

Unit 3: Creative Reading

This unit guides students to discover the power of storytelling. Student will engage with activities that encourage considering different perspectives and looking beyond the text.

Unit focus and goals

- Introduce or review a story arch
- Consider viewpoints other than the narrator
- Imagine alternative scenarios
- Discover the power of storytelling

Materials needed:

- PowerPoint "Creative Reading" provided through the website
- A long, large piece of paper
- Tape
- Markers
- Story prompts
- Short stories provided through website*

* The short stories provided can be switched out to represent your community better. Use materials from your community and culture that your students will connect with.

Structure/Activity

Pictures tell stories – PowerPoint Slides 3-7 (20mins)

Show students a picture of the landscape in the PowerPoint. Ask students to describe what is happening in the picture - encourage them to use descriptive words and go into detail.

Then ask students what is happening outside the frame? Get students to discuss among themselves and share.

Using a large, piece of paper, ask students to draw extensions of this world. If students are stuck, you can provide prompts such as opposite, upside-down, miniature, gigantic, dark, light, etc.

Short, short stories - PowerPoint Slide 8 (15mins)

Tell students a story in 6 words, e.g., The door shook and slowly opened...

Share and discuss Ernest Hemmingway's 6-word story "For sale: baby shoes. Never Worn"

Students take turns sharing their 6-word stories.

Story Road – PowerPoint Slides 9 – 10 (20 – 30mins)

Discuss what is essential in a story and a story arc – Who, what, why, when and story arc (characters, setting, initiating event, problems, levels of difficulties, solution, and morals)

Tape a long piece of paper onto the floor of your classroom. Tell your class a story about yourself from the weekend while walking along with the piece of paper. Pause at parts of a story arc, beginning (setting & characters), middle (problem, building on the problem), and the end (solution).

Tell your story again, only this time when you step onto the road, ask students to identify parts of the story arch. As students identify the arcs [e.g., the setting, characters], you will write down a prompt on the piece of paper. Invite students to walk on the story road, telling their own stories. The stories can be made up, personal, or retelling of their favorite story.

Same story - Different takes - PowerPoint Slide 11 (30 – 45mins)

Separate students into small groups. Each group receives the exact instructions (below) inside an envelope. Students work together to create a short scene (written or performed), but they must include the directions in the envelope.

- Level 1 - The story must include something breaking, a moment of stillness and laughter.
- Level 2 - The story must include: something scary, a box, and a switch
- Level 3 - The story must include: the feeling of pink, a spark, a rumble

Creative Reading Activity – PowerPoint Slide 12 (30 – 45mins)

Separate students into small groups. Students will read a short story.

Ask students to brainstorm what could happen next? Who are the characters in the story? Would their narration of the story be the same or different? Ask students to write out an alternative perspective/version of this story.

Elementary students - This is the House That Jack Built- Simms Taback.

Middle /High School - The Fun They Had - Isaac Asimov

This exercise helps students think beyond the text at hand and consider different perspectives. They are using their imaginations to go beyond the text.

Processing Questions – PowerPoint Slide 14 (20mins)

- How can you use creative reading in your everyday life?
- How will this affect how you read and think about stories?
- Why is it important to think beyond the text?

Larger Unit Project – Town Hall

Pick an article from your local newspaper on a topic with multiple points of view, e.g., an essay on homework or single-use plastic. Pick a piece that is appropriate for your student's age, community setting, and level.

- Elementary and middle school– Time for Kids, CBC Kids news, or community newspaper
- Highschool - Canadian points of view, any major newspaper, academic journals

Read the article as a group. Discuss what the article is about, who wrote it, and what perspectives have been shared. Clarify any questions about vocabulary and provide context for the content.

Discuss the central issue and different perspectives around the story.

Identify what students know and need to investigate about the subject.

Separate students up into research groups. Each group will focus on one perspective.

Once students have gathered enough information, hold a town hall meeting in which students roleplay different perspective holders. Teacher will act as a guide and group moderator.

This activity requires students to use their imagination to consider different perspectives, research current events, roleplay, and use critical thinking with text.