



American Southern Literature Near and Far

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Grade 3

Keywords: Southern, Southern Environment, Unchanging South, Old South, New South, Read Aloud

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

Synopsis:

In this unit, students will travel through the American South represented in literary text. Students will participate in a daily Read Aloud that revolves around guided questions. These questions will implore students to identify recurring southern themes and make personal connections. Through conversations students will be exposed to diverse opinions and experiences building empathy and cultural understanding.

This unit has been designed to be completed within quarter one and pair strategically with the 3rd grade Module 1 EL Curriculum required by CMS. Throughout the EL Module students will explore texts that highlight many diverse places and cultures around the world, while this Read Aloud unit will send students to explore the American South. Three texts have been chosen specifically in this unit, however supplemental texts are provided.

Read Alouds are meant to best support students' needs for fluency and oral comprehension. As a loosely structured Read Aloud curriculum, this unit provides many opportunities for teachers to use their own discretion in teaching points based on their students' needs while supporting conversations to lend themselves to the Southern focus. Naturally many reading and social emotional standards will be addressed.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 25 students in Third Grade.

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

American Southern Literature Near and Far

Meagan Boozer Missigman

Introduction

Rationale:

CMS adopted EL Curriculum about 2 years ago. The purpose of the curriculum is to have the district completely cohesive and equitable. The expectation for educators in CMS is to not stray from the curriculum whatsoever. The EL literacy block for grades third and up, is a solid two hour window where the first hour is diving into the Module content focus - hitting multiple standards - and the second hour is targeting student needs through differentiated instruction. With the structure of EL lessons and the district's expectations, it is crucial that my added curriculum is parallel and pairs nicely with the curriculum focus.

In the EL curriculum, Third Grade begins the year by diving into access to literacy all over the world through a Module called *Overcoming Learning Challenges Near and Far*. Students spend the first quarter exploring different countries, different cultures, and completely different lifestyles than their own.

Through CTI this year, I am partaking in professional development that focuses on American Southern Literature. As a teacher in the new south, I think that it is equally as important to understand the history of where they live and surrounding areas as well as places around the world.

Being limited with when to plug in American Southern literature in the core lessons, it dawned on me that the most obvious time to input American Southern literature would be Read Aloud. Read Aloud has stood the test of time! It is present in so many different curriculums and best practices through the years. Read Aloud is a time for students to listen for fluency, tone, expression, etc., discuss text, and simply enjoy a story! Even with the new curriculum, it is still a prioritized time at my school. What better time to input some "local" literature for these students?! Through Read Alouds, Third graders can access their surrounding states through poems, biographies, picture books, fiction thrillers and more to build an understanding of the historical South and their Modern South.

In an article pulled from RISE, a Children's Literacy Journal, Theresa "Tree" Martus writes that American Southern Literature has three main trends: race, southern environment, and an unchanging South.¹ Now these three points do not necessarily need to be explained in depth to Third Graders. However, I think that through Read Aloud, these sometimes broad, challenging to understand, and often heavy topics can be discussed organically with young learners such as Third Graders with strategic text choice.

A core piece of the EL curriculum for all grades is Guiding Questions. These questions are designed as the focus on the entire Module Block for the quarter. Every lesson, every new piece of information points back to these questions. To keep with the structure and procedures of the district-acquired curriculum, Guiding Questions will be the discussion focus of almost every Read Aloud session.

Southern Literature Near and Far Guiding Questions:

What trends of the “South” do you see in the text?

Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Another impactful concept that EL curriculum does through the first Module is flag every country that is read about on a world map. The map is referenced frequently through the Module. By the end of the quarter, the class has a world map that has flags all over it that represent locations and cultures learned about through their reading. This can easily be mimicked when reading southern literature during Read Aloud. By the end of the quarter, the class has local stops and foreign, far away stops!

This Southern Literature exploration curriculum unit should start at the beginning of the school year and continue through the first quarter. The layout is to begin the unit with background about the South, and then dive into exploring diverse texts, narratives, poems, picture books as well as diverse characters and time periods. At the end of every or every other Read Aloud session, the teacher and students will discuss Guided Questions and jot notices and wonders (another EL heavy practice) on the Guiding Questions anchor chart poster(s). By the end of the quarter, students will have an abundance of notice and wonders from multiple texts. It will be easy to compare, contrast, make connections, form opinions, and so much more!

This CU is designed to be taught the first quarter of the year during the set Read Aloud time. The Overcoming Learning Challenges Near and Far Module (EL) will only be covered during the first quarter as well as the American Southern literature Read Alouds. Some texts will take one or two days and others may take a couple weeks. In the quarter, you may only cover 3 or 4 Southern influenced Read Alouds. I have 3 suggested focus texts below, however included in the unit are many other supplemental texts to best fit different classes.

Teaching in Charlotte, many of our students have had the opportunity to see rural south, urban south, and a whole lot of modern south. Through this CU, students are likely to make connections to their own lives. The texts will enlighten them on past and present topics and situations that revolve around where they are growing up. This CU naturally brings up the topics of history, social emotional learning, and expands upon literary standards.

To learn more about CMS’ adopted EL Curriculum, follow the link [here](#).

School/Student Demographics

My school resides in the Steele Creek area, twenty minutes outside of Charlotte, NC. The area is changing vastly and becoming more and more diverse. There is truly a little bit of everything - race, economic status, cultures, etc.

The current enrollment at my school is approximately 798 students.

The race demographics are as follows:

- .10% Two or more races
- .3% American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 4.3% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 5.8% Asian
- 17.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 27.6% White
- 44.7% Black

Other student demographics include:

- 12% of students receiving Special Education (IEP)
- 7% of students that are Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- 95% of school attendance

Information pulled from [PPES School Improvement Plan](#).

My classroom has 25 students.

The race demographics are as follows:

- 1% Two or more
- 8% Asian
- 16% Hispanic
- 24% White
- 48% Black

Other classroom demographics include:

- 12% Limited English Proficient (LEP)
- 24% MTSS - Literacy Interventions
- 52% Female
- 48% Male

Unit Goals:

1. *Enhance required district curriculum with meaningful “local” influences.*

Throughout the first quarter, the required district literacy curriculum will expose children to many cultures and places around the world, while this unit will expose children to familiar places. Through the unit’s focus text, students will explore Florida, West Virginia and Alabama. While the texts do not all align in terms of time period or place,

there are common themes of Southern influences that will be familiar to students living in the modern South.

2. *Impact students with meaningful focus texts that allow personal connection.*

The focus texts have been strategically chosen to share stories about diverse characters and experiences. Through the readings, children will hopefully see glimmers of themselves and build empathy towards differences in experiences and cultures.

Content Research

Southern Children's Literature CTI Seminar

Through my 2021 CTI seminar, I've had the opportunity to dive into rich southern culture and the themes that often occur in American Southern Literary text. Often times in American Southern Literature, readers see recurring messages of race, southern environment and the unchanging south.¹ As someone who has grown up in Southwest Charlotte and lived through the area's evolution from a relatively old south to new south, and is now teaching in the area I grew up in, I think it is beneficial for students to have a background understanding of where they are growing up and how that has an impact on them.

I've spent a week with the Logan family in Mississippi (*Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, Mildred Taylor). I walked in the shoes of Patti, a young Jewish girl living in a non-Jewish community in Arkansas during WWII and imagined her protecting a Nazi soldier (*Summer of my German Soldier*, Bette Greene). I've been inside the head of Ha, a Vietnamese refugee and felt what it may be like to learn a new language in a very dominant southern community in Alabama (*Inside Out and Back Again*, Thanhha Lai). I school hopped with Paul in Florida (*Tangerine*, Edward Bloor). I jumped down the street and went to York, SC where Clover experienced the death of her father on the same day as his wedding to a white woman after a quick whirlwind romance. She processes the death and racial differences on her family's peach farm (*Clover*, Doris Sanders).

The structure of our weekly CTI sessions has been to independently read a text and then come together to discuss the author's "south" background or interpretation and how that influenced the story. The conversation always pointed to the ever-present American Southern Literary themes. Naturally without any prompting from anyone - connections are openly shared and perspectives feel safe because of the relaxed nature of the course. What has been interesting for me as a twenty-something white female who grew up middle class in the suburbs has been walking into a session with my personal perspective influenced by my experiences and leaving with the diverse lenses of my peers from our group discussion.

Could this magical discussion happen in the current classroom of young learners?

It's no secret that the expectation within CMS is to stick to the structured EL curriculum for literacy. With experience in third grade and fourth grade teaching the curriculum, I can agree that the EL curriculum is diverse in perspectives and experiences. Third grade specifically targets

access to books in different parts of the world as it's first focus. Students are doused in the culture and lifestyles of different places all over the world and their challenges when it comes to education. The students become invested in understanding the differences between these different ways of living in comparison to their own. Because I've seen the way third graders and fourth graders have participated in tough, meaningful conversations through the district curriculum, there is no part of me that doubts that students wouldn't be able to participate in discussions revolving around themes of the South. The connection aspect will be the first connection bridge.

While there isn't a lot of wiggle room with the curriculum and its expectations, there is still Read Aloud time integrated into my current schedule. I know this to be the case for many of my peers at other schools as well. Within CMS there is not a required curriculum for Read Aloud or choice reading within the classroom, should the teacher have time. This allows an opportunity for strategic book choice to enhance and personalize the curriculum.

Why Read Aloud?

Fontas and Pinnell are arguably the ultimate gurus of literacy instruction. Their continuum acts a plan for literacy instruction. Fontas and Pinnell suggest that Read Aloud instruction should happen from prekindergarten through eighth grade as shared in *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*.² My favorite line, in regards to Read Aloud included in their *Continuum of Literacy Learning* is: *When students are actively listening to and discussing a text, all the strategies for comprehending are in operation.* pg. 14 While the approach may be simple, the impact is everlasting.

All levels of readers can be successful in terms of comprehension through a read aloud interaction. There is a sense of "even playing field" that encourages struggling readers to become engrossed with a text. Everyone is hearing the text the same way, but processing the information and making connections uniquely to themselves. Because Read Aloud is an auditory approach, decoding, fluency, etc. aren't necessary skills. When we think about the intention of this American Southern Literature Read Aloud focus, we are wanting students to make personal connections to the area they are growing up in and the surrounding areas. There will be some students who will hear a text and the hot summer humidity will resonate with them. Some students will feel connected to a race injustice that stings because they've witnessed it. Some students may connect with a character because it reminds them of their own culture. This moment of instruction will be about what students hear and the connections made, not what they are able to independently, fluently read.

In order to work towards the goal of open discussion and a true understanding of "the south", book choice and routine has to be strategic. By starting with a quick background introduction of what makes up the South students have a base understanding of the South and are ready to begin diving into text. I have suggested to begin with *Because of Winn Dixie* as it is developmentally appropriate and easy to implement routine expectations. Guided Questions (see below) will begin after several chapters are read so the teacher is able to introduce Read Aloud and choose standards they feel best suit to highlight through discussion. Following *Because of Winn Dixie*,

will be a reread of *More than Anything Else*, a picture book. *More than Anything Else* is first highlighted in the EL Module and through a reread, students are able to see the texts through another lens revolving around this unit's Guided Questions. The last Read Aloud for the module will be *Inside Out and Back Again* which is about a refugee fleeing from Vietnam to Alabama. The diversity of these texts allows many students to feel seen. On the other hand, it allows students to build empathy through understanding of what's not like them.

Read Aloud is certainly a noninvasive way to integrate other topics into daily instruction without interrupting the required curriculum, but it also has so many benefits for developing readers. Students learn so much from talking. Having structured, open conversations as a class progresses through a text, expands their understanding of the text but also each other.

Are Young Readers Capable of “Tough” Discussions?

A huge focus coming out of the pandemic has been Social Emotional Learning, SEL. SEL is a required time included in every classroom's schedule in the CMS school district. The nation has had many impactful situations arise in the past couple years. Children are not naive. They are listening. They are absorbing and not always allowed an outlet. I've learned this through our SEL conversations and Module discussion. I think that teachers and parents alike would be surprised by the connections students make and the willingness they have to share. Not every Southern Literature piece will prompt tough discussions, but should they, we can't be scared to guide those discussions.

Research Reflection

It is interesting because we are in a place of education where educators focus mostly on what standards a lesson will hit and how much growth our students will make, that we have had no choice but to abandon past best practices. Sadly, it is where we are in education right now, especially after learning gaps from the pandemic. But I can assure you, that simply reading a text and talking about it with my peers has rejuvenated so much joy for reading. Our kids need that too.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

(Read Aloud, Guiding Questions, Anchor Charts, Map Connections, Notices and Wonders, T-Chart, Timeline, Turn and Talks, Strategic Grouping, 1:1 Student Text)

Anchor Charts: Throughout the unit running anchor charts will be used strategically as recordings of topics and silent teachers/reminders in the classroom.

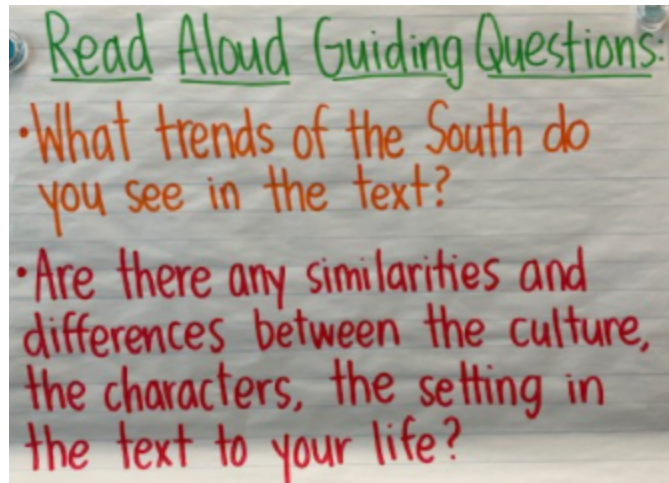
Guiding Questions: Regardless of the the text, the guiding questions will act as the focus for each Read Aloud. There are so many natural literary elements and standards that can be addressed in Read Aloud (see specific lessons below), so the Guiding Questions will help point

the conversation to “the south” focus.

Southern Literature Near and Far Guiding Questions:

- What trends of the “South” do you see in the text?
- Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Map Connections: As different southern Settings come up in text, a pin will be added to a map to mark all of the places traveled to in the text.



With the suggested text- focus or supplemental, the following Southern states could be flagged:

- Alabama
- Appalachian Mountains
- Florida
- Georgia
- Great Smoky Mountains
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Virginia

Notice and Wonders: A key strategy used in many practices, including EL. Notice and Wonders prompt students to identify the obvious details right in front of them and recognize what questions arise through a text, image, etc.

Read Aloud: The entire unit revolves around the teaching idea of Read Alouds. Read aloud is common in many diverse types of curriculum and are often integrated into daily elementary classroom schedules. The premise revolves around an adult reading aloud a text to students while they listen for comprehension. Through read aloud, students are exposed to fluency, expression, tone and many other elements of a strong reader. Read aloud is a time for all level of learners to thrive as it revolves around listening comprehension and that comprehension is often supported with conversations.

Read Aloud Bank: It is important to me that the readings hit “all kinds of south”. By that I mean, that the text portrays the old south, new south, rural south, mountain south, black south,

stereotypical south, all facets of “south”. I have suggested 3 focus texts, however the teacher would have full discretion on supplemental text and the text timeline.

Suggested Focus Texts:

More than Anything Else by Marie Bradby (West Virginia)

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate Dicamillo (Florida)

Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai (Alabama)

Supplemental Picture Books & Poems:

Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds by Cynthia Roland (Appalachia)

Elvis is King! by Jonah Winter (Tennessee)

Freedom Song: The Story of Henry “Box” Brown by Sally W. Walker (Virginia)

Going Down Home with Daddy by Kelly Starling Lyons

John Henry by Julius Lester

Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco (Georgia)

Stitchin’ and Pullin’ by Patricia C. McKissack (Alabama)

Trombone Shorty by Trombone Shorty (Louisiana)

Unspoken: A Story of the Underground Railroad by Henry Cole (Virginia)

Supplemental Chapter Books:

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson (Tennessee)

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen (Florida)

How to Steal a Dog by Barbara O’Connor (North Carolina)

Inside Out & Back Again by Thanhha Lai (Alabama)

Love, Ruby Lavender by Deborah Wiles (Mississippi)

Willa of the Wood by Robert Beatty (Great Smoky Mountains)

The Everlasting Now by Sara Harrell (Alabama)

The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester by Barbara O’Connor (Georgia)

The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis by Barbara O’Connor (South Carolina)

Root Magic by Eden Royce (South Carolina)

Somebody, In, Wanted, But, So/SIWBS: A comprehension support used to enhance the gist understanding of a text. Commonly used throughout the EL Modules.

Strategic Grouping: The teacher can be strategic, or intentional with who is paired up for conversations in order to build empathy and perspective understanding. Strategies for grouping include mixed ability groups, mixed racial groups, mixed “experience” (life) groups, etc.

T-Chart: A graphic organizer used to compare two topics.

Timeline: A list of important events.

Turn and Talks: A classroom protocol to participate in small group conversation revolving around the content.

1:1 Student Text (Optional): Putting the text directly in front of students can support word recognition, fluency and focus.

Instructional Implementation

Suggested Pacing: Please note that Read Aloud dates and the text progression may vary. Teachers have full discretion on how many chapters/poems are shared per Read Aloud session. The only concrete lesson progression includes *Southern Introduction: Day One* and at what point in each selection should Guided Questions be introduced. See notes below.

“Southern” Introduction: (Day One)

Objective: In this session, students will understand what region of the US is identified as the South, brief history and characteristics (climate, goods, etc.) that define the south.

Connect: Create a T-chart. Label one side “Born Here” and the other side “Moved Here”. Pose the following questions - Where do we live? What is it like? Who was born here in Charlotte/Steele Creek? Who moved from another city, state, or country to Charlotte/Steele Creek? Where did you live before? Do you know why your family moved here? Who has family in Charlotte? How would you describe what it’s like to live here to someone who has never been here before?

Teaching Point: Explain to students that they live in the South. Close read the [Southern Background website](#) together as a class. Stop after each section to encourage understanding and prompt connection. Let students share their connections after each subheading.

Active Engagement: Add a flag to Charlotte on the class map labeled “Us” if you haven’t already. If you have (from EL lesson), re-identify for students.

Optional: Outline the region of the South on your class map.

Because Of Winn Dixie Introduction: Chapters 1 - 2 (Day Two)

Suggested Pacing: 1 - 2 chapters a day.

Objective: In these sessions, students will be introduced to the storyline, characters and will be immersed in Read Aloud expectations (personalized by teacher).

Teaching Point: “Today we are going to begin reading a new text together! Before we begin, what do you notice about the cover of the text? Notices are the things that we can see right in front of us.” Record responses on a Notices/Wonder T-chart. Then transition to asking students what they wonder about the text and record responses.

Active Engagement: At the end of chapters 1 and 2, add a pin to Florida on the class map. Label the pin India and Winn-Dixie. Discuss how close we live to Florida and any connections students may have to Florida.

Teacher Discretion: Discuss whole group or in turn and talk partners.

Optional: Add *Because of Winn-Dixie* to your supply list prior to the year beginning, or have students use district/state online book access (Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Sora subscription, etc.) to be 1:1 with the text.

Because Of Winn Dixie Introduction: Chapter 7 (Day X)

Suggested Pacing: 1 - 2 chapters a day.

Objective: In these sessions, students will be introduced to the unit's guiding questions.

Connect: Discuss the storyline so far using the Somebody, In, Wanted, But, So notecatcher/anchor chart. For chapters 1 – 7, there may be multiple *Wants* and *Buts* that students reflect upon, but encourage students to focus on the consistent *Wants* and *Buts*.

Possible responses:

Somebody – Opal

In - Florida

Wanted – to feel part of her Southern Community,

But – she is struggling to build relationships,

So – she relies on Winn-Dixie and their adventures to help build relationships with diverse people around town.

Explain that the *So* portion of the note catcher will continue to develop.

Teaching Point: After reading chapter 7, explain to students that we have been and will continue reading texts in Module block that take us to places all over the world. The story we are reading right now takes place not too far from home. Share the Read Aloud guiding questions. Discuss how they are different from the Module guiding questions. How are they more specific to “us”?

Read Aloud Guiding Questions:

- What trends of the “South” do you see in the text?
- Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Active Engagement: Discuss responses to each Guiding Question. Give students a “me too” signal to nonverbally make connections.

Teacher Discretion: Discuss whole group or in turn and talk partners.

Because Of Winn Dixie Continuation: Chapters 8 - 26 (Day X)

Suggested Pacing: 1 - 2 chapters a day.

Teaching Point Notes: As the text progresses, take teacher autonomy in stopping to discuss literacy standards that best support your students' needs for fluency and comprehension. At the end of every/every other chapter, point students back to the unit guiding questions. Guide students to elaborate on their responses when sharing connections from the text.

Read Aloud Guiding Questions:

- What trends of the “South” do you see in the text?
- Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Because Of Winn Dixie Author Dive: End of Text (Day X)

Objective: In these sessions, students will be introduced to the author and make connections between her life and her writing.

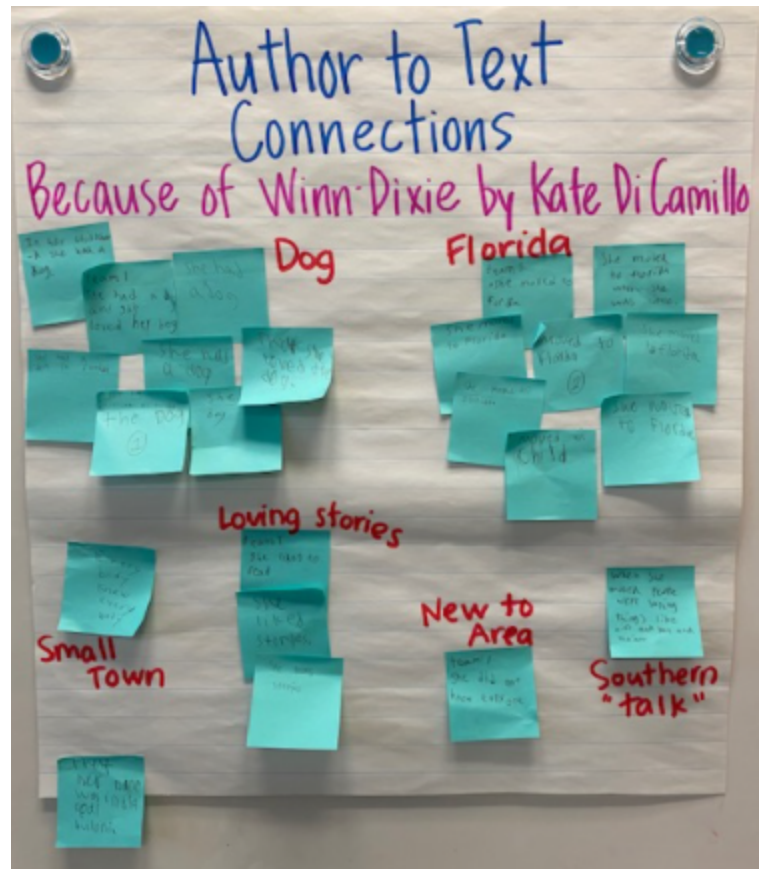
Connect: Share the following [autobiographical writing](#) with the class. Read aloud to the class so all students have an opportunity to comprehend the information.

Teaching Point: “After hearing a little bit about the author’s life, what connections can you make between the author and the text she wrote *Because of Winn-Dixie*?”

Active Engagement: Have students turn and talk in groups of 2-3 to record connections on sticky notes. Instruct students to add connections to an Author - Text Connection anchor chart when finished. After students have completed their sticky notes, discuss the responses. Group similar responses together and label topics for instance moving, location, dog, one parent household, etc.

More than Anything Else: (Day X)

Special Note: *More Than Anything Else* will be read the first time during EL Module Block as part of the EL curriculum. The focus of the EL lesson on the first day of the text has students use the SIWBS strategy (see above). The EL lesson also supports understanding with Booker T. Washington background information. Reread the text after the initial read to push southern influences and other grade level reading strategies.



Objective: In this session, students will shift the understanding from the Module focus, to connections to more personal connections in regards to location, race, human rights, etc.

Connect: State, “We have already read this book and discussed how this book connects to our Module. You also know that Booker grew up to become very educated and he even founded his own school. Today I want to reread the text and look at it through another lens.”

Teaching Points: Read the text aloud stopping at the points below. Allow students to share responses and build upon one another's responses.

At the end of page 3 ask, “What do you notice about the men’s outfits? Do you think this is hard work? How can you tell?”

At the end of page 9 ask, “What does Booker mean by *all the people are free to go where they want and do what they want?*”

At the end of page 12, repeat the line *I have found hope, and it is as brown as me*. Ask, “What does Booker mean? Why would this impact him?”

At the end of page 20 say, “Booker is exhausted, but still studying. Why?”

At the end of the text say, “Thinking about the time period and where Booker lives, why would access to the alphabet be important?”

Active Engagement: Discuss the Guided Questions and record student responses. Add a West Virginia flag to the class map.

Teacher Discretion: Discuss whole group or in turn and talk partners.

Read Aloud Guiding Questions:

- What trends of the “South” do you see in the text?
- Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Special Note: Guide students to make connections between the history of black Americans in the South and how the time period of this text influences Booker’s access to the alphabet. Support students socially and emotionally who may identify with the character.

Inside Out and Back Again: Part I & II (Day X)

Special Note: The Guided Questions will not begin or be discussed until *Part III, Alabama* has begun. See notes below on how to tweak Guided Questions to support cultural understanding for the first two parts of the text.

Suggested Pacing: 10 - 15 pages/poems per day.

Teaching Point Notes: As the text progresses, take teacher autonomy in stopping to discuss literacy standards that best support your students' needs for fluency and comprehension. At the end of every session, consider discussing Vietnamese culture and traditions evident in the text.

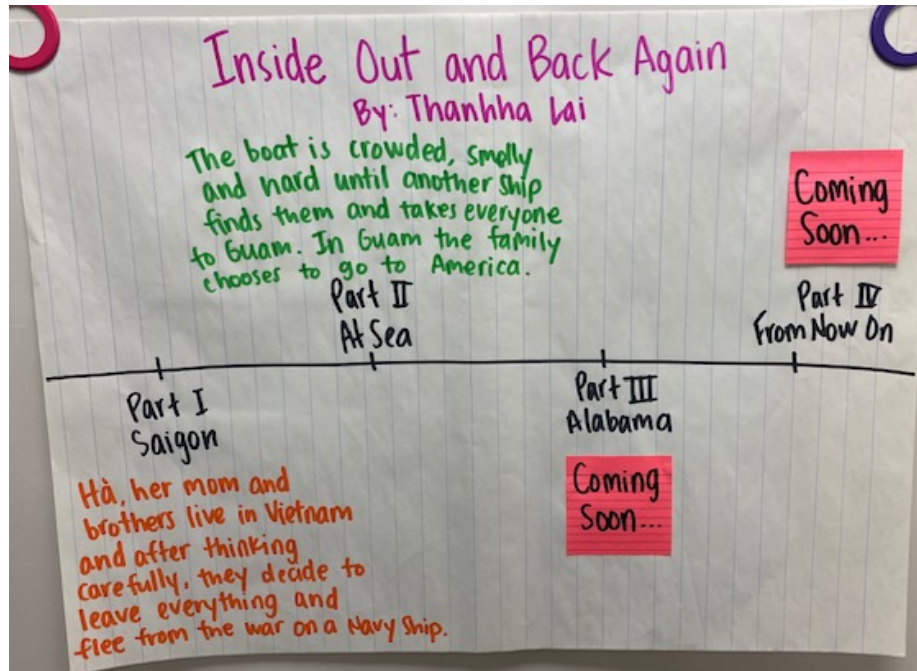
Active Engagement: Discuss the temporary Guided Questions.

Teacher Discretion: Discuss whole group or in turn and talk partners.

Temporary Read Aloud Guiding Questions:

- What elements of Vietnamese culture are present in the text so far?
- Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Inside Out and Back Again: Part III pg. 113 (Day X)



Suggested Pacing: 10 - 15 pages/poems per day.

Objective: In these sessions, students will continue to progress through the text and acknowledge connections between their own self and the character's cultural background and current events.

Connect: Discuss the storyline so far by recording the gist of parts I and II on a timeline anchor chart.

Teaching Point: Begin reading Part III of the text.

Active Engagement: At the end of every Read Aloud session in Part III and Part IV, discuss responses to each Guiding Question. Give students a “me too” signal to nonverbally make connections and an opportunity to take turns and share. Record responses on sticky notes or on board/poster.

Teacher Discretion: Discuss whole group or in turn and talk partners.

Read Aloud Guiding Questions:

- What trends of the “South” do you see in the text?
- Are there any similarities and differences between the culture, the characters, the setting in the text to your life?

Add an Alabama flag to the classroom map on the first day of reading Part III.

Special Note: Support students socially and emotionally who may identify with the character with opportunities to share. Consider strategic seating for students to share with diverse partners.

Resources

Materials:

Anchor Chart Paper

Focus Texts (see below)

Markers

Sticky Notes

Websites (see below)

Student Resources:

Optional: 1:1 text

Teacher Resources:

Focus Texts

- *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo
A fiction novel about a young girl and her dog finding their way in a small southern town. (Florida)
- *More than Anything Else* by Marie Bradby
A historical fiction, picture book approach to Booker T. Washington’s childhood and the impact of the time period and access to literature. (West Virginia)
- *Inside Out and Back again* by Thanhha Lai
A free verse poetry novel about a young girl who must flee her home country of Vietnam to avoid the impacts of the Vietnam War. Her family makes their way to Alabama where they are obvious refugees. The cultural and language differences present challenges. (Alabama)

Read Aloud Bank for Supplemental Texts

Supplemental Picture Books & Poems:

Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds by Cynthia Roland (Appalachia)

Elvis is King! by Jonah Winter (Tennessee)

Freedom Song: The Story of Henry “Box” Brown by Sally W. Walker (Virginia)

Going Down Home with Daddy by Kelly Starling Lyons

John Henry by Julius Lester

Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco (Georgia)

Stitchin’ and Pullin’ by Patricia C. McKissack (Alabama)

Trombone Shorty by Trombone Shorty (Louisiana)

Unspoken: A Story of the Underground Railroad by Henry Cole (Virginia)

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Websites

[Kate Dicamillo Highlight](#)

[Southern Background Website](#)

Assessments

This unit does not require any formal assessments. Informal assessment of understanding, connections, social/emotional will naturally occur by teacher through questioning, conversations and observations.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

Naturally Read Alouds informally hit the majority of the required grade level standards. Through organic conversations and discoveries in texts, multiple standards are covered throughout a text.

North Carolina English Language Standards

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

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 the text.

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

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

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

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

RL.3.10 By the end of grade 3, read and understand literature at the high end of the 2-3 text complexity band proficiently and independently for sustained periods of time. Connect prior knowledge and experiences to text.

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

RI.3.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

RI.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.

RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.

RI.3.9 Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic. Range of Reading and Level of Complexity

RI.3.10 By the end of grade 3, read and understand informational texts at the high end of the 2-3 text complexity band proficiently and independently for sustained periods of time. Connect prior knowledge and experiences to text.

Notes

¹Theresa "Tree" Martus, *Southern Literature for Children Lessons of the Past, the Present and for the Future*, pg. 3-6

²Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. *The Continuum of Literacy Learning*, pg. 14

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Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2008). *The Continuum of Literacy Learning* (Second). Heinemann.

Theresa "Tree" Martus, "Southern Literature for Children Lessons of the Past, the Present and for the Future.". RISE. Spring/Summer 2021. pg. 3-6