The Element of Surprise

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English Language Arts (Grade 6)

Big Ideas:

Exploring **stories** and other **texts** helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.

Developing our understanding of how language works allows us to use it purposefully.

Comprehend and connect (reading, listening, viewing)

* Apply appropriate strategies to comprehend written, oral, and visual **texts**, guide **inquiry**, and **extend thinking**
* Synthesize ideas from a variety of sources to build understanding
* **Think critically, creatively, and reflectively** to explore ideas within, between, and   
  beyond **texts**
* Recognize and identify the role of **personal, social, and cultural contexts, values, and perspectives** in **texts**
* Understand how **literary elements, techniques, and devices** enhance and shape meaning

Create and communicate (writing, speaking, representing)

* Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful **literary and informational texts** for a variety of purposes and **audiences**
* Assess and **refine texts** to improve their clarity, effectiveness, and impact according to purpose, **audience,** and message
* Select and use appropriate features, forms, and genres according to audience, purpose, and message
* Transform ideas and information to create original texts

Developing Understandings: Surprise is an element of effective stories and storytelling that contributes to satisfying experiences reading texts. Authors use intentional construction strategies to develop logical outcomes.

**Inquiry**: How do authors create satisfying endings to stories? What contributes to a logical, but surprising ending that is engaging to readers?

Read:

Donovan’s Big Day by Leslea Newman

OR

Stolen Words by Melanie Florence

OR

In My World by Jillian Ma

OR

Spencer’s New Pet by Jessie Sima. (a nearly wordless book)

Read aloud by Jessie Sima <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtxVNXdHLzk>

Ask readers to consider: How do author’s create satisfying endings to stories?

Ask students to reflect on the story?:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What were you predicting would happen in the story? | How was the outcome different than you were expecting? |
|  |  |

Read: Once Bitten.

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Ftierafoy.weebly.com%2Fuploads%2F2%2F0%2F3%2F5%2F20359387%2Foncebittenbydavidhill.docx>

Stop at designated points to pause and reflect.

What is going on?

What do you anticipate will happen next?

Inquiry Questions:

After completing the story, consider:

Did you anticipate the ending? At what moment in the story did you anticipate the ending?

How did the ending make you feel?

Was the ending logical / reasonable? Would you consider the ending satisfying / entertaining?

How do you connect to the character’s experience? How do you relate the character’s experience to something you have experienced or witnessed?

**How did the author construct the story in order that the ending makes sense? What are the clues sprinkled throughout the story that support the ending?**

Watch: The Present

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iFWyihDvCE>

Consider inquiry questions as above.

Watch: Understanding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZBrowcWnMU&t=25s>

Consider inquiry questions as above.

Watch: The Most Beautiful Thing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP8psM4LWXk>

Consider inquiry questions as above.

Watch: Red Rose Tea Commercial 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hvinz1Tyk9E>

Consider inquiry questions as above.

Watch: Howard’s Drive in Theatre

<https://youtu.be/Tuib_FQR-Tw>

Compare experiences across the texts that have been shared. What do they have in common?

Some ways to consider exploring this inquiry at different grade levels

Use picture box to continue the exploration:

Primary

Read: Bark George by Jules Feiffer

Beatrice Doesn’t Want To by Laura Numeroff

Hooway for Wodney Wat by Helen Lester

King and King by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland

Watch: In A Heartbeat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2REkk9SCRn0>

Simplify questions:

What happened? How did it make you feel?

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For secondary

Read: Fox by Margaret Wild (picture book)

Read: To Serve Man By Damon Knight

<http://perrylocal.org/mostova/files/2010/10/To-Serve-Man.pdf>

Watch: Twilight Zone version of To Serve Man

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdl24bLAs1k> (24:56 mins)

Read: The Lottery by Shirley Jackson

<https://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/jackson_lottery.pdf>

Also available to watch as short film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV03h3XWTDU> (9:56 mins)

Consider having students watch and deconstruct: The Sixth Sense by Filmmaker M. Night Shyamalan (1hr 50 mins)

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VG9AGf66tXM>

Example Lit Circle Set (themes: isolation, disenfranchisement, outcast…)

**Sparks – Graham McNamee**

**Surviving the Applewhites – Stephanie S. Tolan**

**Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key – Jack Gantos**

**Wizard’s Hall – Jane Yolen**

**Among the Hidden – Margaret Peterson Haddix**

**Loser – Jerry Spinelli**

**Silverwing – Kenneth Oppel**

**Freak the Mighty – Rodman Philbrick**

**Maniac Magee – Jerry Spinelli**

**Earthly Astonishments – Marthe Jocelyn**

**Stargirl – Jerry Spinelli**

**Orvis – H.M. Hoover**

**Men of Stone – Gayle Friesen**

**The Chocolate War – Robert Cormier**

**Additions:**

**The Best At It – Maulik Pancholy**

**A High Five For Glenn Burke – Phil Bildner**

Consider:

What kind of theme could be built around……

Scrambled

<https://youtu.be/9JBNmGlEdLY>