

# Marvelous

## MIDDLE GRADE READS

# Teacher's Guide Sheaf

*Includes Teacher Guides for all twenty-four titles  
in the Marvelous Middle Grade Reads program*

Featuring new fiction, non-fiction, and graphic novels that will capture your students' imaginations, Marvelous Middle Grade Reads is designed to engage students with fun, dynamic and compelling stories that also educate, inform and inspire by opening up new worlds to discover or connecting readers more deeply to the world in which they live.

Each book in the collection is supported by a companion lesson plan written by the passionate and dedicated educator and librarian duo **Museable**. The lessons focus on teaching writing skills, critical reading, and literary analysis and can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom — including whole-class reading, book clubs, and independent reading for interested students. With these guides in-hand, all of these books can be easily and immediately incorporated into your curriculum!

Guides are organized here alphabetically by author last name; listed in order of appearance. See next page for listing.

Please email at [k12education@edu.penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:k12education@edu.penguinrandomhouse.com) to learn about how you can order this collection for your school.

The Line Tender *by Kate Allen*

Cosmic Commandos *by Christopher Eliopoulos*

Dragons in a Bag *by Zetta Elliott*

Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart *by Candace Fleming*

Mr. Lemoncello's All-Star Breakout Game *by Chris Grabenstein*

When Friendship Followed Me Home *by Paul Griffin*

The Third Mushroom *by Jennifer L. Holm*

When Stars Are Scattered *by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed*

Are You Ready to Hatch an Unusual Chicken? *by Kelly Jones*

Song for a Whale *by Lynne Kelly*

Stepping Stones *by Lucy Knisley*

The Season of Styx Malone *by Kekla Magoon*

Tight *by Torrey Maldonado*

The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl *by Stacy McAnulty*

The Stars Beneath Our Feet *by David Barclay Moore*

Until Tomorrow, Mr. Marsworth *by Sheila O'Connor*

The First Rule of Punk *by Celia C. Pérez*

Aster and the Accidental Magic *by Thom Pico*

Amal Unbound *by Aisha Saeed*

The True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins *by Gail Shepherd*

To Night Owl From Dogfish *by Holly Goldberg Sloan & Meg Wolitzer*

The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor *by Sonia Sotomayor*

The Bridge Home *by Padma Venkatraman*

Harbor Me *by Jacqueline Woodson*

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads

## The Line Tender

Written by Kate Allen

Puffin Books

978-0-7352-3161-0 | Trade Paperback  
384 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 710L



### LESSON FOCUS

Complex character analysis

### OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

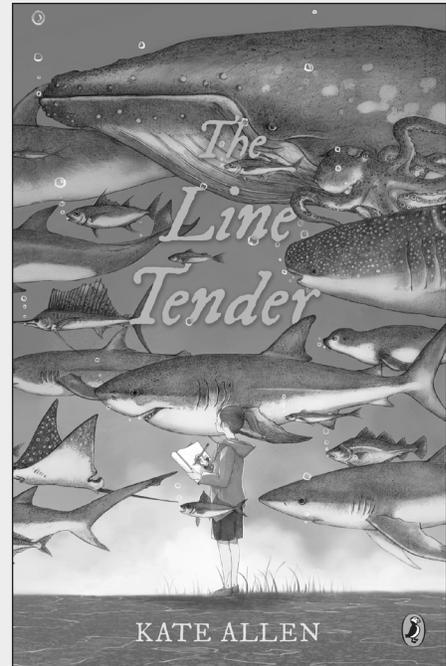
Complex characters are developed by authors through speech, actions, and inner thoughts. Students will be able to cite quotes, develop theories about characters, and cite evidence to support their theories.

### LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will be able to analyze dialogue of a fictional character.
2. Students will be able to cite evidence to support their analysis of the character's dialogue.
3. Students will be able to adjust their character theories as new scenes are presented in the novel or short story.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Line Tender* by Kate Allen
2. Character Analysis Chart



### SUMMARY

Heartbreaking but also filled with wit and hope, *The Line Tender* is the story of Lucy, the daughter of a marine biologist and a rescue diver, and the summer that changes her life. If she ever wants to lift the cloud of grief over her family and community, she must complete the research her late mother began. She must follow the sharks.

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *The Line Tender* by Kate Allen
- Step 2:** Read Chapter 1: Shark aloud together
- Step 3:** Begin recording thoughts in the Character Analysis Chart
- I do: Use the think aloud to model your thoughts about the Character Analysis of Fred.  
Select a quote representing that theory and cite evidence to support your thoughts
  - We do: Work together with students to develop a theory for the Character Analysis of Lucy
  - You do: Have students continue analysis after they read Chapter 2
- Step 4:** Provide students with additional analysis charts as new characters are introduced that they find interesting

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS CHART

MY CHARACTER THEORY	BEST QUOTE	CHAPTER EVIDENCE
Chapter 1: Fred  I think Fred is adventurous and spontaneous.	“Shark. C’mon,” he said, taking off into the bright sunlight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fred ran out of the candy store.</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Chapter 1: Lucy	“Okay, but we’re not staying out there all day,” I yelled ahead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

# Cosmic Commandos

Written by Christopher Eliopoulos

## Dial Books

978-1-101-99447-4 | Trade Paperback  
192 pages | \$9.99 | Lexile: GN180L



### LESSON FOCUS

Supporting claims with evidence

### OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The main character in *Cosmic Commandos* makes a strong case for his beliefs. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to support a claim with multiple pieces of evidence by using several panels from the book *Cosmic Commandos*.

### LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will be able to determine the claim.
2. Students will identify multiple pieces of evidence that support the claim.

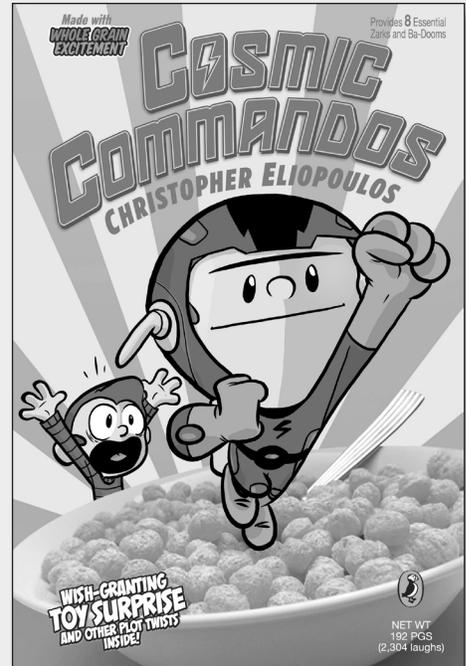
### MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Cosmic Commandos* book pages 6, 7, 8, 40, 41, 42, 43
2. Prove it or Lose it worksheets

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Cosmic Commandos* by Christopher Eliopoulos.
- Step 2:** Review with students how to write a claim and support that claim with evidence from the text.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



### SUMMARY

In this graphic novel adventure for readers of *Monster Mayhem* and *Roller Girl*, a pair of twin brothers accidentally bring their favorite video game to life — and now they have to find a way to work together to defeat it.

**Step 3:** There will be three phases for the students:

**PHASE 1:** State the claim. Students will read pages 6-8, determine the evidence that Jeremy provides and place it in the worksheet. Students can meet with a partner and share their evidence.

**The Claim:** Jeremy wants a commando rifle: “Mom, can I have a high-powered, laser-blasting, pellet-shooting, cosmic commando rifle?” (Eliopoulos 6)

**Jeremy’s Evidence:**

- “All my friends have one!”
- “It shoots four different kinds of darts, has a tow-line, a grappling hook, and a water squirter!”
- “It’s a fake gun!”
- “It can’t hurt anyone!”

**PHASE 2:** Do not state the claim. Students will read pages 40-41, determine what the claim is, provide evidence and place it in the worksheet. Students can meet with a partner and share their evidence.

**The Claim:** Justin’s life is pretty great.

**Justin’s Evidence:**

- “I have my books, old movies, and retro video games.”
- “My parents are cool.”

**PHASE 3:** The claim is not directly stated in the text. It must be inferred. Students will read pages 42-43, determine what the claim is, provide evidence and place it in the worksheet. Students can meet with a partner and share their evidence.

**The Claim:** Justin doesn’t like his brother.

**Justin’s Evidence:**

- “He’s anti-social.”
- “He always tries to get me to do his homework for him...”
- “...thoughtless

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**PROVE IT OR LOSE IT**

Directions: Find the claim. List as many pieces of textual evidence as you can, copying it from the text and using quotations.

Evidence #1:

Evidence #2:

Evidence #3:

Evidence #4:



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# Dragons in a Bag

Written by Zetta Elliott

Yearling

978-1-5247-7048-8 | Trade Paperback

176 pages | \$6.99 | Lexile: 740L



## LESSON FOCUS

Show don't tell

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The author's ability to create a picture using words is critical. In this lesson, students will evaluate portions of text from various chapters in *Dragons in a Bag* and determine what is being shown and what the author meant to convey by it. Students will then create their own show versus tell scenes.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will be able to determine what the author is showing instead of telling.
2. Students will create two original show don't tell examples.

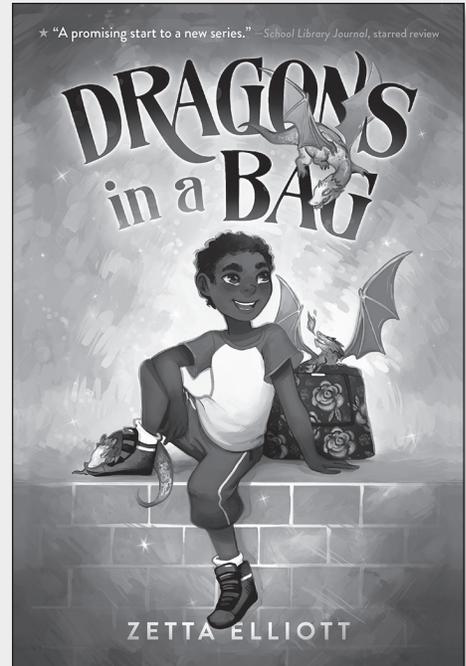
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Dragons in a Bag* pages 1, 2, 31, 57, 59, 65, 103, 141, 147
2. Show Don't Tell worksheet with quotes from *Dragons in a Bag*

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Dragons in a Bag* by Zetta Elliott.
- Step 2:** Introduce the concept of Show Don't Tell. Explain to students that authors do not always have to directly tell the reader how a character feels. They can show the reader instead. Students need to be aware of when authors do this in a piece of writing. It can reveal more about a character and help readers go beyond superficial explanations.

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

When Jaxon is sent to spend the day with a mean old lady his mother calls Ma, he finds out she's not his grandmother — but she is a witch! She needs his help delivering baby dragons to a magical world where they'll be safe. There are two rules when it comes to the dragons: don't let them out of the bag and don't feed them anything sweet. Before he knows it, Jax and his friends Vikram and Kavita have broken both rules! Will Jax get the baby dragons delivered safe and sound? Or will they be lost in Brooklyn forever?

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION** (cont'd)

**Step 3:** Determine the SHOW vs. the TELL

Students will be reading selected quotes from *Dragons in a Bag*.

- Students should complete the Show Don't Tell worksheet.
- Students should team up with a partner and discuss the Tell. Did each student evaluate the Tell the same? Did each student interpret the Show the same?

**Step 4:** Practical Application

- Students will be provided with the Tell and they will need to provide the Show.  
*HINT: Students are NOT allowed to use the words from the Tell in their Show.*
- Students should team up with a partner and read their Show. Can their partner guess which Tell they are describing?

**SHOW DON'T TELL WORKSHEET**

Directions: Read the quote provided on the left from the book *Dragons in a Bag*. Consider how the author, Zetta Elliott, shows how her characters feel. On the right, explain the Tell. What is the author trying to show through actions instead of telling us directly?

Quote from <i>Dragons in a Bag</i> – The SHOW	What is the TELL? What is the author trying to show the reader?:
"Ma pulls a chair out from the dining room table, sinks onto it, and covers her eyes with her hand" (Elliott 31).	Example: The author could have said that Ma was frustrated or even tired, but she doesn't. She takes the time to show the reader through Ma's actions: pulls out the chair, sinks onto it, and covers her eyes. These are signals to the reader of just how Ma feels: frustrated or tired.
"A heavy body shuffles toward the door. Mama and I wait patiently as at least three locks are turned. The chain stays on and lets the door open just a crack" (Elliott 2).	
"Mama strokes my cheek with her finger before pressing the doorbell. I feel tears pooling behind my eyes, but I will them not to fall" (Elliott 1).	
"I swallow hard and take a few deep breaths" (Elliott 57).	
"I swat at the biggest mosquito I've ever seen. My clothes are sticking to my skin, but I'll get eaten alive by bugs if I take off my shirt" (Elliott 59).	
"Ma backs toward the guardhouse and then steps inside. We pull the door shut and huddle together, breathing hard in the dark" (Elliot 65).	



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# Amelia Lost

## The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart

Written by Candace Fleming

Yearling

978-0-593-17784-6 | Trade Paperback

128 pages | \$10.99 | Lexile: 930L



### LESSON FOCUS

Author tone

### OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Authors write with their own agenda or bias. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to read a short chapter (“Little Amelia”) from *Amelia Lost* by Candace Fleming and excavate the author’s pro-feminist support.

### LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will read a nonfiction article.
2. Students will identify the meaning of the author’s tone.
3. Students will identify the meaning of feminism.
4. Students will identify multiple pieces of evidence.

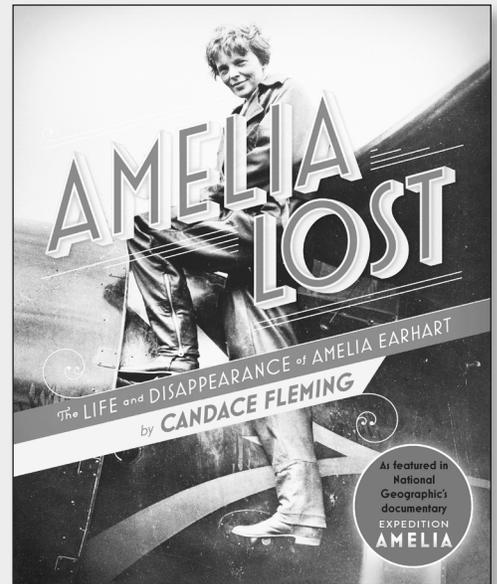
### MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Amelia Lost* by Candace Fleming, pages 6-12
2. Feminist Support Quote Chart

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Amelia Lost* by Candace Fleming
- Step 2:** Explain what is meant by the author’s tone. This is how an author expresses his/her beliefs in a piece of writing.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



### SUMMARY

On May 21, 1937, the most famous female pilot of all time, Amelia Earhart, set out to do the impossible: circumnavigate the globe at its widest point – 27,000 miles in all. Just six weeks later, she disappeared over the Pacific Ocean. Eighty years have passed since that fateful flight and still, Amelia’s plane has never been found. Discover the thrilling life and tragic end of America’s most famous trailblazing flier with this impeccably researched and masterfully crafted book from acclaimed author Candace Fleming.

**Step 3:** Explain the meaning of feminism. A definition can be found on the Feminist Support Quote chart. Ask students why the author may have adopted this tone for the text. How does the feminist tone influence the text?

**KEY IDEAS:** These are some suggested quotes from the assigned text. Notice how each quote supports the feminist tone.

- “The rules of female conduct,’ she later said, ‘bewildered and annoyed me” (Fleming 8).
- “Ladies don’t climb fences,’ admonished Grandmother Otis. ‘Only boys do that. Little girls use the gate” (Fleming 8).
- “But Amelia didn’t want to coast. She wanted to soar. So she asked her father for a boy’s sled – the flat kind with steel runners” (Fleming 10).
- “Tomboy,’ some of the prissier girls whispered” (Fleming 10).
- “Amelia was good at sports, too. But she wasn’t allowed to play on any of the school’s teams. In those days, team sports were for boys only” (Fleming 11).

**Step 4:** Set the purpose for reading the chapter. Direct students to read the chapter “Little Amelia” with the author’s feminist tone in mind. This can be done independently or as a group. Students should collect quotes to support the feminist tone.

- Students should complete the Feminist Support Quote chart
- Students should compare their evidence with other students

**Step 5:** Questions for discussion

- Have you experienced feminism in action?
- Are there ways that you can advocate for feminism in your everyday lives?

**FEMINIST SUPPORT QUOTE CHART**

feminism[ fem-uh-niz-uh m ] noun, the doctrine advocating social, political, and all other rights of women equal to those of men. (sometimes initial capital letter) an organized movement for the attainment of such rights for women. (Dictionary.com)

Select key lines or quotes from “Little Amelia” as examples of feminist tone	Explain how these quotes support the author’s feminist tone

# Mr. Lemoncello's All-Star Breakout Game

Written by Chris Grabenstein

Yearling

978-0-525-64647-1 | Trade Paperback  
352 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 1070L



## LESSON FOCUS

Character development

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Authors develop characters in their stories in many ways. They can directly tell a reader about a character or reveal a character through what the character says, how he or she acts, how other characters interact with the character, what the character thinks, and what other characters say about a character. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to read a chapter from *Mr. Lemoncello's All Star Breakout Game* by Chris Grabenstein and collect quotes as evidence to support the development of a single character. Students will also evaluate the quote and provide an explanation of how it reveals further character development.

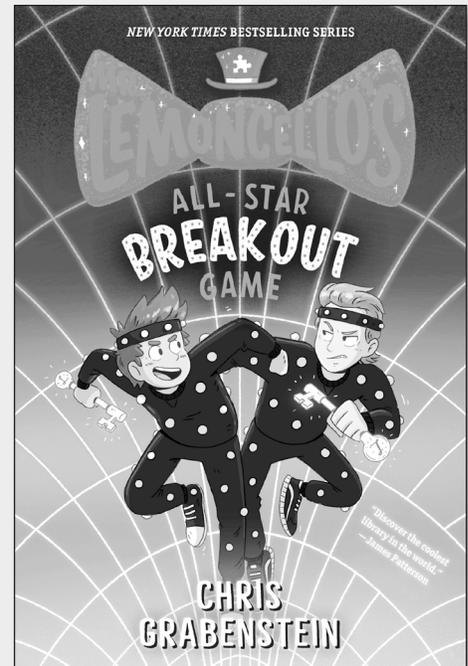
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will use quotes as evidence to support character development.
2. Students will evaluate what the quote reveals about a character.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Mr. Lemoncello's All-Star Breakout Game* by Chris Grabenstein, chapters 2 and 4
2. Character Development worksheet

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

It's the biggest livestream event ever – Mr. Lemoncello is going live with his first-ever televised BREAKOUT game! Discover what James Patterson calls “the coolest library in the world” in the fourth puzzle-packed adventure in Chris Grabenstein’s *New York Times* bestselling MR. LEMONCELLO series!

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

**Step 1:** Introduce *Mr. Lemoncello's All-Star Breakout Game* by Chris Grabenstein

**Step 2:** Review the concept of character development.

KEY IDEAS:

- What the character says
- How the character acts
- How other characters interact with the character
- What the character thinks
- What other characters say about the character

**Step 3:** Provide the class with a copy of chapter two. It will be used as a whole class (we do) instruction. You can read the chapter together or have students read it independently. Tell students they are looking for quotes to support the character development of Charles. As a class, fill out the first Character Development Worksheet (this one has been done for you).

**Step 4:** Provide the class with a copy of chapter four. It will be used for students to read and work on independently, with a partner or as a team. Tell students they are looking for quotes to support the character development of Charles again. They will create their own Character Development Worksheet.

**Step 5:** Discuss answers as a class.

**CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET**

How does an author develop a character? Let's use chapter 2 from *Mr. Lemoncello's All Star Breakout Game* for practice in studying the character development of Charles (we do).

Character Focus: Charles	Quote	What does this reveal to the reader about the character?
What a character says	"Well, at least I wasn't playing mindless video games, as you miscreants and ne'er-do-wells indubitably were" (Grabenstein 5).	Charles thinks more highly of himself than the other kids.
How a character acts	"Charles smirked" (Grabenstein 8).	Charles is arrogant.
How other characters interact with a character	"I believe you were about to issue Kyle, Akimi, Miguel, and, sadly, even Sierra three detentions each,' said Charles" (Grabenstein 7)	Clearly, Charles does not like the other students.
What a character thinks	"In their never-ending competition, he had just pulled ahead of Kyle by slamming him with a dreaded 'Go to Detention' card" (Grabenstein 8).	Charles thinks he "got one over" the other students – he is ahead of them.
What other characters say about a character	"He was always super polite in front of adults" (Grabenstein 5).	Charles is insincere.

Let's use chapter 4 from *Mr. Lemoncello's All Star Breakout Game* to study the character development of Charles (you do). Please use an additional sheet of paper to create your own Character Development worksheet.



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# When Friendship Followed Me Home

Written by Paul Griffin

Puffin Books

978-0-14-751006-8 | Trade Paperback

272 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 590L



## LESSON FOCUS

Conflict

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In this lesson, students will identify the types of conflict in *When Friendship Followed Me Home* by Paul Griffin. Students will provide textual evidence to support the type of conflict.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify four types of conflict in literature.
2. Students will identify textual evidence to support a specific type of conflict.

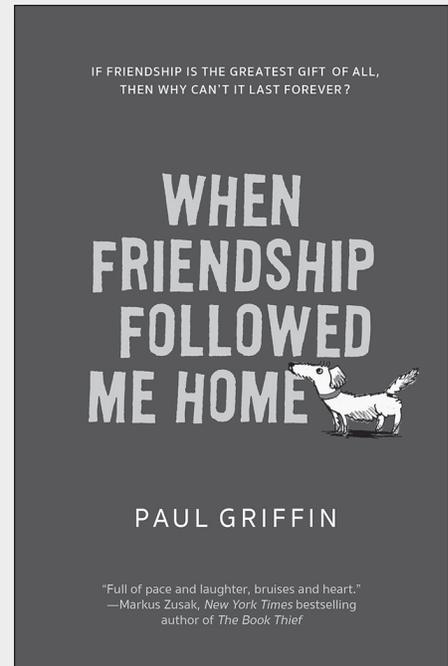
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *When Friendship Followed Me Home*, chapter 1
2. Conflict Worksheet

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *When Friendship Followed Me Home* by Paul Griffin.
- Step 2:** Introduce the definition of conflict, types of conflict, and examples of conflict.
- Step 3:** Have students read chapter 1 of *When Friendship Followed Me Home* or read the chapter aloud to students.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Ben Coffin has never been one for making friends. As a former foster kid, he knows people can up and leave without so much as a good-bye. Ben prefers to spend his time with the characters in his favorite sci-fi books . . . until he rescues an abandoned mutt from the alley next-door to the Coney Island Library. Scruffy little Flip leads Ben to befriend a fellow book-lover named Halley — yes, like the comet — a girl unlike anyone he has ever met.

**Key Ideas:**

Man vs. Man	Man vs. Self	Man vs. Nature	Man vs. Society
“The trouble started the second Friday of seventh grade. Damon Rayburn shoved me out of the lunch line” (Griffin 1).	“If you think a little threat like that could get me to surrender my pizza money to an idiot like Damon Rayburn, you know me pretty well” (Griffin 1).	“[...]I actually became a magician’s assistant. That part was the Rainbow Girl’s fault, but the rest of it I blame on a little dog named Flip” (Griffin 1).	“It’s true. It’s an ancient custom that goes all the way back to classical times, the Greeks and Romanians. It’s like you’re bowing to her to acknowledge her awesomeness” (Griffin 3).
“He slapped the back of my head and cut to the front of the line” (Griffin 1).	“A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense never for attack” (Griffin 2).		
“Even Mold was more aggravation than ally” (Griffin 4).			

**Step 4:** Students will read the chapter a second time. They can do this activity independently or with a partner. This time, they will be focused on looking for conflict in the chapter. Students should highlight any lines in the text that they believe to be evidence to support the conflict. They should label each conflict: MM, MS, MN, MSO

- Students should complete the Conflict Worksheet. Always encourage proper citations.
- Students should team up with other students and compare their conflict evidence and labels.

**CONFLICT WORKSHEET**

**Directions:**

Conflict involves two opposing forces. Conflict can be internal or external. Read chapter 1 of *When Friendship Followed Me Home* by Paul Griffin. Look for CONFLICT in the story and identify the type of conflict by placing the evidence in the correct box. Don’t forget to use proper citations!

Man vs. Man	Man vs. Self	Man vs. Nature	Man vs. Society

# The Third Mushroom

Written by Jennifer L. Holm

Yearling

978-1-5247-1983-8 | Trade Paperback  
256 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 500L



## LESSON FOCUS

How thinking about characters changes throughout a story

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Authors use their writing talent to create complex characters; teaching students how to analyze characters within the story allows them to understand fiction at a deeper level. For students to analyze a character they will need multiple tools in their toolbox. The My Character Notes Analysis chart will allow students to track characters throughout a novel or even from an excerpt and connect the purpose for the author including the information. Additionally, it will focus on what students think of the characters and how their thoughts adjust throughout the story.

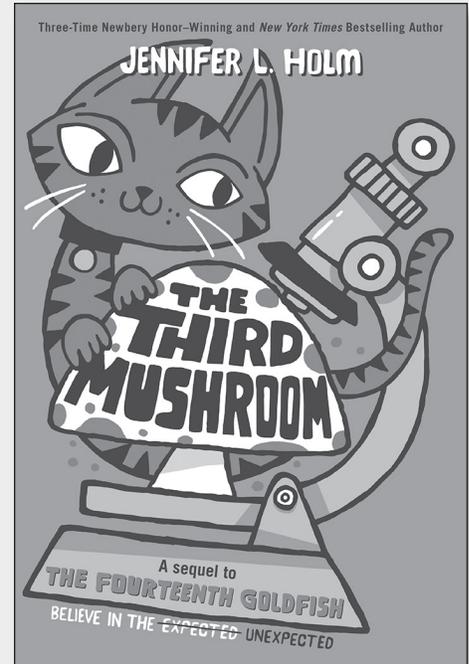
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will analyze characters' thoughts, quotes, and actions.
2. Students will adjust their thinking based on additional information revealed in the plot.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Third Mushroom* by Jennifer Holm
2. My Character Notes Analysis Chart

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Ellie's grandpa Melvin is a world-renowned scientist . . . in the body of a fourteen-year-old boy. His feet stink, and he eats everything in the refrigerator — and Ellie is so happy to have him around. Grandpa may not exactly fit in at middle school, but he certainly keeps things interesting. When he and Ellie team up for the county science fair, no one realizes just how groundbreaking their experiment will be.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

- Step 1:** Introduce *The Third Mushroom*. Students will need additional connections to book one, *The Fourteenth Goldfish*.
- Step 2:** Read chapter 1 of *The Third Mushroom* aloud as students follow along.
- Step 3:** Model how to add information into the My Character Notes Analysis Chart.
- Step 4:** Read chapter 2 aloud and continue adding information into the My Character Notes Analysis Chart.
- Step 5:** Have students determine if their thinking has changed.

**MY CHARACTER NOTES ANALYSIS CHART**

Quote From Book	<input type="checkbox"/> Am thinking.... <input type="checkbox"/> The author wants me to know....	Tracking My Thinking
<b>The Mushroom War - Chapter 1</b> “Eventually, my parents gave up and I won the Mushroom War.” p 3	I think the author is showing Ellie is strong willed and doesn’t give up on things easily.	<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts my Thinking
<b>Criminal - Chapter 2</b> “While the lawyers are interesting, my heart’s been with criminals lately. Because I know just how they feel. Middle School is just like jail...” p 5		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts my Thinking
“Most of all, I miss talking to him. He’s bossy and opinionated and thinks he’s smarter than everyone else because he has two PhDs.” p 7		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts my Thinking
		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts my Thinking
		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed Thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts my Thinking

# When Stars Are Scattered

Written by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed  
Illustrated by Victoria Jamieson

Dial Books  
978-0-525-55390-8 | Trade Paperback | 264 pages | \$12.99



## LESSON FOCUS

Non-fiction verification

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

*When Stars Are Scattered* is a memoir told through the memories of Omar Mohamed, one of the authors. Students will compare the information presented about life in the refugee camp, Dadaab, in chapters 1-4 of the graphic novel to the news article “The Chosen,” published in *The Washington Post*, August 25, 2017.

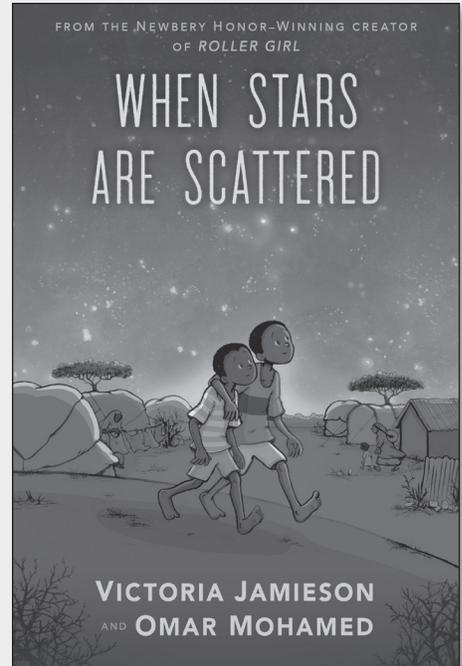
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will compare central ideas from 2 nonfiction sources.
2. Students will provide evidence from both sources tied to the central ideas.
3. Students will determine the importance of these central ideas for the reader.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *When Stars Are Scattered*
2. “The Chosen” by Kevin Sieff: <http://tiny.cc/jdrjsz>
3. Central Idea Comparison Chart: <http://tiny.cc/ogrjsz>

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Omar and his younger brother Hassan live in a refugee camp. When an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of daily life in a refugee camp.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

- Step 1:** Introduce the graphic novel, *When Stars Are Scattered*, with a summary.
- Provide information about Dadaab Refugee Camp.
  - Provide information about the location in Africa of Kenya and Somalia.
  - Provide information about memoirs.
- Step 2:** Read chapters 1-4 of *When Stars Are Scattered*.
- Step 3:** Fill in details from the graphic novel in the Central Idea Comparison Chart.
- Step 4:** Read “The Chosen” article from *The Washington Post*.
- Step 5:** Fill in details from the news article into the Central Idea Comparison Chart.
- Step 6:** Revisit the “Central Idea” details and infer why both nonfiction texts included this information.

**CENTRAL IDEA TOPICS:**

- |   |                                    |  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Number of refugees in camp | <input type="checkbox"/> Food      | <input type="checkbox"/> Education in camp                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hut   tent in camp         | <input type="checkbox"/> Water     | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for women           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dress of refugees          | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for life after camp |

Central Idea	<i>When Stars Are Scattered</i>	“The Chosen”	Inference: Importance of Information
# of Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So many people it’s more like a city</li> <li>• Three separate camps within 1 HUGE camp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surged past 22 million over all the years it has been open</li> </ul>	

(If needed, please use an additional sheet of paper to respond)



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# Are You Ready to Hatch an Unusual Chicken?

Written by Kelly Jones; illustrated by Katie Kath

Yearling

978-1-5247-6594-1 | Trade Paperback  
336 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 840L



## LESSON FOCUS

Compare and Contrast

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The main character is new to farming. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to compare and contrast the differences between living in a rural area on Redwood Farm and in Los Angeles, CA.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will compare two places in a text.
2. Students will identify evidence in the text to support the comparison/contrast.

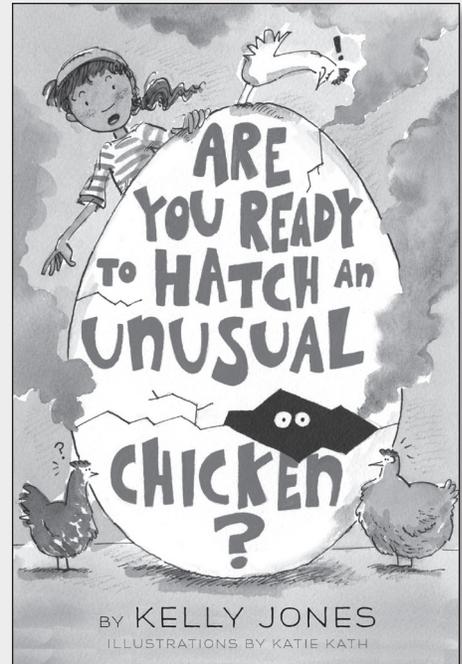
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Are You Ready to Hatch an Unusual Chicken?* by Kelly Jones, pages 89-93
2. Compare/Contrast Chart

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Are You Ready to Hatch an Unusual Chicken?* by Kelly Jones. Students will read pages 89-93.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

This laugh-out-loud sequel to *Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer* has EVEN MORE MAGIC CHICKENS! In this wildly funny and quirky novel told in letters and lists and quizzes, Sophie learns that even an exceptional poultry farmer can use some help.

Key ideas:

Redwood Farm	Los Angeles
Cut grass and bale it	Don't know what baling is
You call some friends with apple ladders	Doesn't know how to pick apples
People talk about deer fences	Which bus system uses which kind of transfer, or when the free day is at the museums
People use wells here	What to do if someone is getting mugged

**Step 2:** Determine the differences. Students will read the assigned pages independently or they can be read as a class. Students will look for differences between living at Redwood Farm and living in Los Angeles.

- Students should highlight any differences in the text.
- Students should complete the Compare/Contrast Chart.
- Students should team up and compare their details used for support.

Directions: Compare and contrast the differences between living in a rural area and living in Los Angeles, CA. Copy specific details from the text to support the differences.

Redwood Farm	Los Angeles

(If needed, please use an additional sheet of paper to respond)

# Song for a Whale

Written by Lynne Kelly

Yearling

978-1-5247-7026-6 | Trade Paperback  
304 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 800L



## LESSON FOCUS

Non-fiction pairing

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The science of tracking whales is referenced in multiple chapters. In this lesson, students have the opportunity to read articles written on whale communication, compare central ideas, and create connections to *Song For A Whale*.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will determine the central idea of each article.
2. Students will capture two quotes per article and create Quote It.
3. Students will connect quotes to chapter 28 in *Song For A Whale*.

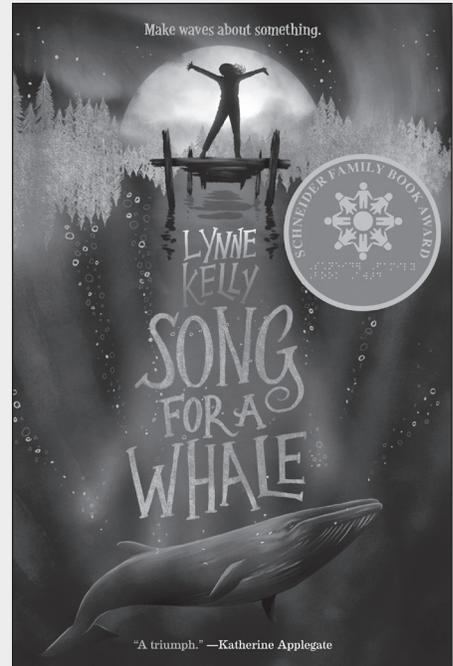
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Song For A Whale* by Lynne Kelly, chapter 28
2. "Group of Belugas May Have Adopted Young Narwhal" by Brigit Katz: <http://tiny.cc/2krjsz>
3. "Baby Humpback Whales 'Whisper' to Mums to Avoid Predators" by Helen Briggs: <http://tiny.cc/4lrjsz>
4. "Songs from the Deep: Tuning In To Why Humpbacks Sing" by Virginia Morell: <http://tiny.cc/slrjsz>
5. "The World's Loneliest Whale May Not Be Alone After All" by Chris Baraniuk: <http://tiny.cc/kmrjsz>
6. Quote It
7. What Is This Article About? worksheet

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Song For A Whale* by Lynne Kelly. Have students read chapter 28 independently or read the chapter aloud to students.

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

The Schneider Family Book Award-winning story of a deaf girl's connection to a whale whose song can't be heard by his species, and the journey she takes to help him.

Key ideas:

Iris, the main character, is deaf	Explanation of 'Bubble Net Feeding'	Blue 55 whale has a unique song
On a cruise with her grandmother	Whales communicate using 'songs'	

Key Quote:

"That's the fun thing about science. The wondering. If we knew all the answers, there wouldn't be anything to search for." (page 169)

**Step 2:** Determine the main idea of the news article. Connect key quote to the news articles. Students will read about how scientists are investigating whales and their songs.

- Students should select two articles of interest from available titles.
- Students should complete a notes sheet.
- Students should team up with classmates who chose the same article and compare their main idea statements.

**WHAT IS THE ARTICLE ABOUT?**

Fill in the who, what, where, when and why with notes that you will use to create a main idea statement for the article.

<b>ARTICLE TITLE:</b>	(If needed, use an additional sheet of paper to respond)
<b>Who?</b> Who was involved? Who is mentioned in the article? What names are credited?	
<b>What?</b> What happened? What was discovered? What new information was learned?	
<b>Where?</b> Where did it happen? Location mentioned? Area?	
<b>When?</b> When did it happen? Dates mentioned? Time mentioned?	
<b>Why?</b> Why did it happen? What caused it?	
<b>How?</b> How did it happen?	

Use the details from your notes to create a main idea statement for the article.  
(Please use an additional sheet of paper to respond)

Quote It:

Article Window Quote:	Explanation:	<i>Song For A Whale</i> Window Quote:	Connection:
Select a key line or quote from an article highlight.	What does your window quote explain about the science behind how whales communicate?	What does your window quote explain about the science behind how whales communicate?	Connect the 2 window quotes you chose. How does the news article connect to the novel?

(Please use an additional sheet of paper to respond)

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads

## Stepping Stones

Written by Lucy Knisley

Random House Graphic  
978-1-9848-9684-1 | Trade Paperback  
224 pages | \$12.99



### LESSON FOCUS

Steps in a process

### OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

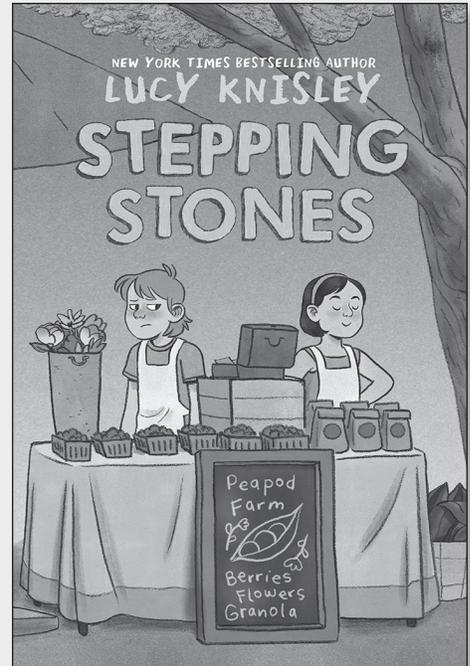
In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to review multiple panels from the graphic novel *Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley and correctly identify the steps in a process. This assignment can pair effectively with those annual how-to or steps in a process papers.

### LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify the topic of multiple graphic panels.
2. Students will list the steps of a process in order.
3. Students will infer a character's feelings based on visual clues.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley, pages 131-134
2. Steps in a Process worksheet



### SUMMARY

Jen is used to not getting what she wants. So suddenly moving to the country and getting new stepsisters shouldn't be too much of a surprise.

*New York Times* bestselling author Lucy Knisley brings to life a story inspired from her own childhood in an amazing journey of unlikely friends, sisters, and home.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

**Step 1:** Introduce *Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley.

**Step 2:** Review what steps in a process means: it's explaining or showing all the details in a process. Students will read pages 131-134.

**Steps in the Process of Making Butter:**

- Milk the cow
- Skim the cream off the top with a ladle
- Place cream in a jar with a lid. It will be a liquid
- Shake vigorously until the cream thickens
- The result is fresh butter

**Step 3:** Determine the main idea of the graphic panels. For this activity, students will determine the topic and the steps in the process. You will need to remind students that graphic novels use words and pictures.

- Students should read pages 131-134
- Students should complete the Steps in the Process worksheet
- As an extension activity, you can also ask students to review the graphic panels for any inferences they can make about the girls. Ask these questions:
  - How do the girls feel about making butter?
  - What do their eyes tell us as readers?
  - What do their faces tell us?
  - Are they excited about milking the cow?
  - Do they like making butter?
  - What are the visual clues that Lucy Knisley provides the reader?

**STEPS IN A PROCESS WORKSHEET**

**Directions:**

In the graphic novel *Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley, the author provides a multi-step process. You will need to identify the topic and list the process in the proper order.

**Remember:** *graphic novels use words AND pictures.*

**Topic:**

**Steps in the Process:**

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	
Step 5	
What is the result?	



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# The Season of Styx Malone

Written by Kekla Magoon

Yearling

978-1-5247-1598-4 | Trade Paperback  
304 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 510L



## LESSON FOCUS

Examining character qualities

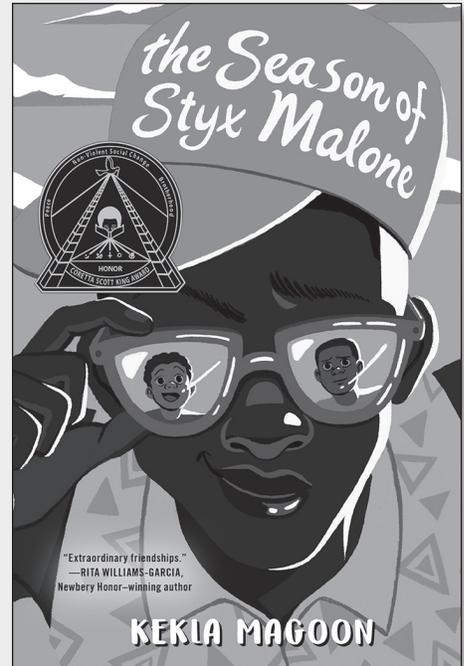
## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Students evaluate people and classmates daily. They have inner voices which guide them to determine who is a friend and who they should most likely stay away from. In this lesson, students evaluate fictional characters using information presented to them by the author. They will determine what type of person the fictional character is by examining what the character: says, how they act, their inner thoughts, and how they are described.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students draw character conclusions based on the author's presentation: what is said, actions, inner thoughts, and descriptions.
2. Students will defend character claims using evidence and personal experience.
3. Students will revise initial claims if conflicting information is introduced.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Caleb Franklin and his big brother Bobby Gene are excited to have adventures in the woods behind their house. But Caleb dreams of venturing beyond their ordinary small town.

Then Caleb and Bobby Gene meet new neighbor Styx Malone. Styx is sixteen and oozes cool. Styx promises the brothers that together, the three of them can pull off the Great Escalator Trade – exchanging one small thing for something better until they achieve their wildest dream. But as the trades get bigger, the brothers soon find themselves in over their heads. Styx has secrets – secrets so big they could ruin everything.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Season of Styx Malone* by Kekla Magoon
2. Character Analysis Sheet
  - a. **Styx** ([tiny.cc/StyxMalone](http://tiny.cc/StyxMalone))
  - b. **Mr. Franklin/ Dad** ([tiny.cc/MrFranklin](http://tiny.cc/MrFranklin))
  - c. **Caleb** ([tiny.cc/Caleb](http://tiny.cc/Caleb))
  - d. **Bobby Gene** ([tiny.cc/BobbyGene](http://tiny.cc/BobbyGene))

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *The Season of Styx Malone* by Kekla Magoon by showing the cover only and stating it's a story about friendship.
- Step 2:** Continue by explaining that students are going to evaluate characters by analyzing information provided by the author: analyzing what they say, how they act, their inner thoughts, and how they are described by others.
- Step 3:** Character Analysis Sheet
- Select one of the characters and work through what information is being described. Think aloud about what it makes you assume about that character.
  - Scaffold with the students as necessary, gradually releasing ownership to students.

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS SHEET: BOBBY GENE

What are your initial thoughts about this character? You will base your claim on what the character says, how they act, their inner thoughts, and how they are described. Drawing conclusions will depend on you synthesizing what is provided and your personal experience. Use additional paper to analyze the other characters.

<p><b>Character Says:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Isn’t this trespassing? This feels wrong.”</li> <li>• “Dude, that was close. We almost got grounded or something in there.”</li> <li>• “No way, we just stole from someone!”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Character Acts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleared dinner dishes and put them in the dishwasher.</li> <li>• Blurts out without thinking.</li> <li>• Plays Legos with his brother.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inner Thoughts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skeptical of Styx, he didn’t trust his schemes.</li> <li>• Not sure what Caleb is up to; he is putting him in danger to keep up with Styx.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Character Description by Others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn’t know any better than to put his foot in it.</li> <li>• Named after his father.</li> <li>• Brother thinks he is too practical.</li> <li>• Physically bigger than his brother.</li> </ul>

My initial thoughts about Bobby Gene:

# Tight

Written by Torrey Maldonado

Puffin Books

978-1-5247-4057-3 | Trade Paperback

192 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 600L



## LESSON FOCUS

Internal and external character conflict analysis

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Authors create and introduce characters to readers in a variety of ways. Torrey Maldonado introduces Bryan to the readers immediately showing his internal and external conflicts. Students will be doing a close read to examine how the author reveals Bryan's conflicts.

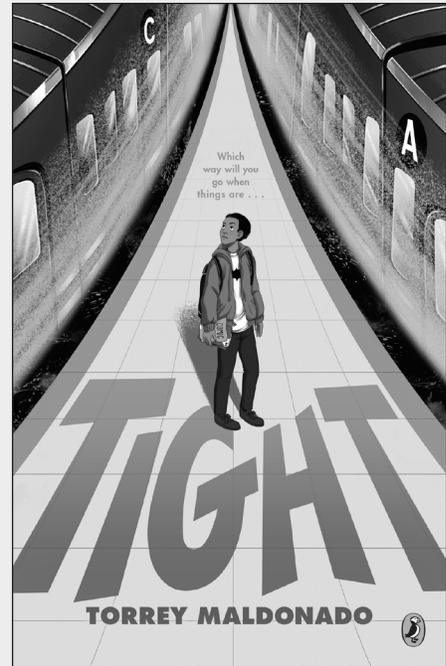
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify a character's conflict.
2. Students will determine if the conflict is an example of internal or external conflict.
3. Students will cite evidence to support thoughts on internal and external conflict.
4. Students will connect conflicts to future character decisions.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Tight* by Torrey Maldonado.
2. Character Conflict: Internal and External Analysis diagram

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Lately Bryan's been feeling it in all kinds of ways. He knows what's tight for him in a good way – reading comics, drawing superheroes, and hanging out with no drama. But drama's hard to escape where he's from, and that gets him wound up tight.

Torrey Maldonado delivers a fast-paced, insightful, dynamic story. Readers will connect with Bryan's journey as he navigates a tough world with a heartfelt desire for a different life.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

- Step 1:** Introduce students to *Tight* by Torrey Maldonado. Read chapter one together aloud.
- Step 2:** Introduce Character Conflict: Internal and External Analysis sheet
- Step 3:** Return to chapter one. Help students through a close read and begin identifying examples of conflict.
- Step 4:** Read chapters two and three aloud or have students read independently.
- Step 5:** Have students continue to close read and determine the type of conflict and find evidence for quotes you provide.

**INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

**Internal Conflict**

Any struggles a character is experiencing from within: the thoughts, feelings, and flaws a character has driving their decisions

**External Conflict**

Struggles the character has no control over: pressure, circumstances, and issues impacting decisions the character makes

Quote	Conflict Type	Evidence	My Thoughts
<p>“My whole head burns like I have a fever. I want to cut on her so hard. But only weak disses come to mind. I finally growl, ‘Big Head.’” (pg 3)</p>	<p>Internal</p>	<p>“I like reading, being quiet, and chilling for forever.” pg 1                      “...I’m distracted spying on him.” pg 1                      “Why’s he playing her so close?” pg 2                      “He just called her Ma again!” pg 3                      “I wish Mike was my real brother... He’s no mama’s boy like you.” pg 3</p>	<p>Bryan knows others view him as a mama’s boy and he likes it. He feels threatened by Mike, and his connection with his mother. His sister’s comment puts him over the edge.</p>

# The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl

Written by Stacy McAnulty

Yearling

978-1-5247-6760-0 | Trade Paperback  
320 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 530L



## LESSON FOCUS

Dialogue analysis

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Character analysis is a way to have students think about fiction to find deeper meaning of the text. *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl* naturally leads students to create empathetic/sympathetic connections to the characters. During this activity, students will reflect on the character's motivation in using the dialogue from the excerpt and foster a personal connection to a fictional classroom incident.

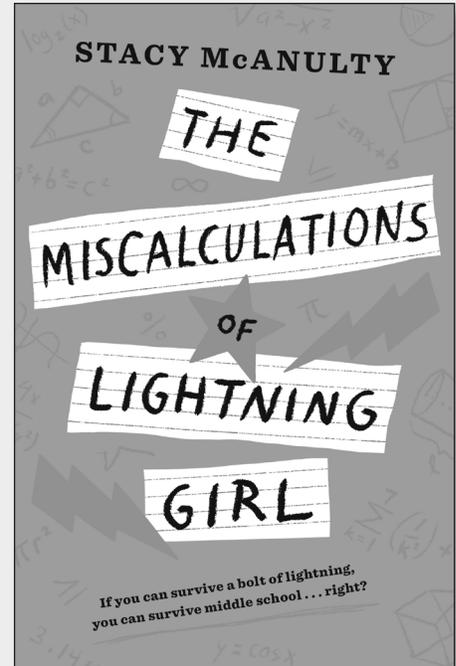
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will determine the connection between a character's dialogue and their motivation.
2. Students will capture evidence from the excerpt to reinforce their thinking.
2. Students will share their thoughts collaboratively to gain insight into what their classmates are thinking.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl*: chapter 23, "Classroom Incident"
2. Character Analysis Chart

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

A lightning strike gave her a super power . . . but even a super genius can't solve the problem of middle school.

A celebration of friendship, Stacy McAnulty's smart and thoughtful middle-grade debut reminds us all to get out of our comfort zones and embrace what makes us different.

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Begin with giving a summary of *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl*.
- Step 2:** Read chapter 23 aloud to the class. For the first read, students should listen to the excerpt. They should not have the text in front of them, take notes or be otherwise distracted. Instead, explain to students that you are interested in their reaction to this chapter.
- Step 3:** Capitalize on student reactions to the excerpt. Have them record their initial thoughts on the top of the Character Analysis chart. Once students have had an opportunity to write down their ideas, have them share with a partner or small group.
- Step 4:** Present the text for chapter 23 to students for a close second read. Students will need to decide which two characters they are going to analyze: Ms. Fleming (teacher), Lucy (Lightning Girl), Windy (girl from class) or Levi (boy from class). Students can work independently or with partners.
- Step 5:** Students will select two characters and determine how their characters' dialogue, actions and thoughts coincide. They will determine what is motivating their character to act a certain way.
- Step 6:** Allow students to share their character analysis and motivations with each other to gain insight and deeper meaning of what classmates are thinking... and why they think it.

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS CHART

The chart is a collection of shapes for student input:

- What My Character Says:** A large rectangular box on the left.
- Character Inner Thoughts:** A large circular shape on the right.
- Character Motivation:** A rounded rectangular box on the right, containing the text "I think the character is acting like this because...".
- How My Character Acts:** A large rectangular box at the bottom left.
- Character Choice:** A central orange circle containing a list of characters with checkboxes:
  - Mrs Fleming
  - Lucy
  - Windy
  - Levi

# The Stars Beneath Our Feet

Written by David Barclay Moore

Yearling

978-1-5247-0127-7 | Trade Paperback  
304 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 650L



## LESSON FOCUS

Characterization

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

In this lesson, students will focus on characterization in *The Stars Beneath Our Feet* by David Barclay Moore.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify the central character in the text.
2. Students will collect multiple pieces of evidence to support the characterization in the text.

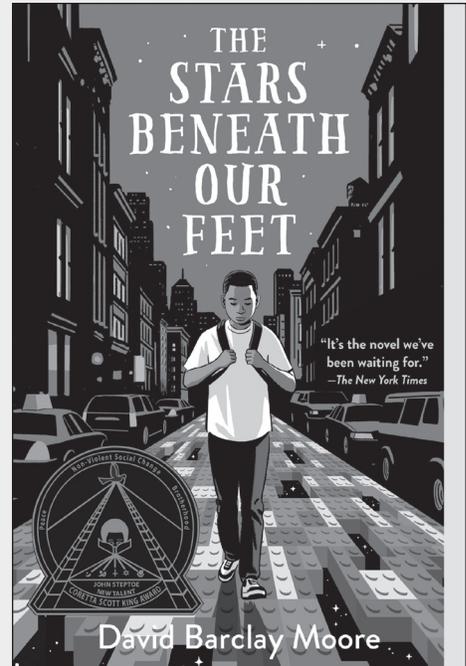
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Stars Beneath Our Feet* by David Barclay Moore, chapter 8 pages 55-57 and chapter 21 pages 145-156
2. Characterization worksheet

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *The Stars Beneath Our Feet* by David Barclay Moore.
- Step 2:** Review the definition of characterization and the types of characterization.
- Step 3:** Discuss first impressions. What is a first impression? Are first impressions ever wrong? Have you ever been wrong about someone? Explain to students that this is a first impression of Big Rose. In the end, the main character Lolly is very wrong about her.
- Step 4:** Have students read chapter 8 pages 55-57 or read the chapter aloud to the class.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Winner of the Coretta Scott King John Steptoe Award for New Talent. It's Christmas Eve in Harlem, but twelve-year-old Lolly Rachpaul and his mom aren't celebrating. They're still reeling from his older brother's death in a gang-related shooting just a few months earlier. Then Lolly's mother's girlfriend brings him a gift that will change everything: two enormous bags filled with Legos. Lolly's always loved Legos, and he prides himself on following the kit instructions exactly. Now, faced with a pile of building blocks and no instructions, Lolly must find his own way forward.

Key ideas: Big Rose — aka Rosamund Major

Character’s appearance	<p>“Rosamund Major was the biggest and tallest kid in after-school. Maybe even the biggest and tallest kid in all of Harlem!” (Moore 56)</p> <p>“The girl had a watermelon head and this way of walking — or stomping — that looked like she was skipping rope on the moon; she kind of hopped into the air with every step she took. Her big ol’ eyes flashed straight ahead, and her upper lip was always tucked inside her bottom one” (Moore 56).</p> <p>“Her head was like a dark planet that drew your eyes. I had never heard her speak” (Moore 57).</p>
How other characters feel about the character	<p>“None of the other kids would say much, if anything to her” (Moore 57).</p> <p>“Except you couldn’t help but watch her” (Moore 57).</p>
Character’s background	<p>“She just started coming to after-school in November. This girl had lived in St. Nick for a while, I think, and she’d been thrown out of too many after-schools to count” (Moore 56).</p>
Character’s actions	<p>“She had forced the door to the room open by ramming her big butt into it” (Moore 55).</p> <p>“Big Rose spun around and eyed all of us like she was surprised to see us sitting here” (Moore 56).</p> <p>“Big Rose liked to bang up other kids, we had heard” (Moore 56).</p>

- Step 5:** Once students have read pages 55-57, have them determine which character is the most essential. Which character does David Barclay Moore focus on in these pages?
- Step 6:** Students will collect evidence on the Characterization worksheet to support the four areas of characterization in this chapter. Encourage students to quote directly from the text and provide citations for the textual evidence.
- Step 7:** Students should team up to review their evidence and add or delete from the worksheet.
- Step 8:** Provide students with chapter 21, pages 145-156. Students can read it independently or as a class. After reading the chapter, does their impression of Big Rose change? How? What is different about her? Were their first impressions wrong?

**CHARACTERIZATION**

Read pages 55-57 and determine which character the author believes to be the most essential. Write that name in the box below.

**Directions:** Once you have determined the essential character in pages 55-57, find evidence from the text to support the characterization and fill out the information in a chart like the one above. Next, read pages 145-156. Does your impression of Big Rose change? How? What is different about her? Were your first impressions wrong? Write your thoughts below your chart.



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# Until Tomorrow, Mr. Marsworth

Written by Sheila O'Connor

Puffin Books

978-0-14-242554-1 | Trade Paperback

384 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 770L



## LESSON FOCUS

Opinion writing

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

*Until Tomorrow, Mr. Marsworth* by Sheila O'Connor is an unusual story told through an ongoing exchange of letters. In this lesson, students will read a letter from Reenie Kelly. Everyone in the letter has an opinion about the Vietnam War. Students will identify each of the characters and the opinion they hold.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify an individual character's opinions about a topic.
2. Students will collect evidence to support that opinion.

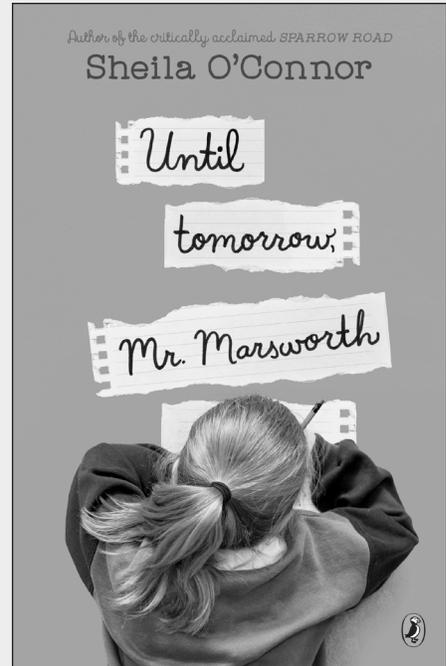
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Until Tomorrow, Mr. Marsworth* by Sheila O'Connor, pages 18-22
2. Everyone Has an Opinion worksheet

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Until Tomorrow, Mr. Marsworth* by Sheila O'Connor
- Step 2:** Have students read Reenie Kelly's letter on pages 18-22 or read the chapter aloud to the class.
- Step 3:** Students will read the letter a second time with a purpose. They can do this independently or with a partner. This time,

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, one young girl is determined to save her brother from the draft — and gets help from an unlikely source — in this middle-grade tale, perfect for fans of *The Wednesday Wars*.

they will determine the opinion of each character in the letter about the Vietnam War.

**Step 4:** Fill out the Everyone Has an Opinion worksheet with evidence from the text.

**Step 5:** Students will meet with a different partner or group and share the evidence found for each character. Students can agree or disagree and add or remove evidence from the chart.

**KEY PIECES OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT EACH CHARACTER'S OPINION:**

Reenie Kelly	Gram	Billy
"I didn't mind you wrote against the war[...]" (O'Connor 18).	[...]but Gram sure did" (O'Connor 19).	"Even Bobby Kennedy thought the war was wrong" (O'Connor 19).
"Skip's not for this war either," I told Gram[...] "Our boys are getting killed in Vietnam" (O'Connor 19).	"If Howard Marsworth doesn't love this country, he should leave it" (O'Connor 19).	"Our men are dying in the thousands there, and nobody knows why. And the Vietnamese are dying. Or else they're made to suffer while their country is destroyed. Reports are coming in that we've killed women and children" (O'Connor 20).
"No one can agree about this war, not even us" (O'Connor 21).	"They didn't write letters to the editor saying war is wrong. They served their country first. A letter is a coward's way" (O'Connor 19).	"So why draft ten thousand more of us to fight against our will? To die in some strange country just like Mr. Marsworth says" (O'Connor 21).
	"Your pen pal Skip from Baton Rouge. Don't you think our soldiers deserve our full support?" (O'Connor 19)	
	"They're dying for our country. They need us on their side" (O'Connor 19).	
	"They didn't argue with their country, they didn't refuse to serve. They didn't stay home to write the paper. Or burn their draft cards like some boys are doing now" (O'Connor 20).	

**EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION**

Directions: Read the letter on pages 18-22. Locate evidence in the text that supports each character's opinion about the Vietnam War. You, as the reader, have not actually read the letter Mr. Marsworth sent to the local newspaper. Based on the conversation in the text, infer Mr. Marsworth's opinion about the Vietnam War.

**Opinions About the Vietnam War**

Reenie Kelly	Gram	Billy

What can you, as the reader, infer Mr. Marsworth's opinion is in his letter to the paper about the Vietnam War?



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# The First Rule of Punk

Written by Celia C. Pérez

Puffin Books

978-0-425-29042-2 | Trade Paperback  
336 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 670L



## LESSON FOCUS

Getting to know you

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Art and creative writing are an impactful part of this book. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to create their own zine just like the main character, Malú from *The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez. Students will create their own zine introducing themselves.

*(Keep in mind that this zine project could be used for so much more: Students could introduce and describe a character, do a review of a class novel, or even learn the story of their name — the possibilities are endless).*

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify specific characteristics about themselves.
2. Students will design a multi-page zine.

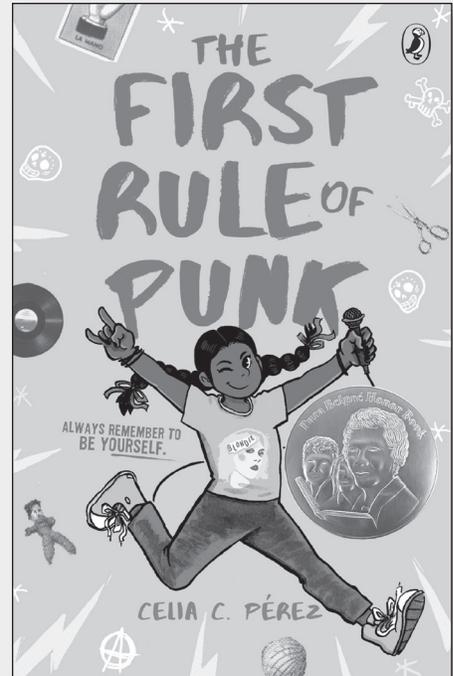
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez, chapter one
2. Zine samples: pages 5-12, 51-58, 73-80, 145-152, 215-222  
*(more available in the book if needed)*

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez.
- Step 2:** Read chapter one of *The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez as a class or independently.
- Step 3:** Let students review the chapter and determine evidence that explains what a zine is. On the next page are quotes from the text that lead to a zine explanation. Students can collect their quotes on the What in the World is a Zine? worksheet.

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

When twelve-year-old Malú (María Luisa, if you want to annoy her) moves to a new school, she inadvertently upsets Posada Middle School's queen bee, violates the school's dress code with her punk rock look, and disappoints her college-professor mom in the process. Then she remembers her dad's advice about the first rule of punk: be yourself. Filled with black and white illustrations and collage art, *The First Rule of Punk* is a wry and heartfelt exploration of friendship, finding your place, and learning to rock out like no one's watching.

Key Ideas:

- “There were sheets of unlined paper and old magazines Dad had given me, an uncapped purple glue stick, and a folder so fat with clip art that papers spilled out of the opening” (Pérez 2).
- “I started making zines earlier this year when I discovered Dad’s collection of punk music zines from his high school days. Zines are self-published booklets, like homemade magazines, they can be about anything – not just punk” (Pérez 4).
- “A zine can be a tribute to someone you love and nerd out about or a place to share ideas and opinions” (Pérez 4).
- “Dad said they’re also a good way to write about what you’re thinking or feeling, kind of like a diary that you share with people. Mine are mostly about stuff I find interesting or want to know more about” (Pérez 4).

**Step 4:** Show students samples of zines from *The First Rule of Punk*.

**Step 5:** Now, students can create their own zine. They can start by making a zine that introduces them to their classmates.

**WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A ZINE?**

Directions:

Read chapter one. This will give you the opportunity to meet the main character. Read chapter one a second time. This time, you will identify lines from the text that explain what a zine is.

Quotations from the text:

Based on the evidence you have collected from the text, what is a zine?

If you could create a zine, what would it be about?



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# Aster and the Accidental Magic

Written by Thom Pico; Illustrated by Karensac

Random House Graphic  
978-0-593-11884-9 | Trade Paperback  
224 pages | \$12.99 | Lexile: GN400L



## LESSON FOCUS

Graphic novel analysis

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Reading graphic novels requires students to synthesize what they read in the text as they interpret how visual images support the overall tone. During this activity, students will do a close read on a graphic novel excerpt while using specific questions to analyze what they see and what it makes them think.

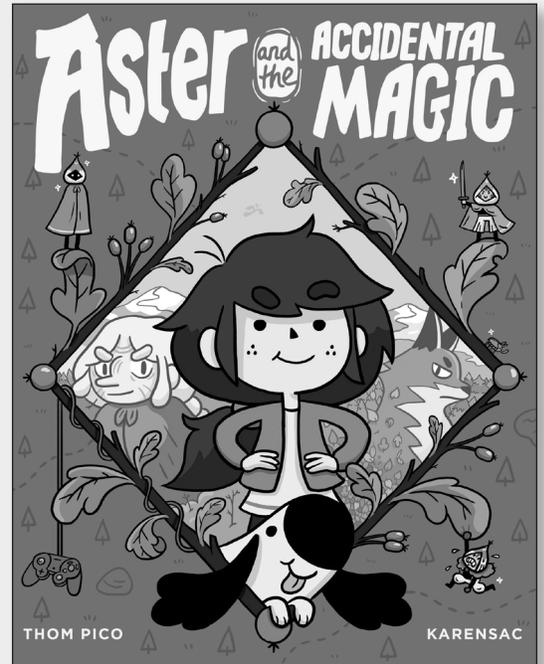
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will analyze graphic novel scenes.
2. Students will use visual literacy skills to create inferences.
3. Students will cite evidence to support their inferences.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Aster and the Accidental Magic* by Thom Pico
2. Graphic Novel Analysis sheet

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

A fun, action-packed fantasy adventure about a girl, her dog, and magic gone wrong!

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce the graphic novel, *Aster and the Accidental Magic*.  
Students will work with the image on the title page, so do not reveal too many facts.
- Step 2:** Have students look at the image printed on the title page.  
What do they see? What does it make them think?
- Step 3:** Begin recording information in the Graphic Novel Analysis sheet.

### GRAPHIC NOVEL ANALYSIS QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Use these questions to guide your inferences while close reading graphic novels.

QUESTIONS FOR A CLOSER LOOK	SUPPORT
What does the reader learn from the text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is said?</li> <li>• How is the text printed?</li> <li>• Does the font stay the same?</li> <li>• How does it change?</li> <li>• Do any words have dual meaning?</li> </ul>
How does the artist use:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Color?</li> <li>• Spacing?</li> <li>• Lighting?</li> <li>• Page layout?</li> <li>• Size?</li> </ul>
How does the author represent:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age?</li> <li>• Feelings?</li> <li>• Relationships?</li> <li>• Emotions?</li> <li>• Action?</li> </ul>
How does the author use images?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are images familiar?</li> <li>• Are they distorted or exaggerated?</li> </ul>
Characterization:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all characters similar?</li> <li>• What makes them different?</li> <li>• How do characters change throughout the scene/story?</li> </ul>
Background / extras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the artist use backgrounds?</li> <li>• Are images in the background familiar?</li> <li>• Does the background affect the overall feeling?</li> </ul>

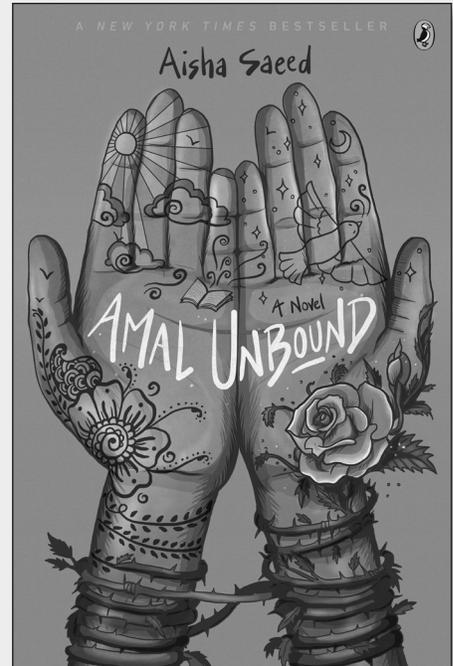
# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads

## Amal Unbound

Written by Aisha Saeed

Puffin Books

978-0-399-54469-9 | Trade Paperback  
240 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: HL600L



### LESSON FOCUS

Complex character analysis

### OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This lesson focuses on comparing two characters from an excerpt. Authors develop complex characters in order to tell a whole story. Students will examine how two characters experience the same incident, use the same verbiage, and yet come to different conclusions.

### LEARNING TARGETS

Students will compare two characters from an excerpt, paying close attention to:

- The character's role in the story
- What is motivating their actions
- What choices they make
- How they respond to the incident
- What opinions the reader might have of each character

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed
- Multiple Character Analysis chart

### SUMMARY

Twelve-year-old Amal's dream of becoming a teacher one day is dashed in an instant when she accidentally insults a member of her Pakistani village's ruling family. As punishment for her behavior, she is forced to leave her heartbroken family behind and go work at their estate. The compelling story of a girl's fight to regain her life and dreams after being forced into indentured servitude.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

- Step 1:** Introduce *Amal Unbound* to students.
- Step 2:** Read chapter 10 aloud with students.
- Step 3:** Introduce the Multiple Character Analysis chart (direct instruction or review). Students will analyze an incident in which Amal was involved. Explain the questions readers should ask when analyzing multiple characters.
- Step 4:** Review the events of chapter 10. Fill in thoughts on the Analysis Chart.
- Step 5:** Read chapter 11 together. Do not pause to fill in the chart; rather read the chapter completely and then go back for a closer read. Record thoughts in the Analysis Chart for Chapter 11.
- Step 6:** Allow students to work on an Analysis Chart for Chapter 13 independently and share with partners when complete.

**MULTIPLE CHARACTER ANALYSIS: CHAPTER 10**

Character	Role in the story / chapter	Motivating actions	What choice did the character make?	How does this character react with other characters?
Amal	Oldest daughter in her family. Needed to go to the store.	Amal wanted to get out of the house and get away from her younger sibling. She wanted a break from helping her mother recover from childbirth and watching her sisters.		

What initial reaction do you have of Amal? Of the man who hit her with his car?

Recreate the chart above on a separate piece of paper to analyze Amal and Amal’s father in chapter 11. What is your reaction to Amal and Amal’s father? Has your initial reaction changed?

# The True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins

Written by Gail Shepherd

Puffin Books

978-0-14-751561-2 | Trade Paperback  
304 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 700L



## LESSON FOCUS

Claim, evidence, evaluation

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Arguments are developed through critical thinking and use of logical evidence. Students will use a claim made by Lyndie B. Hawkins in the prologue of the book and provide the evidence Lyndie uses for her claim. Additionally, they will use their critical thinking skills to determine if they agree or disagree with the claim.

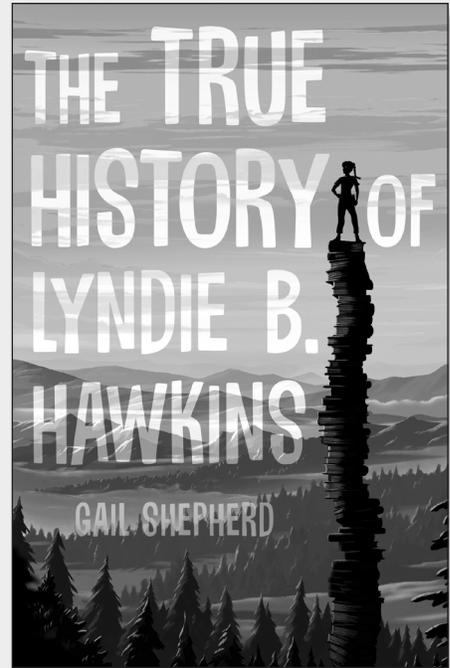
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will evaluate a claim.
2. Students will determine evidence for a given claim.
3. Students will decide if they agree or disagree with the claim and evidence.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins* by Gail Shepherd
2. Claim Evidence Analysis chart

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Lyndie B. Hawkins' knowledge of her family is full of holes: What happened to Daddy in Vietnam? Why did he lose his job? Why did they have to move in with her grandparents? Grandma Lady's number one rule is Keep Quiet About Family Business. But when Daddy goes missing, Lyndie faces a difficult choice: follow Lady's rule and do nothing — which doesn't help her father — or say something and split her family right down the middle.

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Before you begin reading, take a quick poll of students.  
Do they agree or disagree with the claim: Lying can be honorable.
- Step 2:** Read the prologue from *The True Story of Lyndie B. Hawkins* aloud with students.
- Step 3:** Distribute the Claim Evidence Analysis chart.
- Step 4:** Work together to restate the claim Lyndie makes about lying.
- Step 5:** Have students work with partners to determine what Lyndie establishes as evidence for her claim.
- Step 6:** Finally, students will determine if they agree or disagree with Lyndie.

### CLAIM | EVIDENCE | EVALUATION

CLAIM: LYING CAN BE HONORABLE.
EVIDENCE 1:
EVIDENCE 1:
EVIDENCE 1:
DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE CLAIM?



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# To Night Owl From Dogfish

Written by Holly Goldberg Sloan & Meg Wolitzer

Puffin Books

978-0-525-55324-3 | Trade Paperback  
304 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 770L



## LESSON FOCUS

Author craft: examine how authors convey thoughts, feelings, and actions.

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This unique book is told in multiple forms of communication (emails, letters, reflections) between multiple voices, written by two different authors, making it the perfect opportunity for students to practice their skills in identifying authors' techniques used to convey the characters' thoughts, feelings and actions.

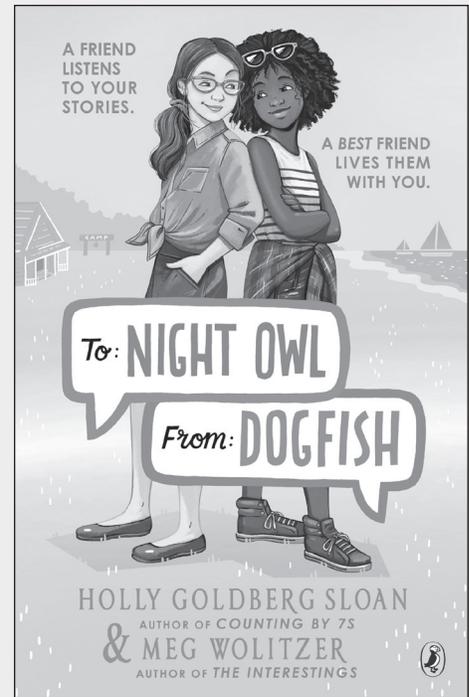
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify distinct characteristics of the author's writing craft.
2. Students will capture the author's craft technique examples from different characters in the "Camp Incident" excerpt.
3. Students will connect craft to characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions.
4. Specific craft techniques studied:
  - a. **Whispering Parenthesis:** sharing a secret with the reader
  - b. **Emotional Emphasis in Italics and Capitalization:** insight into character development
  - c. **Dramatic Break in Sentence Structure:** highlights specific details the author wants the reader to focus on.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *To Night Own From Dogfish* by Holly Goldberg Sloan & Meg Wolitzer, pages 93-107
2. Writer's Workshop - Author's Craft Techniques: examples from the excerpt (I Do), opportunity to practice (We Do)
3. Writer's Workshop - Author's Craft Techniques: independent practice (You Do)

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

From two extraordinary authors comes a moving, exuberant, laugh-out-loud novel about friendship and family, told entirely in emails and letters.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

- Step 1:** Introduce students to the book *To Night Owl from Dogfish*.
  - Give an overall summary of the book. If you have not read it, please familiarize yourself with the summary provided.
- Step 2:** Read aloud the excerpt “The Camp Incident” on pages 93-107. Present the entire excerpt first and then go back to close read for Author’s Craft techniques.
- Step 3:** Writing Workshop: Author’s Craft Techniques Worksheet

Author’s Craft: how an author communicates to the reader

- Whispering parenthesis:** An author can share a secret with the reader about how the character is really feeling by putting it in parenthesis outside the actual dialogue.
- Break in sentence structure:** An author will break traditional sentence structure for emphasis.
- Italics and capitalization emphasis:** An author will change the type of font, style, and size to grab the reader’s attention and focus.

Examples from *To Night Owl From Dogfish* “Camp Incident”

pg	Craft Type	Quote	Shows....
94	Whispering	“(with both our passports and my phone inside)”	It wasn’t just any travel bag. It was the bag with all the important documents inside.
94	Italic Emphasis	“Which we’ve been told won’t be <i>that</i> big of a deal”	Doubts it is going to be easy to get everything replaced.
94	Sentence Structure	“...calls — not all the time — but we have trouble making them.”	Doesn’t want to seem completely disconnected from his daughter.
94	Whispering	“(I can see that he’s on the verge of freaking out about everything)....”	Emphasis on who is maintaining a cool head and who is on the verge.

pg	Craft Type	Quote	Shows....
96		“She blurts out, “Avery has no idea you’re coming today, Kristina! I told her I had a <i>surprise</i> for her, but that’s all I said.”	
96		“Bett removes the blindfold and yells (the girl has lungs), SURPRISE!”	
96		“‘Why?’ she asks. ‘ <i>Why would you do this?</i> ’”	
97		“Then Bett says the kicker: ‘Come on — aren’t you glad to see her? I mean, she’s your MOM!’”	

# The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor

Written by Sonia Sotomayor

Yearling

978-1-5247-7117-1 | Trade Paperback

352 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 1070L



## LESSON FOCUS

Characters and drawing conclusions

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Characters and character development are a critical component to storytelling. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to read two paragraphs that each develop a different essential character in *The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor* by Sonia Sotomayor. Students will collect evidence supporting what they learn about the character and they will draw a conclusion about that character.

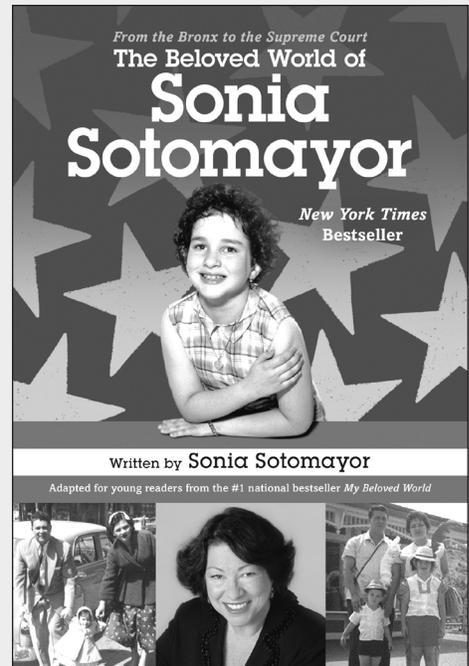
## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify evidence to support a character description.
2. Students will draw a conclusion about the character evidence.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor* by Sonia Sotomayor  
Chapter 1, page 17
2. Character Worksheet

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Discover the inspiring life of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina and third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court, in this middle-grade adaptation of her bestselling adult memoir, *My Beloved World*.

“A lively autobiography.”

—*Booklist*, starred review

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor* by Sonia Sotomayor.
- Step 2:** Introduce the literary term “characterization” to students.  
Check out this website for support at: <https://literaryterms.net/characterization/>
- Step 3:** Have students read chapter 1 (the two paragraphs about Sonia Sotomayor’s parents on page 17) or read the excerpt aloud to students.

KEY IDEAS ABOUT FATHER:

- Cooked dinner for the family
- Excellent cook
- Left the dirty dishes
- Shut himself in the bedroom
- Tells kids to go to bed

KEY IDEAS ABOUT MOTHER:

- Avoids being home with Father
- Worked the night shift as a nurse
- When she wasn’t working, she would drop the kids off at Abuelita’s apartment
- Beautiful
- Elegantly dressed
- Strong and decisive
- She insisted kids go to Catholic school

- Step 4:** Have the students read the paragraphs a second time with a purpose. This time, they are collecting evidence about each of the characters.
- Step 5:** Students should write their evidence on the Character worksheet provided.
- Step 6:** Students will draw a conclusion about each character. What can the reader learn about each character overall? When making judgments about the characters, can students put aside their own preconceptions and instead think objectively (at the facts), like a lawyer or a judge?

### CHARACTERS

Directions: Read both paragraphs from page 17 of *The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor*. The author, Sonia Sotomayor, describes her parents, essential characters from her life story. Collect details from the two paragraphs about each of her parents and place the evidence in the chart. Once you have reviewed all the evidence, draw an overall conclusion about each of the characters.

CHARACTER 1: FATHER	CHARACTER 2: MOTHER
EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE
DRAW A CONCLUSION ABOUT THIS CHARACTER:	DRAW A CONCLUSION ABOUT THIS CHARACTER:

(If needed, please use an additional sheet of paper to respond)



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*Marvelous*  
MIDDLE GRADE READS

# The Bridge Home

Written by Padma Venkatraman

Puffin Books

978-1-5247-3813-6 | Trade Paperback  
208 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 680L



## LESSON FOCUS

Author craft: memory moments

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

One of the tools in an author's craft bag is the ability for characters to have memories. These memories allow for the reader to discover information or motivations they would not otherwise have known. The novel *The Bridge Home* has multiple character memories and students will practice analyzing the memory and infer the purpose.

## LEARNING TARGETS

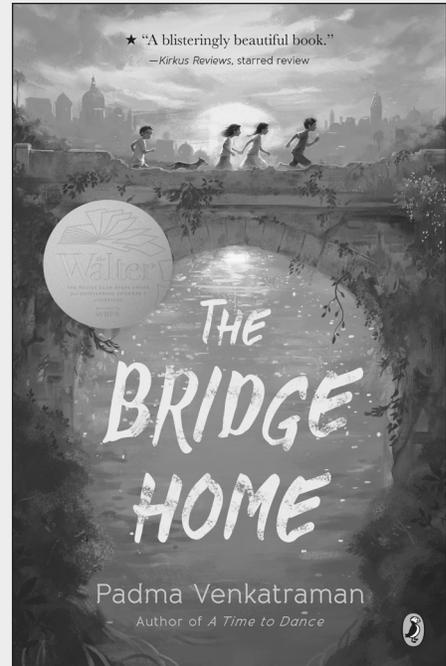
Students will analyze excerpts of memory moments.

- Infer the purpose. What is the author revealing?
- Make a connection. Why does the author need to communicate this memory to the reader?
- Predict how the memory impacts the theme or an impression of a character.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *The Bridge Home* by Padma Venkatraman
2. Author's Craft: Memory Analysis chart

## Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Four determined homeless children make a life for themselves in Padma Venkatraman's stirring middle-grade debut.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

**Step 1:** Introduce *The Bridge Home*.

**Step 2:** Direct Instruction or Review

Author’s Craft: Character Memory

1. Characters’ memories are inserted into the text by an author to reveal information.

2. Readers should ask themselves:

- What is this showing me about the character?
- How does this impact the story?
- Do I believe this is remembered accurately?
- Why does the author need to reveal this?

**Step 3:** Read chapter one aloud with students. After reading, distribute the Character Memory Analysis chart.

**Step 4:** Revisit page 2 for a closer read. Re-read the memory excerpt. Have students think about the reason an author inserts memories. Ask students to infer what purpose this memory is serving. Record your thoughts on the Author’s Craft Character Memory chart.

**Step 5:** Continue through the other examples. Read chapters 3-4.

Memory Excerpt	Purpose of the Memory
“I suppose you’d like to hear the fairytale you’d make me tell you every night we huddled together on the ruined bridge. The story that began with Once upon a time, two sisters ruled a magical land, and ended with Vigi and Rukku, always together.” (page 2)	(HINT: What does this show about the character?)
“We’d just finished our dinner when we heard Appa’s (father) heavy footsteps. The sound of him staggering up the stairs to our apartment told us all we needed to know.” (page 5)	(HINT: What does this reveal about the father and what his children think of him?)
“I was glad you’d fallen asleep, but I stayed awake, worrying and hoping. I hoped Amma (mother) would finally tell someone about how she had been hurt, and that they’d swoop down and rescue us. But I should have known she’d never tell.” (page 7)	

# Harbor Me

Written by Jacqueline Woodson

Puffin Books

978-0-525-51514-2 | Trade Paperback  
192 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 630L



## LESSON FOCUS

Author's craft: use of italics

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Jacqueline Woodson uses italics in multiple ways throughout her book *Harbor Me*. In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to read multiple passages from the book and determine how the italics impact the author's writing.

## LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will recognize italics in text.
2. Students will determine the purpose of the italics in a piece of text.

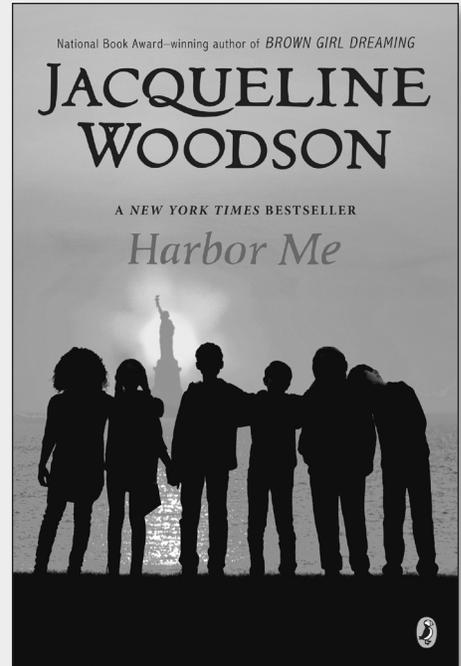
## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Chapter 1 from *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson
2. Italics Chart worksheet

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1:** Introduce *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson
- Step 2:** Introduce italics. Ultimately, the goal is to get students to be critical readers. It's all in the details.

# Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads



## SUMMARY

Six kids have to meet for a weekly chat — by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them — everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

- Step 3:** Have students read chapter one independently or read the chapter aloud and have students highlight ALL the italics found in the chapter. This should include everything on the Italics Chart worksheet.
- Notice the repetition used by the author: “We think they took my papi.” This is mentioned three times in chapter one. (Remind students of the power of three: 3 bears, 3 stooges, 3 wishes, etc.)
  - The author uses italics to show dialogue.
  - The author uses italics for the title of a book.
  - The author uses italics for emphasis.
  - The author uses italics for character inner thoughts.
- Step 4:** Determine the purpose of the italics.
- Students should complete the Italics Chart worksheet
  - Students should team up and compare their interpretation of the italics.
  - Discuss as a class the impact that italics have on a piece of writing.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

**Directions:** Jacqueline Woodson uses italics in multiple ways throughout her book *Harbor Me*. Read chapter one and highlight all the italics in the text. Once you have completed this task, determine the purpose of the italics.

Italics	Purpose for the Italics
“We think they took my papi” (Woodson 1).	
“Maybe her...” “And him.” “And her” (Woodson 1).	
“Nobody knows where he’s at” (Woodson 2).	
“A Tree Grows in Brooklyn” (Woodson 2).	
“And that was the <i>metaphor</i> : that even when things got really hard for everyone in the story — even when the dad died and the mom had to scrub more and more floors to make money, even when the kids didn’t have anything to eat for days and the apartment was freezing — the tree kept growing” (Woodson 2).	
“This is a <i>beginning</i> . He says, <i>Now you’ll have two houses to go to. He says, You’re twelve now, Haley. You’re ready</i> ” (Woodson 2).	
“And I’ll be back every single Sunday to spend time with my most favorite person in the world” (Woodson 4).	



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