



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# **Grade 7: Module 3A: Unit 3: Lesson 2**

## **Discussing and Identifying Themes: What Makes a Good Children's Book?**



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**Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)**

I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3)

I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L7.1a and b)

**Supporting Learning Targets**

- I can write a concluding thematic statement that connects the experience of Frederick Douglass to situations beyond the story.
- I can recognize narrative techniques in a children's book.
- I can combine phrases into a complete sentence.

**Ongoing Assessment**

- Children's Book Scavenger Hunt



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<p>1. Opening</p> <p>A. Entry Task: Summing It Up (15 minutes)</p> <p>2. Work Time</p> <p>A. Children's Book Scavenger Hunt (20 minutes)</p> <p>3. Closing and Assessment</p> <p>A. Sentence Practice (10 minutes)</p> <p>4. Homework</p> <p>A. Reread the episode you want to turn into a children's book. As you read, underline sentences that you think you could borrow to help you develop character, add sensory details, create dialogue, include strong verbs, and craft the thematic statement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In this lesson, students will begin to articulate the theme of their children's books. They first read the conclusion of <i>Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery</i> (excerpted in the entry task) and think about the theme of that book. Using the author's language as a scaffold, they then write their own theme for two of the episodes they read. Students should keep today's entry task in a safe place and use it as they write the conclusion of their children's book.</li><li>• Students also look closely at a children's book to evaluate the narrative techniques. This will serve as an additional model before they begin writing their own stories. To facilitate this, go to the library and get 10–15 books. Because students will be reading them closely and looking at illustrations, this lesson will be most successful if you have one book for every two students. To find a list of recommended titles that are thematically linked to <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>, see the Unit 3 Overview.</li><li>• In the next lesson, students will be returning to their excerpt analysis triads from Unit 2 to report on the children's book they studied in this lesson. Be deliberate in your groupings today to ensure that the groups will be successful today and tomorrow.</li><li>• You collect the Children's Book Scavenger Hunt at the end of today's lesson. Students will use it again in Lesson 3.</li><li>• For today's sentence practice, students practice putting phrases together. If you wish, you may substitute this lesson with a worksheet that has examples of sentence-level errors from their work.</li><li>• The homework for this lesson asks students to pick the episode on which they will base their children's book. You may want to provide guidance at this time. Because the model text is based on the fight with Covey, this episode will be very familiar and will be appropriate for some of your struggling students. You may wish to guide your stronger students to challenge themselves and choose a less familiar episode or even one that they read on their own.</li><li>• Emphasize the importance of completing the homework before tomorrow's class. Students must be familiar with their chosen episodes in order to complete the My Children's Book Plan tomorrow.</li></ul>



Agenda	Teaching Notes (continued)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This lesson uses a picture book called <i>Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery</i>. This book serves as the mentor text for the performance task. This children’s book is integral to several lessons in this module. If your school does not have this book, it is widely available in public and school libraries. However, by January 15, alternate materials that use a free alternative children’s book will be available on EngageNY.org and at commoncoresuccess.elschools.org. These alternate materials will accommodate any schools/districts that are not able to secure a copy of <i>Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery</i>.</li> <li>• If you use the alternate text, the lesson structure stays the same, but you will need to use Unit 3, Lesson 2, Opening (alternate) and Entry Task: Summing It Up (alternate) from the file of alternate materials that accompanies the book.</li> <li>• Post: Learning targets.</li> </ul>

Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
<p>theme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry Task: Summing It Up (one per student)</li> <li>• Douglass’s Homes Discussion Appointment worksheet (from Unit 1, Lesson 6)</li> <li>• An assortment of children’s books (one for every two or three students)</li> <li>• Children’s Book Scavenger Hunt worksheets (one per student)</li> <li>• Document camera</li> <li>• Putting Sentences Together worksheet (one per student and one to display)</li> <li>• Equity sticks</li> </ul>



Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Entry Task: Summing It Up (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute and post the <b>Entry Task: Summing It Up</b>. Invite students to follow along silently as you read the directions for Part I aloud.</li> <li>• Ask for a volunteer to define <i>theme</i>. Listen for: “It is a message or universal truth that the author is trying to convey,” or “It is a statement that is broadly applicable to situations beyond the story.”</li> <li>• Direct students’ attention to today’s learning targets. Tell them you are interested in hearing the themes they can articulate.</li> <li>• After a few minutes, ask the students to share their answers to the questions in Part I. Listen for thematic statements such as: “People always long to be free,” “When you stand up for yourself, you gain new resolve and power,” or “It is a good thing to be true to yourself and not let someone else tell you who you are.” For the second question, listen for: “The star is a symbol for his hope for the future,” “It’s a symbol of his resolve to free his people,” or “It symbolizes his decision to break out of the mentality of a slave.”</li> <li>• Arrange the students in pairs using the <b>Douglass’s Homes Discussion Appointment worksheet</b> (from Unit 1, Lesson 6). Direct them to Part II of the entry task. Invite them to get out their notes for each episode.</li> <li>• After a few minutes, ask the students to share out possible thematic statements. Accept all reasonable responses.</li> <li>• Point out that there are several possible themes for any given episode. It depends on what the author wants to focus on. The thematic statement for <i>Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery</i> could have been that owning a slave makes someone a brutal person (like Covey), but because this is a children’s book, the theme is something that is more appropriate for young children—like “if you are determined to find freedom, you will one day find it.” Also, the story focuses more on the relationship between Douglass and his mother. This is not a major focus of <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>, but because this is a book for children, and children are close to their parents, the author focused on that aspect of the story.</li> <li>• Remind students that part of their assignment is to articulate a thematic statement. Just as <i>Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery</i> doesn’t come out and say its theme directly, they won’t say it directly either. Instead, they will use the sentence stems on the entry task to articulate the theme and to lead the reader to the understanding that they, as authors, want the reader to get. This exercise helps them generate a first draft of that theme. Students should save this entry task and use it as they write the last page of their book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider partnering ELL students who speak the same home language when discussion of complex content is required. This allows students to have more meaningful discussions and clarify points in their native language.</li> <li>• Giving students a moment to think before they answer will help them articulate their ideas more clearly.</li> <li>• Inviting the whole class to participate by giving a thumbs-up will bring reluctant students into the discussion.</li> </ul>



Opening (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students that the theme of their stories will be directly related to audience and purpose. As authors they will have to think deeply about how they will address their audience and their purpose. Ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* "Who is the audience for this book? How will that affect your writing?"</li></ul></li><li>• Wait a few moments for everyone's hand to go up and then call on someone. Listen for students to name the type of diction they will use, the details they will include, the pacing, etc.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* "What is the purpose of this book? How will that affect your writing?"</li></ul></li><li>• Wait a few moments for everyone's hand to go up and then call on someone. Listen for: "The purpose of this book is to teach young children about the life of Frederick Douglass," "The purpose is to help young children reflect on a universal truth through the theme," "The purpose is to entertain children," or "The purpose is to teach children about American history."</li></ul>	

Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Children's Book Scavenger Hunt (20 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depending on the number of children's books you have, arrange the students into pairs or triads. Distribute the <b>assortment of children's books</b> and the <b>Children's Book Scavenger Hunt worksheets</b>. Tell students they will complete the first three sections today, and tomorrow they will share out what they found with another group.</li><li>• Ask for a volunteer to read the directions for the first three sections aloud. Ask for another volunteer to paraphrase the directions. Clarify any questions.</li><li>• Circulate to help as needed, or consider joining a struggling group.</li><li>• Collect the worksheets and be ready to return them tomorrow.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mixed-ability groupings of students for regular discussion and close reading exercises will provide a collaborative and supportive structure for close reading of the text. Determine these groups ahead of time.</li></ul>



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Sentence Practice (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students’ attention to the <b>document camera</b>. Distribute and display the <b>Putting Sentences Together worksheet</b>. Remind students that writers think of the big picture of how a story fits together, as well as the small details like how to craft clear and interesting sentences. Practicing constructing sentences is a good way to think like a writer. Read the model out loud and talk about the nuances of meaning in the way the phrases are arranged.</li> <li>• Direct students to write their ideas for the first collection of phrases on a scratch piece of paper. After a few minutes, have them turn and talk to a classmate. Using the <b>equity sticks</b>, cold call a few students to share out their ideas. Discuss how the arrangement of the clauses changes the meaning.</li> <li>• Repeat for the remaining collections of phrases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Total Participations Techniques (like Turn and Talk) allows for total participation of students. It encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and social construction of knowledge. It also helps students practice their speaking and listening skills.</li> </ul>
Homework	Meeting Students’ Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reread the episode you want to turn into a children’s book. As you read, underline sentences that you think you could borrow to help you develop character, add sensory details, create dialogue, include strong verbs, and craft the thematic statement.</li> </ul>	



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## Supporting Materials



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Entry Task: Summing It Up

Name:

Date:

**Part I**

*Directions:* Complete this task individually.

These are the last lines of *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*:

“That night, while he lay by the fire, Frederick thought about his mother. He remembered how she had walked all night, across the frozen fields, just to hold him. He told himself that he would never think or act like a slave again. He promised his mother that one day he would escape, that all slaves would be free. Frederick looked up into the sky and saw the moon drifting through the clouds. After the moon came a star, pale and far off, but burning in the sky.”

1. What is the theme that Frederick reflects on in these last few lines?

2. The star that he sees “pale and far off but burning” is symbolic to him. What does the star represent to Frederick?



Entry Task: Summing It Up

**Part II**

*Directions:* With a partner, articulate **a thematic statement** for two of the episodes we read as a class.

Episode:	Episode:
That night, while he lay by the fire, Frederick thought ...  He told himself that ...	That night, while he lay by the fire, Frederick thought ...  He told himself that ...



Children's Book Scavenger Hunt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Scavenger Hunt**

*Directions:* Read the children's book provided and answer the questions in the first column. Then look for the author's use of narrative techniques. When you find evidence of one, note it in the third column.

**Book Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

Elements of a story	Can you find ...?	Example from text (with page number)
What is the setting?	... one <b>sensory detail</b> that helped you imagine the setting?	
Who is the main character?	... when the author <b>shows</b> you a character trait instead of just telling you?	
What is the central conflict?	... where the author <b>shows</b> you the conflict instead of telling you?	
What happens in the story?	... a <b>strong verb</b> ?  ... an example of <b>dialogue</b> ?  ... three <b>vivid words</b> or <b>precise adjectives</b> ?	
Does the author show what the characters think or feel?	... one thought-shot?	
What is the resolution?	... some concluding sentences that lead the reader to the thematic statement that the story is implying?	



Children's Book Scavenger Hunt

**II. Zooming in**

*Directions:* Think for a moment about where the author zoomed in on the action or characters and where the author did not.

1. Describe one event the author zoomed in on. Why is this event important enough to zoom in on? What tools did the author use to magnify this event?

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2. Describe a place that the author paused to give the reader a thought-shot. Why was it important for us to know the thoughts of the character at this time?

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3. Describe one event the author moved quickly over. Why is this event not important enough to zoom in on?

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Children's Book Scavenger Hunt

**III. Looking at Pictures**

*Directions:* Now spend a few minutes looking at the pictures. Pick one illustration to focus on. What do you notice? Why? What part of the text did this author choose to illustrate? Make some notes for yourself below. Be prepared to share out with a partner.

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**IV. Tell a Friend (you'll do this in the next lesson)**

*Directions:* Now share what you found with your small group. Start with these sentence stems:

My story was powerful/was not powerful because ...

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I noticed that the author of this book ...

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Children's Book Scavenger Hunt

As you discuss, use this as an opportunity to practice using these sentence stems that can help you on your mid-unit assessment.

Questions to encourage discussion:

Why did you think ...?

Did you consider ...?

Could you explain your thinking about ...?

I hear you saying.... Is that right?

Respectful responses that encourage discussion:

I'm glad you said ...

I hadn't thought of ...

I see it differently because ...

I hear you saying ... and now I think ...



Putting Sentences Together

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Name:

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Date:

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**Directions:** Using the collections of phrases and sentences below, make a least three grammatically correct sentences. You can add words, rearrange existing words, or change verbs tense if you need to.

**Model:** Dog,  
getting on my nerves,  
barking

*The dog, which was barking, was getting on my nerves.*

*The barking dog was getting on my nerves.*

*The dog, which was getting on my nerves, wouldn't stop barking.*

*Because he was barking, the dog was getting on my nerves.*

**Combining phrases:** Day,  
sunny,  
was starting to get cloudy

There was someone

He looked

down the hall

didn't recognize

**Combining sentences:** Frederick learned to read.  
Reading opened up a whole new world to him.  
Frederick got a taste of freedom.

Frederick devised a daring plan.

It was a plan full of danger.

The plan filled him with hope.