



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 7: Module 3A: Unit 1: Lesson 1

What Gives Stories Their Power?



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

I can determine a theme or the central ideas of a literary text. (RL.7.2)

I can determine the meaning of words and phrases in a literary text (figurative, connotative, and technical meanings). (RL.7.4)

I can analyze figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L.7.5)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can analyze how the content, theme, images, and language in *The People Could Fly* give the story its enduring power.

Ongoing Assessment

- Powerful Story note-catcher



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Opening<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Engaging the Reader (2 minutes)B. Reviewing the Learning Target (1 minute)2. Work Time<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Reading Aloud: <i>The People Could Fly</i> (17 minutes)B. Pair Conversation: What Gives This Story Its Power? (15 minutes)3. Closing and Assessment<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Adding to the Powerful Stories Anchor Chart (10 minutes)4. Homework<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. None	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This lesson launches Module 3, giving students the opportunity to experience a powerful story and discuss what makes it powerful. Through their work in this module, students will understand that powerful stories have powerful content (i.e. an interesting or important topic and a compelling theme) and use powerful language and images to convey that content. This lesson helps students understand that powerful language and images are tools in the service of conveying powerful content: they are not an end in themselves, nor does the use of them give power to a story that is based on weak content.• Note that the opening is very brief to provide the time necessary to read and discuss the story.• In this lesson, students hear <i>The People Could Fly: The Picture Book</i> by Virginia Hamilton read aloud. Consider how to frame the read-aloud so your students understand why you are reading a picture book in middle school. Also consider how you will have them process the book as you read it aloud. The lesson suggests a series of questions that could be asked through a Think-Pair-Share protocol to help students process and engage with the story. This requires the teacher to pause periodically throughout the book. However, you may prefer to pose fewer questions so as to interrupt the story less often. Be sure to at least ask the questions after pages 9, 13, and 14, as well as the final question.• Note that the story has some difficult scenes, and students may need support in navigating those scenes.• The pages in <i>The People Could Fly</i> are not numbered. This lesson plan refers to each spread as one page—so for example, the text “Then, many of the people were captured” and the facing illustration are referred to as page 2.• After hearing the story, students participate in a pair conversation, in which they consider the power of the words and images on particular pages. Doing this activity provides all students with time to reflect on the powerful story.• If your school or district does not have a copy of <i>The People Could Fly</i>, seek another copy at your public library.



Agenda	Teaching Notes (continued)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that there are two titles of this name: <i>The People Could Fly</i> (Hamilton, reprint 1993) is an anthology of African American folk tales; the last selection in the anthology is the narrative referenced here. There is another title, <i>The People Could Fly: The Picture Book</i> (Hamilton, 2004), which is the exact text used in this lesson. If you cannot get a copy of the picture book, it would work to read aloud the story from the anthology for Work Time A and then also use that text for Work Time B. Rather than revisiting the pages listed in this lesson, select four brief passages or images from that text that are powerful. • If you cannot access either text, you can find an audio version of the story at: http://www.prx.org/pieces/58171-the-people-could-fly. You will need to create a (free) account. Use this for Work Time A. For Work Time B, go to http://www.costanzaknight.com/fly.html. This is an artist's retelling of the story, and you can use selected images and words from the site for Work Time B. Alternatively, you could just use this protocol: Read aloud the story, showing the pictures, for Work Time A and then revisit a few pictures and sentences for Work Time B. Consider what will work best for your class and gather the materials accordingly. • In advance, create the Powerful Stories anchor chart (see supporting materials). • Post: Learning target, Powerful Stories anchor chart. • Review: <i>The People Could Fly: The Picture Book</i> by Virginia Hamilton.

Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
enduring, power, content, empowering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The People Could Fly</i> (picture book; one copy for teacher read aloud) • Powerful Stories anchor chart (new; teacher-created; see supporting materials) • Powerful Story note-catcher (one per student)



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Engaging the Reader (2 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As students enter, have them sit where they will be for the read-aloud of <i>The People Could Fly</i>. If your room allows you to gather students in a circle or on a rug, that is best. Tell students that today's lesson launches a new module, with a new topic. Over the next two lessons, they will learn more about what this module focuses on, but today you are going to begin by reading them a story. Be prepared to reassure students that you are not reading them a picture book because you think they are little kids; rather, assure them that this picture book is beautiful, difficult, and actually not for young children at all. Display the cover of <i>The People Could Fly</i> (either the physical book or by using an online image of the cover) and ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Who do you think this book will be about? Why do you think that?" Ask several students to share their thinking, making sure they cite evidence for their ideas. Do not tell them whether they are correct or incorrect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using an image to launch a text allows students who struggle with texts to engage more easily.
<p>B. Reviewing the Learning Target (1 minute)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct students' attention to the posted learning target. Read it aloud to the class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I can analyze how the content, theme, images, and language in <i>The People Could Fly</i> give the story its enduring power." Focus students on the word <i>enduring</i>. Tell them that <i>enduring</i> means lasting a long time. Cold call on one student to define the word <i>power</i>. Listen for: "strong," "might," "force," or "strength." Tell students that we often talk about stories and words having power. We will be exploring what that means over the course of the module, but when we talk about a powerful story, we usually mean that the story makes us feel something strongly or that it changes our thinking in some way. Powerful stories are based on compelling <i>content</i>: they deal with interesting and important topics, and have themes that help readers understand the world. Powerful stories use tools – such as powerful language and images – to convey their content. Powerful stories often echo over time—their power remains for generation after generation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting learning targets allows students to reference them throughout the lesson to check their understanding. The targets also provide a reminder to students and teachers about the intended learning behind a given lesson or activity.



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Reading Aloud: <i>The People Could Fly</i> (17 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>The People Could Fly</i> aloud to the class, slowly and with expression, making sure to show the pictures and give students a chance to study at least a few of them. The point is to immerse the students in the story and let them experience its power, so do not interrupt the story too much. However, pause several times to let students respond to the story: It is powerful and at times upsetting, and they will need time to process it. • After you read page 3, ask students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Who is this story about?” * “This story is from the oral tradition, which means that it used to be told rather than read. What kinds of words is the author using to give the feeling that she is telling you a story, rather than the feeling that you are reading a book?” • After you read page 6, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Who is Sarah? Where and when do you think she lives?” * “Why is her situation so hard? What do you think she will do now?” • After you read page 9, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “How did Toby help the slaves?” * “Do you think this is real? Why or why not?” • After you read page 13, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What happened to the slaves who could fly? What happened to the other slaves?” * “Why is Toby not crying or laughing?” • After you read page 14, ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “Why would the slaves who could not fly tell this story?” * “Why might the author tell it to you?” • Invite students to turn and talk with a partner about a final set of questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * “What makes it beautiful? What makes it difficult?” • Cold call on two or three pairs to share out whole group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking up a text with questions can help struggling readers and ELL students process the text in chunks. • Turn and Talk allows for total participation of students. It encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and social construction of knowledge. It also helps students to practice their speaking and listening skills.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Pair Conversation: What Gives This Story Its Power? (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct students' attention back to the learning target. The story they just heard is one that has enduring power: It has been powerful for many generations. Ask students to consider:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* "Can you think of any other stories that have <i>enduring power</i>?"• Cold call on two or three students and listen for them to mention fairy tales, myths, or religious stories.• Let students know that in this module, they will be considering what gives stories their power, starting with this story and continuing with others. At the end of the module, they will write a powerful story of their own.• Direct students' attention to the definition of <i>powerful</i> on the Powerful Stories anchor chart, and remind them that it may be helpful for them to refer to this in the next activity.• Ask students:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* "What was the content of this story? What was it about?"• Call on several students and add their thinking to the content column of the Powerful Stories anchor chart. Help them notice that the content of this story is important: it relates to a significant time in U.S. history, and helps us understand the experiences of slaves.• Tell students that in the next activity, they will consider the other columns on this anchor chart. As they return to their seats, make sure they remain seated in pairs.• Distribute one Powerful Story note-catcher to each student. Then tell students that now that they have read the story, they are going to consider how the images, words, and theme also give it power. Give directions:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You will hear parts of the book read aloud again and look at the picture.2. You and your partner notice powerful words and images for that page.3. You and your partner should record your ideas on your Powerful Story note-catcher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giving students the opportunity to discuss answers to questions in pairs before asking them to share with the whole group can ensure that all students are able to contribute to the whole group discussion.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reread the text on page 5 and show students the image. Make sure to give them time to look carefully at it. Then prompt them to note what particular words and parts of the image are powerful. They should hold their thinking on the Powerful Story note-catcher. Consider modeling how you identify a powerful word, phrase, or image—you might use language like: “This pulled at me,” “This helped me imagine I was there,” or “This made me sad.”• Repeat this process with page 7, page 9 and page 10.• Finally, give partners time to discuss the theme of the story. Do not have students share out yet; you will do this in the next activity.	



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Adding to the Powerful Stories Anchor Chart (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct students' attention to the posted Powerful Stories anchor chart. Help students notice that in pairs, they have thought about three more parts of the anchor chart: theme, language, and images. • Lead a debrief of students' pair work, beginning with the theme of the story. Ask several pairs to share their thinking. Listen for them to say: "The theme is that freedom is possible, whether you fly to it or walk to it," or "The theme is that people seek freedom at any cost." • Introduce students to the idea that a theme can make a story <i>empowering</i>. Tell students that some powerful stories are also empowering—they give people power or make them feel that they can accomplish a goal. It is often the theme of a story that makes it empowering. • Invite students to turn and talk with their partner. Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Why is the theme of this story empowering? Why would slaves tell and retell this story?" • Cold call on one or two pairs to share out. Listen for students to say something like: "Slaves would feel empowered by thinking about freedom, and in the story the slaves get the better of the overseer," "People draw strength from learning about the courage of their ancestors," or "Freedom can be from many things, not just slavery." • Add student thinking about theme to the Powerful Stories anchor chart. • Before calling on the pairs to share their thinking about powerful language and images, point out to the class that this story has powerful content, and that the language and images they are discussing help convey that powerful content. Reiterate that the language and images are tools the author uses to communicate this powerful content. • Ask students to share their thinking about powerful words and images in this story. Add their thinking to the Powerful Stories anchor chart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchor charts provide a visual cue to students about what to do when you ask them to work independently. They also serve as note-catchers when the class is co-constructing ideas.
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	



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Supporting Materials



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Powerful Stories Anchor Chart

What gives stories and poems their enduring power?

Powerful stories and language make you feel something or change your thinking

Story or poem	Content	Theme	Language	Images
<i>The People Could Fly</i>				
<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Chapters 1 and 2</i>				
<i>“Negro Speaks of Rivers”</i>				
<i>Last Day of Slavery</i>				



Powerful Story note-catcher

Name:

Date:

After each selection from the story is read aloud, talk with your partner about what words and images you found powerful. Record your thinking on the chart below.

Pages in text	What is a phrase or sentence that you think is powerful? Write it on the paper and explain what it helps you understand or how it makes you feel.	What about the image is powerful? Tell which part of the image you are looking at and explain what it helps you understand or how it makes you feel.
5		
7		
9		
10		



Powerful Story note-catcher

Finally, talk with your partner about what you think the theme of this story is. Record your ideas below.

What do you think the theme of *The People Could Fly* is?

Remember:

A theme of a book is the message or the lesson that the author is trying to convey.

- * It is a statement that is broadly applicable to situations beyond the story.
- * A theme in *A Long Walk to Water* was: *Individuals can survive challenging environments in a variety of ways.*