

Third Grade Reading, Orrington School, Evanston

The Reader's Workshop block at Orrington follows the Daily Five literacy model (Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Work on Writing, Word Work) and uses a Balanced Literacy Framework. The basal series, Treasures, has skills, strategies, and unit tests that are linked to the ISAT. Reader's Workshop typically begins with the Treasures vocabulary routine, with a task for each day using the vocabulary from the current selection. Next, students read from the text and practice targeted reading strategies. Instruction is whole-class for about half an hour. I teach reading as a process that can be practiced using comprehension strategies such as setting purposes for reading, identifying the author's purpose and main idea/details, summarizing, paraphrasing, asking questions, and making connections to oneself, other texts, and the world. At this time, I might have students do Paired Reading, Shared Reading, or I might read out loud and model my thinking about the skill to be practiced. After whole class reading, I pull Guided Reading groups, which are flexible groupings organized by fluency and DRA levels (similar to STEP levels). Guided Reading groups meet with me while other students are engaged in group work, independent reading or activities, Reader's Theater, or other aspects of the Daily Five. During the small group time, I teach using leveled texts or work with a group on a targeted activity or skill, usually relating to the whole group lesson. Students receive individual attention as they practice fluency and comprehension.

The following is an example of a typical Reader's Workshop session.

Objective: Students will analyze story structure and use academic language (story structure, character, setting, and plot) to talk about the story. Students will identify and discuss character traits.

Materials: Treasures basal series: "Dear Juno"; leveled readers; index cards; writing supplies; chart paper; picture books (Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed; The Other Side; No, David!); graphic organizers; Reader's Theater plays.

Activities: Start Treasures vocabulary routine by introducing the selection's vocabulary words. The students know the day's tasks: Monday, write each vocabulary word on a separate index card. Tuesday, illustrate each word with a reminder picture that represents its meaning. Wednesday, write a sentence for each word on the back of the index card, leaving a blank where the word should be and including context clues in the sentence. Thursday, read sentences to a partner, who will supply the missing word by using context clues. Friday, "retire" words by writing them in appropriate parts-of-speech columns in vocabulary folders.

After vocabulary activity, make a K-W-L chart about characters, setting, and plot. Tell students they will be looking for these elements of story structure to understand "Dear Juno." Discuss the word "structure." Have students offer ideas about its meaning as it relates to a story.

Have students preview illustrations, asking themselves what the story is about and who the main character is. They will write their predictions on an index card before they read to find out how Juno tries to communicate with his grandmother. Students will read "Dear Juno" independently. After reading the story, they will check their predictions. Did the illustrations give information

about the main character, the setting, and the plot? Turn and talk with a partner and then discuss as a class.

Over the next few days, we will return to “Dear Juno” as we complete the Character Web with character traits, using examples from the story. We will add to our K-W-L chart about characters, setting, and plot, and students will answer the Comprehension Check questions in their Reading notebooks after we discuss them as a class. We will practice fluency and expression by using selections of the story for Shared Reading. We will also take the week to draft, write and mail a personal letter to a friend or relative. Students will bring in stamped, addressed envelopes by Friday, and I will collect and mail the letters at the end of the week. If they choose to do so, they can share their letters with the class before mailing them.

On Monday-Thursday, after whole-class work, I will pull Guided Reading groups to work on fluency and skills relating to the targeted strategies for the selection. The leveled readers will give further opportunities to analyze story structure and character traits and make character webs.

Another group of students will be reading independently from a chapter book at an appropriate level; I give them “managed choice” between two titles. To help them read purposefully, I will use picture books during a whole class read-aloud to introduce graphic organizers. Students will keep graphic organizers in their Reading folders. The organizers, in increasing levels of difficulty, require students to identify unfamiliar words, infer their meaning through context clues, and confirm by using a dictionary; on another; students make predictions, explain their predictions, and confirm by further reading; finally, students choose a character to focus upon, write about something the character said or did, explain what they can infer about the character based upon that, and predict something about the character based upon the inference.

The remaining third of the class will work as a group to read and practice for a Reader’s Theater production. They will choose roles and practice acting out the play. On Friday, they will be allowed to bring in costumes and props and perform the play for the class.

Outcome: Students will be familiar with and practiced using academic language to discuss stories. They will have samples of academic and personal writing to add to their Reading folders/portfolios, which they will save for parent-teacher conferences. They will also receive small group instruction relating to the selection’s skills and strategies and work on reading comprehension and fluency.