Teaching Character Education Through the "Four Blocks"

An Honors Thesis

by

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Abstract
This three-week teaching unit was developed for second or third grade teachers who would like to use the “Four Blocks” system of teaching reading and writing in their classrooms. The unit focuses on character education by teaching about kindness, generosity, and initiative through lessons based on books from a variety of cultures. The first sections of the unit give an overview of each of the “Four Blocks.” The remaining sections give day-by-day plans for the teacher to follow.

Acknowledgments
Thank you Dr. Tancock for helping me to discover how much I enjoy teaching reading. I have learned many strategies from you. Thank you also for setting aside time to talk with me about my thesis and give me suggestions. I really appreciate all of your help.
Guided Reading

During this 30-40 minute block, the students read material that has been selected by the teacher. Guided Reading lessons are divided into three sections: “Before Reading,” “During Reading,” and “After Reading.” Each day the teacher focuses on a skill which will help the students with comprehension of the reading material. Students are given the opportunity to read the selection either individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Because all students will be reading the same material, multiple copies of the selection must be available (Cunningham 42).
Guided Reading Books

Week 1: Kindness
Matthew and Tilly by Rebecca C. Jones (Mon., Tues.)
Matthew and Tilly are best friends who play together all the time. One day when they are playing, they get into an argument over a broken crayon. They must make up and go on with their friendship after this.

The Meanest Thing To Say by Bill Cosby (Wed., Thurs., Fri.)
Little Bill has a tough decision to make when some kids begin playing a new game on the playground. The game involves saying mean things to the other players. Little Bill must decide how he can play with the kids without being mean.

Week 2: Generosity
Sam and the Lucky Money by Karen Chinn (Mon., Tues., Wed.)
Sam must decide how to spend the "lucky money" his grandparents have given him for the Chinese New Year. He walks through Chinatown with his mother, trying to find just the right place to spend his money. He complains that the money is not enough until he has an encounter with a homeless man who truly appreciates a small amount of money.

The Birthday Swap by Loretta Lopez (Thurs., Fri.)
Lori is having a very difficult time deciding what to get her older sister Cookie for her birthday. She looks all over for the perfect gift. When Lori arrives at Cookie's birthday party, she finds out that Cookie has given her something special.

Week 3: Initiative
Jamaica Louise James by Amy Hest (Mon., Tues.)
Eight-year-old Jamaica comes up with a wonderful way to brighten up the subway station where her grandmother works. Jamaica says the subway walls are plain and the grownups at the station "all look mad." She paints pictures and puts them up in the subway station early one morning as a birthday present for her grandmother.

Music, Music For Everyone by Vera B. Williams (Wed., Thurs., Fri.)
Rosa and three of her friends often play music for Rosa's grandmother, who is sick. The family's money jar is empty because of the money they are spending to take care of grandma. Rosa and her friends come up with a way they can use their musical talents to entertain others while putting money back into the jar.
Writing

This 30-40 minute block is dedicated to helping students strengthen their writing skills. During the first 10 minutes of the block, the teacher teaches a minilesson in which he or she models the writing process. The rest of the block involves students writing, editing, and sharing. The teacher conferences with students individually about their writing (Cunningham 86).
Week 2

- Characters

- Setting

- Problem

- Who gives something

- What they give

- Solution
I'm a good friend
Week 3

Person I’m writing to:

Ideas:
1.

2.

3.

4.
Working With Words

During this 30 minute block, students spend time exploring and experimenting with letters in order to become more familiar with spelling and letter patterns. The first 10 minutes of the block are used working with the classroom Word Wall. The students are engaged in an activity to help with spelling and decoding for the remainder of the time (Cunningham 122).
Working With Words
Weekly Outline

This is a sample week of “Working With Words.”

Monday:
Word Wall
--add new words:
(Ex.) played
laugh
didn’t
school
together

--students clap, chant, write words

Tuesday:
Word Wall
— “Guess the Covered Word”
The teacher writes five sentences on the board and covers up one word in each. Students guess which word wall word fills in the blank.

Activity
— “Using What You Know”
The teacher writes words on the board one at a time. The students tell the word and write it down. The teacher then has students use this word to figure out how to spell others that follow the same pattern. (Ex.) right--light, night, fight

Wednesday:
Word Wall
— “On-the-Back” activity
The teacher says five word wall words and the students write these down. The teacher then begins giving sentences that use the words with different endings added (ed, ing, s). The students write these words with the proper endings.
**Activity**

- "Reading/Writing Rhymes"
  The teacher puts up a pattern of letters that is found in many words. (Ex.) --ine. The teacher writes this many times. Students must find letters to add to the beginning of the pattern to make words. (line, fine, shine, dine)

**Thursday:**

**Word Wall**

- "On-the-Back Rhyme"
  This is the same except the teacher says words that rhyme with word wall words, and the students must write these words.

**Activity**

- Let students vote on an activity.

**Friday:**

**Activity**

Making Words
Word Wall Words

The word wall words are high-frequency words that are found in one or both of the guided reading books each week.

Week 1
Matthew and Tilly/The Meanest Thing to Say
played
laugh
didn’t
school
together

Week 2
Sam and the Lucky Money/The Birthday Swap
could
right
money
sister
birthday

Week 3
Jamaica Louise James/Music, Music For Everyone
first
people
thank
very
when
Self-Selected Reading

This 30-40 minute block gives students the opportunity to choose the books that they read. The majority of the block is used as a time for students to read books of their choice individually. Teachers may choose to conference with students about what they are reading during this time. Teachers may also choose to use the first five minutes of the block for teacher read-aloud or the last five minutes for student sharing (Cunningham 20). On the following page is an annotated list of theme-related books which could be checked out from the library and added to the students' selection during the time of this unit. These are second and third grade reading level books.
The Meanest Thing To Say by Bill Cosby  (kindness, respect, courage)
Little Bill has a tough decision to make when some kids begin playing new game on the playground. The game involves saying mean things to the other players. Little Bill must decide how he can play with the kids without being mean.

Matthew and Tilly by Rebecca C. Jones  (kindness, fairness, caring)
Matthew and Tilly are best friends who play together all the time. One day when they are playing, they get into an argument over a broken crayon. They must make up and go on with their friendship after this.

Jamaica Louise James by Amy Hest  (initiative, perseverance)
Eight-year-old Jamaica comes up with a wonderful idea to brighten up the subway station where her grandmother works. Jamaica says the subway walls are plain and the grownups at the station “all look mad.” She paints pictures and puts them up in the subway station early one morning as a birthday present for her grandmother.

Music, Music For Everyone by Vera B. Williams  (initiative, teamwork, caring)
Rosa and three of her friends often play music for Rosa’s grandmother, who is sick. The family’s money jar is empty because of the money they are spending to take care of grandma. Rosa and her friends come up with a way that they can use their musical talents to entertain others while putting money back into the jar.

The Birthday Swap by Loretta Lopez  (generosity, caring)
Lori is having a very difficult time deciding what to get her older sister Cookie for her birthday. She looks all over for the perfect gift. When Lori arrives at Cookie’s birthday party, she finds out that Cookie has given her something special.

Sam and the Lucky Money by Karen Chinn  (generosity, caring, initiative)
Sam must decide how to spend the “lucky money” his grandparents have given him for the Chinese New Year. He walks through
Chinatown with his mother, trying to find just the right place to spend his money. He complains that the money is not enough to buy much until he has an encounter with a homeless man who truly appreciates a small amount of money.

The Patchwork Quilt by Valerie Flournoy (perseverance, teamwork)
When Tanya’s grandmother begins making a family quilt, she shares with Tanya the importance and meaning of such a project. Grandma becomes sick and is unable to work on the quilt anymore. Tanya takes over and works daily on the quilt to finish the project her grandmother has started.

Knots on a Counting Rope by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault (courage)
A young Native American boy and his grandfather are sitting by a fire and talking. The boy begs the grandfather to tell the story of the boy’s birth, which the boy has heard many times before. The story tells how the boy was born blind and weak but still survived. As the boy grows older, he is gaining the courage he needs to face the challenge of his blindness, even when his grandfather is not with him.

Jamaica Tag-Along by Juanita Havill (fairness, teamwork)
Jamaica is upset when her older brother tells her she cannot come along when he goes to play basketball at the park with some friends. Jamaica goes to the park and begins building a sand castle. When a smaller boy tries to help her, she begins to think about how she should treat him based on how she felt when her brother hurt her feelings.

Jamaica’a Find by Juanita Havill (honesty, trustworthiness)
Jamaica is playing at the park one day when she finds a hat and a stuffed dog. She takes the hat to the Lost and Found but takes the dog home. Jamaica begins to regret the decision she has made and comes up with a way to fix her problem.

The Paperboy by Dav Pilkey (responsibility)
This book goes through the paperboy’s morning routine. The paperboy has to wake up and deliver papers before most people ever get out of bed. He has many morning responsibilities that he must take care of before he goes back home for a nap.
My Big Lie by Bill Cosby (honesty, trustworthiness)
When Little Bill is late coming home for dinner, he makes up a lie about where he has been. This lie gets Little Bill into trouble, and he must deal with the consequences.

A Chair For My Mother by Vera B. Williams (caring, teamwork, initiative, perseverance)
Rosa and her mother and grandmother are saving up money because a fire destroyed their other house and their possessions. Each day, they put change in their jar and count the money. They are saving money to buy a comfortable chair for their house.

Pumpkin Fiesta by Caryn Yacowitz (honesty, trustworthiness)
Each year at the big fiesta, Old Juana wins the special pumpkin crown for growing the biggest pumpkins in San Miguel. Foolish Fernando decides that he is going to win the crown this year. He decides to copy everything Juana does to win the crown, but he ends up learning a lesson about honesty and doing the right thing.

My Navajo Sister by Eleanor Schick (generosity, caring, respect)
Sparrow is remembering everything that she and her good friend Jennie used to do together. When they were younger, Sparrow and her family had come to live on the Navajo land where Jennie and her family lived. Jennie welcomed Sparrow, and the two girls shared many experiences together, which are now in the form of memories.
Week 1--Monday
Matthew and Tilly

Guided Reading

Skill: Self-monitoring

Before reading:
1. Ask the students to share some things that they like to do with their friends.
2. Ask them to tell some reasons why friends might have trouble getting along at times.
3. Tell the students that they need to follow along while you read Matthew and Tilly. Tell them that you will be showing them something that good readers do whenever they are reading.
4. Write the word “monitoring” on the board and tell them that it means you are thinking about what you are reading and checking to see if it makes sense.

During reading:
1. Read the first half of Matthew and Tilly to students. Model self-monitoring by stopping periodically to think about the reading and ask questions about whether or not it makes sense. Rather than having students answer, talk through answers to show the procedure.
2. Have students spread out and read the rest of the story individually. Remind them to monitor themselves. Give them three sticky notes on which to write questions that they ask themselves as they read. Have them place these on the corresponding parts of the story. Have them put the answers on the papers if they are able to. As students are reading, listen to a small number of them and take anecdotal notes. Have students read the story again after they read the second half.

After reading:
Have a discussion about the story. Ask questions such as, “Why did Matthew and Tilly get into an argument?” and “How do you think Matthew and Tilly felt when they were playing alone after the argument?”

Have students place their books in a pile so that you can look over the sticky notes and check the students’ questions and answers.
Week 1--Tuesday
Matthew and Tilly

Guided Reading

Skills: Reading with emotion, critical thinking

Before reading:
1. Have students turn to the page where Matthew and Tilly have their argument. Tell the students that you are going to read this page to them two times and that you want them to tell you the difference between the two times.
2. Read the page first with a great deal of emotion, acting angry as the characters would.
3. Read the page the second time in a quiet, monotone voice.
4. Ask the students the difference and then ask which way they should read the page and why.

During reading:
Assign the students partners and have them read the story together, alternating pages. Tell them that when they get to the page that was just modeled, they will each take a turn reading the page and practicing what you have just talked about. Remind the students to think about how the characters would sound on all of the pages.

After reading:
1. Ask the students if they think Matthew and Tilly acted appropriately when the crayon was broken. Students will probably say that neither one did. Ask why not.
2. Tell students that they are going to be coming up with better ways that Matthew and Tilly could have acted in their situation.
3. Tell the students that they have five minutes to work with their same partners and come up with a way to role-play a better response to the crayon being broken. One partner will be Matthew and the other will be Tilly.
4. After five minutes, have students role-play for the class. Ask the rest of the class if each solution is better and why or why not.
Guided Reading

Skill: Critical thinking

Before reading:
1. Ask students to give some rules they have about how to treat others. Ask them why these rules are important.
2. Tell students that they are going to be reading a story about a game that some children are playing at recess.
3. Tell students to listen to the story to find out whether or not the game follows their rules about how to treat others.

During reading:
1. Read Chapter 1 of the story to the students.
2. Ask students if they would like to play Michael’s game. Ask how the players probably felt during the game.
3. Have students spread out and read Chapter 1 individually. Tell students write down how Little Bill probably feels right now and what he could do about his situation. Move around the room and listen to a few of the students so that you can take running records.

After reading:
Have a discussion about how Little Bill probably feels and what he could do about Michael’s game.
Week 1--Thursday
The Meanest Thing To Say

Guided Reading

Skill: Sequencing

Before reading:
1. Ask for a student to tell what happened yesterday in Chapter 1.
2. Tell students to think about the possibilities they came up with yesterday about what Little Bill might do next.

During reading:
1. Read Chapter 2 to the students. Ask students why Little Bill’s dad kept saying, “So?” when Little Bill was talking to him. Ask how Little Bill probably felt when his dad was saying this.
2. Tell students that they are going to partner-read Chapter 2. Before they begin, explain that they will be getting some sentences to put in the right order.
3. Show them an example by putting up 4 sentence strips containing sentences from Matthew and Tilly. The sentences will read: “Matthew broke Tilly’s purple crayon. Tilly called Matthew stupid. Matthew and Tilly played alone. Matthew and Tilly said they were sorry.” Model the process of putting these in the proper order.
4. Give each pair 4 strips of paper containing sentences. They will read: “Little Bill was at the playground with his friends. Little Bill jumped on his bed. Little Bill talked to his mother. Little Bill talked to Big Bill.” Partner groups will have to put these strips in the proper order after they finish reading.

After reading:
Have partner groups share the order their strips are in. Check to see that the groups put the strips in the proper order.
Week 1--Friday
The Meanest Thing To Say

Guided Reading

Skill: Making predictions

Before reading:
1. Have a student remind the class what happened at the end of Chapter 2.
2. Have each student write down a prediction about what will happen in Chapter 3.

During reading:
1. Have students read Chapter 3 to themselves in order to find out if their predictions are correct. Have them turn their prediction papers over and write three sentences about what happens in this chapter.
2. Tell the students that you are going to read the story together, with one student being Michael and the other Little Bill. Call on a volunteer for each part.
3. Read the chapter with the volunteers reading the parts of the two characters. Remind them to read their parts like they think the characters would be saying them.
4. Ask the students questions such as, “Why did Michael get angry when Little Bill started laughing?” and “Why did Little Bill start to feel sorry for Michael?”

After reading:
Have a discussion about good ways to act when a person is being unkind. Have students offer suggestions and tell why these would be appropriate. Talk about reasons why some people may act unkind.
Week 1
Matthew and Tilly/The Meanest Thing to Say

Writing
Weekly Outline

Weekly writing activity:
Have students think about what it means to be a good friend. Have them brainstorm things that a good friend does. Make a list of these on the board. Tell students that they are going to be writing about how they are a good friend. Show them the web-shaped graphic organizer, and tell them that they must fill out each oval before they begin writing their papers. Model an example graphic organizer. As students finish filling out their graphic organizers, check them and give the students writing paper. Remind students to check their writing for spacing, capital letters, and periods.

Monday:
- **Minilesson**
  - Punctuation

  **Writing Activity**
  - Students brainstorm/teacher makes list about good friends
  - Teacher explains directions/models example graphic organizers
  - Students begin graphic organizers

Tuesday:
- **Minilesson**
  - Punctuation

  **Writing Activity**
  - Students continue working on graphic organizers
  - Teacher checks graphic organizers when completed
  - Students begin writing final drafts

Wednesday:
- **Minilesson**
  - Capital letters
Writing Activity
--Students continue working on final drafts

Thursday:
Minilesson
Editing

Writing Activity
--Students finish final drafts and illustrate them
--Finished students write about what they like to do with their friends

Friday:
Minilesson
Editing

Writing Activity
--Students share their writing
Week 1--Friday
Matthew and Tilly/The Meanest Thing to Say

Making Words

Secret word: friendship

Possible words:
  is  end  den  pie  hip  dip  sin  pin  rip  sip  fin
  hen  pen  Ned  send  ship  shin  hind  find  pine  rind  shine
  friend  friendship

Sort for:
  short e: end, den, hen, pen, send

  short i: hip, dip, sin, pin, rip, sip, fin, ship, shin

  "ip" words: hip, dip, rip, sip, ship

Transfer words: trip, blind, behind, spine
Guided Reading

Skill: Story mapping (characters)

Before reading:
1. Ask the students how many of them have ever received money as a present. Ask how many of them spent this money. Ask what they bought with the money.
2. Tell the students that you are going to be reading a book about a boy who gets some money as a gift.
3. Tell students that after you read the story you will be asking them to name the characters in the book. Ask them what the word “characters” means. Explain that characters are the people or animals in a story. As an example, have the students tell the characters in the book The Meanest Thing To Say.

During reading:
1. Read the first half of the book to the students (until Sam leaves the toy store). Stop and ask students questions such as “What kinds of things does Sam see in Chinatown?” and “Why does Sam get mad in the toy store?”
2. Have students get into groups of three. Have them read the first half of the story together, rotating pages. If possible, sit with one group of three and take running records. Have each group make a list of the characters in the story after they are finished reading.

After reading:
Make a class list of the characters from the story on a large sheet of chart paper. Have groups share their lists in order to do this.
Week 2—Tuesday
Sam and the Lucky Money

Guided Reading

Skill: Story Mapping (setting)

Before reading:
1. Have each student draw a picture of “the place where Sam was in the story yesterday.”
2. Have students explain their drawings of Chinatown.
3. Ask students how they knew where Sam was yesterday. Talk about the fact that the author told about the place and the illustrator drew pictures of it.
4. Write the word “setting” on the board. Ask students what the word is and what it means. Discuss the fact that the setting is where the story takes place.

During reading:
1. Have a student tell what was happening last in the story. Begin reading the second half to the students.
2. Ask questions to check for understanding such as, “What did Sam decide to do with his money?” and “Why does Sam say that he is the lucky one?”
3. Have students partner-read the second half of the story. Have pairs begin making lists of things people can do for others.

After reading:
Have a discussion about things people can do to help others. Talk about how this makes both of the people feel.
Week 2--Wednesday
Sam and the Lucky Money

Guided Reading

Skill: Story Mapping (sequencing main events)

Before reading:
1. Tell students to think of one of their friends who is not in our classroom. They are going to pretend that that friend has never read Sam and the Lucky Money and asks what happens in the story.
2. Ask students what they would have to think about in order to answer this question. Discuss the fact that they would have to know the characters, setting, and main events.
3. Ask students if it is important to tell events in the right order and why.

During reading:
Have students read back through the story individually and make a list of 3-4 main events from the story.

After reading:
1. Have students share their events. Write these on the board.
2. As a class, choose 4 of these events and put them into the proper order.
Week 2--Thursday
The Birthday Swap

Guided Reading

Skill: Using picture clues

Before reading:
2. Tell students that you are going to flip through the book and look at the pictures but not the words. Tell them that this will give them clues about the story. Tell them that they can also get clues from the story when they are reading and they do not understand something.
3. Guide students through a “picture walk.” Ask them about what they see and what they think might be happening at certain parts. Ask them to describe the characters and tell what the setting might be.

During reading:
1. Read the first half of the book to the students. Stop at the part where Lori is getting ready for the party. Stop to have students confirm the predictions they made during the “picture walk.”
2. Have students read in groups of 3. Have groups make lists of things Lori saw at the market when they finish reading the first half.

After reading:
Have students share their lists and then predict what will happen next.
Week 2--Friday  
The Birthday Swap

Guided Reading

Skill: Vocabulary

Before reading:
1. Put some words from the story up on the board ("pinata," "Spanish," "mercado," and "sombrero.") Focus on one word at a time. Ask the students what the word means and why it is in the story. Students may need some clues about the meanings.
2. Have students look back through their books and point to the pinata, mercado (market), and sombrero.
3. Tell students that there are some words in the story, besides "mercado," that are in Spanish. Ask them what they are. Ask the students if they remember what these words mean from the first half of the story. (tia--aunt, tio--uncle, feliz cumpleanos--happy birthday, mija--my daughter)

During reading:
1. Read the rest of the story to the students. Stop to confirm their predictions from yesterday. Ask them how Cookie and Lori each probably felt at the party and why.
2. Have students read the second half of the story in pairs.

After reading:
Have each student take a white piece of paper and fold it into thirds. Have them write the words "pinata," "mercado," and "sombrero" each in a section. Have them draw the item and write a sentence telling about it.
Week 2
Sam and the Lucky Money/The Birthday Swap

Writing
Weekly Outline

Weekly writing activity:
Tell the students that they are going to be writing their own stories about someone who gives something to someone else like the characters in the stories they are reading this week do. Show the students the graphic organizer they will be using and tell them that they must fill this out before they begin writing their stories because it will help them to plan. Have the students tell the labels of the graphic organizer sections and tell what these mean (characters, setting, problem, who gives something, what they give, and solution). As an example, fill out the graphic organizer using the story Sam and the Lucky Money. Have students fill out the graphic organizers for their stories. As they finish, check these and then have students begin writing their stories. Remind students to check their stories for spacing, capital letters, and periods before turning them in.

Monday:
Minilesson
Verbs

Writing Activity
--Teacher explains activity and gives directions
--Teacher models graphic organizer procedure
--Students begin working on graphic organizers

Tuesday:
Minilesson
Verbs

Writing Activity
--Students continue working on graphic organizers
--Teacher checks completed graphic organizers
--Students begin writing stories from graphic organizers
Wednesday:
Minilesson
Adjectives

Writing Activity
--Students continue working on stories

Thursday:
Minilesson
Adjectives

Writing Activity
--Students continue working on stories
--Students illustrate stories

Friday:
Minilesson
Fact vs. fiction

Writing Activity
--Students share stories
Secret word: birthday

Possible words:
  at  day  hat  had  rat  bat  bad  rad  rib  rid  hid  hay
  tab  bird  dirt  dart  yard  birth  third

Sort for:
  short a: hat, had, rat, bat, bad, rad, tab
  r controlled vowels: birth, bird, third, dirt, yard, dart

Transfer words: skirt, stay, sprat, Brad
Guided Reading

Skill: Punctuation at the end of sentences

Before reading:
1. Ask students what a hobby is. Have them share their hobbies. Tell students that you are going to read a story about a girl whose hobby is drawing.
2. Tell students that you need to first review some of the marks that are found at the end of a sentence. Ask the students what these marks might be (period, question mark, exclamation point). Ask students when each of these is used. Tell students that all of these appear in our story.
3. Tell students that the girl’s name is Jamaica and that she is going to tell them about a great idea that she had.

During reading:
1. Read the story to the students. Stop to ask questions such as, “What was Jamaica’s idea?” and “How was the station different after Jamaica hung the pictures?”
2. Have students partner-read the story. Before they begin, ask them about how to read different types of sentences (statements, questions, exclamations). Read a question and an exclamation from the story in a monotone voice and ask the students what is wrong with that. Model for the students how to stress questions and exclamations. Tell them to work on this as they read to their partners.

After reading:
Write five of the sentences from the story on the board without their ending punctuation.
- Want to hear my big idea?
- Snap to it, baby!
- This story begins with me.
- Why does the man’s coat have triangle pockets?
- We can’t wait another minute!

Read the sentences to the students and have them put up one finger if they think there should be a period, two fingers for question mark, and three for exclamation point.
Week 3--Tuesday
Jamaica Louise James

Guided Reading

Skill: Reading with emotion, critical thinking

Before reading:
1. Ask students what the name is of the story from yesterday.
2. Ask students what we worked on yesterday when we were reading the different types of sentences.
3. Call on students to find and read questions, statements, and exclamations from the story.

During reading:
1. Have students partner-read the story with someone different than their partner from yesterday. Tell them that you will be walking around to listen to how they read the different types of sentences.
2. Tell students to go back to their seats after they are finished partner-reading. Have them brainstorm something they could do to cheer people up like Jamaica cheered people up in the subway station. Have them write about their ideas.

After reading:
Have students share what they have written.
Guided Reading

Skill: Making predictions

Before reading:
1. Ask students how many of them have played an instrument before. Let them share their experiences.
2. Tell students that we are going to read a story about a girl who likes to play music with her friends.

During reading:
1. Read the first half of the story to the children. Stop at the part where Rosa goes upstairs to talk to her grandmother.
2. Ask the students questions to check for understanding such as “Why is the money jar empty?” and “Why does Rosa go upstairs?”
3. Have the students read the first half of the story on their own. Tell them to stop where you did. Have students write down a prediction about what they think Rosa’s idea is.
   Have them draw pictures to go with these.

After reading:
Have students share their predictions. Write them on the board.
Guided Reading

Skill: Acting out the story

Before reading:
Ask the students what was happening in the story where you left off yesterday. Tell them to think about the predictions they had.

During reading:
1. Have students read the second half of the book in groups of three. Tell them to keep reading the book until all groups have finished.
2. Tell students that they are going to be acting out part of this story. They will be making up the scripts themselves. Put the students into groups of 6. Have each student in each group draw a part for the skit. Parts could include Rosa, her 3 friends, her grandmother, and her mother.
3. Tell students that they need to work in their groups to write down what they will be saying in the skit. Tell them to think about what happened in the story and what the characters would be saying at each part.
4. Assign a “writer” in each group. Model the process of working as a team to write a script. Assist the groups as they write their scripts.

After reading:
Students continue working on their scripts.
Week 3--Friday
Music, Music For Everyone

Guided Reading

Skill: Acting out the story

Before reading:
Tell students that they are going to finish their scripts and then use them to perform for the rest of the class.

During reading:
1. Have each group read the story together to give them more ideas for their scripts.
2. When they are finished reading, have them finish their scripts and begin practicing.

After reading:
When all groups are finished, have them act out the story for the rest of the class. Students may use their scripts.
Week 3
Jamaica Louise James/Music, Music For Everyone

Writing
Weekly Outline

Weekly writing activity:
Tell students that they are going to be writing a letter to either Jamaica Louise James or to Rosa to thank her for what she has done (decorating subway station or entertaining with music). Each student will pretend that he or she was at either the subway station or the performance and was affected by one of these characters. To do this, the students will have to use their imaginations and think about what it would have been like to be in either situation. Before writing their letters, the students will fill out the graphic organizers. On these, they have to write the character’s name and four things they would like to tell the character. Check graphic organizers and have students begin writing letters. Remind students to check for the heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature.

Monday:
Minilesson
Letter writing

Writing Activity
--Teacher explains letter assignment
--Teacher models filling out graphic organizer/writing letter
--Students decide who to write

Tuesday:
Minilesson
Letter writing

Writing Activity
--Students fill out graphic organizers
Wednesday:
  Minilesson
  Letter writing

  Writing Activity
  --Students begin writing letters

Thursday:
  Minilesson
  Poetry

  Writing Activity
  --Students continue work on letters

Friday:
  Minilesson
  Poetry

  Writing Activity
  --Students finish letters and share with class
Week 3--Friday
Jamaica Louise James/Music, Music For Everyone

Making Words

Secret word: helping

Possible words:
   pen  leg  hen  peg  pin  nip  lip  hip  gel  lie

Sort for:
   short e: pen, leg, hen, peg

   "ip" words: nip, lip, hip

Transfer words: flip, thin, open, then
Resources
Resources

Children’s Literature (See annotations in Self-Selected Reading section)


Other sources


This book is a guide for teachers in grades 1-3 who would like to teach reading and writing in the framework of the “Four Blocks.” A purpose and an explanation are given for each of the blocks. Sample days and weeks are outlined as well.


This book provides teachers with numerous strategies to use when teaching reading and writing. Various assessment techniques are also described. The activities in the book could be modified for use with a wide range of ages and ability levels.

www.msdlt.k12.in.us

This is the web site for Lawrence Township in Indianapolis, Indiana. The site contains information about character education. Lawrence Township teaches students the ten Lifeskills.