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Grade 6 ► Unit 1

I Won't Grow Up

This first six-week unit of sixth grade starts off the year with reflections on childhood—from literature and poetry to students' own experiences.



ESSENTIAL QUESTION



What distinguishes childhood from adulthood?

OVERVIEW

Students build on their knowledge of books read in fifth grade (see the Common Core Curriculum Maps for grades K–5) and explore the theme of growing up. Students read the original and prequel versions of *Peter Pan*. They have the opportunity to listen to one of the books on tape, compare and contrast the written and audio presentations, and extend this activity to watching the Broadway musical version. Students read biographies about and interviews with the respective authors of the various versions. After reading and discussing the elements of effective prequels, students write their own prequels to another well-known story in order to see just how challenging writing one can be. This unit ends with an informative/explanatory essay that addresses the essential question.

FOCUS STANDARDS

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.7: Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, poem, or drama to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

W.6.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

SL.6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.6.1(a): Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

SL.6.1(b): Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

L.6.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.6.1(a): Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).

L.6.1(b): Use intensive pronouns (e.g., *myself*, *ourselves*).

SUGGESTED STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Read and compare an original text to its prequel (e.g., *Peter Pan* and *Peter and the Starcatchers*).
- Establish a plan for locating credible and reliable information when conducting research.
- Research the relationship between authors' lives and what they write about through reading author biographies, autobiographies, letters, and interviews; present findings to the class.
- Prepare for class discussions by taking notes on specific elements of texts read.
- Write a prequel for a story of choice that reflects appreciation for the selected work.
- Demonstrate understanding of texts by interpreting significant scenes for classmates.

SUGGESTED WORKS

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

LITERARY TEXTS

Stories

- “Eleven” (Sandra Cisneros) (E)
- *Peter Pan* (J. M. Barrie)
- *Peter and the Starcatchers* (Dave Barry, Ridley Pearson, and Greg Call)
- *Peter and the Shadow Thieves* (Dave Barry, Ridley Pearson, and Greg Call)
- *When I Was Your Age, Volume Two: Original Stories about Growing up* (Amy Ehrlich, ed.)
- *The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups* (David Wisniewski)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (Roald Dahl)
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Roald Dahl)

Poetry

- “Past, Present, Future” (Emily Brontë)
- “A Birthday” (Christina Rossetti) (EA)

INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Nonfiction

- *J. M. Barrie: The Magic Behind Peter Pan* (Susan Bivin Aller)
- *Boy: Tales of Childhood* (Roald Dahl) (EA)

Articles

- “Peter Pan’s early years” (Bob Minzesheimer, *USA Today*, September 1, 2004)
- “Prequel to Peter Pan fills in the blanks with fun” (Sue Corbett, *Miami Herald*, no date)
- “Classic story flies in many forms” (A Peter Pan timeline)” (Bob Minzesheimer, *USA Today*, September 1, 2004)

ART, MUSIC, AND MEDIA

Music

- Moose Charlap and Carolyn Leigh, “I Won’t Grow Up” (1954). *Note:* This song is from *Peter Pan*, the musical, and the version in which Cathy Rigby sings the part of Peter is recommended.

Film

- Glenn Casale and Gary Halvorson, dir., *Peter Pan* (2000)
- Marc Forster, dir., *Finding Neverland* (2004)
- Henry Selick, dir., *James and the Giant Peach* (1996)
- Mel Stuart, dir., *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971)
- Tim Burton, dir., *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005)

Media

- *Peter Pan* (BBC Radio Presents) (Random House Audio)
- *Peter and the Starcatchers* (audiobook CD) (Brilliance Audio)
- *James and the Giant Peach* (audiobook CD) (Puffin Books)

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS

1. LITERATURE RESPONSE

As you read the original and prequel versions of *Peter Pan*, take notes about the following in your journal:

- Setting
- List of characters and their traits
- The character’s internal responses and external behaviors to events in the story
- The events that lead up to climax, and, ultimately, the character’s development
- “I Won’t Grow Up” — how do Peter Pan’s actions reflect these famous words?

Be sure to write down the page numbers of relevant information, or mark your book with sticky notes, so you can go back and cite the text during class discussion. You will be given an opportunity to talk through your ideas with a partner prior to class discussion. (RL.6.1)

2. LITERATURE RESPONSE

Discuss the elements of setting (e.g., time, place, environment) with your classmates. Find examples of how time, place, and environment are used in *Peter Pan*. Write your ideas on a sticky note before sharing ideas as a class. After the class discussion, look back in the text to find specific examples of how J. M. Barrie described Neverland and even how he described the Darlings' home in England. Create a three-column chart in your journal (or as a table on the computer) to help organize your notes; use one column for each element of setting. (RL.6.1, RL.6.3)

3. LITERATURE RESPONSE

Create a character map of one of the characters from *Peter Pan*, citing specific examples from the text. As a class, we will compare and contrast similarities and differences in how the characters develop over the course of a story, and discuss how we learn from the behavior of literary characters—both through examples and “non-examples.” (RL.6.1, RL.6.3)

4. CLASS DISCUSSION

In *Peter and the Starcatchers*, Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson took a well-known book, *Peter Pan*, and wrote about what happened before the events that took place in it. How do Barry and Pearson connect this story to the original? What elements and details do they retain, and which ones do they omit? Your teacher may ask you first to write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner prior to discussing as a class. Be sure to write down the page numbers of relevant information, or to mark your book with sticky notes, so you can cite the text during class discussion. (SL.6.1a,b, RL.6.1, RL.6.6)

5. NARRATIVE WRITING

Write a prequel to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl (or to another favorite book). What elements of the original are important to maintain in creating a prequel? What elements of setting (e.g., time, place, environment) will you include? Be sure to stay true to the original characters and open the prequel with an attention-getting scene, like the one in *Peter and the Starcatchers*. The well-developed prequel should hook the reader from the start. Edit your writing for pronouns, punctuation, and spelling. Your teacher may ask you to draw and scan an illustration to accompany it. (RL.6.3, W.6.3, W.6.4, L.6.1a,b, L.6.2a,b)

6. WRITING (ARGUMENT)

How is listening to *Peter Pan*, *Peter and the Starcatchers*, or *James and the Giant Peach* as an audiobook similar to and different from reading the book? Which do you prefer? Why? Write an argument to support your preference in your journal or post it on the classroom blog, and compare your response to those of your classmates. Discuss at least three reasons for your preference, citing evidence from the text. (RL.6.7, W.6.1, L.6.1a,b, L.6.2a,b)

7. DRAMATIZATION/FLUENCY

Choose a scene from one of the books that you find humorous or that touched you in some way. Work with classmates to present the scene as a dramatic reading. You may also record your presentation using a video camera to compare the difference in impact between seeing and hearing the words. (SL.6.6)

8. INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY WRITING

What did you learn about the authors from the biographies, autobiographies, letters, or interviews that you didn't know before? How much of the author's experience do you "see" in the text after learning more about him/her? Prior to drafting your essay, you should establish a plan for locating credible and reliable information. Your explanation should be a well-developed essay that includes three to four supporting details. Edit your writing for pronouns, punctuation, and spelling. (RI.6.1, L.6.1a,b, L.6.2a,b)

9. POETRY RESPONSE

How is the treatment of growing up similar and different in the poems and the prose we've read? Write your ideas in your journal prior to class discussion. (SL.6.6)

10. LITERATURE RESPONSE/MEDIA APPRECIATION

What does the phrase "I won't grow up" mean to you? Based on the lyrics from the musical version of *Peter Pan*, what does growing up mean to Peter? Does this song include all aspects of growing up? Your teacher may ask you to first write your own response in your journal and share it with a partner prior to discussing as a class. (SL.6.1a,b) (*Note:* Alternatively, you may watch the "I Won't Grow Up" scene from the movie or on YouTube and then discuss.) (RL.6.7)

11. WORD STUDY

Keep an index card file of words studied while reading *Peter Pan*. Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, spelling feature, and so on. Can you select a word and find its root? How do prefixes and suffixes affect the part of speech and spelling? (*Note:* This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) (L.6.4a,b)

12. CLASS DISCUSSION (QUESTIONS THAT BUILD ON TEXTS READ IN GRADE FIVE)

Compare and contrast the character of Wendy Darling in *Peter Pan* with the character of Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. How are their experiences in a fantastic land similar? How are they different? How does the fact that these characters are female affect their fantastic experiences?

Eternal youth is a common theme between *Tuck Everlasting* and *Peter Pan*. Would you like to remain young forever? Why or why not? Cite specific passages or events from *Peter Pan* or *Tuck Everlasting* to support your claim. (SL.6.1a,b)

13. INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY WRITING

Write an informative/explanatory essay in response to the essential question (What distinguishes childhood from adulthood?). Choose at least three things learned from a character or an author and explain what you learned from them. Prepare the essay for publication by editing, especially for pronouns, punctuation, and spelling. Upload your essay to the classroom blog or a class wiki. Be prepared to make an audio recording of your essay and upload it as a podcast on the class web page for this unit. (W.6.9a,b, W.6.4, L.6.1a,b, L.6.2a,b)

14. GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Your teacher will teach mini-lessons on the individual language standards. For example, he/she will explain relative pronouns and adverbs to the class, and then you will practice some cloze activities as a class: (i.e., (1) I told you about the dog _____ [who, whose, whom, which, that] lives next door. (2) The stars were shining _____ [brightly, bright] in the night sky.) Select a piece of your own writing, circle the relative pronouns and adverbs, and ensure the correct words were used. (L.6.1a)

15. MECHANICS/GRAMMAR WALL

As a class, create a Mechanics/Grammar bulletin board where, throughout the year, you will add to a checklist of editing topics as they are taught through targeted mini-lessons (e.g., proper use of punctuation, capitalization). Once skills are taught in a mini-lesson and listed on the bulletin board, you are expected to edit your work for the elements before publication. (L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3)

16. MECHANICS

Your teacher will teach mini-lessons on the individual language standards. For example, as a class you will find examples of commas, parentheses, and dashes in books read in class. See if the class can generalize rules for when these are used. (See the following examples: (1) The 25th anniversary of our school (August 25, 2008) brought back memories for the retired teachers who worked there. (2) The 25th anniversary of our school—August 25, 2008—brought back memories for the retired teachers who worked there. (3) Sheila’s youngest brother, Connor, will be visiting her in the hospital.) Then, you will choose a piece of your own writing and see if there is a place where information could be added—and decide if a comma, parentheses, or a dash is needed. Check your work with a partner. (L.6.2a)

17. VOCABULARY/WORD WALL

As a class, create a Vocabulary Word Wall bulletin board where, throughout the year, you will add and sort words as you learn them in each unit of study. (L.6.4)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Literary Elements Map* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.3)
- *Lights, Camera, Action: Interviewing a Book Character* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.3)
- *Book Report Alternative: Creating a Childhood for a Character* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.3)
- *Action Is Character: Exploring Character Traits with Adjectives* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.1)
- *Internalization of Vocabulary Through the Use of a Word Map* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.4, RI.6.4)
- *Improve Comprehension: A Word Game Using Root Words and Affixes* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4)
- *Flip-a-Chip: Examining Affixes and Roots to Build Vocabulary* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4)
- *You Can’t Spell the Word Prefix Without a Prefix* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.7.4, RI.7.4)
- *March Is Music in Our Schools Month* (ReadWriteThink) (SL.6.1)
- *Roald Dahl Was Born on This Day in 1916* (ReadWriteThink) (RL.6.7)
- Story map (ReadWriteThink)

TERMINOLOGY

Character development
Character traits

Elements of setting: place, time,
environment

Interviews
Prequel

Grade Six, Unit One Sample Lesson Plan

“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros

In this series of four lessons, students read “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros, and they:

Examine Sandra Cisneros’s “Eleven” and note its memoir qualities (RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.9)

Explore the literary art of fictionalizing memories (RL.6.6, L.6.6)

Reflect upon their memories (SL.6.1, W.6.3, W.6.4)

Summary

Lesson I: “Eleven”

- Explicate “Eleven” (RL.6.1)
- Analyze Cisneros’s literary style (RL.6.6)
- Explore the narrator’s voice (RL.6.6)
- Probe the narrator’s conflict (RL.6.2)
- Investigate the central theme of the story (RL.6.2)
- Identify the literary genre, memoir (RL.6.9)
- Note the memoir qualities in Cisneros’s short story (RL.6.9)

Lesson II: “Fictionalizing Memories”

- Generate memories (SL.6.1)
- Begin to reconstruct events that carry meaning (W.6.3)
- Revisit the components of a story (RL.6.3, W.6.3)
- Begin to translate mere memories into more memorable, meaningful moments (W.6.3, W.6.4, L.6.6)
- Draft a memoir (W.6.3, W.6.4, W.6.10)

Lesson III: Writing and Revising Memories

- Revisit initial drafts of memoirs (W.6.3)
- Rethink details (L.6.6)
- Enhance descriptions (W.6.3, W.6.4)
- Rewrite earlier drafts (W.6.3, W.6.5, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3, W.6.10)

Lesson IV: Collecting Memories

- Reflect upon one’s memories (SL.6.1)
- Emphasize the ability to make memorable moments more meaningful (RL.6.6)
- Appreciate the stories of others (SL.6.1)

Lesson II: Fictionalizing Memories

Objectives

- Generate memories (SL.6.1)
- Begin to reconstruct events that carry meaning (W.6.3)
- Revisit the components of a story (RL.6.3, W.6.3)
- Begin to translate mere memories into more memorable, meaningful moments (W.6.3, W.6.4, L.6.6)
- Draft a memoir (W.6.3, W.6.4, W.6.10)

Required Materials

- Childhood photos, artifacts of childhood, etc.

Procedures

1. Lead-In:

Ask the students to take out their artifacts and lead a conversation in which they describe what they brought. The story “Eleven” is not about the red sweater; it is about growing up. Similarly, the purpose of the artifact is to help students relive memories.

2. Step by Step:

- Independently, the students will begin to take notes. This is a time for remembering details. For example, if the artifact is a picture, the students might think of the moment it was taken: Who else was around? Was he/she happy or sad? What was the occasion?
- Before the students begin to draft their memoirs, they should be reminded to consider the components that make stories, both fiction and nonfiction, exciting (narrative voice, conflict, characters, setting, and so on).
- Students will begin to draft their memoirs.

3. Closure:

Since the writing activity will continue, summarize what has been accomplished so far, and what the students will do in the next lesson.

Differentiation

Advanced

- Students will collaboratively create interview questions on a shared online spreadsheet, based on teacher prompts, to help students for whom this assignment is difficult. Students will conduct interviews with a recording device such as a voice memo or video camera, asking probing questions to “pull” the story from the reluctant storyteller.

Struggling

- Students will talk about their artifact or photograph with a partner as a warm-up, participate in student interviews, and use the recorded interview to write the memoir draft. Students will write out main ideas from the recorded interview on index cards, sort them, and write their memoir draft focusing on three main components (narrative voice, characters, and setting).
- Students without artifacts and photographs will read “My Name,” from *House on Mango Street* by Susan Cisneros, in a small group. Students will write a memoir based on their name.

Homework/Assessment

N/A