

THIRD GRADE NOVELS (3 OF THEM)

Tales of 4th Grade Nothing by Judy Blume

Reading/ELA

RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

In *Tales*, students can explore questions like:

- “Why does Peter feel overlooked?” or
- “What motivates Fudge’s behavior when he swallows Dribble?”
They must cite specific lines (e.g., Peter’s dialogue or Fudge’s tantrums) to support their answers.

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (traits, motivations), explain how their actions influence the events.

Students can:

- Analyze Peter’s frustration and how it escalates the sibling tension.
- Discuss Fudge’s impulsiveness and how it drives key plot events.
Example: Fudge swallowing Dribble leads directly to the dramatic hospital scene.

RL.3.4 Determine the meaning of unknown words and phrases using context clues, word parts, etc.

Vocabulary exploration could include:

- “temper tantrum,” “frustrated,” “compensate,” “commercial,” etc. Students use the surrounding text to infer meaning before consulting a dictionary.

RL.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from the narrator or characters.

After reading, prompts such as:

- “Do you agree with how Peter handled Fudge?”
- “Would you have told on Fudge or kept silent?”
encourage students to contrast their perspectives with Peter’s feelings and narration.

Social Studies

DOC.SS.3.3.1 Summarize changes in the local community over time, including growth, enhanced resources and services, etc.

Though set in a familiar urban neighborhood, *Tales* subtly captures how families—and by extension, communities—evolve:

- Family “growth” parallels community shifts. Peter’s world changes when Fudge is born—mirroring how neighborhoods adapt to new members or demographics.
- Resource changes are seen in Peter’s shifting access to parents’ attention and family space—similar to the way community services flex when new schools or parks are needed.

DOC.SS.3.4.4 Give examples of civic responsibility as a member of the Church and demonstrate good citizenship through virtuous habits.

Peter often exhibits civic and moral behavior in small but important ways—ideal for discussing character and responsibility:

- He shows honesty, but reporting exactly what happened during the jungle gym incident.
- He exercises empathy, caring about Fudge even when frustrated.
- He models perseverance, juggling school, neighborhood friends, and chaotic home life.

DOC.SS.3.7.2 Explain how people in different communities adapt to or modify their physical environment in which they live, and ways God calls us to care for his creation.

While *Tales* doesn't address environmental change overtly, we can still explore adaptation and stewardship:

- Peter's apartment environment is modified to handle Fudge's antics—such as protecting belongings or establishing quiet routines inside their urban “ecosystem.”
- Adaptation is evident as Peter and his friends find creative ways to play and live in an apartment building.
- This can lead to discussions about caring for shared spaces, like respecting others in close quarters—whether siblings or neighbors.

RELIGION

3.1 Made in God's Image (3.1.a)

Children are created in God's image—capable of love, creativity, and moral choice.

- Peter Hatcher demonstrates this image-bearing through his empathy and responsibility, particularly when Fudge swallows Dribble. Peter shifts from resentment to concern and care, reflecting human dignity and moral awareness

3.2 Formation of Conscience

3.2.a: Know the difference between right and wrong

- Peter consistently distinguishes right from wrong: he dislikes Fudge's misbehavior (throwing tantrums, swallowing Dribble), and even when he's frustrated, he doesn't retaliate destructively .

3.2.b: Talk about actions that are loving and good

- When Peter expresses genuine concern for Fudge at the hospital, it shows his capacity for love even toward someone who frustrates him. He recognizes that caring for Fudge is the loving thing to do .

3.2.c: Develop awareness of need to be sorry when we hurt someone

- Peter's mixed feelings toward Fudge—and parents' eventual recognition and Peter receiving the puppy—highlight the need for reconciliation and feeling hurt when relations are strained

3.3 Virtues (3.3.a)

Saying kind words or doing good deeds shows God's love.

- Peter’s transformation from irritation to affection—offering care at the hospital and naming the new puppy Turtle—is a simple but powerful act of kindness rooted in brotherly love 3.4 Sin (3.4.a)

Actions that hurt God, others, or ourselves

- Fudge’s misbehavior (eg., eating Dribble) can serve as a prompt to discuss how unkind or harmful actions affect others. Peter’s emotional burden illustrates that even when we feel justified, hurtful behaviors cause real pain .

3.5 Commandments (3.5.a & b)

- God’s commandments guide us toward loving behavior. Peter’s patience, refusal to seek revenge, and eventual forgiveness of Fudge reflect love of neighbor. His actions align with commandments like “You shall not kill” (valuing life) and “Honor your father and mother”—obeying household norms even when frustrated.

Peter’s journey illustrates how everyday family life calls us to live out God’s commands with respect, patience, and love.

FRINDLE by Andrew Clements

Reading/ELA

RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

In Frindle: Students can explore:

- “Why did Nick start calling his pen a ‘frindle’?”
- “How did Mrs. Granger and his classmates react?”
They cite dialogue or narrative elements to support their responses.

RL.3.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details.

In Frindle: Students can retell the progression of Nick inventing “frindle,” how it spread, and identify its central themes: the power of words, creativity, and authority.

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (traits, motivations), explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

In Frindle: Analyze Nick’s creativity and persistence, Mrs. Granger’s resistance and eventual support, and how these character traits shape the plot’s rise and resolution.

RL.3.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, identifying words that impact the meaning in a text.

In Frindle: Students confront vocabulary like “innovative,”

“merchandising,” “persistence,” and infer their meanings from context before verifying definitions.

RL.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or characters.

In Frindle: Prompt: “Would you have challenged your teacher like Nick did? Why or why not?” Students compare their perspectives with Nick’s bold, respectful approach.

RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

In Frindle: Using Brian Selznick’s illustrations, students can discuss how Nick’s expressions or classroom visuals enhance the understanding of events or tone.

RL.3.9 Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters.

In Frindle: If students read other Andrew Clements books (e.g., *No Talking*), they can compare themes such as student voice and authority.

Social Studies

DOC.SS.3.5.2 Describe how producers and consumers work together in making and using goods and services to improve their community, nation, and the world.

In Frindle:

- Nick (Producer): He “produces” the new word *frindle*, creating demand in his classroom and beyond.

- Classmates, teachers, and local shop (Consumers): They buy into the word by using it—and at one point, even buying *frindle* pens from a local store.
- This interaction illustrates how producers and consumers collaborate: students invented a word (a good/service) and the community adopted and promoted it.

Key Concept: Just as producers create, consumers purchase—and both roles fuel community growth and creativity

DOC.SS.3.5.3 Explain the roles of buyers and sellers in creating markets and pricing in a just economy.

In *Frindle*:

- Local store owners (Sellers): They create a market for “frindle” pens once demand rises.
- Students and teachers (Buyers): They purchase or seek out pens labeled “frindle.”
- Pricing: Store owners set prices for branded pens, responding to increased demand—demonstrating a basic supply-and-demand dynamic.

Key Concept: Frindle showcases how buyers and sellers establish markets and determine pricing together in a fair exchange

DOC.SS.3.5.5 Give examples of ways to earn, spend, save, and donate money. (simple business operation)

In *Frindle*:

- As the “frindle” trend grows, Nick decides to donate part of any earnings from merchandise to the school library (Mrs. Granger mentions it in her letter).
- Though Nick doesn’t actually sell the pens himself, the story highlights the concept of donation and community support through earnings tied to a creative idea.
- Key Concept: Even without formal business, the narrative introduces students to earning (from their idea), spending, saving, and donating money for a communal good.

RELIGION

3.1 Made in God’s Image

(3.1.a) All people are created in God’s image, capable of creativity, moral reasoning, and meaningful relationships.

- Nick embodies this divine image through his imaginative idea of renaming the pen and navigating the moral implications of his actions. His creativity and thoughtful leadership reflect human dignity and purpose.

3.2 Formation of Conscience

3.2.a Know the difference between right and wrong

- Nick recognizes the implications of starting a “word movement” when his actions begin to affect classmates and upset school authorities. He reflects on respecting rules—even ones he questions.

3.2.b Talk about actions that are loving and good

- When Mrs. Granger sends a letter praising Nick’s initiative and behavior, he realizes that respectful challenge can be positive and loving, encouraging growth in others.

3.2.c Develop awareness of need to be sorry when we hurt someone

- Nick grapples with whether he overstepped—prompting reflection on remorse and reconciling with others impacted by the frindle phenomenon.

3.3 Virtues (3.3.a) Saying kind words or doing good deeds show God’s love.

- Nick eventually returns a personalized frindle to Mrs. Granger with a heartfelt note, an unprompted kind gesture that demonstrates gratitude and respect—a true act of virtue and love.

3.4 Sin (3.4.a) Actions that hurt God, others, and ourselves

- The frindle fad nearly spirals out of control. Nick sees how his “harmless” experiment escalates and affects others, illustrating that even well-intended actions can have harmful consequences.

3.5 Commandments (3.5.a & b)

Following God’s guidelines leads to loving and orderly living.

- Nick's journey reflects a growing respect for authority and community norms. While he questions some rules, he learns to balance bold action with obedience and respect—echoing commandments like “Honor your father and mother” and “Love your neighbor.”
- Mrs. Granger's response—disciplinary but ultimately encouraging—demonstrates a nurturing authority aligned with moral guidance.

HUNDRED DRESSES by Eleanor Estes

Reading/ELA

RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

In *The Hundred Dresses*, students can explore:

- “Why did Wanda claim she had 100 dresses?”
- “What caused Maddie to feel guilty after Wanda left?”
They support their answers by pointing to passages describing Wanda’s feelings, Maddie’s reactions, or key dialogue.

RL.3.2 Recount stories ... determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. Students can summarize the story and identify its themes of empathy, forgiveness, and the impact of bullying—using details like the drawing contest and Maddie’s letter to demonstrate how Estes communicates those lessons.

RL.3.3 Describe characters ... explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Analyze how Wanda’s quiet dignity, Maddie and Peggy’s teasing behavior, and the teacher’s actions shape the story’s progression and emotional impact.

RL.3.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, identifying words that impact the meaning in a text.

Explore significant terms and phrases—such as “mocked,” “remorse,” “forgiveness”—using context to interpret how Estes conveys tone and character emotions.

RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories ... describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

Have students examine how the initial teasing leads to Wanda’s drawing contest, which then leads to her family’s departure and subsequent reflections by Maddie and Peggy.

RL.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or the characters.

Encourage students to reflect: “Do you agree with how Maddie and the other girls treated Wanda? What would you have done?” They compare personal moral choices to those depicted in the story.

RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story.

Discuss how Louis Slobodkin’s illustrations—like Wanda’s posture or facial expressions—enhance the emotional tone and deepen understanding of characters’ feelings.

RL.3.9 Compare and contrast themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author...

If students read other realistic fiction (or bullying-themed stories), they can compare themes of empathy and standing up for others as presented in *The Hundred Dresses*.

Social Studies

DOC.SS.3.4.4 Give examples of civic responsibility as a member of the Church and demonstrate good citizenship through virtuous habits.

Connection in *The Hundred Dresses*:

- Maddie and Peggy reflect and regret their participation in teasing Wanda. Their decision to write a letter of apology shows growing moral responsibility and courage.
- Wanda exhibits forgiveness and kindness, modeling virtuous character for readers.

DOC.SS.3.6.1 Recognize the basic elements that make up cultures in their community (language, religion, customs, art, etc.), how those elements unite individuals, and identify similarities to other cultures.

Connection in *The Hundred Dresses*:

- Wanda's Polish heritage (her last name, accent, family dress styles) highlights cultural differences within the community
- Art binds the classroom: the dress-drawing contest allows students to appreciate Wanda's creativity, bridging cultural understanding.

DOC.SS.3.6.2 Recognize cultural differences within the Church, school, and community and compare with cultures from different parts of the world.

Connection in *The Hundred Dresses*:

- Wanda's Polish-American experience is contrasted with the school's mainstream culture. Her classmates initially mock her differences, then learn to value diversity.
- The story can be a springboard: comparing Wanda's culture with other immigrant experiences globally

DOC.SS.3.6.3 Recognize and describe the contributions of different cultural groups in their community (school, Church, local) and how those contributions may benefit others.

Connection in *The Hundred Dresses*:

- Wanda's creativity—her designs and artistry—enriches the classroom and deeply moves classmates and teacher.
- Her artistic contribution encourages classmates to broaden their understanding, showing how her cultural perspective benefits the whole group.

RELIGION

3.1 Made in God's Image (3.1.a)

Recognize that human beings are made in God's image.

- Wanda, Maddie, Peggy—and every child—bears innate dignity and creativity.

- Wanda’s quiet strength and imaginative dress designs reveal the value and worth God places in each person, regardless of appearance or background.
- Maddie’s empathy and conscience also reflect the image of God in her—sensitive to truth and justice.

3.2 Formation of Conscience

3.2.a Know the difference between right and wrong

- Though initially part of the teasing, Maddie begins to feel uneasy and recognizes the wrong in taunting Wanda—a clear moment of conscience awakening.

3.2.b Talk about actions that are loving and good

- Maddie and Peggy ultimately write an apology letter—choosing kindness, taking responsibility, and showing concern for Wanda’s feelings.

3.2.c Develop an awareness of our need to be sorry

- Maddie’s deep regret, especially after Wanda leaves, underscores the necessity of remorse when we hurt someone—a lesson in moral responsibility.

3.3 Virtues (3.3.a)

Discuss how saying a kind word or doing a good deed shows God’s love.

- The apology letter is a heartfelt act of making amends and reflecting God's love through words and actions.
- Wanda's forgiveness ("a note of her own") demonstrates grace and virtue that inspire courage and healing in others.

3.4 Sin (3.4.a)

Talk about actions we know hurt God, others, and ourselves.

- The bullying—mocking Wanda's dress and heritage—is an action that knowingly harms a person, their dignity, and community unity.
- It also brings internal pain and guilt for Maddie, showing how sin wounds both victims and bystanders.

3.5 Commandments

3.5.a Know that God gave us guides to live good lives

- Basic moral principles—like "Love your neighbor" and "You shall not bear false witness"—underpin respectful behavior.
- Maddie—and Peggy—learn that it is wrong to exclude or mock someone; living out God's guidance means treating others with dignity.

3.5.b Talk about the Ten Commandments as rules to follow

- Idolatry isn't relevant, but principles such as respect ("You shall not covet," seeing Wanda as equal) and honesty are clearly echoed.

- Their remorse and apology show an internalization of these moral rules.