Grade 3 - Unit 3 Reading - Reading with Believable Characters and Problems

Unit Focus

In *Reading with Believable Characters and Problems*, students explore realistic fiction to deepen their understanding of how authors create believable characters, meaningful conflicts, and authentic stories that reflect real-life experiences. Through close reading and discussion, students examine how characters' thoughts, feelings, motivations, and actions shape the events of a story and contribute to character growth and change. Students learn how authors use dialogue, descriptive detail, internal thinking, and plot structure to build tension and develop emotional depth.

Instruction is grounded in the Science of Reading, integrating systematic instruction in phonics, morphology, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to support the development of skilled, independent readers and writers. Structured literacy instruction is delivered through Fundations, which provides explicit instruction in phonics, morphology, spelling patterns, and encoding; Bookworms, which builds background knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension, and structured discussion through shared reading and read-aloud experiences; and Geodes, which supports application of taught phonics patterns in connected, decodable texts to strengthen fluency, accuracy, and automaticity.

Students engage with high-quality texts that build knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension while supporting close reading of grade-level standards, including *Owen Foote Money Man* by Stephanie Greene, *Thank You, Mr. Falker* and *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco, *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson, and *The Memory String* by Eve Bunting.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)

Common Core
English Language Arts: 3

- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1)
- 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 the text. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RL.3.2)
- Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RL.3.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4)
- By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 23 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RL.3.10)
- Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.3.A)

Transfer

Students will be able to independently use their learning to...
T1 Use strategies to comprehend and engage with a variety of increasingly complex texts to become independent, critical, and reflective thinkers.

Meaning

Understanding(s)

Students will understand that...
U1 Realistic fiction helps readers understand real-life experiences because its characters face believable problems, make choices based on their traits, and grow or change in meaningful ways.
U2 Analyzing a text's genre, purpose, and structure helps to deepen comprehension.
U3 Sounds, letters, and patterns work together to support decoding and spelling of words.
U4 Reading accurately, smoothly, and with expression helps readers focus on meaning and better understand the text.
U5 Vocabulary knowledge supports making meaning from text and deepening understanding.

Essential Question(s)

Students will keep considering...
Q1 How do realistic fiction stories use believable characters and events to help us understand how people grow and learn?
Q2 How does understanding a text's genre, purpose, and structure help readers make meaning?
Q3 How do sounds, letters, and patterns work together to help me read and spell words?
Q4 How does reading with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression support comprehension?
Q5 How can the words I know help me understand what I read?

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Decode words with common Latin suffixes. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.3.B)
- Decode multisyllable words. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RF.3.3.C)
- Read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF. 3.3.D)
- Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF. 3.4.A)
- Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.4.B)
- Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RF.3.4.C)
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.A)
- Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.C)
- Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.* (CCSS.ELALITERACY.L.3.1.F)
- Capitalize appropriate words in titles. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.A)
- Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.C)
- Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.F)
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.A)
- Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., agreeable/disagreeable, comfortable/uncomfortable, care/ careless, heat/preheat). (CCSS.ELALITERACY.L.3.4.B)
- Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.C)
- Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.D)

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...

K1 Realistic fiction is a genre with imaginary but believable events, characters, and settings that reflect real-life experiences.

K2 Realistic fiction includes story elements (plot, setting, characters, problem, events, solution) arranged in proper sequence.

K3 A summary involves selecting key events and details from a text while excluding less important or minor information.

K4 Characters have traits and motivations that influence their decisions, and authors reveal these traits through actions, dialogue, thoughts, and feelings.

K5 Inference is the process of using text evidence and prior knowledge to draw conclusions not directly stated in the text.

K6 Realistic characters often change and learn lessons throughout the story.

K7 Sounds, letters, and spelling patterns work together to form words, supporting accurate reading and spelling.

K8 Reading with accuracy, fluency, and expression supports understanding of text.

K9 Vocabulary supports understanding of text and builds deeper meaning.

K10 Fundations:

- Identifying schwa
- Reading and spelling words with a schwa in an unaccented syllable
- -et spelling at the end of words such as "jacket"
- Dictionary skills
- Open-syllable review
- y as a vowel: long /i/ and long / e/
- Schwa in open syllables with a and i
- Open-syllable exception
- c: ce. ci. cy (reading)
- Soft g: ge, gi, gy (reading)

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...

S1 Identifying whether a story is realistic fiction by previewing the text, analyzing story elements, and explaining why characters and events feel real.

S2 Identifying key story elements and sequence events correctly to summarize the story accurately.

S3 Summarizing a text by identifying and organizing the most important events and excluding minor details.

S4 Analyzing a character's traits using actions, dialogue, thoughts, and feelings; using text evidence to explain how traits influence events, problems, solutions, and character change.

S5 Making inferences using text evidence and prior knowledge to draw conclusions about a text's meaning.

S6 Identifying the lesson of a story and explaining it using text evidence.

S7 Decoding unfamiliar words and spelling words correctly using their knowledge of sounds, letters, and patterns.

S8 Reading aloud with accuracy, smoothness, and expression to focus on comprehension.

S9 Using known words, context clues, and new vocabulary to understand and make meaning from texts.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings		
• Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L. 3.5.A) • Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful). (CCSS.ELALITERACY.L.3.5.B) **Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate** • Analyzing: Examining information/data/ evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. (POG.1.2)	• Prefixes: con, dis, un, em, ex, in, im, il, ir, mis, non, sub, trans, de, e, pre, pro, re • Roots: dict, duct, fect, fract, ject, junct, lect, min, scrib, sist, spec, struct, tract	