**ADVANCED CURRICULUM FROM THE
CENTER FOR GIFTED EDUCATION AT WILLIAM & MARY**

Challenging
Australian Curriculum:
English Lessons

**Activities and Extensions for Gifted and Advanced Learners in
YEAR 3**

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UNIT 1

Choices

This unit centres on the theme of choice, as related to the choices people, authors and characters make within literature and nonfiction texts. Within the unit, students will read, analyse, evaluate and interpret poetry, short stories and literature with themes related to choices and the effects of those choices. Students will consider choices made by characters, authors and even themselves as they work to develop a deeper understanding of choice in literature and nonfiction. Students will demonstrate their growing understanding of this theme through various projects, narrative writing, informative writing and presentations.

What Do You Think While Reading?

Objectives

In this lesson, students will
- read and analyse a poem to determine literal and non-literal meanings of words
- write an original poem in the style of the analysed poem
- record a reading of their own poem to demonstrate fluid reading.

Estimated Time

- 120 minutes

Australian Curriculum: English Content Descriptions

See Australian Curriculum: English Alignment, p. 153

Materials

- Lesson 1.1 Literature Analysis Model
- Lesson 1.1 Thinking While Analysing Poetry
- Lesson 1.1 Rubric: Gary Soto Figurative Language
- Student copies of "Eating While Reading" by Gary Soto
- Computer and internet access
- Projector to show video clip

Content

Students will analyse a poem by Gary Soto to distinguish literal and non-literal meanings of words and phrases, understanding why the author chose the words and phrases for the overall effect of the poem. Students will create their own poem in the style of Soto's "Eating While Reading" to use non-literal language to express what reading means to them. Students will then choose or draw pictures to illustrate their poems. Students will create an audio/visual recording of their poem to demonstrate fluid reading and reading with expression. Students will then write a reflective essay about the choices they made when writing their poem.

Prior Knowledge

Students will need to have prior exposure to types of figurative language, specifically alliteration, onomatopoeia and personification as well as poetry structure. Students will also need to have prior knowledge in the use of imagery by poets to create mood in poetry.

> **Teacher's Note.** You may not want to tell students the specific pieces of figurative language found in this poem if students have prior knowledge of identifying figurative language.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

1. Conduct a whole-class reading of "Eating While Reading" by Gary Soto. For an initial analysis, work with students to complete Lesson 1.1 Literature Analysis Model. Consider leaving the imagery box blank, as that will be the focus of this lesson. (See pp. 3–4 for additional information about using the Literature Analysis Model.)

2. As a class, discuss how the author uses figurative language to create images in the minds of readers. Guiding questions may include:
   - What do you see when you hear this poem?
   - What vivid words does the author use to create images in the minds of the reader?
   - What line shows an example of imagery that Gary Soto uses in this poem? (Answers will vary, but may include "the balloon of bubble gum" or "slow slither of snow cone syrup running down your arm".)

3. Have pairs do a close read of the poem, looking for examples of figurative language. Encourage students to annotate the text as they read. Examples of figurative language seen include alliteration ("swig of soda", "slow slither of snow cone syrup"), onomatopoeia ("crack") and personification ("book yells"). Have students complete Lesson 1.1 Thinking While Analysing Poetry with their partners.

4. Discuss what students found. Encourage students to support their answers with lines from the poem.

5. Ask: *How do you think Gary Soto feels about reading?* Have students discuss within small groups and then as a whole class. Ask: *How did the author's word choice add to your understanding of the poem?* For example, you may want students to notice the use of "swig of soda" as opposed to a "sip of soda".

6. Have students brainstorm what reading means to them and how reading makes them feel. Have them equate reading to another enjoyable activity, as Gary Soto equates the pleasure of consuming a favourite food with the draw of a good book and how both provide an irresistible attraction. Have students share a few examples. Examples may include "singing while reading", "dancing while reading" and "swinging while reading" (cricket).

7. Have students create a poem in the style of "Eating While Reading" to equate reading to another pleasurable activity, using at least three different types of figurative language and descriptive words to create imagery. Students should draw from the ideas that they have brainstormed, considering what types of figurative language will be most appropriate.

Consider doing an example together as a class, using one of the ideas generated previously. Distribute Lesson 1.1 Rubric: Gary Soto Figurative Language before they begin.

> ***Teacher's Note.*** An Exceeds Expectations column has been added to the rubric to encourage students to push themselves beyond the standard expectations. Very few students may rank in this column.

8. (Optional) Have students edit a peer's writing. Students can add "glows" (remarks on outstanding parts of the writing) and "grows" (remarks on where a student might improve the writing) to a peer's writing.
9. Afterwards, show a video of Gary Soto's poem (http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=36330&CategoryID=10488). Discuss how the images chosen help add to the poem.
10. Have students create their own video version of their poem, using images either found or created by students. Students may use a public domain picture website, such as https://pixabay.com, to find photos to use in their poem.
11. Allow for a movie day in which students share movie poems with their classmates.
12. Have each student write a reflective essay about the choices they made when writing their poem. This should be a metacognitive piece in which they reflect on why they chose certain figurative language types to express the images they wanted to portray. Have students share their work. During the class discussion, ask:
    ▪ What types of choices did you have to make while writing the poem?
    ▪ How often did you make a choice, then change your mind and rewrite a section? What caused you to change your mind?
    ▪ Why is an author's choice of figurative language so important in poetry writing?
    ▪ Which types of figurative language were particularly useful for writing your poem? Why?

Extension Activities

Students may
▪ choose a character from a novel they are reading and write a poem from that character's perspective that explains how the character feels about reading
▪ use a novel that they are reading to serve as inspiration for a poem specifically related to the joy the reader gets from reading this novel, which can serve as an advertisement for the novel at the end of a unit
▪ find other examples of poetry that rely heavily on figurative language and share the poem with their classmates, pointing out the figurative language used and why it is effective.

UNIT III

Beliefs

This unit centres on the ideas related to the beliefs of various characters, authors and historical figures and how those beliefs cause actions and growth in people and characters. Within the unit, students will read, analyse, evaluate and interpret literature, novels and nonfiction texts with themes related to beliefs and to the effects of a belief on those characters or historical figures. They will consider the beliefs of authors, characters and themselves as they work to develop a deeper understanding of beliefs in literature and nonfiction. Students will demonstrate their growing understanding of this theme through various projects, narrative writing, informative writing, persuasive writing and poetry.

LESSON 3.1

Belief in the Unknown

Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- analyse nonfiction texts and traditional creation myths
- create an original myth to explain a natural process.

Estimated Time

- 160 minutes

Australian Curriculum: English Content Descriptions

See Australian Curriculum: English Alignment, p. 156

Materials

- Lesson 3.1 Exploring Myths
- Lesson 3.1 The Process of a Seed Becoming a Plant
- Lesson 3.1 Rubric: From Seed to Plant Myth
- *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons, or similar book illustrating the life cycle of a plant.
- Student copies of supplementary texts:
  - "Myths From Around the World: China" (http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/china.htm)
  - "Pan Gu and Nü Wa" (http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSPG&NW.html)
  - "The Sun Goddess Brings Life to the World" (eprints.utas.edu.au/13321/2/Stories_1-7.pdf), or another Aboriginal Dreamtime story selected by the teacher.

Content

Students will read creation myths to understand how ancient cultures tried to explain the origin of natural events that had no obvious explanation before the advent of modern science. Afterwards, students will create a myth for how a seed becomes a plant based on prior knowledge of elements of myths. Students will read a nonfiction text in order to gain scientific knowledge behind a natural event. Students will then compare and contrast their myth with the scientific process.

Prior Knowledge

Students will need to be familiar with the myth genre and analysing nonfiction texts.

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

1. Ask students to quickly write all of the things they already know about the myth genre.
2. Explain that there are many myths about processes in the natural world that are now explainable by science. Before the advent of modern science, people created myths in order to explain why events in nature happened.
3. Tell students they are going to read one to three myths to see how they are structured. You can assign students a specific myth or have students explore all three myths in the alternative text selections. You may also incorporate other myths.
4. As students are exploring the myth(s), have them organise their thoughts using Lesson 3.1 Exploring Myths. Allow students to share and discuss their thoughts from the handout. If necessary, review the elements of the creation myth genre.
5. Have students imagine that they are members of an ancient culture and must create a myth to explain the process of a seed becoming a plant. They may use Lesson 3.1 Rubric: From Seed to Plant Myth to assist them.
6. After writing, students will investigate the scientific reason as to how a seed grows into a plant. Show students *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons (or a similar text) and explain that they will work with a partner to read through this nonfiction text and answer a few questions.
7. Distribute Lesson 3.1 The Process of a Seed Becoming a Plant. Explain that now that students understand the scientific explanation of how a seed becomes a plant, they will compare and contrast their myth with the scientific explanation.
8. Allow students to share their thoughts from their Venn diagram on Lesson 3.1 The Process of a Seed Becoming a Plant with a partner.

Extension Activities

Students may
- create a play or graphic novel to reflect their created myth
- take an existing myth and write an informative essay to explain the process that happened, using scientific facts gained from research
- write a nonfiction essay comparing the two pieces of writing, their own myth, and *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons.