience—and then we use a rubric that carefully defines a successful performance to derive each kid’s grade. This might mean a polished essay published on the web, a series of tableaux performed with a group, or a full-scale public debate or talk show enactment. Nancy has written a whole book with ideas on this kind of performance process called *Assessment Live: 10 Real-Time Ways for Kids to Show What They Know—and Meet the Standards* (Heinemann 2009).

Have Fun

We’re serious about putting this “F-word” back into school. The two of us had a blast searching out these amazing short texts and using them with kids around the country. In those classrooms, everyone seemed to have a good time reading, savoring, analyzing, debating, and even rereading these little literary gemstones. Field-testing these lessons with kids has reminded us that “all adolescents want to work hard and do well,” as the brilliant British educator Charity James once wrote in her book *Young Lives at Stake: The Education of Adolescents*.

Or you can just call it “*rigor without the mortis*.”

Enjoy!

Smokey and Nancy

LITERARY ARGUMENTS

The Common Core Standards want kids not just to persuade, but to argue. Interesting choice of words. When you think about it, “persuasive” sounds pretty genteel, while “argue” has a more aggressive connotation. The technical difference is that when we are persuading, we only need to make our own case. But to argue, you also have to acknowledge the other side’s position—and then crush it. These lessons reflect our belief that to get good at this process, kids need lots of practice drawing on textual evidence to develop an interpretation, and then testing it against others’ thinking.

LESSON 8.1 Take a Position

Remember the last episode of *The Sopranos*? You don’t? Then you might want to take some time off and devote eighty-three hours to watching the complete DVD collection. On the other hand, you can just keep reading and take our word for what follows . . .

. . . at this point, Tony is pretty much the last man standing, since an earlier mob war has wiped out his crew. To top it off, the feds have him cornered. Tony waits in a diner, sitting in a booth while a suspicious-looking guy at the counter is eyeing him. Who is this guy? Hit man? Mob celebrity stalker? Job applicant who heard there were openings? We don’t know, but he’s sure making us nervous! The camera keeps switching between the front door, Tony, guy at the counter. Anxiety mounts for the viewer, not so much for Tony. He seems pretty happy; maybe his new meds are kicking in? Someone’s at the door. Oh no! Whew, it’s only his wife, Carmella. The anxiety builds again, but then it’s just A.J., his son. Finally Meadow walks in. Tony looks up. Screen goes blank and stays that way for about ten seconds, and then the credits roll silently.

What the !*@#? That was it. Every viewer had to make up his/her own ending based on the evidence they had gathered in the previous eighty-two episodes. At the time the final installment aired, it created quite a buzz and many viewers were angry. How could David Chase (writer, director, executive producer) do this to them after they had invested half a lifetime watching that show? The nerve of that guy! The next day, Chase stated, “I have no interest in explaining, defending, reinterpreting, or adding to what is there.”

Yet months later Chase reneged on his “vow of silence” and claimed that Tony didn’t die (reviving the chances of a future movie or *Sopranos* reunion episode), telling the *New York Daily News*, “Why would we entertain people for eight years only to give them the finger?” The ending was only an “artistic” decision. Personally we wish he had refused to give “the right answer,” but probably

TEXT ▶ “We? #5” by Helen Phillips

TIME ▶ 20 Minutes

GROUPING SEQUENCE ▶ Whole class, pairs, whole class

USED IN TEXT SET ▶ 8

Steps & Teaching Language

COMMON CORE STANDARDS SUPPORTED

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. (CCRA.R.1)
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. (CCRA.R.2)
- Analyze how and why ideas develop over the course of a text. (CCRA.R.3)
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative meanings. (CCRA.R.4)
- Analyze the structure of texts. (CCRA.R.5)
- Assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text. (CCRA.R.6)
- Participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations. (CCRA.SL.1)

he was tired of being pilloried in YouTube comments as obsessed viewers watched and rewatched Tony's last five minutes. Luckily, few authors face the same degree of scrutiny about their endings.

How many times have you had students read a story or novel, get to the end, and say, "That's it? What happened?" But what we really want them to say is "Cool. I'm glad the author thought I was smart enough to use the clues to make my own meaning." Here's a chance to help your students make that transition.

PREPARATION

Make a copy of "We? #5" for each student. Practice reading the story aloud.

STEP 1 Define symbolism. *A symbol is usually an object or graphic that represents more than its literal meaning; it also represents an idea or quality. Take U.S. currency, paper money. The literal value of a twenty-dollar bill is about the same as a single—same amount of ink, same paper, same cost of printing—yet they symbolize different values. And then there are all the different graphics on money that are more than just decoration: the eagle, the unfinished pyramid with the eye floating above it. We could probably spend the whole period just examining and deciphering the currency in our wallets, but we're not. Instead we're going to read a story.*

STEP 2 Distribute the story and read aloud. *To start off, I'm going to read this story aloud and I want you follow along. As the story unfolds, I want you to watch for something that seems to be working as a symbol. Any questions on what I mean by symbol? Also, I want you to notice something else. In the last paragraph, the point of view jumps from third to first person. What do you think that's all about?*

Read aloud. (If you think the title may be confusing to kids, you can tell them that Phillips' book has sets of stories that are numbered under the same title. Hence "We? #5" is the fifth story about "We," and the number has no significance within the story.)

STEP 3 Highlight the story symbol. *What object do you think is the symbol? Students should readily recognize the blank die. What led you to believe that's a symbol? Students should mention the repetition.*

STEP 4 Reread the story. *Before we talk about what the symbol might mean, I want you to reread the story once or twice (it's short!), and decide for yourself: What does that blank die represent? Once you think you know, write down your idea and make sure that you've found lines in the story to support your viewpoint.*

STEP 5 Monitor and coach. Let kids work for five minutes or so, checking in and coaching the ones who haven't marked up their sheet and jotted some symbolism notes.

STEP 6 Pair share. *Get together with your partner and discuss the blank die. What might it symbolize? How do you know? Where's the evidence? Listen carefully to your partner. If you have different ideas, that's OK. The important thing is that you can logically defend your answer with text evidence.*

STEP 7 Share out. *OK, let's hear some ideas. Anybody work with a partner who had a completely different idea than you? Call on those students first and have them explain their divergent opinions. Remember to always require students to defend their opinions with text evidence. Interesting. Anybody else have some other interpretations to share? I bet you're wondering what the right answer is, huh. I don't know. It's kind of like that last episode of The Sopranos . . .*

This activity lends itself to an extension into argumentative writing. Have students use their notes to develop a strong essay defending their interpretation of the central symbol of the story. Does the mysterious cube represent:

- conquering depression
- growing up
- taking control of your life
- breaking a bad habit
- leaving your “baggage” behind
- reaching out to other people

There are so many ways to look at this story and symbol. The kids will probably surprise you with things that neither we, nor *The Sopranos* writing staff, would ever think of.

◀ **Shoptalk**

We? #5

Helen Phillips

Once there was a person whose sadness was so enormous she knew it would kill her if she didn't squeeze it into a cube one centimeter by one centimeter by one centimeter. Diligently, she set about this task. Alone in her room, she grappled with her sadness. It was quite a beast, alternately foggy and slippery; by the time she managed to grip it, her skin was sleek with sweat, soaked with tears. (The sounds coming from her apartment worried the neighbors. What was that shy little woman up to?) She twisted her sadness like a dishrag. It strained against her, tugged, pulled. She sat on it to shrink it down the way old-fashioned ladies sat on their snakeskin suitcases.

Then, finally, there it was: a small white cube.

She slipped it into her pocket, went outside, noticed orange lichen growing on tenements, ordered lemonade in a café. The checkered floor nearly blinded her—it looked exactly like joy, and she almost covered her eyes. But instead, she fingered the thing in her pocket. Her eyes became bright prisms; they made her irresistible, and soon she had a friend. One day, passing some kids in the street who had just lost a die down the sewer, she discovered a die in her pocket. “Wow, lady,” they said. “Where'dya get a blank one?”

“Gosh,” she said, “I really can't remember.” And she couldn't.

You know that book where they went all over the world and took pictures of families in front of their homes along with everything they owned? A hut in Kenya, a suburban house in Texas, a Tokyo apartment? I always loved to see the precious and unprecious items, the woven blankets and the TVs, the families standing nervously alongside. Sometimes I look around our home and imagine everything out on the street. But I hope that someday, when they come to take our picture with everything we own, it will just be us, standing before a building, your arm around me, a blank die in my palm.



LESSON 8.2 Finish the Story

Go to any art museum and you will see students sitting in front of the classics sketching away. Why? Are they practicing to be art counterfeiters? What's a convincing copy of the Mona Lisa going for these days? No, their studious practice is making them better artists because a great way to learn technique is through imitation. And once you've mastered that technique, you can reshape it and make it your own.

Students need to do the same thing with their own writing: imitate other writers' style and technique. Unfortunately, when we want kids to emulate a piece, we typically give them longish essays and then expect them to do everything: come up with their own topic, find the argument, research the details, and put it all together in a series of paragraphs that make sense. By the time they've finished all of that they're exhausted, we're exhausted, and any attention to craft details has long been kicked to the curb.

A more manageable way for kids to practice developing an eye for craft is to finish stories. Yes, we've all tried this at one time or another, but once again, we'll wager that the mentor text was long, like full-length novel long, and the assignment was to write an alternative ending chapter. Instead, let's shorten this up. Write the end of a story, but use a story short enough to emulate. And don't rewrite the ending. Just withhold the original ending and don't even read it until you've heard all the other alternatives. Who knows? It might turn out that one of your students writes a more satisfying ending than the original.

PREPARATION

Each student needs a copy of just the first part of "Little Brother™." We didn't label it Part 1 because we want the kids to think that's the whole story. Part 2, which begins with "Later, when Mommy came in to the living room . . .," will be read aloud at the end of the lesson.

Determine how pairs will form to work together to write the ending. Determine how those pairs will combine to form groups of four, and how they will later combine to form groups of eight.

STEP 1 Pass out and introduce the story. *As I read the first few paragraphs of this story aloud, I want you to pay attention to what's going on, as well as details on character and setting. Read the first three paragraphs aloud and then stop. What did you notice in these first few paragraphs? Take answers. Be sure to redirect the kids back to the details about Peter's little brother that make him different from a typical baby.*

TEXT ▶ "Little Brother™"
by Bruce Holland Rogers

TIME ▶ 50 Minutes

GROUPING SEQUENCE ▶ Whole class, pairs, groups of four, groups of eight, whole class

USED IN TEXT SET ▶ 7

◀ Steps & Teaching Language

**COMMON CORE
STANDARDS SUPPORTED**

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. (CCRA.R.1)
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. (CCRA.R.3)
- Assess how point of view shapes the content and style of a text. (CCRA.R.6)
- Write narratives to develop imagined experiences or events. (CCRA.W.3)
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. (CCRA.L.3)
- Participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations. (CCRA.SL.1)

STEP 2 Give students time to read the story. *You've got the details right and you are following the story fine, so I'm confident you can read the rest on your own. Go ahead and do that now. Be sure to pay close attention to the dynamics between Peter, his mother, and his new little brother.*

STEP 3 Examine craft. *That story ended kind of suddenly, didn't it? Actually, there's a little bit more to go, but before we finish it up I want you to pause and take a look at the author's style. How does the author put this story together? Turn to your partner and take a look at the last section you read. Mark what you notice right on the text. Try to label what you see.*

Give pairs a few minutes to reread, discuss, and mark. Call them back and get suggestions. Students will probably notice these items.

- Third person-limited. We only know what Peter is thinking.
- Section starts and ends with narration: setting, plot.
- Most of the story told in dialogue.
- Lots of tension. Explanation points after what characters say.
- Arguing.
- Mom's explanations are longer than Peter's.
- Peter's little brother's name is Little Brother™.

Good. You've noticed that there is a specific style and rhythm to this story and that the author has made some specific choices about characterization and advancing the story.

STEP 4 Give directions. *Remember when I said that this wasn't the end of the story? Now we're going to get to that. Everyone stay with your partner, but get out a sheet of loose-leaf paper. How do you think the story is going to end? That's for you and your partner to figure out. Together you're going to write the ending in the style we just investigated. Now, don't panic. This is a short story. The original ending has 226 words, so it's not going to be any longer than about one to one and a half pages, depending on whether you type or handwrite it. What questions do you have? Answer questions.*

Oh, and even though you are working together, I want both of you to write down the ending you come up with so that you each have your own copy. Though you'll be tempted, don't share your ideas with any other pairs. We want the endings to be a surprise, and they won't be if you tell others what you're writing about. And remember, what you write has to be G-rated—we're still at school. Go ahead and get started.

STEP 5 Monitor pairs. Keep pairs focused on each other and on avoiding conversations with other groups that will slow down the writing. If a pair is struggling, direct them to reread the previous story section with this question in mind: How is Peter going to resolve this conflict with Little Brother™? The writing should take about ten minutes.

STEP 6 Pairs combine to form groups of four. *It's time to hear what you wrote. I want each pair to get with another pair to form a group of four. Partners, decide who will be your reader. The job in your group of four is to listen to both endings and decide which one does the best job matching the author's style and the clues in the first part of the story. Each group of four will choose of their two pieces to read aloud in the next round. Decide which pair is going first and get started.*

STEP 7 Groups of four pair up to form groups of eight. *OK, every group should know which piece you chose. Be sure to take that piece with you for the next step. Everyone stand up. Groups of four, point to another nearby group and move together so that you are a group of eight. Pay attention because I'm going to assign you to a different part of the room for your "on your feet" meeting.*

Direct groups to various corners and standable spaces. *It's your new group's job to listen to both of the endings brought to the meeting and decide which one most resembles the author's style and completes the story. That is the piece your group of eight will present to the class. Decide who's going first and get started.*

STEP 8 Monitor groups of eight. This shouldn't take long. Ascertain that each group has picked one piece to present to the whole class and make sure they know who is going to read it aloud. At this point, students can return to their seats or remain standing and listening respectfully. It will be easier to manage which groups have presented if the groups remain standing.

STEP 9 Chosen pieces are read to the class. Choose groups at random to send their reader up to the front. Encourage readers to make it interesting and dramatic. Keep it brisk. After each piece is read, call for a big round of applause. This shouldn't take long since you will be listening to only one piece from each group of eight students. Collect the pieces afterwards if you want, or have students file them in their binders for later retrieval.

STEP 10 Read the original ending aloud. Then ask: *Out of all the endings you heard, which one worked best? What was it about the writing that influenced your decision?*

To tell the truth: That was once the name of a game show where three people claimed to have a certain accomplishment or career, and the panelists had to decide which one was real and which two were the imposters. This variation works the same way. After the groups of eight have met and made their choices, collect those stories. Assuming that kids have created their endings on computers, grab those files. If handwritten, type them up, along with the last part of the original story, so that they look almost identical. Just identify the different

◀ Variation

endings with letters or numbers. Make copies of this “endings collection” for every student. Pass them out, have students read silently, and then vote on which one they think is the original. Tell the groups that they will recognize one piece as their own but the others should be unfamiliar. After the votes are in, reveal the winner and the original story ending.

Shoptalk ►

There’s a lot of talk these days—which we applaud—about “mentor texts.” “Little Brother™” is a pretty good example. In the wide world of literature, there are certain pieces that particularly exemplify one or more literary elements: voice, tone, characterization, structure, dialogue, surprise endings, whatever. These special readings invite kids into an apprenticeship with them as readers—and, as we have shown in this lesson, as writers. But our friend Ted DeMille makes an important distinction about how we use these precious teaching tools: we want kids to riff on mentor texts, to write “impersonations,” not simple imitations. Nice.

Little Brother™

Bruce Holland Rogers

Peter had wanted a Little Brother™ for three Christmases in a row. His favorite TV commercials were the ones that showed just how much fun he would have teaching Little Brother™ to do all the things that he could already do himself. But every year, Mommy had said that Peter wasn't ready for a Little Brother™. Until this year.

This year when Peter ran into the living room, there sat Little Brother™ among all the wrapped presents, babbling baby talk, smiling his happy smile, and patting one of the packages with his fat little hand. Peter was so excited that he ran up and gave Little Brother™ a big hug around the neck. That was how he found out about the button. Peter's hand pushed against something cold on Little Brother™'s neck, and suddenly Little Brother™ wasn't babbling any more, or even sitting up. Suddenly, Little Brother™ was limp on the floor, as lifeless as any ordinary doll.

"Peter!" Mommy said.

"I didn't mean to!"

Mommy picked up Little Brother™, sat him in her lap, and pressed the black button at the back of his neck. Little Brother™'s face came alive, and it wrinkled up as if he were about to cry, but Mommy bounced him on her knee and told him what a good boy he was. He didn't cry after all.

"Little Brother™ isn't like your other toys, Peter," Mommy said. "You have to be extra careful with him, as if he were a real baby." She put Little Brother™ down on the floor, and he took tottering baby steps toward Peter. "Why don't you let him help open your other presents?"

So that's what Peter did. He showed Little Brother™ how to tear the paper and open the boxes. The other toys were a fire engine, some talking books, a wagon, and lots and lots of wooden blocks. The fire engine was the second-best present. It had lights, a siren, and hoses that blew green gas just like the real thing. There weren't as many presents as last year, Mommy explained, because Little Brother™ was expensive. That was OK. Little Brother™ was the best present ever!

Well, that's what Peter thought at first. At first, everything that Little Brother™ did was funny and wonderful. Peter put all the torn wrapping paper in the wagon, and Little Brother™ took it out again and threw it on the floor. Peter started to read a talking book, and Little Brother™ came and turned the pages too fast for the book to keep up.

But then, while Mommy went to the kitchen to cook breakfast, Peter tried to show Little Brother™ how to build a very tall tower out of blocks. Little Brother™ wasn't interested in seeing a really tall tower. Every time Peter had a few blocks stacked up, Little Brother™ swatted the tower with his hand and laughed. Peter laughed, too, for the first time, and the second. But then he said, "Now watch this time. I'm going to make it really big."

But Little Brother™ didn't watch. The tower was only a few blocks tall when he knocked it down.

"No!" Peter said. He grabbed hold of Little Brother™'s arm. "Don't!"

Little Brother™'s face wrinkled. He was getting ready to cry.

Peter looked toward the kitchen and let go. "Don't cry," he said. "Look, I'm building another one! Watch me build it!"

Little Brother™ watched. Then he knocked the tower down.

Peter had an idea.

When Mommy came into the living room again, Peter had built a tower that was taller than he was, the best tower he had ever made. "Look!" he said.

But Mommy didn't even look at the tower. "Peter!" She picked up Little Brother™, put him on her lap, and pressed the button to turn him back on. As soon as he was on, Little Brother™ started to scream. His face turned red.

"I didn't mean to!"

"Peter, I told you! He's not like your other toys. When you turn him off, he can't move but he can still see and hear. He can still feel. And it scares him."

"He was knocking down my blocks."

"Babies do things like that," Mommy said. "That's what it's like to have a baby brother."

Little Brother™ howled.

"He's mine," Peter said too quietly for Mommy to hear. But when Little Brother™ had calmed down, Mommy put him back on the floor and Peter let him toddle over and knock down the tower.

Mommy told Peter to clean up the wrapping paper, and she went back into the kitchen. Peter had already picked up the wrapping paper once, and she hadn't said thank you. She hadn't even noticed.

Peter wadded the paper into angry balls and threw them one at a time into the wagon until it was almost full. That's when Little Brother™ broke the fire engine. Peter turned just in time to see him lift the engine up over his head and let it drop.

"No!" Peter shouted. The windshield cracked and popped out as the fire engine hit the floor. Broken. Peter hadn't even played with it once, and his best Christmas present was broken.

Little Brother™

Bruce Holland Rogers

Part 2

Later, when Mommy came into the living room, she didn't thank Peter for picking up all the wrapping paper. Instead, she scooped up Little Brother™ and turned him on again. He trembled and screeched louder than ever.

"My God! How long has he been off?" Mommy demanded.

"I don't like him!"

"Peter, it scares him! Listen to him!"

"I hate him! Take him back!"

"You are not to turn him off again. Ever!"

"He's mine!" Peter shouted. "He's mine and I can do what I want with him! He broke my fire engine!"

"He's a baby!"

"He's stupid! I hate him! Take him back!"

"You are going to learn to be nice with him."

"I'll turn him off if you don't take him back. I'll turn him off and hide him someplace where you can't find him!"

"Peter!" Mommy said, and she was angry. She was angrier than he'd ever seen her before. She put Little Brother™ down and took a step toward Peter. She would punish him. Peter didn't care. He was angry, too.

"I'll do it!" he yelled. "I'll turn him off and hide him someplace dark!"

"You'll do no such thing!" Mommy said. She grabbed his arm and spun him around. The spanking would come next.

But it didn't. Instead he felt her fingers searching for something at the back of his neck.



LESSON 8.3

Arguing Both Sides

TEXT ▶ “The Wallet,”
by Andrew McCuaig

TIME ▶ 50 Minutes

GROUPING SEQUENCE ▶ Individ-
uals, pairs, groups of four, pairs

USED IN TEXT SETS ▶ 7, 8

The thing that makes literature so compelling is the human condition, the moral dilemma. Should George have shot Lenny in *Of Mice and Men*? In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, did Randle McMurphy ultimately help his fellow patients or harm them? In Walter Dean Myers’ book *Monster*, is sixteen-year old Steve Harmon truly a monster, as the prosecutor declares at his trial?

If you start looking at the literature you teach, you’ll find compelling argument possibilities in most of your pieces, even poetry. And you know what? That’s good because the Common Core wants kids arguing, big-time. As a matter of fact, if you examine the Core Standards closely, you’ll find argumentation built into the nonfiction reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. And, even though argument doesn’t play as prevalent a role in the literature standards, we shouldn’t ignore it: making a case is making a case. When literature is the body of evidence, students must find text details and draw inferences as they develop their supports. Then they must present their conclusions articulately, while also paying close attention to the opposing viewpoint in order to refute it. And to complete the cycle of reasoning, students then switch sides to argue the opposing viewpoint as confidently as they did their own.

PREPARATION

Each student will need a copy of the story. Students will be working in two sets of pairs: they will have a “shoulder partner” (a student sitting beside them) and a “face partner” (one across a table or possibly behind them). With shoulder partners, students will be *planning* their arguments. With the face partners, they will be doing the actual *arguing*. Kids need to be able to turn quickly between two different partners, so think about how best to work this in your room.

Grab the projectable list of argument steps from the website (it also appears on page 183).



Steps & ▶ Teaching Language

STEP 1 Read and annotate the story. *As you read this story, pay attention to details of plot, setting, and character. Underline words or passages that seem important and jot down questions that will help you discuss the characters. If you finish the story before I call time, reread it and see what else you notice.*

STEP 2 Preparation partners discuss the story. *Turn to your shoulder partner and share what you’ve underlined. When you pose a question, be sure to let your partner answer first before you share your thoughts. Allow three minutes. Students might discuss:*

How does Elaine feel about Troy?

Why does Elaine keep the job if it’s boring and she dislikes her coworkers?

What do you think went through Elaine’s mind when the woman in the yellow Chevette said, “No, I mean I need money”?

What conclusions does Elaine draw when she sees the kids in the backseat?

Why did Elaine give the woman Troy’s money instead of her own?

STEP 3 Share out. *What were some of the ideas that you discussed in your pairs? What do you think Elaine might like about her job as a tollbooth worker? Who was that woman with the kids who drove up at the end of the story? Why did Elaine give that woman money that wasn’t hers? Was that the right decision?*

STEP 4 Introduce argument. *You seem divided on the last question I posed. Let’s talk about that one a little bit more. But first, I want everyone to get out a sheet of loose-leaf paper. Ready? Shoulder partners, we’re going to count off by twos (1, 2—1, 2—1, 2—and so on). As we count off, you and your partner should write down your number on your sheet of paper; you will end up being a one or a two.*

As this lesson progresses, students will be working with two different partners. Their shoulder partner will be their preparation partner and will support the same position, while their face partner will be their argument partner. *Number one shoulder partners raise your hands. Good. At the top of your papers write: Elaine did the right thing with Troy’s money. Number two shoulder partners raise your hands. Excellent. At the top of your papers write: Elaine should not have given Troy’s money away.*

STEP 5 Give preparation instructions. *With your preparation partner—your shoulder partner—I want you to come up with a list of reasons that support your side of the argument. Go back through the story and comb it for details that support your side. Remember that all of the support will not be stated in the story in black and white; you’ll need to make some inferences using the text details as clues. Questions? Work with your partner on making as complete a list as possible for your side. If you get stuck, silently reread the story and look for other details you can use.*

Go to the end of this lesson for examples of what the preparation partners’ notes should look like for each side.

STEP 6 Give students time to work. They’ll probably need five to ten minutes. Monitor progress and cut off discussion as talk and note taking wind down.

STEP 7 Partner one argues. *It’s almost time to begin arguing, but first thank your preparation partner for all the help in getting ready. Now turn to your face partner. If I planned this correctly, you should be facing someone who has the opposing viewpoint. Everybody good? Number ones—Elaine did the right thing—you’re going to argue your position first. I’m going to give you one minute to convince your partner that Elaine did the right*

COMMON CORE STANDARDS SUPPORTED

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. (CCRA.R.1)
- Analyze how and why individuals develop and interact over the course of a text. (CCRA.R.3)
- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. (CCRA.SL.1)
- Demonstrate understanding of nuances in word meanings. (L.CCR.5)

thing giving Tony's money to that woman. Number twos, you need to just listen carefully. You can't talk, but you can take notes. As a matter of fact, I recommend you do take notes because they are going to come in handy later. Any questions? All right—go!

STEP 8 Partner two argues. *Stop! The minute is up. Now it's partner number two's turn to argue why Elaine should not have given away Tony's money. Same rules apply. Number ones, you can only listen, and you should take notes on your opponent's arguments. Go!*

STEP 9 Refutation preparation. *Stop! Turn back to your shoulder partner. What was the weakest argument your opponent gave you? Why was it weak? Talk this over with your preparation partner and decide how you will prove this with further points from your side.*

STEP 10 Give pairs time to work. This will only take about three minutes.

STEP 11 Refutation. *Get back with your argument partner. Each side is going to get one minute to point out the flaws in their opponent's arguments, but this time the opponents can talk back. Number ones, you are up. Go! Call time after one minute. Stop! Number twos, now it's your turn. Same rules apply. Go! If time grows short, you can jump to Step 14, have students drop positions, and work in their groups of four to come up with the best solution.*

STEP 12 Reverse positions. *Stop! Remember when I told you to take notes on your opponent's arguments? Now they are going to come in handy because you and your argument partner are going to switch positions. If you were originally a number one arguing that Elaine did the right thing, now you are a number two arguing that she made a mistake. Number twos, you are now number ones. Everybody understand what their new position is?*

At this point, you can move directly into the final argument round or you can add a brief meeting with the preparation partners first so they can organize their new positions.

STEP 13 Argue new positions. *Same rules apply as before. One minute for each side. New number ones go first. Number twos will go second. Listening only. No interrupting. Begin the arguments and start timing.*

STEP 14 Groups of four brainstorm solutions. *Stop! Now I want argument partners and preparation partners to form a group of four. You are no longer arguing whether or not Elaine did the right thing. Your job now is to come up with the best solution to Elaine's dilemma. Your group is free to use ideas from both sides or use new ideas that were not previously mentioned. Give groups a few minutes to discuss and then quickly have each group state their solution.*

STEP 15 Bring solutions back to the story. *How would your group's solution have changed the story?* Have students discuss briefly back in pairs and then conclude with some brief sharing as a few groups report out.

Argument Steps

1. Prepare positions
2. Argue positions
3. Prepare refutation
4. Refute arguments
5. Reverse positions and argue
6. Synthesize solution

POSITION 1: Elaine did the right thing giving Troy's money to that woman	TEXT DETAILS
Troy's a jerk and Elaine doesn't owe him any favors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves his trash for Elaine to pick up (sweating cup of Coke); "left his food regularly . . ." • Purposely "rubs" up against her. He sexually harasses her.
Elaine is bored and feels disconnected from others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She thinks José is a lecher as well. • She counts the cars to fight the boredom. • It seems like a lonely job. She's all alone in the booth, she doesn't like her coworkers, she doesn't really talk to anyone.
The woman in the yellow Chevette looks like someone is chasing her, going to kill her.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brakes screech like she was speeding away, maybe not even going to stop. • Suitcase looks like it was thrown together in seconds—"overflowing with clothes."
She looks like she needs to see a doctor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is physically injured—gash below one eye, face swollen and purple, dried blood at corner of mouth.
The woman had two young children who look traumatized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Their eyes were wide and afraid." • Older kid is sucking thumb.
Woman in Chevette has no money, no one to turn to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaine sees the kids and puts herself in the woman's place. What would she hope Elaine did?

POSITION 2: Elaine should not have given Troy's money to that woman	TEXT DETAILS
Troy trusts her. If she steals money, she could lose her job, since her job is working with cash.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He's left his wallet before and it's always been intact. What's he going to think when he finds out? Elaine might lose her job if he files a complaint!
\$92 isn't going to get that woman very far.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That money might just be encouraging the woman in the Chevette to jeopardize her children's safety. Where are they going? Where will they stay after that money runs out? Temporary solution.
Elaine's inferences might be completely incorrect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She assumes that the woman has been beaten by someone and is being chased. But maybe she just murdered someone!
Elaine knows she shouldn't have given Troy's money away. She's stealing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She "surreptitiously reached for Troy's wallet." If she thought she was doing the right thing, she wouldn't have been so sneaky.
If that woman was really in trouble, Elaine should have called the state police.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State police would have investigated, helped her find a shelter, maybe get a restraining order against who hurt her (gash, swollen bruised face, blood on lip).

Shoptalk ►

Though this lesson seems a little complicated at first, the more you practice it, the better the kids will get at moving quickly through the steps. Soon, this will be a strategy that you can plug into a lesson on an almost impromptu basis. Let's say you're studying *The Crucible*, and someone asks, "Why did Reverend Parris ever trust his niece Abigail?" Time for a quick argument! Pair the kids and number them off. Ones argue "trust her" and twos argue "don't trust her." Pairs work up their side of the argument by reviewing their notes and scanning the text for a few minutes—and then argue.

Revisit your textbook, hunting for potential controversies that can enliven almost any selection. Slogging through Emerson's "Self Reliance"? Time to argue whether "self-reliance" is an achievable reality for all Americans. When logical, academic argument becomes routine, transferring that thinking into writing—or Common Core assessments—will be much easier.

THE WALLET

Andrew McCuaig

When Elaine arrived at work the first thing she noticed was that Troy had left his wallet on the small shelf next to a half-finished cup of Coke. Troy left his food regularly, as if she were his maid, but he left his wallet less often—about once a month. The first time it happened was just her second night on the job, and she thought maybe he was testing her honesty, or, worse, that he had created some excuse to come back and see her. He had, in fact, returned half an hour later and deliberately rubbed his body up against hers as he retrieved his wallet instead of just standing at the door and asking her to hand it to him. They had made awkward small talk in the cramped booth before he finally raised his wallet in a salute, said good-bye and good luck and rubbed past her again.

Now, as she settled onto the stool for her shift, she could smell his lingering presence. She picked up the cup of Coke and placed it in the garbage can at her feet, careful to keep it upright. The cup had sweated out a puddle in the summer heat and she shook her head despairingly. She lined up her piles of quarters and dimes on the shelf in order to have something to do. Two booths down, Jose waved at her and gave her two thumbs up, a gesture he thought was cute. He was another lecherous type, always spending his breaks standing at her door looking her up and down and blowing smoke into her booth. She waved at him so he'd turn around.

In front of her now the highway was black. Every few minutes headlights would appear in the distance like slow trains but most of the time the drivers would pick the automatic lanes. Then three or four cars might come in a row and she'd be grateful to move into a rhythm—reach, grab, turn, gather, turn, reach, good night. It was annoying when people didn't bring their cars close enough, but at least it allowed her to stretch more. By midnight she had made change for twenty-six people. Several weeks ago she had started to keep track out of boredom. Her midnight record was seventy-two, her fewest, twelve.

At about three o'clock a car came toward her too fast, weaving like a firefly, before picking her booth. The brakes screeched, the muffler roared: it was a little yellow Chevette, an eighties car pocked with rust. Elaine leaned forward with her hand ready, but the driver, a young woman, made no move to pay her toll. She looked straight ahead, her face hidden by strings of brown hair, both hands locked tight to the wheel. Beside her in the front seat was a small beat-up suitcase overflowing with clothes.

Elaine said, "Good morning," and the woman said, "I need money."

Elaine hesitated. "You mean you don't have the toll?"

"No, I mean I need money." She turned now and Elaine saw her bleary eyes and splotched face. There was an ugly gash below one eye and the skin around it had swollen up and turned purple. There seemed to be an older scar on her nose, and dried blood in the corner of her mouth. Her stare was bitter and bold and it made Elaine look away.

She was about to raise the bar and tell her to go on ahead when she saw movement in the backseat. Looking closer, she saw there were two children, one about five, the other barely two, neither in car seats or seatbelts. Their eyes were wide and afraid and Elaine realized it was this that had drawn her attention to them in the dark. The little one held on to a gray stuffed animal, the older one was sucking her thumb.

José was watching her; he raised his palms and scowled. She had been trained to signal in a certain way if she was being held up, and José seemed to be waiting for this gesture. Instead, she gave him a thumbs up and surreptitiously reached for Troy's wallet. She opened the wallet to find ninety-two dollars inside. She pulled these bills out, wadded them in her fist and reached out to the woman, who took the money, gripped the wheel harder and sped away. The older girl's face, framed by the back window, receded into the darkness, her eyes like glowing stones.