**Life Lessons**

**In this third six-week unit of first grade, students read literature and informational texts related to life lessons.**

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**Overview**

* + Building on the retelling of stories with details, students focus on the categorizing of those story details into the following groupings: characters, key events, and settings. Students read and listen to fables with morals. They also learn about rules for life in a book of manners. Reading the life story of George Washington Carver, students learn about a man who had to overcome obstacles in life to make important contributions to science and agriculture. Students also learn about Thomas Edison’s work with electricity and the rules for its safe use. Descriptive words are the focus of a lesson centered on the artwork of Georgia O’Keeffe. Finally, the children write narratives focused on life lessons and create informative posters focused on electrical safety.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.1.3:** Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
    - **RL.1.2:** Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of the central message or lesson.
    - **RI.1.6:** Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
    - **W.1.3:** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
    - **L.1.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
    - **L.1.2(b):** Use end punctuation for sentences.
    - **RF.1.4:** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
    - **RF.1.4(b):** Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Describe characters, key events, and the setting in a story.
    - Identify who is speaking in a story or fable.
    - Distinguish between the information provided by the pictures or illustrations in a text and the information provided by the words.
    - Using time cue words, providing some details, and ending with a sense of closure, write narratives that include at least two sequenced events.
    - Revise  narratives with the help of an adult.
    - Produce complete sentences with correct past, present, or future verb tenses.
    - Use end punctuation for sentences: periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
    - Relate the use of punctuation to the way a text should be read expressively.
    - Compare and contrast two versions of an Indian fable.
    - Create informative posters using both text and illustrations to teach about electrical safety.
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**Suggested Works**

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

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

* + - *Green Eggs and Ham* (Dr. Seuss) (E)
    - *Yo! Yes?*(Chris Raschka)
    - *The Blind Men and the Elephant*(Karen Backstein and Annie Mitra)
    - *Seven Blind Mice* (Ed Young) (EA)

**Poetry**

* + - "By Myself" in *Honey I Love and Other Poems* (Eloise Greenfield)
    - "Sharing" in *Falling Up* (Shel Silverstein)
    - "Ridiculous Rose" in *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (Shel Silverstein)

**Stories (Read Aloud)**

* + - *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* (B.G. Hennessy and Boris Kulikov)
    - *Town Mouse, Country Mouse*(Jan Brett)
    - *Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes*(Margie Palatini and Barry Moser)
    - *The Lion & the Mouse* (Jerry Pinkney)
    - *The Tortoise and the Hare*(Janet Stevens)
    - *The Hare and The Tortoise*(Swahili) (Helen Ward)
    - *Fables* (Arnold Lobel) (EA)
    - *The Little Red Hen*(Paul Galdone)
    - *The Ugly Duckling* (Hans Christian Andersen and Jerry Pinkney)
    - *Swimmy*(Leo Leonni)
    - *Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse*(Leo Lionni)
    - *Inch by Inch*(Leo Lionni)
    - *Punctuation Takes a Vacation*(Robin Pulver and Lynn Rowe Reed)

**Poetry (Read Aloud)**

* + - *Goops and How to Be Them: A Manual of Manners for Polite Children* (Gelett Burgess)
    - "I'm Making a List" in *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (Shel Silverstein)
    - "My Mother Says I’m Sickening" in *The New Kid on the Block* (Jack Prelutsky)

**Informational Texts**

**Informational Text**

* + - A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver (Aliki) (E)
    - George Washington Carver (Rookie Biographies) (Lynea Bowdish)
    - Thomas Alva Edison (Rookie Biographies) (Wil Mara)
    - What is Electricity? (Rookie Read-About Science) (Lisa Trumbauer)

**Informational Text (Read Aloud)**

* + - Manners (Aliki) (EA)
    - Hello! Good-bye! (Aliki) (EA)
    - Georgia O’Keeffe (Getting to Know the World’s Greatest Artists) (Mike Venezia)
    - My Light (Molly Bang) (EA)
    - Flick a Switch: How Electricity Gets to Your Home (Barbara Seuling and Nancy Tobin)
    - Watch Out! At Home (Claire Llewellyn and Mike Gordon)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Art**

* + - Georgia O’Keeffe, [*Red Poppy*](http://www.globalgallery.com/enlarge/29789/) (1927)
    - Georgia O’Keeffe, [*Jack in the Pulpit No. IV*](http://www.nga.gov/fcgi-bin/timage_f?object=70179ℑ=17577&c=20centpa) (1930)
    - Georgia O’Keeffe, [*Jimson Weed*](http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections/artwork/jimson-weed-okeeffe-georgia) (1936)
    - Georgia O’Keeffe, [*Oriental Poppies*](http://www.artsconnected.org/artsnetmn/environ/okeeffe.html) (1928)
    - Georgia O’Keeffe, [*Two Calla Lilies on Pink*](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/83649.html) (1928)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Language / Literary**

To introduce the relationship between punctuation and reading expression, use the book *Yo! Yes?.* Show the students the cover of the book with its very simple title: *Yo! Yes?* Ask how someone would say those words? YO! YES? As you read the book with the students, have the boys read one page, and the girls the opposite page. As they focus on the illustrations and the way the author ends each sentence, they will know how to read the words, and a story will be created in their minds. Follow this reading with other books so that the children learn how important it is to read with the end punctuation in mind. (RL.1.6, RF.1.4b, L.1.2b, RL.1.7)

**Class Discussion / Literature**

Tell the students that fables are stories that teach us a lesson. The characters in the story are usually animals and have one main characteristic. Read the familiar  fable, “The Tortoise and the Hare.” Ask students what they can tell you about the tortoise. (He’s slow, but steady.) What can they tell about the hare? (He’s fast, but undependable.) Create a chart with cells for the title, characters (with one characteristic each), setting, key events (i.e., from the beginning, middle, and end), and the lesson learned (i.e., the moral of the story). As you read each fable in this unit, continue to fill in the chart. Give students more and more responsibility for filling in the characters, setting, and key events of a fable. Assess understanding at the end of the unit by reading a fable and then have each child write or dictate the entries on his or her own chart. (RL.1.3, RL.1.2)

**Class Activity / Literature**

Tell the students that the Indian fable, “The Blind Men and the Elephant” is the original telling of a fable more commonly known as “Seven Blind Mice.” Read the original story first and then read “Seven Blind Mice.” (Read aloud to students, or they may read on their own if they are able.)  As the two fables are added to the fable story chart, ask the students to explain how these two stories are the same and how they are different. (RL.1.9, RL.1.2)

**Writing / Narrative**

Assign this narrative prompt: “Think of a time when you learned a lesson.” Encourage the students to think about the lessons learned in the fables as they write their own story. Be sure the students focus on the beginning, middle and end (where they tell about the lesson learned). Be sure they include at least two sequenced events, use time cue words, provide some details, and include a sense of closure (W.1.3, W.1.5, RL.1.2)

**Class Discussion / Language**

One of the life lessons focused on in this unit is “manners.” With the students, create a list of “lunchroom manners” using a book such as *Manners* (Aliki). Students should dictate the sentences while you write them on sentence strips. In this writing lesson, focus on writing complete sentences with subject-verb agreement. To practice handwriting and correct sentence construction, have the students copy some of the sentences.  A follow-up to this lesson would be a humorous list of “lunchroom manners” inspired by Prelutsky and Silverstein and written in poetic form. (SL.1.6, L.1.1c, L.1.1e, L.1.1j)

**Independent Reading / Informational Text**

Introduce the book *A Weed is a Flower: The Story of George Washington Carver*. Explain that illustrations and text are both very important in a book. Guide students as they read by asking them first to think about what you can learn from the illustrations. Create a two-column chart with “illustrations” on one side and “text” on the other side. When students learn something from studying the illustration, they will write it on a Post-It note and put it in the book. Use the Post-Its to guide the discussion when they are finished reading. Repeat the activity with learning from the text. (RI.1.6)

**Art Connection / Language**

After students have read about George Washington Carver’s love of nature, introduce them to an artist who also focused on nature and who lived during the same time period: Georgia O’Keeffe. Both of their names come from the Greek root “geo” meaning “earth.”  Tell the students to look at some of Georgia O’Keefe’s artwork. Ask them to use describing words (i.e., *adjectives*) to discuss what they see in her work. (L.1.5d, L.1.1f)

When you are finished with the art description activity, read these quotations and have the children write a response. (L.1.1j)

“Nobody sees a flower, really, it is so small. We haven't time—and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.” Georgia O’Keeffe

“If I could paint the flower exactly as I see it no one would see what I see because I would paint it small like the flower is small. So I said to myself—‘I'll paint what I see—what the flower is to me, but I'll paint it big, and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it - I will make even busy New Yorkers take time to see what I see of flowers.” Georgia O’Keeffe

**Writing / Informational Text**

After reading several books about electricity, create a list of rules for safety (e.g., avoiding electrical outlets with wet hands). Divide the rules evenly among the students and assign the task of creating a safety poster for each one. Each student will write a rule neatly and show additional information (i.e., the application of the rule) in his or her illustration. Create sets of posters and allow students to present their rules to another classroom or grade level. (W.1.2, RI.1.6, SL.1.5, SL.1.6)

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**Reading Foundations**

* + **A Pacing Guide for Reading Instruction**

This guide is based on the “reading foundations,” writing, and language standards in the CCSS and is customized to the maps. Completed for Kindergarten and first grade (more grades to come), the guide tracks curriculum map units, as indicated in the first row of the document. Concepts of print, phonological awareness, and text reading fluency are all addressed and woven into a developmental progression that leads to word recognition and text reading. Accomplishment of these milestones can be achieved with daily practice and brief activities, suggestions for which are highlighted in the guide.

[Reading Foundations and Activities (1: Units 1-3)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/1st_Foundations_U1-3_(8.19).pdf)

[Reading Foundations and Activities (1: Units 4-6)](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/1st_Foundations_U4-6_(8.19).pdf)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [Building a Matrix for Leo Lionni Books: An Author Study](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/building-matrix-lionni-books-263.html?tab=4#tabs) (ReadWriteThink) (RL.1.9)

[Aesop and Ananse: Animal Fables and Trickster Tales](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=240) (National Endowment for the Humanities) (RL.1.2)

[The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum](http://www.okeeffemuseum.org/)

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**Terminology**

* + - adjectives
    - affixes
    - characters
    - complete sentences
    - declarative
    - end punctuation
    - exclamation mark
    - exclamatory
    - fable
    - imperative
    - interrogative
    - key events
    - lesson
    - message
    - moral
    - narratives
    - period
    - question mark
    - revision
    - setting
    - verbs
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
    - **Art**: The still lifes of Georgia O’Keeffe
    - **Science**:
      * Scientists (e.g., George Washington Carver, Thomas Edison)
      * Electricity (e.g., basic principles, safety rules)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **Science**: Sun (i.e., as a source of energy, light, and heat)