Close Reading: Charlie Anderson

Resource ID#: 59368

Primary Type: Lesson Plan

During this lesson, the students will become highly involved with the text Charlie Anderson by Barbara Abercrombie. The students will use this text to review and later build on concepts such as characters, setting and events. At the completion of this lesson, students will have a better understanding of characters and their responses to major events. The students will also have the opportunities (if so desired by the teacher) in this lesson to practice comprehension strategies such as making predictions and inferences, asking questions, and making connections to a character and text.

Subject(s): English Language Arts
Grade Level(s): 2

Intended Audience: Educators

Suggested Technology: Computer for Presenter, LCD Projector, Document Camera, Microsoft Office

Instructional Time: 2 Hour(s) 30 Minute(s)

Freely Available: Yes
LESSON CONTENT

- **Lesson Plan Template:** General Lesson Plan
- **Formative Assessment**
  - **Beginning of the lesson:** The teacher will determine the student's background knowledge by discussing major events that occur in our lives. What constitutes a "major" event? What events might forever change our lives? (for example: marriage, divorce, death, re-marriage/step parents, graduation, tornado, hurricane, birth of a child or sibling, etc.) What reactions might we have to these events? Are there ever other factors that may determine or contribute to our reactions to major events?

  - **During the lesson:** After having read the story once, the students will complete a story map (alternative story map) identifying the characters and the main events. After the second reading, the students will take turns answering the whole group discussion questions using the text.

  - **Optional writing:** After the second reading have the students participate in a Think-Write-Pair-Share (see further recommendations for explanation of strategy). Have the student identify the major events and, with a partner, write a detail or two about Elizabeth's (main character) reaction to any of these events.

- **Feedback to Students**
  - The teacher will provide feedback during discussion throughout the lesson.
  - The teacher may provide feedback by asking guiding questions during the completion of the story map and planning sheets.
  - During the lesson (while participating in the inside/outside circle), the teacher will help to facilitate the discussion with text-based questions and provide assistance/guidance when needed while still allowing the students to determine the answers with the use of evidence from the text.
The teacher may provide written or oral feedback during the Think-Write-Pair-Share (see Further Recommendations).

- **Summative Assessment**
  Students will write an informative paragraph to respond to the following prompt:

  *Using the text, write a paragraph to describe the main character’s (Elizabeth) reaction to learning that Charlie the cat belongs to someone else. Remember to include a topic sentence, at least two supporting sentences with evidence from the text, and a closing sentence. Consider this in your writing: How does belonging to two families help Elizabeth in this situation?*

  The attached [Informative/explanatory writing rubric](#) will be used to assess student writing.

- **Learning Objectives: What should students know and be able to do as a result of this lesson?**
  Students will:
  - demonstrate an understanding of the main character in the text *Charlie Anderson* by Barbara Abercrombie.
  - describe key details from a text orally and in writing while asking and answering questions about the text.
  - describe how the main character responds to major events and challenges using details from the text.
  - write an informative paragraph including text-based evidence using grade-appropriate organization, grammar, and conventions.

- **Guiding Questions: What are the guiding questions for this lesson?**
  - What events in the story cause the main character to reflect and/or accept?
  - What major events might force us (the students) to reflect and or accept?
  - How do characters in a story respond to major events?
  - How is the main character changed throughout the story?
  - Essential Question: Why is it important to understand how/why a character responds to a major event or challenge in a text?

- **Prior Knowledge: What prior knowledge should students have for this lesson?**
  Students will need to know:
  - story elements (characters, setting, major events).
  - how to identify the main idea in a text.
  - some comprehension strategies: making connections, making predictions and inferences, determining importance, asking questions.
  - how to write an informative paragraph with grade-appropriate organization, grammar and conventions.
  - how to complete graphic organizers, such as story maps and writing plan sheets.
  - procedures for partner work.

- **Teaching Phase: How will the teacher present the concept or skill to students?**

  **Hook:** (Approximately 20-30 minutes)
1. Have students sitting elbow to elbow, knee to knee (EEKK) with their numbered head partners (partners chosen by teacher based on ability—above average with average, average with low—never two above average or two below average—see further recommendations for explanation of strategy). Show students a series of pictures. With their partners, have the students take turns identifying the major events shown in the pictures. Pictures may include: a wedding, hurricane/tornado, graduation, an extended family—remarriage, step parents/siblings. Then take a few minutes to have partner pairs discuss possible reactions to these events. How might we feel at a wedding? How might we react during/after a tornado or hurricane? How might we feel at a graduation ceremony? After partner discussions bring the class back together and have students share what they discussed.

Depending on the background knowledge of the students, the teacher may need to explain what is happening in the pictures and the possible impact of the event. But the purpose of the hook is to have students identify major events and begin discussing possible reactions people/characters have to these events.

2. Then ask the students the essential question: Why is it important to understand how/why a character responds to a major event or challenge in a text?

Possible answers:

- To help us better understand the story
- To help us relate to the characters (make connections)
- To help us determine appropriate reactions in various situations

The students may not know the answer to this guiding question at the beginning of the lesson. Asking the question gives the students a purpose for learning. This question will be asked continuously throughout instruction. The teacher should have the essential question posted in the room so that the teacher and the students may refer back to it throughout the lesson.

**First Read (approximately two 20-30 minute sessions):**

1. Introduce the book *Charlie Anderson* by Barbara Abercrombie. The teacher will have the students look at the cover. Before the teacher begins reading, allow the students to take a few minutes to make predictions with their numbered head partners. "Looking at the illustration and thinking about the title, what do you think this story might be about?"

2. During this first reading, continuously stop and think about the characters, Elizabeth and Sarah, and the events throughout the story. Model this "stop and think" strategy by writing your thinking on sticky notes and attaching it to the page your thinking is occurring.

   - For example, on the first page the story begins with the line, "One cold night a cat walked out of the woods, up the steps, across the deck and into the house where
Elizabeth and Sarah lived." After reading this I would stop and wonder aloud. "Where did this cat come from?" I would write my question on a sticky note and mark it on that page, sharing it with the students and then allowing them time to wonder as well.

- On page 5, "He decided to stay, and the girls named him Charlie." At this point, I would stop and make a connection: "This reminds me of when my brother and I got our first pet, Coco when I was six years old." Again, I would write my connection on a sticky note and mark it on the page while explaining to the students that my connection helps me understand how Elizabeth and Sarah feel about having acquired a pet.

- Continue using comprehension strategies and marking your thinking while reading throughout the story. Make sure that you also allow time for partner discussions throughout this reading as well. Ask the students to share any wonderings or connections they might be having to the story with their partners.

**Comprehension Check: Story Map (Formative assessment #1)**

3. After you have read the entire story, have the students complete a story map (alternative story map) identifying the characters and major events in the beginning, middle, and end of the story. They may complete their story map with their numbered head partners. If the students are unfamiliar with story elements or a story map graphic organizer you may ask the following guiding questions to aid in its completion:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- Where does the story take place?
- Does the setting change?
- What is the problem in the story?
- What are the major events—in the beginning, in the middle, in the end?
- How is the problem solved?

**Guided Practice: What activities or exercises will the students complete with teacher guidance?**

**Second Reading (approximately two 20-30 minute sessions):**

1. The teacher should display pages 15-28 for the students using a document camera or provide additional copies of the book if available. Have students re-read these pages with their numbered head partners. Using sticky notes have the students mark the pages with their questions (questions may include, but are not limited to, unknown vocabulary and connections).

2. After the students have read the pages with their partners call the class back together whole group. At this point the teacher may allow the students a few moments to discuss their sticky notes with the rest of the class. Teacher may ask "What connections did you make? What questions do you have about the text? What words in the story were you unfamiliar with?"

**Vocabulary:**
3. Have the students refer to page 18 and follow along as you read. "All night long Elizabeth listened to the rain beating on the roof and the wind rattling the windows. Was he cold? Was he hurt? Where was Charlie?" Ask the students, "Why do you think the author described the rain and wind using the words 'beating' and 'rattling'?" Students will use clues to help them determine the meanings of words (if unknown) in this context. Discuss the meanings of words as a whole group to avoid possible misconceptions. Then discuss the imagery these words provide and relate them to how Elizabeth may be feeling not knowing where Charlie is at this point in the story.

**Inside-Outside Circle (Formative assessment #2):**

4. Have the students create an inside and outside circle. The students in the inside circle will be holding the text to refer back to (if multiple copies are available). Then, have the students take turns answering the whole group discussion questions (listed below) using the text. More information on this strategy is provided in the Further Recommendations.

**Whole Group Discussion Questions:**

- **What is Elizabeth's reaction when Charlie doesn't come home during the storm?**

Evidence: "All night long Elizabeth listened to the rainâ€¦ She was wondering, "Was he cold? Was he hurt? Where was Charlie? In the morning Elizabeth and Sarah looked for himâ€¦ They were too worried to eat anything." (page 19)

- **On pages 23-24 Elizabeth and Sarah discover that Charlie and Anderson are the same cat. Using the text, what clues bring them to this discovery?**


- **Using evidence from the text, explain Elizabeth's reaction to the news that Charlie belongs to another family.**

Evidence: The students will draw conclusions based on the ending of the story. Elizabeth learned acceptance based on her own experiences. While sometimes she asked Charlie, "Who do you love the best?", she also realized that he was a lucky cat to be loved by two families.

- **The very last line of the story says, "He's a lucky cat." Why is Charlie a lucky cat?**

Evidence: Just like Elizabeth and Sarah, Charlie has two houses, two beds and two families that love him.

**Third Reading (approximately 30 minutes):**
1. Have the students read or listen to the book *Charlie Anderson* for a third time. The students will complete a plan sheet (while listening to, or reading, the story) to prepare for their independent writing assignment (summative assessment).

2. The teacher may want to make an anchor chart to match the students' plan sheet. The teacher and students may be citing evidence together throughout the third reading. This will provide support for students that may struggle to comprehend.

3. To begin their plan sheet, point out to the students that they will be focused on Elizabeth's reactions to the major events. The teacher might say, "As we read the story, you will determine the main event in the story and write it in the middle box, marked 'Main Event.'" By the third reading the students should know that the main event in the story is when Elizabeth loses Charlie or when she discovers Charlie belongs to another family. Either main event would be appropriate.

4. As they read (or listen to) the story have the students to write evidence and/or details describing Elizabeth's reactions to main events in the four boxes surrounding the middle box. For example, students could record: when Charlie doesn't come home Elizabeth is so worried she can't even eat the cookies offered to her by the neighbor, when the girls discover Charlie is living with another family Elizabeth is shocked and confused, when Elizabeth seems to accept the fact that Charlie belongs to two families and realizes that he is a lucky cat to have two families and two homes. These findings will go in the four surrounding boxes of their plan sheet and will serve as details/evidence in their informative writing.

5. Allow time for students to share their plan sheets and findings. Students will use their plan sheet to complete summative assessment.

- **Independent Practice: What activities or exercises will students complete to reinforce the concepts and skills developed in the lesson?**

**Informative Writing (approximately 30 minutes):**

Provide the following prompt:

*Using the text, write a paragraph to describe the main character's (Elizabeth) reaction to learning that Charlie the cat belongs to someone else. Remember to include a topic sentence, at least two supporting sentences with evidence from the text, and a closing sentence. Consider this in your writing: How does belonging to two families help Elizabeth in this situation?*

Note: The teacher should explain the rubric/expectations to the students prior to writing. See attached Informative/explanatory writing rubric.

- **Closure: How will the teacher assist students in organizing the knowledge gained in the lesson?**
At the end of the lesson, the teacher will have the students refer back to the essential question that was discussed at the beginning of the lesson: *Why is it important to understand how/why a character responds to a major event or challenge in a text?*

After being involved with the lesson the students should have a better understanding of why it is important to understand how/why a character responds to a major event or challenge in a text.

- to better understand the story
- to relate to characters and/or events
- to make real life connections
- to learn appropriate reactions to challenging situations (right vs. wrong)
- to build empathy

**ACCOMMODATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Accommodations:**
  - Students working below grade level may need to work with a partner or in a small group with guidance from teacher for independent portion of the lesson.
  - Students needing extra support may need to orally dictate their ideas for their writing.
  - Visuals—some students may rely more heavily on the illustrations than others to better understand the story. Make sure the pictures are accessible to the students. The teacher may need to display the illustrations as well as the text.
  - Some students may need repeated instructions.
  - Some students may need to work in close proximity to the teacher to be more successful.
  - Students that struggle with writing could be provided a writing frame for the summative assessment.
  - Teachers may want to model how to fill out one of the boxes on the planning frame with students before they complete the remaining boxes independently.

- **Extensions:**
  - Allow students to determine the main events and the character's reactions to those events using another chosen book by the teacher or the students own independent reading books. Students may write their responses/findings in a writing journal or on a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.
  - Students could write a narrative from the cat's point of view, "A Day in the Life of Charlie Anderson," in which they describe the cat's actions, thoughts, and feelings over the course of a day.

- **Suggested Technology:** Computer for Presenter, LCD Projector, Document Camera, Microsoft Office
Special Materials Needed:

- Charlie Anderson by Barbara Abercrombie
- Chart paper (if modeling the story map)
- Sticky notes
- Story map (including characters and events)
- Plan sheet for informative writing

Further Recommendations:

- If possible, have copies of the book Charlie Anderson for student use before beginning lesson.
- The teacher will circulate during partner and independent work asking guiding questions and determining understanding of concepts taught.
- The teacher should determine partner pairs before the lesson, keeping in mind behaviors and the reading level of each student.
- Numbered head partners: To assist in comprehension, assign the students a numbered head partner. For this strategy you will assign each student a number, a one or a two. Then partner each "one" student with a "two" student. When choosing partners, consider the ability and behavior of each child. The purpose of the number is to avoid having only one half of the pair talking. Both partners will responsible for participating in discussion. For example, the teacher may ask the "ones" to tell the "twos": "What major event is happening at this point in the story?" Then the teacher may have the twos share the answer with the whole group. Continue asking questions in this manner, making sure that each part of the partner pair has the opportunity to speak. Assigning the students a number allows the teacher to assess each student's knowledge of concepts being taught and each student's ability to express their thoughts and ideas.

- Inside-outside circle: This strategy allows for discussion between several different partners and also allows for some student movement to keep them engaged in the lesson. To prepare for the inside-outside circle, assign each student a number, either a one or a two. Have all of the "ones" stand up and make a circle facing out. Then have all of the "twos" make a circle around the "ones" circle, facing in. Each "one" should be facing a "two." The teacher may stand in the middle of both circles to help facilitate the discussion. To change up partners, just have one of the circle rotate a certain number of students until they are standing in front of someone different, such as "move to your right two students."

- Think-Write-Pair-Share: This strategy requires the student to think about a topic or question individually and write a sentence or two describing or identifying the topic or answering the question. Then have the student share and compare their ideas with a partner.

Additional Information/Instructions

By Author/Submitter
Charlie Anderson by Barbara Abercrombie has a Lexile level of 480.
As a close reading activity, this lesson focuses on the application of the skills in the aligned standards, not as an introductory lesson.

**SOURCE AND ACCESS INFORMATION**

**Contributed by:** Monica Cooper  
**Name of Author/Source:** Monica Cooper  
**District/Organization of Contributor(s):** Levy  
**Is this Resource freely Available?** Yes  
**Access Privileges:** Public  
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**Related Standards**

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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.2.RL.1.1:</td>
<td>Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.2.SL.1.2:</td>
<td>Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.2.W.1.2:</td>
<td>Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAFS.2.RL.1.3:</td>
<td>Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.</td>
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**Other Resources Related to the Same Standards**

**Student Center Activity**

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<tr>
<td>Comprehension: Story Mapping:</td>
<td>In this FCRR Student Center Activity, the student will identify story elements.</td>
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