



***Around the World in 20 Days:  
Virtual Flights and Explorations through Children's Literature***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Special Education Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade Resource Setting

**Keywords:** special education, experience and exposure, trip around the world, virtual explorations, close reading

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:**

The lessons and activities contained within this curriculum unit were developed to provide engaging and interactive virtual explorations around the world. The students for whom it is designed are fifth grade students within a special education program, not in a self-contained class but in a resource level of service. These lessons will occur three times a week for a total of forty-five minutes for twenty days. The unit instruction targets low-achieving students through a variety of explicit and systematic activities in order to increase reading comprehension through close reading activities and cultural experiences in which they otherwise may not be able to participate.

*I plan to begin teaching this unit in December 2014, to my resource group of Special Education students.*

*I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

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*Tiffany Craig*

**Introduction**

Shrinking school budgets have caused a painful, vice-grip on teacher creativity. These hard times affect innovative, instructional techniques that involve any amount of money. The end results in discouraging teachers to feel boxed in, therefore creating dry, mundane lessons. As the national scrutiny of student achievement and teacher accountability increases, so too does the importance for effective instruction. We try making it a laughing joke, even as we know that the budget is gradually fading to dismal proportions. All the while we are continually charged with the inundated task of ensuring children achieve at high levels regardless of problems presented as roadblocks. With a daily urgency, teachers attempt educating students with robust educational, social, familial, emotional and behavioral needs. Ideally, these issues would be handled outside of the classroom in order to provide the most benefit and to decrease the interference of valuable instruction. Instead teachers are expected to plan academic and behavioral interventions that are handcuffed by reality of the issues the children are dealing with from their lives at home.

Students who come from poverty or low-socioeconomic backgrounds are faced with circumstances that make learning difficult. If you work with students who have to deal with these unfortunate circumstances, then you are aware of their limited or missing opportunities to experience life outside of their everyday worlds. With that frustration comes the instructional inadequacies you experience when presented with the fact your students cannot read and comprehend their grade level texts. Literacy encompasses comprehension, vocabulary, basic decoding skills and cognitive processing but becomes entangled in the multilayered web of academic, social, familial, emotional and behavioral issues that plague our students who live in poverty. When age-appropriate texts are presented to your struggling, upper elementary students it becomes increasingly disappointing for the teacher and painfully discouraging for the students. The books are dull and uninteresting to these fifth-grade children, even though they may be reading on a second-, first- or even kindergarten-level. At this point teachers search for alternate ideas but find little to no relief.

At times the burden becomes heavy and it seems that you will never be able to help your students succeed. Educational researcher Paul Barton shares knowledge with teachers in order to gain a better understanding that there are school and extracurricular factors that influence student achievement.<sup>1</sup> Even though the issues children in poverty face are not in the control of school staff, teacher preparation, a rigorous curriculum, and

technology-assisted instruction have proven significant in overcoming the non-school-related issues.<sup>2</sup> Not only are these problems present but researched has documented that limitations beyond the school walls prohibit students from being able to experience life outside of their world.<sup>3</sup>

In my thirteen years of teaching experience, I have endlessly witnessed the above chain of circumstances that hinder academic achievement. The more awareness increases among educators about this heartbreaking reality the more we can eradicate its vicious cycle. We can be more intentional about our teaching methods and strive to eradicate its harmful sting. Schools and school staff can attempt this mountainous task through offering more effective and engaging academic curricula using research proven instructional strategies specific to the needs of the students. There is a sad reality for minority students in poverty and their achievement gap when compared to middle-class children. It is called The Matthew Effect and explains how children who have a small word knowledge bank have a difficult time learning words, while children with a well-developed vocabulary learn words easily.<sup>4</sup>

## **Rationale**

Limited experiences and exposure are just a fraction of the problems that contribute to these students' poor reading skills, but there is a possible solution for teachers, even with little to no budgetary help. No money? Problem solved. No ideas on where to take your students? Problem solved. Here I introduce an experience of traveling around the globe to a world outside of your students' schema. I created this unit so that teachers could provide an opportunity for students to explore different cultures and learn about life on other continents without leaving the classroom, or even the school.

Years of extensive research have proven time and time again that attending school and gaining academic skills will have everlasting benefits well into adulthood. One of the lasting enhancements is an increased income over a person's lifetime from the academic skills acquired, but behavioral skills and societal norms are rarely mentioned as to show its impact.<sup>5</sup> Educational Consultants and authors, Carla Morsello and Isabel Ruiz-Mallen reveal a correlation between increases in earnings to first-hand experiences of the world outside the study participant's daily lives.<sup>6</sup> The information presented is groundbreaking, and even though the students, who I discuss throughout my unit, were not represented in this study, the research provides sound rationale and a claim for the importance of providing engaging opportunities in which minority students can learn about other cultures.

As my research progressed and I fervently continued to search for answers, I stumbled upon an article in which the authors, also educators, created a virtual field trip through literature, in order to increase their vocabulary knowledge. The teachers' in this study accomplished their goal: results indicated students with this new word knowledge could

initiate new ideas, develop questions to ask and pursue, and use the vocabulary learned in their writing and speaking.<sup>7</sup> I do not have a direct objective in this unit to increase vocabulary because of limited time, but I do expect vocabulary enhancement will generate from the new schema that will develop through students' travel experiences.

While I found it difficult to decide on instructional strategies I also have witnessed a countless number of teachers with the same dilemma. After feeling that I failed my students—a feeling that seemed to reoccur every year—I became even more determined to find a better way for my students to experience academic success. I tried exposing them to higher-leveled texts that I could read-aloud. This failed miserably. The dilemma was the complexity of the text was on a higher level than my students' zone of learning or cognitive ability. They could not answer questions, verbalize or even had a clue as to what they were learning. Then I tried to focus only on the students' IEP goals oddly it perpetuated the same inadequate feeling, even though the instructional approach allowed them to work on their instructional level. I knew I was not contributing to their academic success pertaining to grade level material and continued to feel as if I was holding them back.

I felt defeated and at times hopeless. Again I was back at square one, my Exceptional Children (EC) students are already at a greater disadvantage than their nondisabled peers. They cannot even enjoy reading an age-appropriate book. I began believing I was unable to guide them in achieving academic success. I was rescued through the opportunity to participate in the Charlotte Teachers Institute. The feeling of defeat disappeared! Through the seminar, *The Art of Fiction: Close Analysis, Style and the Novel*, I gained invaluable knowledge and skill on how to instruct students at any level to analyze a text closely. The time to sharpen my close reading skills and conduct extensive research was extremely targeted to what I needed. This opportunity provided a platform for me to create an innovative, intriguing researched-based curriculum unit that focuses on providing enriching activities on the functional level of my EC students. This is how the no cost, *Around the World in 20 Days: Virtual Flights and Explorations through Children's Literature* was birthed. I am now on track to guiding my Special Education students more steadily in their reading comprehension goals and will enjoy the process!

## **Background**

My school, Allenbrook Elementary, is located in the West corridor of Charlotte, North Carolina, in the large Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District (CMS). We are nested in a forested, area of mature homes just minutes from downtown. This area once consisted of mostly Caucasians whom owned their homes. This has changed to a more diverse population which consists of residents who predominately African-American but has a substantial population of Asian and Hispanic families who rents the homes.

The schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg are divided into learning communities, which consists of north, east, south, west, and Project Lift. Allenbrook is a part of the Project LIFT learning community. Project LIFT is an innovative, initiative that consists of private and public funding in the amount of \$55,000,000 to be implemented over the course of five years. It was rolled out in January 2011, but its first year of implementation was in the 2012-2013<sup>8</sup>.

Superintendent of Project LIFT, a former Charlotte-Mecklenburg Principal from a high needs middle school, Denise Watts, leads this venture. Donations are from various entities ranging from corporations to philanthropists invested in increasing the achievement scores and graduation rate focused in this West Charlotte corridor of town. The goal is to increase rates to 90-90-90 which translate to 90 percent of students will be proficient in reading and math, 90 percent of students will achieve more than one years growth in one years time and 90 percent of students will graduate in 2017<sup>9</sup>.

There are nine schools directly impacted by this enormous endeavor; Allenbrook Elementary, Ashley Park PreK-8, Burns Academy, Druid Hills, Ranson IB Middle, Statesville Road Elementary, Thomasboro Academy, Walter G. Byers, West Charlotte High School<sup>10</sup>. All of these schools house at least, 80% and above free and reduced lunch students, coming from homes in poverty. Each school has a unique, diverse population all of them with majority African-American, then the percentages vary with Asian, Hispanic or other ethnic groups being highly represented. The population of students that are educated in these schools, researchers would define them of being “at-risk”. This term being indicated by the high number of free and reduced lunches offered and indicates a low socio-economic status and high minority representation.

At Allenbrook, I teach Exceptional Children (EC), in CMS terms or more widely known as Special Education. There are two full-time teachers that work with this population. This year I have a focus on the upper grades three through five, while the other teacher will work with students in kindergarten to second grades. As a part of the urgency to increase reading and math proficiency of this Project LIFT School, a blended learning platform has been rolled out to its full implementation in the regular education environment in grades two through five<sup>11</sup>. With this new way of teaching and learning, I incorporated activities in which students will incorporate many technology-integrated lessons in which some I will elude to but not in depth.

On my caseload I currently have a special education caseload of 25 students from third to five grade, with fifth grade being the more heavily populated. The EC students I have the privilege of serving have majority specific learning disabilities (SLD) in the core academic areas. This indicates they have low-average to average intellectual abilities but have difficulty performing to their ability level on academic material. The next largest group are the children with a health impairment (OHI) affecting their learning. Two of the three students with (OHI) are affected by attention deficit disorder with or without

hyperactivity in which these students have behavior issues affecting their learning the other student has a physical disability that causes learning difficulties. I serve two students that are Intellectually Disabled-Mild (ID Mild). The other categories sort the remaining students I serve into one student. These disabilities are Autism (AU), Emotionally Disabled (ED) and Hearing Impaired (HI).

The Individualized Education Plan, IEP, is created for students to address their academic, functional and emotional/behavioral strengths and weaknesses. The IEPs my students possess generally require between thirty minutes to two and a half hours daily to address their goals. Children are provided their service in the Special Education or resource and/or the Regular Education or inclusion setting to address their skill deficits. The inclusion setting, also known as co-teaching, is ideally designed with the Special Education Teacher and the Regular Education Teacher, instructing in tandem in such an inclusive manner that an outsider would not be able to differentiate the two teachers. The other option is the resource setting, in which students' goals are addressed in a pullout model that includes only EC or special education students. Since the inclusion level of service is intended to focus on teaching as a team rather than separate entities on grade level material, I viewed the Special Education or resource time as appropriate to teach the lessons created in this curriculum unit.

### **Content Objectives**

Through the research and resources provided here, this global excursion will afford multiple opportunities for students to improve their comprehension skills. Students will meet reading achievement goals by analyzing multicultural texts through the practice of close reading and through answering grade-level questions that will employ explicit and systematic instructional strategies. When working with the special education population this level of detailed planning is required for all concepts, either new or reviewed. The information and skills explained in detail and practiced in a systematic format are the approaches proven to ensure learning success for these students. As I work through this process I was further assured as I read about teaching strategies I owned in my instructional toolbox that were aligned with best practices but are now reinforced and enhanced. Therefore I designed Appendix 2, which includes a document entitled *Intensified Instructional Lesson Planning*. This template was created for classroom teachers to make notes of pertinent teaching strategies when planning lessons that include students with disabilities or those not identified but who struggle academically.

Systematic instruction occurs when a teacher breaks down the lesson into smaller sequential chunks of information that fit the cognitive abilities of the students.<sup>12</sup> Lessons are presented to these children as they are given pieces of information in which they can retain as they build on this knowledge each day.

A think-aloud is a great example of explicit instruction, this allows the teacher to demonstrate the thinking and skill to be used by the student as he or she is completing a learning task.<sup>13</sup> Once you reveal the processes needed to the children, as a well-known step in the teaching process, you provide the opportunity for the students to practice the skill as you interactively observe and ensure they apply the skill appropriately and correct when necessary scaffolding the explicit steps.

Scaffolding is well-known instructional technique but executed to the twenty-fourth power. Scaffolding is the artful teaching practice of an instructor offering sequential, verbal and or physical prompts for the student that allows him or her to perform a learning task otherwise too difficult.<sup>14</sup> This teacher support is heavy initially then gradually released when the student is observed becoming more successful with the learning task.<sup>15</sup> In this unit, exposure to complex reading and critical thinking skills are the goals. Student abilities should be monitored in order to know plan how much scaffolding to be provided. The “twenty-fourth power” refers to the hours in a day. It indicates scaffolding as ongoing, when instructing in close reading analysis. I will utilize this strategy not just in the beginning of my lesson but also throughout, until I have observed that each student is able to perform a learning task independently.

Scaffolding to the twenty-fourth power allows the instructor to solicit the student to participate when needed to process information when he or she is not paying attention. This strategy provides enough information to the student to participate and enhance his or her understanding. The learning depends on the one-on-one focused time they receive when called upon to participate. Scaffolding is what you would consider as your guided practice during the lesson, except when I am instructing my EC students this occurs in an ongoing basis unless students are testing and I am gathering data as to skills they possess and strategies they use.

After much discussion on how to prepare academically, it is equally important that the teacher prepare with a unique approach. This concept goes beyond the surface level and requires interpersonal skills that will truly test your character. Microaggression is a phrase coined by Chester Pierce in 1978.<sup>16</sup> This term refers to the idea of how an individual's own cultural viewpoints are involved in his or her everyday communication and how information is delivered.<sup>17</sup> It is beyond the obvious racial prejudices and discrimination. These are the decisions you make in connection to your beliefs, known or unknown, your nonverbal communication and the surfacing of subtle frustrations due to this engrained type of thinking.<sup>18</sup>

A teacher's beliefs or judgments about cultures outside of his or her own can be invisible and can affect a student's ability to trust in the teacher's care.<sup>19</sup> This can have an adverse effect on the goals set throughout the unit. This behavior is easy to conceal and deny, as it is difficult to measure a person's intentions or meaning behind their actions. With the increasing number of immigrants in United States schools, districts have

recognized the initial hurdle and have increased conversations about diversity and added some training. The acknowledgement of the importance of diversity awareness by school officials have only begun but more work needs to be done.

Diversity training may allow teachers to gain a better understanding of ways to interact with children in poverty. Yet equally important is the need for instructors to internalize a mindset that does not allow our interactions with students to be condescending or judgmental. Ruby Payne, a well-known researcher in the education of students in poverty, found nine practical strategies in which school staff can apply to increase student achievement or learning.<sup>20</sup> In a short, but deeply informative article, Payne explains how teachers need to build relationships of respect, make beginning learning relational, teach students to speak in formal register, assess each student's resources, teach the hidden rules of school, monitor progress and plan interventions, translate the concrete into the abstract, teach students how to ask questions, and forge relationships with parents.<sup>21</sup> The use of all of these strategies require us as educators to acknowledge biased beliefs. Even if you believe you have philosophies that are not biased, but true, I would challenge you to be mindful that these are based on middle-class standards, which many times can defy the reality that many of these children experience on a daily basis.<sup>22</sup> Teachers should prepare for themselves a learning mindset that uses a neutral standpoint to create a safe space for these students to ask questions and express themselves.

This crucial preparation by the teacher is not a part of the lesson planning contained within this unit but it should occur before each lesson. The teacher can prepare by exploring the upcoming lesson and internally search for possible racial microaggressions or share your thoughts with a friend or colleagues, allowing them to serve as your soundboard. In your reflection, keep an open mind and remember not to dish out judgment. You can also engage in a mental self-assessment in order to reflect and be willing to recognize judgmental beliefs and thoughts that can cause students to feel belittled and disrespected. When tackling the multi-faceted challenges of students from different cultural backgrounds the teacher needs to aware of his or her intent. Most likely, these subtle ways, cannot be detected by a camera or video but the students can definitely feel, hear in your tone and see in your gestures.<sup>23</sup>

Teaching the reading comprehension skill of inference can be one of the toughest skills, in that students have to be able to apply their schema, or background knowledge, on a topic and combine this knowledge we have about things or the world. Background knowledge is essential for students when comprehending text using inferential skills. This prior knowledge allows for students to make sense of text and information through forging connections. Students will collect prior knowledge or information they have about a topic and combine this with textual evidence to formulate conclusions that cannot be specifically pointed out in the text. Prior knowledge and information from the text is



what students use to make inferences and providing a wider range of background knowledge through the experiences contained within will be enlightening for students.

Fifth graders will fly to each continent depicted in the books on the syllabus. They will “ride an airplane” that will be played on a projector from a YouTube video. This was created by someone recording their actual flight experience in which I will play about three minute portions each day showing specifics related to being in takeoff on an airplane. The simulation I am providing will allow them to obtain a real life flight experience that gives them an opportunity to observe a sky view and put into perspective the distance we move with the airplane, which shows the vast timing difference than on our interactive globe, where the travel appears to be quick. It is important to have a discussion connecting this visualization of the distance on a globe and experiencing the distance on a plane. This conversation with the students, is an example of the instructional practices, explicit and strategic, through guiding them in following the system of the real-life experience and comprehending the actualization of the distance. Students will become immersed in the travel experience, creating a mindset that makes them feel the trip is real, therefore freeing them to open their minds to learn about the culture we will explore. As you will read or review the book twice, they only ride the airplane once, when you travel to the country via the Internet on the second day of the lesson. An added bonus to providing an authentic experience is that I will be able to bring my passport so they can view it and they can compare it to theirs, in which they will mark their trips.

Through these journeys students will gain self-awareness about how they relate to others, be exposed them to richer vocabulary, and build their comprehension skills and strategies through close reading as demanded by the common core standards. The lessons will take place in the resource setting that will contain only students for whom I render reading services to address skill deficits. The activities will occur for forty-five minutes about three days a week, for a total of twenty days. During this time Allenbrook will present a “Living Timeline” opportunity, in which we will decorate our “Walk-Through” Travel Brochure, which will be decorated with all of our writings, projects and visits on cardboard dividers.

### **Teacher and Student Materials**

The books to be read are annotated below. The lesson materials are also listed below in the order in which you will utilize them.

Suitcase or Exploration Suitcase

<http://www.teachwithme.com/blogs/getting-to-the-core/item/62-christmas-around-the-world>.

The creator of this idea has a Christmas themed suitcase for her children to store items when she guides them in trip around the world for Christmas. I will not use the suitcase

for this purpose but will instead make an Exploration suitcase that will be used for each student in advance for the first day of the unit. I will leave it plain and allow students to decorate on the last days when sharing their voyage. Students will use this on days one to twenty in order to store the items they make and write.

White Cardboard Room Dividers or Walk-Through Travel Brochure

[http://www.dormco.com/Dorm\\_Divider\\_Room\\_Divider\\_For\\_Privacy\\_p/rm-3-ddivd.htm](http://www.dormco.com/Dorm_Divider_Room_Divider_For_Privacy_p/rm-3-ddivd.htm)

This site provides the place to purchase the blank room dividers in order to make the Walk-Through Travel Brochure. I will choose items from random students whom make them correctly and display the information thoroughly.

Fox, Mem, and Leslie Staub. *Whoever You Are*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1997.

Mem Fox uses simple language to show how we are all the same even though we have differences. She also uses bold, rich colors in the pictures to convince readers of how everyone shares obvious differences but share the quality of all being the same, human beings who require respect.

Teaching Tolerance Lesson

<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/developing-empathy-elementary-grades>

This lesson is printed and used for day one only. The lesson has exercises the teacher will present to students to engage a discussion. Decisions will be analyzed about the scenarios indicating the lack of understanding shown and what change the child could make in the situation to show empathy.

Venn Diagram

This organizer is created and used for day one only. A Venn Diagram is a graphic organizer commonly used in classrooms, that has two circles, one on the left side and one on the right side in which the middle overlaps. The circles are an organizer used to compare and contrast two concepts. The left and right sides create spaces for the students to write indicating how two separate concepts, one on each side, are different. While the middle section gives a space to write, showing how the two concepts are the same. The unique part of this Venn Diagram is that it should be in color, a color to match the décor of your Walk-Through Travel Brochure.

Die-Cut Hearts

These will be prepared and used for only the first day. The hearts can be die-cut using the Ellison Machine or hand-cut, creating a four by four inch heart, in which the teacher will choose some to decorate our Walk-Through Travel Brochure.

Close Reading Poster

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/433823376578417287/>

This poster is located within a packet of documents that will be utilized throughout the unit. This document was created by the author to provide a guide of questions students or teachers can reference to analyzing the text using a close reading strategy. I printed a color copy of this poster for me to use on day one and to post and reference while hanging, during the lessons specified below.

#### Common Themes Paper

<http://blogs.scholastic.com/a/6a00e54faaf86b88330148c85fa34c970c-popup>

This list with definitions, was created by the author to provide a resource for classrooms of themes commonly used in stories. I made enough copies for each student to utilize during the unit. Students will store these in their Exploration Suitcase and reference when noted in the lessons below.

#### Projector/Laptop for teacher, Smartboard or Interactive Board, iPads for students

This technology resource is necessary to project stories and conduct class researches on the countries. Students will utilize the iPads at the end when creating their presentation on what they learned using tellagamis, vokis or sockpuppets.

#### Whoever You Are on YouTube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cA0G1\\_wjgRQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cA0G1_wjgRQ)

Authors of this video read this story with a black background, showing nothing but the bright, bold pages of the book while reading. This is the video to be used on the second day of the unit with no sound so students can read the story using the pictures only.

#### Talk Time Cards

<http://blogs.scholastic.com/a/6a00e54faaf86b88330148c85fa34c970c-popup>

These are conversation starters, in which students can use to have a discussion. This will be used on day two and any other day referenced in the lessons contained within this unit below.

#### Booklet

The five pages to this booklet will be cut for students ahead of time. The size is a six by six inch booklet that students will utilize to write what acceptance means to them. This booklet will be used on day two.

#### Comment Board

This will be a space on my whiteboard in which students will use to place comments on any topic we are exploring.

#### Flight Simulation or Reality Flight: Miami-to-New York (LGA) flight: Takeoff, Fort Lauderdale, Statue of Liberty, Manhattan 2014-02-16 (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNd7qRDGFrc> (accessed November 7, 2014)

This is the simulation experience of the flight reality you will play each time students travel to the country on the internet exploration on the fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth, twelfth days. The site will need to be prepared ahead of the students entering. As the students enter the classroom on these days I will greet them and shake their hand welcoming them aboard Allenbrook Flight 1430, which is my schools building address.

#### Students' Picture

The teacher will take the students' pictures with a device available to him or her and have them ready for their paper-made passports. This is prepared ahead of time and glued onto the teacher-made passports. This will be given on the fourth day of the unit already on the passport.

#### Student Passport

[http://www.fiarcircle.com/downloads/lessons/fc\\_passport.pdf](http://www.fiarcircle.com/downloads/lessons/fc_passport.pdf).

Here is the link to the printable pages of the student passport. It provides two options of covers and looks close to a real one. Prepared these ahead of time for each student and hand them out on the days the class visits the websites researching the culture of the country. The days in which the students travel are: day four, day six, day eight, day ten, day twelve, and day fourteen.

#### Country Flag Stickers

I purchased these from *Education Express*, a teacher store in Concord Mills Mall in Concord, North Carolina, which is not available online. A similar product can be purchased on Amazon's website at <http://www.amazon.com/Flags-World-Color-Stickers-Dover/dp/0486485269>. There are also free, printable, generic country stamps to use located in the student passport site above.

#### Felt travel globe or interactive atlas

<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/interactive-globecup-of-coco-123531>

The globe will need to be prepared ahead of time for classroom display. Use it to visualize the distance from one continent to the next, which will be on the student travel days four, six, eight, ten, twelve and fourteen.

#### Close Reading Word Detective

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/433823376578417287/>

This a worksheet located within the close reading packet. It was created by the author to provide students with a graphic organizer to sort context clues in order to find the definition of unknown words. I will give students this worksheet to utilize on day three and other days noted in the unit below.

#### Writing Comprehension Paragraph, Sentence Starters

These sentence starters were given to me by the English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher at my school. I was unable to find the original source from where it has been created. I provided the information as Appendix four to use when noted as, sentence starters, in the lessons below. Students will begin to reference this list on day three.

Williams, Karen Lynn, and Catherine Stock. *Galimoto*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1990. *Galimoto* is about a boy from Malawi Africa who desires to build his car but he does not have enough scraps of metal. This story takes you through the journey to get the pieces he needed.

Malawi, Africa (KidRex search engine)

<http://www.our-africa.org/Malawi>

This is a magnificent site that truly provides a tour of the country of Malawi by two young adult females that are studying to become journalists. They created this site, which provides colorful pictorial icons that journey through topics in which these girls videotape the scenes in which they interview natives of their country and comment on what the viewer is watching. This is used in day 4, the first day students will fly and journey to the designated country using the reality flight and the internet sites provided.

Lined Notebook Paper

This material is needed on day five and any other days noted below. Day five students will be composing an author's purpose paragraph from the sentence starter resource

Light and Dark Construction paper

This material is going to be used initially on day five and subsequent days as noted in the lessons below.

Clipart of a mountain

The clipart I chose is large enough to fit a full-size sheet of construction paper. This will be used on day five.

Scissors

Students will use scissors for various projects throughout the unit.

Glue Sticks

Students will use this initially on day five and then on other days noted below.

Research Form

I created this form as a resource in which students can document information about the countries on days four, six, eight, ten and twelve, in an organized manner. This form is listed as Appendix three below; copies for students may be needed for other days.

Bond, Ruskin, and Allan Eitzen. *Cherry Tree*. Honesdale, Pa.: Caroline House, 1991.

This is a story in which a little girl displays patience and endurance while she puts hope in a cherry tree growing that beat all the odds.

Close Reading Making an Inference

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/433823376578417287/>

This a worksheet located within the close reading packet. This document was created by the author to provide students with a format in which to make an inference and then provide text evidence from the story. I will give students this worksheet only to reference on day one and to utilize on day five, subsequent days noted in the unit below and copies for students will be needed. They will also store this in their Exploration Suitcase on day one.

India Tour (KidRex search engine)

[http://mountainvoices.org/i\\_th\\_family\\_life.asp.html](http://mountainvoices.org/i_th_family_life.asp.html)

This site provides visitors with pictures and text of life in the Himalayan Mountains.

Takabayashi, Mari. *I Live in Tokyo*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

This book offers readers, colorful, detailed pictures and text about the abundant and busy life of children and adults living in Tokyo. This book will be introduced on day seven.

Tokyo, Japan (Fact Monster search engine)

<http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2164.html>

This site provides visitors with information of life of those in Tokyo, Japan

Clipart of fast moving train

This picture will be utilized as a tracing template for students to glue their surprising facts onto about Tokyo on day eight.

Germein, Katrina, and Bronwyn Bancroft. *Big Rain Coming*. New York: Clarion Books, 1999.

This is a book a teacher from America wrote wanting to share her experience with the Aboriginal people in Minyerri.

Aboriginal Group Tribal Dance (KidRex search)

<http://www.townsoftheworld.com/Australia/Northern%20Territory/Numbulwar/Videos>

This site provides vivid pictures and videos of the Aborigine people.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Butterfly*. New York: Philomel Books, 2000.

A heartfelt book about two girls' strength and friendship during a difficult time, Germany's takeover of France.

France, Germany (kidrex search)

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/215768/France/40262/The-end-of-Roman-Gaul-c-400-c-500>

On this site students will be provided text and picture information about this time in history and how people lived during this hard time.

Atinuke and Tobia, Lauren. *Splash, Anna Hibiscus*. London: Walker Books, LTD, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DHtR1dMZ74>. This site presents an actress reading the book as the pictures and sound display to make the story come to life.

Interview of Atinuke and Personal travels  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8NXmyZ20DE> and her Weebly <http://atinuke-author.weebly.com/>

This site shows the author Atinuke interviewing and answering questions about her book writing skills and rationale.

Tellagami

<https://tellagami.com>

Tellagami is a mobile app (phones or tablets ONLY) that let you create and share a quick animated Gami (avatar) video.

Sock Puppets

This is an app for Apple products and can be used on the iPad or iPhone. Sock Puppets let you create your own lip-synched videos and share them on YouTube.

Voki

[www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com)

Voki allows students to create an avatar to present information.

## **Teaching Strategies**

Teaching strategies contained within the detailed lessons are close reading with inferencing, identifying and understanding the theme of the story, and determining word meaning using context clues.

Day 1

*Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox

Materials: teaching tolerance lesson, colored Venn Diagram, die-cut heart

My goal here is to introduce the unit and begin with focusing the students' attention and critical thinking skills on the meaning of tolerance or empathy and evaluating its implementation. Students will have the book above read to them with teacher think-alouds given on selected pages of the text to begin the explicit and strategic instruction on

details and purpose of a story. Also while reading to story, the teacher will be scaffolding directions on how to complete the Venn Diagram.

## Day 2

*Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox

Materials: close reading poster, making inferences, booklet, common themes paper, *Whoever You Are* on YouTube

The goal on day two is to present close reading to students and allow practice time with guided practice.

Reread the story *Whoever You Are* and tell students we will analyze our story differently. I will explain they will read the pictures of the book from the projector, as I will turn down the sound. Explain what reading closely or close reading means by explaining it is a way to look closely at a text or pictures with our eyes as a magnifying glass. I will be using the projector in my room to view the story on YouTube. The class will listen to this story as I turn the sound all the way down. After reviewing the story I will share with students that today close reading will involve us practicing the comprehension skill of inferencing and finding a theme of a story. I will share how these two skills are alike in that neither answer is explicitly stated in the text, and students will have to use their prior knowledge and evidence from the to determine an answer. Then I will share posters of texts and pictures that depict the meaning of each skill: inferencing and establishing a theme. We will engage in a discussion about inferencing and I will provide examples. I will scaffold questions in a three-leveled system based from the Close Reading Poster, in which students will provide text-based evidence when responding to oral questions. First, I will ask the students if anything “jumped” out to them from the pictures. Second, I will find out if the students knew how the author felt about this story by using the pictures. Third, I will ask them to connect the last question to this one as ask how the author supports the key points using the pictures. If the students do not recognize the gold decorative picture frame outlining each page I will tell them what that I noticed it and ask what they can infer as to why the author placed everyone inside this really nice picture frame.

Last, we will engage in a discussion to determine the meaning of theme. I will reveal this poster and the Common Theme guide. Before we get started I will go over the meaning of each word and we will discuss if it is a happy, sad, mad, or neutral word and the students will draw this face next to the word in order to help remember the meanings. Next, I will ask which theme they believe the author wanted to portray as they recall our discussion about the gold frame and connect this information and provide text-based answers. I will provide another scaffolding task by pointing out three options from the common theme guide so students can focus on what the author is trying to share in regards to theme instead of sifting through all of the words. The children will be



instructed to discuss which theme they believe the author is portraying with the student sitting next to them using the talk time cards referenced. Students will be provided two minutes for this discussion, as they discuss I will provide them with Making Inferences Worksheet. Once the time is up, student groups will be asked to share with the class. At this time I will direct them to the Making Inferences Worksheet, this is what I will use to create a visualization of the inferences that are given. When the booklet will be provided to students and they will be instructed to on what to write and how to decorate. The directions for the booklet is that it contain the theme word of acceptance on the front cover and once completed with the rest of the work, it will be decorated. Each successive page in their book will contain a sentence describing examples of acceptance.

Before the students leave I will introduce my comment board and provide post-its close by for them. I will give the requirements in which it has to be appropriate about something you learned, surprise or question. The sentence format will be displayed and left exposed for students.

### Day 3

*Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams, Illustrated by Catherine Stock

Materials: close reading poster, word detective paper, sentence starter-author's purpose

My goal at the end of the story today is for students to engage in the practice of close reading by determining why the author wrote the word "Galimoto," in the font depicted on the book cover.

I will introduce *Galimoto* and share the goal above and review the reading and thinking skills we need to infer meaning from a text or picture. Before students get to hear the read aloud I will provide them with the Word Detective paper. We will discuss the definition of a context clue and I will provide a poster defining context clues to add to our comprehension skills posters. A strategy will be provided and explained how they will practice this when they have the text on paper. The strategy is to underline the unknown word, then read two to three sentences before and two to three sentences after the word. Students will be told this is the way to use context clues to find the meaning of unknown words. I will refer to as they listen and hear a word, to ask me to read the sentences they believed would help them identify the definition.

The one word everyone needs to listen for clues is "Galimoto." I will explain this is important to know because if we are listening or reading a story and do not know what the title or any big words in which the text is about, we will have a hard time understanding the story.

I will begin reading the story as I prompt students by stopping at points and telling them they should have a clue as to what the word means. As I read the story I will

interject statements and questions to students as my think-aloud for students about the story. Next, the group will have a discussion about what Galimoto means and we will write this on our paper. I will solicit other words students have written to see if they were able to find the words or need help with this strategy. We would then go back and see if we can find the context clues for the words students share.

Next a group close reading analysis will be completed with looking closely to determine why the author wrote *Galimoto*. Students need to recognize that it looks as if the word was written with a stick, and they should infer how the author wanted us to see him. If students are having a difficult time coming close to an answer, I will use the Close Reading Poster using three-tiered levels to guide my questions and refer students to the Making Inferences sheet. I will write on the board using this format to guide them in the organized thinking of how to use your knowledge and text evidence to infer. As students are providing answers I will be connecting the information they provide using a think-aloud as I write and determine where the information is placed. This scaffolding will allow students to hear if there is any information that does not make sense or answer the question as I make the inferences on the board.

Today students will be exposed to a writing comprehension format. We will write an author's purpose paragraph about the information discussed above about how the author depicted Galimoto to the readers in this story. I will operate with the scaffolding strategy to guide students through this process to ensure they can focus on the writing skill and not struggle with comprehending in written format.

#### Day 4

*Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams, Illustrated by Catherine Stock.

Materials: a projector or interactive board, flight simulation, student passports, country stickers, tour of Malawi site above, research form, comprehension paragraph starter-compare and contrast

The objective is for students to experience traveling on an airplane and going to Malawi, Africa to learn about the daily lives of the people, the vast differences and similarities in children's lives in Malawi with themselves.

Today as the students enter they will be given their passport, as they are welcomed aboard their airplane "Allenbrook 1430." Once everybody is seated I will turn on the reality flight simulation. When it is complete the passport stamps will be provided as we discuss what kind of stamp is depicted and what it means in regards to their travel. For the first time, we will move our airplane from Charlotte, North Carolina in North America to Malawi, Africa on our interactive globe.

They will use the research form provided in the appendix to provide a structure of what we are learning about Malawi. As a class, we will read the information to learn from our form and I will guide a discussion on which icon to explore in order to locate the information. Once completed, as a group we will create a compare and contrast comprehension paragraph that students will reference the similarities and differences they described on their research paper.

#### Day 5

*Cherry Tree* by Ruskin Bond, Illustrated by Allan Eitzen

Materials: making an inference, close reading poster, clipart cutout of mountain, white crayons, lined paper, sentence starter

The goal today is for students to infer why the author thought it was important to write this story about a growing cherry tree in the Himalayan Mountains.

Next, I will introduce our book *Cherry Tree* and I will tell them to think about the above goal as I read. Students will be given the organizer making an inference, which they will complete as they listen to the story and I conduct think-alouds.

After I am finished reading this book, we will share out our inferences with text evidence. If answers are incorrect, my first scaffolding strategy is to remind students that she had access to cherries and was eating them in the beginning of the story but that she when sharing them with her grandfather she acted as if she had to savor the last one, and guide them through what this could possibly mean. I will also use my close reading poster to ask questions and provide students support in finding the answer.

Once we conclude why telling the story of this cherry tree was important, students will then write a comprehension paragraph on the theme the author wanted to portray to the reader using the sentence starter-author's purpose using the lined notebook paper. I will show the students how to fit the discussion of theme in this topic sentence, "The author's purpose is to provide a theme of"... Students will then write the rest of it as normal. They will then copy the cutout mountain onto the black or brown construction paper. Next, they will cutout their paragraph from the lined paper and glue onto the mountain. This will be a product to hang on our *Walk-Through Travel Brochure*.

#### Day 6

*Cherry Tree* by Ruskin Bond, Illustrated by Allan Eitzen

Materials: website of Himalayan Mountain tour, research form, flight simulation site, sentence starter-connection

Today students will experience the flight again, while the objective is for them to learn facts about life in the Himalayan Mountains. Information will be presented about their land being filled with garbage. I will ask if they have experienced or currently experiencing a similar situation. After this discussion, students will write a connection paragraph from the sentence starter.

#### Day 7

*I Live in Tokyo*, written and illustrated by Mal Takabayashi.

Materials: close reading poster, make inference sheet, sentence starter-opinion paragraph

The objective for day seven is for students to listen for how the author shows her feeling about her country as I read. I will remind the students to look and analyze the pictures to find out this information. Once I am finished reading we will discuss their making inferences sheets. Next we will compare how this story makes us feel compared to how we felt in the *Cherry Tree*. The children will write an opinion paragraph providing references to the text.

#### Day 8

*I Live in Tokyo*, written and illustrated by Mal Takabayashi

Materials: online tour of Tokyo, flight simulation, research form, lined paper, cutout of train

The objective today is for students to learn similarities and differences between North America and Tokyo Japan using their research form and a class discussion.

The class will conduct research on this website about Tokyo and write on research form. Students will then copy their surprising facts onto lined paper. They will be given the train template to trace, cutout then glue their lined paper containing their surprising facts.

#### Day 9

*Big Rain Coming* by Katrina Germein, Illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft

Materials: close reading poster, thinking about the text organizer, sentence starter-prediction

The objective is to analyze the story and make a prediction as why the author and illustrator depicted the illustrations they did in the text.

Before I read the text I will give the students some background of the people from this culture without showing any pictures. I will then tell the children to listen to the story and

analyze the pictures to make a prediction about this answer. Once I complete the story students will be directed to write a prediction paragraph from comprehension starter.

Day 10

*Big Rain Coming* by Katrina Germein, Illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft

Materials: research form, reality flight, sentence starter inference, website of the tour of Minyerri.

The goal for today is that students will make a prediction about information in which they are only provided a few facts in order to focus their attention the skill of close reading.

Students will take have another flight experience and students will be completing the research form as this exploration and discussion occurs. I will show the children the information on theories of how long the Minyerri people have been in America. Next, students will be directed to their prediction writing from the day we read the book. They will be asked if their prediction from yesterday has changed, they have to describe why it does or does not change in an inference paragraph sentence starter structure using strong text evidence.

Day 11

*The Butterfly*, written and illustrated by Patricia Polacco

Materials: make an inference sheet, close reading poster, inference sentence starter

The objective is for students to make an inference using close reading skills. I tell the students to make an inference as to why the storeowner was taking by the Nazis.

After reading, ask students to confirm their inference in a written comprehension paragraph.

Day 12

*The Butterfly*, written and illustrated by Patricia Polacco

Materials: research form, flight simulation, France, Germany website, sentence starter-opinion paragraph

The goal of today is to discover some of the beautiful structures in France and form their opinion about it.

Students will complete research forms about the information they learned and we discussed on the exploration. We will have a discussion about their favorite structures they viewed and their opinion of that structure.

Day 13

*Splash, Anna Hibiscus* written and illustrated by Atinuke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DHtR1dMZ74>

Materials: Thinking about the text, life lesson paragraph starter, interactive whiteboard or projector

The objective is to provide information about the perceptions students have about people and places making a point to provide the stark contrast of their thoughts with this story.

Students will be asked if they learned a lesson about assuming places and people are one certain way. We will have a discussion on the topic of, how the Africa depicted by Atinuke, different from Malawi, Africa or any place in Africa you have visualized or saw on television. Students will be directed and guided to write a life lesson paragraph to answer this question.

Day 14

The Issue

Materials: inference paragraph from day eleven, texts used from other days

Today's objective is to discuss the importance of acceptance, tolerance and empathy by connecting more than one story read and or connecting information learned from different sources.

We will reference our first lesson and engage in a discussion about the story *Whoever You Are*, in order to bring to remembrance the importance of acceptance, tolerance and empathy. Students will be guided to use any of the texts read to reference two different sources as to why these traits are important using the issue paragraph. Students will be told they have to use both references in the paragraph.

Day 15

Sharing my Exploration

Materials: summary sentence starter, past materials from trips, laptops, iPads, desktops

The goal today is for students to create a Tellagami, Sockpuppet or Voki to share what they learned. The information they share needs to come from a written summary paragraph they must complete first.

Day 16-20

Interview of Atinuke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8NXmyZ20DE>

Materials: Research form, website of Atinuke interview

Today's objective is to learn about a different perspective of Africa by listening to the author tell the purpose for her stories and related to the purpose of Black History month. This will continue until day twenty.

We will have a discussion about what Atinuke discussed about the purpose she started writing stories. I will ask the students how this connects to Black History month in February. I will tell students that we will share our international travels with our Walk Through Travel Brochure and continue to grow through this process by researching famous African-Americans. My children will be able to choose African-Americans in whom to research as individuals or groups. Students interested in being in the living timeline will begin to prepare.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Barton, Paul E. *Why the Gap Persist? Research ties 14 factors to student achievement and low-income and minority children are at a disadvantage in almost all of them.* 2004

<sup>2</sup> referenced above

<sup>3</sup> referenced above

<sup>4</sup>Blachowicz, Camille L.Z. and Obrochta, Connie. *Vocabulary Visits: Virtual Field Trips for Content Vocabulary Development.* In International Reading Association. pp. 262-268. doi:10.1598/RT.59.3.6 (2005)

<sup>5</sup>Morsello, Carla and Ruiz-Mallen, Isabel. *Do Schooling and exposure to the dominant society through travel experiences associated with the monetary income of ethnic minorities? A case study among three remote Amazonian indigenous groups.* In Learning and Individual Differences. 223-233:27, 2013

<sup>6</sup> reference 5 above

<sup>7</sup> reference 4 above

<sup>8</sup> Project LIFT website

<sup>9</sup> referenced above

<sup>10</sup> referenced above

<sup>11</sup> Allenbrook website

<sup>12</sup> Vaughn, Sharon and Wanzek, Jeanne and Murray, Christy S. and Roberts, Greg. *Intensive interventions for students struggling in reading and mathematics: A practice guide.* pp 1-51. 2012. www.centeroninstruction.org (accessed November 3, 2014)

<sup>13</sup> referenced above

<sup>14</sup> Shanahan, Timothy. *The National Reading Panel Report: Practice Advice for Teachers.* pp 1-44, 2005. www.learningpt.org (accessed November 3, 2014)

<sup>15</sup> referenced above

<sup>16</sup> Hochberg, Karen. *Be aware of microaggression in diversity communication.* In One Connect. pp 20. 2008.

<sup>17</sup> referenced above

<sup>18</sup> referenced above

<sup>19</sup> referenced above

<sup>20</sup> Payne, Ruby. *Nine Powerful Practices: Nine strategies help raise the achievement of student living in poverty.* Educational Leadership pp 49-52 4, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> referenced above

<sup>22</sup> referenced above

<sup>23</sup> reference 16 above



## **Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards**

This page gives access to the various standards covered throughout this unit. It is important to keep in mind I am working with the Special Education population therefore standards will be implemented with a heavy influence of teacher support or scaffolding. Students will be given many examples and explicit instructions throughout in order for the students to be successful.

### **5<sup>th</sup> grade**

Key Ideas and Details:

#### **RL. 5.1**

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### **SL 5.1**

Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### **RL 5.2**

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

#### **RL 5.3**

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

#### **SL.5.4**

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

#### **SL.5.5**

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

#### **W 5.8**

Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources

**Appendix 2**

**Intensive Instructional Lesson Plan for Students with Disabilities**

I. Differentiating Instructional Delivery (content)

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a. Systematic Instruction

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b. Explicit Instruction

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II. Additional Instructional, Practice and Feedback

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c. Modified Student Work (guided practice, independent work, any assignments)

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d. Learning Environment Considerations

I. Small Groups/One-on-one (Students)

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II. Support Teachers

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### Appendix 3

\_\_\_\_\_’s Research Form      Date\_\_\_\_\_

1). Name of country

\_\_\_\_\_

2). Located on what continent

\_\_\_\_\_

3). This country is connected to what text

\_\_\_\_\_

4). Surprising Facts (at least 3)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5). Did the author illustrate the country appropriately? Explain why or why not

\_\_\_\_\_

6). What is the country/continent internationally famous for

\_\_\_\_\_

7). Write 2 comparing (similar/same) facts and 2 contrasting (different) facts between you and the children living in that country.

Similar

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Different

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

Sentence Starters for Reading Comprehension Paragraphs  
(TS: Topic Sentence, SS: Sentence Starter, CS: Closing Sentence)

Author's Purpose

TS: The author's purpose is

SS1: For instance,

SS2: On top of that,

SS3: While

CS: It's clear that

Compare and Contrast

TS: There are similarities and differences between

SS1: A similarity

SS2: A difference

SS3: Although

CS: In other words,

Connections

TS: This text reminds me of when

SS1: Both times,

SS2: Plus,

SS3: In another way,

CS: This connection is important because

Life Lesson

TS: My inference is that

SS1: The writer does not fully explain

SS2: One clue is

SS3: From my own life, I know

CS: Consequently,

Prediction

TS: I predict that

SS1: One reason is

SS2: Another reason is

SS3: From my own life, I know

CS: According to my prediction