



THEME

Explore the problems faced by characters and real people, as well as the strategies used to solve them. This guide can easily be incorporated into a larger discussion of problem-solving strategies that students can use in their own lives.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What strategies do characters use to solve their problems?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will summarize key supporting details and ideas.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics.
- Students will conduct research projects.



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

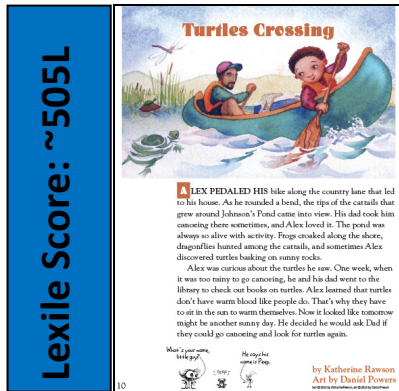
- **Turtles Crossing**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, 505L
- **Catching Frogs in the Clouds**
Expository Nonfiction, 705L
- **Peter's Wish**
Fairy Tale, 705L

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Turtles Crossing

pp. 10–14, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Give students practice in identifying story elements using this story about a boy who helps turtles.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What strategies do characters use to solve their problems?

Remind students that most stories tell about a problem the characters face and how they solve the problem. Discuss favorite book and movie characters, the problems they face, and how they solve those problems. Then tell students to think about the problems in this story and how characters solve them.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

1. At the zoo, we watched an elephant _____ across a muddy field.
2. My aunt lives in the country, at the end of a quiet _____.
3. Be careful! The broken glass is _____ and dangerous.

RESOURCES

- Story Map

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **lane** (p. 10) a narrow road
- **jagged** (p. 11) having a sharp, uneven edge or surface
- **lumber** (p. 11) to move in a slow or awkward way

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use the questions below for discussion.

1. What do you learn about the setting of this story?
2. Describe the relationship between Alex and his dad.
3. Why does Alex know so much about turtles?
4. Why does Alex think more turtles will try to cross the road?
5. What problem does Alex try to solve?
6. What strategy or plan did Alex use to solve this problem?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Story Elements

INSTRUCT: Invite students to name the elements of a short story. Then display a copy of the *Story Map* worksheet and go over these terms in the graphic organizer: *character, setting, problem/solution, story events*. Ask students to identify these elements in a familiar story, such as *Cinderella*. Record students' responses, redirecting them as needed.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Story Map* worksheet to each student. Have students work in pairs to identify and record the story elements in "Turtles Crossing." After all students have completed the worksheets, discuss responses as a class. Invite students to share themes or messages they find in the story.

EXTEND

Science Have students use books and the internet to learn about the negative and positive interactions between humans and turtles. Have students create posters that inform viewers about these interactions and suggest ways that people can help keep turtles safe, such as by using reusable straws.

Name _____

Story Map

Use the organizer below to record information about “Turtles Crossing.”

Characters	Setting
What is the problem?	
List the story events that lead to the problem.	
How is the problem solved?	
List the story events that lead to the solution.	

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Catching Frogs in the Clouds

pp. 16–19, Expository Nonfiction

Review summarizing using this article about scientists who climb mountains to learn about a tiny frog species.



RESOURCES

- Summarizing (2 pages)

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a science article.
- Students will summarize key supporting details and ideas.
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **high-pitched** (p. 16) making a high sound
- **mountainous** (p. 16) having many mountains
- **burrow** (p. 17) to move under something

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What strategies do characters use to solve their problems?

Show students the photos in the article. Explain that the article is about scientists who travel to a remote area to study tiny frogs. Help students brainstorm a list of problems and difficulties these scientists might face as a result of their work. As students read the article and identify the solutions, have them check the brainstorming list for accuracies.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students work in pairs to write sentences that use the words correctly. Invite partners to share their sentences with the class. Help students rephrase, if necessary. Have students look for these words in the article.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the article, use the questions below for discussion.

1. What are the scientists hoping to find on the mountain top?
2. Why is the cloud forest a good environment for the miniature frogs?
3. How do the frogs protect themselves from other animals?
4. How do the scientists study the frogs they find?
5. Why is studying cloud forest frogs difficult?
6. How did the team's patience and hard work pay off?
7. Why does Professor Pie worry about the frogs?
8. What can scientists do to help the frogs?

SKILL FOCUS: Summarizing a Text

INSTRUCT: Explain that summarizing a nonfiction text means using your own words to write a condensed version of the key ideas in the text. Distribute the *Summarizing* worksheet to all students. Point out that it shows the magazine article broken up into short sections. Use the following sequence (based on Frey, Fischer, Hernandez/GIST summary) to guide students through some or all of the sections in the article:

1. Read the section aloud.
2. Discuss the key ideas with students.
3. Have students highlight key ideas.
4. Work with students to write a statement to summarize key ideas.
5. Have students write statement in the box at the end of the section.

ASSESS: Have students work in small groups to summarize the remaining sections. Then have them combine their section summaries to create a summary of the entire article. Review summaries as a class.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students work in pairs to research and create a travel brochure for a real cloud forest. Brochures should include a slogan for the destination; information about the cloud forest's location; interesting facts and details about plants and animals that travelers will see there; a brief description of the differences between rain forests and cloud forests; colorful photographs and drawings.

Summarizing: Catching Frogs in the Clouds

By Tracy Vonder Brink

Professor Marco Pie and his team stop on top of a mountain in Brazil. It's cool and damp under the trees. The scientists listen. The air fills with high-pitched chirps. But it's not birds calling. It's frogs! They are so noisy it sounds as if there could be hundreds of them. These frogs are why the team has climbed nearly eight hours to visit this cloud forest, a mountainous area where clouds hang low among the trees.

The scientists have come to study miniature frogs—some no bigger than a jellybean! These frogs need cool temperatures and moisture to live, so a damp cloud forest is the perfect place for them. Twenty-one kinds of cloud forest frogs have been discovered during other trips. Now the professor and his team hope to find even more. **STOP**

Statement:

The team walks toward the sound, but the amphibians go quiet and hide as soon as they feel footsteps coming near. To frogs, something moving on the forest floor might be a hungry snake. They can stay quiet and out of sight for up to an hour. Even if the professor and his team can't see the frogs, they know where the amphibians are likely to be. Cloud forest frogs spend their day in the leaf litter, the fallen leaves that pile up on the forest floor. There they find bugs to eat, and their skin soaks up moisture from the wet leaves.

Now they burrow deeper into the leaves to hide. The scientists get down on their hands and knees and lift the muddy leaves one by one. Sometimes they can't find a single frog, no matter how many leaves they check. Being a scientist can be frustrating! **STOP**

Statement:

But the team is patient. They wait. They listen. They dig through more leaves. When they finally do catch some frogs, they examine them closely and take pictures. They want to find out whether these frogs are different from the ones other scientists have already found. The team measures the frogs to see how long they are. They even count the frogs' toes! Most frogs have four toes on each front leg and five toes on each back leg. Cloud forest frogs have two toes in the front and three toes in the back. Why? The frogs' feet are so small that they don't have room for any more toes.

The team also notes how the frogs look. Some have smooth skin. Others are rough. Many are brightly colored —orange like a pumpkin or lemon yellow with a sprinkling of brown spots. Their color is a warning because cloud forest frogs are poisonous. Their bright skin tells other animals, "Don't eat me! I'm deadly!" **STOP**

Statement:

Studying cloud forest frogs isn't easy, but the team's patience and hard work pays off. They find seven new kinds of cloud forest frogs. The team introduces the frogs to the world through the Internet and shares what they've learned with other scientists. Professor Pie thinks the mountains could be home to even more frogs nobody has ever seen.

He worries about the tiny creatures. Logging, farming, and warmer world temperatures could harm their habitat. The professor and his team have suggested making cloud forests protected land to keep the frogs and other animals that live there safe. Scientists have also thought about raising some frogs in captivity so they don't become extinct. With some help from humans, cloud forest frogs could live among the clouds for years to come. **STOP**

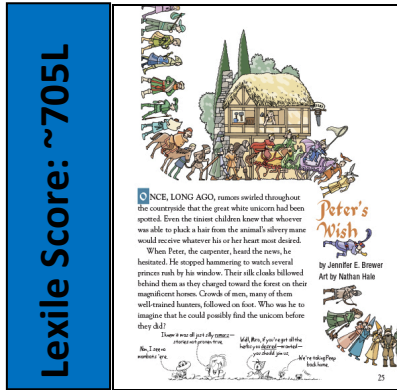
Statement:

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Peter's Wish

pp. 25–31, Fairy Tale

Teach students the characteristics of fairy tales using this story about a young man who seeks to pluck a hair from a unicorn's mane.



RESOURCES

- Elements of Fairy Tales

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a fairy tale.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will conduct research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **hesitate (p. 25)** to stop for a moment before you do something because you are nervous or unsure
- **billow (p. 25)** to be pushed out by air
- **nuzzle (p. 31)** to gently push or rub your nose or face against someone or something to show affection

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What strategies do characters use to solve their problems?

Brainstorm a list of well-known fairy tales. Discuss the characters, problems, and solutions in these tales. Guide students to notice that the problems and solutions in fairy tales often involve magic, fantasy, or make-believe characters. Tell students to pay attention to the problems and solutions in this fairy tale.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following context sentences and underline the vocabulary words. Have students work in pairs to predict the meaning of each vocabulary word based on the context. Then reveal the definitions and have students check their predictions. Instruct students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

1. Sometimes students hesitate before they raise their hands in class.
2. When the wind blew, the boat's sail began to billow.
3. I felt the horse's soft nose gently nuzzle my arm.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use the questions below for discussion.

1. Why does Peter hesitate to join the search for the unicorn?
2. What changes Peter's mind about joining the search?
3. Why does Peter feel discouraged by the seventh day?
4. What do you learn about Peter from his encounters with the old man, the thirsty woman, and the lost child?
5. How does the ending "they lived happily ever after" apply to this story?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze a Fairy Tale

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that a fairy tale is a kind of folktale—a simple story that has been passed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Review the list of familiar fairy tales you created for the Engage activity. Discuss any similarities in the characters, setting, and events in these fairy tales. Next, distribute a copy of the *Elements of Fairy Tales* worksheet to each student. Review the different elements and ask students to think of examples of these elements from the fairy tales you have discussed.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to complete the *Elements of Fairy Tales* worksheet. Discuss responses as a class. Then work with students to come up with one or more themes or morals for the tale.

EXTEND

Writing Invite interested students to conduct research to learn facts and legends connected to unicorns. Have students create a presentation, including facts and visuals, to share with the class.

Name _____

Elements of Fairy Tales

Fill in the chart with details from "Peter's Wish" that support the fairy tale elements listed below.

1. The story begins with the words <i>once upon a time</i> or something very similar.	
2. The story includes fantasy, magic, and make-believe elements.	
3. The setting is often a forest or a castle long ago.	
4. The story involves a problem that needs to be solved.	
5. Things happen three times.	
6. The ending is happy and good characters are rewarded.	
7. The story teaches a lesson.	