Spider®

ISSUE THEME

Use the stories in this issue to help your students think about the different elements that make stories fun, interesting, odd, and spooky. Then give them the opportunity to write their own stories.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What makes a good story?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

• Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats
• Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop over the course of a text
• Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences
• Students will analyze and create art
• Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information

In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

• **The Beavers That Struck It Rich**
Narrative Nonfiction, ~750L
• **The Boy Who Drew Cats**
Folktale, ~550L
• **The Best Dog in the Universe**
Science Fiction, ~650L

The Beavers That Struck It Rich

pp. 10–13, Narrative Nonfiction

Use this story about beavers who build a dam with stolen money to teach students to analyze text features.

Lexile Score: ~750L

RESOURCES

- Analyze Text Features

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article
- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate

KEY VOCABULARY

- *constant* **(p. 10)** happening all the time
- *chiseled* **(p. 10)** cut something with a chisel
- *whittled* **(p. 10)** cut away small pieces of something
- *drenched* **(p. 12)** completely wet
- *loot* **(p. 12)** something that is stolen
- *overjoyed* **(p. 13)** very happy

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes a good story?

Display an idea web with the Conversation Question in the middle. Work with students to brainstorm answers to the question and record them in the web. Then discuss with students the difference between true stories and made-up stories. Ask students if they think one is better than the other and have them explain their answers. Then tell students that the next story is a nonfiction narrative, or true story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then have students work in pairs to predict something that will happen in the selection, based on the title and the vocabulary words. Record predictions and tell students to check them as they read. Remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, discuss the predictions they made. Then use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. How did the money end up in the creek?
2. Should the thief's friend have thrown the money into the water? What else could she have done?
3. Compare how the money was useful to the beavers and how it could have been useful to the thief.
4. How did different people react to the story about the beavers and the money?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Text Features

INSTRUCT: Ask students to name familiar text features, such as titles, captions, pictures, headings, and boldfaced words. Then ask students to point out the text features in "The Beavers That Struck It Rich." Explain that this article contains three sidebars. Explain that sidebars tell more about a detail mentioned in the text. Distribute the *Analyze Text Features* graphic organizer to all students. Work with students to analyze the sidebar on page 11 and fill in the first section.

ASSESS: Have students work independently to analyze the other sidebars using the organizer. Then have them share their work with a partner.

EXTEND

Science Explain to students that humans aren't the only animals that steal—animals and birds do it too. Have students conduct online and library research to learn about bird and animal thieves. Then have them choose one and create a most-wanted poster for it, listing crimes and noting the appearance and last whereabouts of the criminal.

Name_____

Analyze Text Features

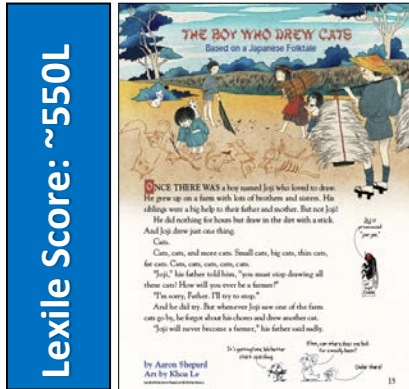In the chart below, answer questions about text features in this article.

Sidebars	What is the sidebar about?	What ideas in the article does the sidebar help you understand?
Page 11		
Page 12		
Page 13		

The Boy Who Drew Cats

pp. 15–19, Folktale

Use this folktale to help students analyze story events in different settings.

Lexile Score: ~550L

RESOURCES

- Analyze Setting and Events

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop over the course of a text
- Students will analyze art

KEY VOCABULARY

- *siblings* **(p. 15)** brothers or sisters
- *priest* **(p. 16)** a person who performs religious ceremonies
- *temple* **(p. 15)** a building where religious ceremonies are performed
- *struggling* **(p. 18)** fighting
- *peered* **(p. 18)** looked carefully

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes a good story?

Ask students to name folktales they've heard or read. Then briefly discuss the kinds of characters and events that occur in folktales. Remind students that many folktales contain talking animals, and unusual events. Ask students to name books, TV shows, and movies that contain these elements. Discuss how they make a story fun and interesting.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then have students work in pairs to create a three-column chart with the headings "characters," "setting," and "events." Have partners decide which story elements the vocabulary words relate to and write them in the columns. Invite volunteers to share their charts. Finally, tell students to look for vocabulary words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. How is Joji different from his brothers and sisters?
2. What do you think was the conversation between the father and the priest?
3. Which sentence in the story tells you that Joji has become afraid of the dark, empty temple?
4. How did Joji know that his cat drawing had come to life?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Setting and Events

INSTRUCT: Remind students that setting is where and when a story takes place. Have students use text and picture details to determine whether the tale takes place in the past, present, or future. Then have them use text and picture details to determine where in the world the story takes place. Next, explain that within the larger setting of Japan, there are three smaller settings where important events take place. Invite volunteers to identify these settings (the family farm, the village temple, the dark, empty temple). Invite volunteers to name a few events that happen in each setting.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Analyze Setting and Events* graphic organizer. Have students work in pairs to identify important details in each setting and identify themes or morals for the story.

EXTEND

Art Bring some books of Japanese art from different periods into the classroom and allow students to explore the images. Have students choose one painting and draw or paint their own version of it.

Name_____

Analyze Setting and Events

In the chart below, list the story events that happen in each setting.

| Story events on the family farm	Story events at the village temple	Story events at the empty temple

WRITE What is the message or theme of this folktale? On the lines below, write the theme and tell how the folktale shows the theme.

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_____

_____

_____

_____

The Best Dog in the Universe

pp. 25–30, Science Fiction

Use this story about a girl, her dog, and some space aliens to get students ready to write their own stories.

Lexile Score: ~650L
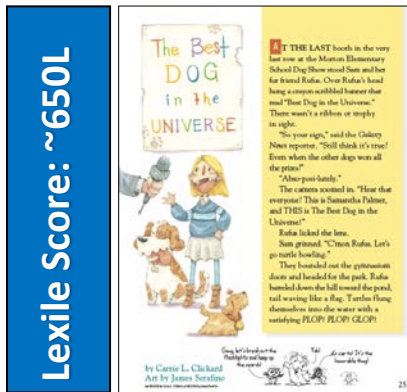
RESOURCES

- Story Map

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a science fiction story
- Students will write a narrative to develop imagined experiences
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information

KEY VOCABULARY

- **bounded (p. 25)** walked with long, energetic steps
- **barreled (p. 25)** moved very fast without paying attention to surroundings
- **hopped (p. 26)** moved quickly
- **zoomed (p. 26)** moved quickly
- **loped (p. 27)** ran in a relaxed way with long strides
- **zipped (p. 27)** moved quickly

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes a good story?

Display a chart with the headings "Characters" and "Setting." Tell students that these are two of the elements that make a good story. Ask students to name favorite characters and settings from books and movies and explain why they like them. Note ideas in the chart. Then tell students to notice these elements in "The Best Dog in the Universe."

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Then read the definitions and ask students what these words have in common. Point out that using a variety of interesting words helps make stories fun and interesting to read. Have students make up oral sentences using the words. Then tell students to look for these and other interesting words in the story.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. How would you describe Sam?
2. What do the different aliens want Rufus to do?
3. What are some words the aliens use when they are frustrated?
4. Why does Sam think Rufus is the best dog in the world? Is she right?

SKILL FOCUS: Write a Story

INSTRUCT: Display the *Story Map* or draw it on the board. Work with students to fill it in with information from "The Best Dog in the Universe." Ask students to share what they liked about this story. Then tell students that they will be writing their own stories based on this prompt: *A spaceships lands on the school playground*. To get students warmed up, brainstorm a few story ideas. Then distribute the *Story Map* to all students and have them use it to map out their own stories. Circulate to help students as needed.

ASSESS: Give students time to draft their stories. Then have them work with peer reviewers to review stories and make suggestions. Finally, have students revise and edit their stories and read them aloud.

EXTEND

Science Remind students that the reporter in the story writes for the Galaxy News. Explain that a galaxy is a huge collection of stars, dust, gases, and other things, and our home galaxy is called the Milky Way. Have students create an idea wall with images and writing that tells about the Milky Way.

Name_____

Story Map

Characters	Problem
Setting	**Solution**

Beginning	Middle	End