



Teacher Companion Guide: Duke's Storm

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Dear Teachers,

We are excited to announce our companion interactive lessons designed to support a read aloud experience of *Duke's Storm: A Story of Courage*. This beautifully illustrated and inspiring story focuses on themes of resilience, bravery, and overcoming challenges, and we believe it will offer students valuable opportunities for both academic and personal growth.

These lesson plans are crafted to enhance the students' engagement with the text, as well as to deepen their understanding of its themes and messages. Each lesson includes activities that encourage critical thinking, discussions, and reflections on courage, perseverance, and teamwork, all of which are highlighted in the story.

The lessons are designed to be flexible and can be easily incorporated into your structured literacy classroom. They will also provide students with opportunities to practice essential skills such as comprehension, vocabulary, and communication.

We hope these resources will help create an enriching and meaningful experience as you guide your students through *Duke's Storm*. Please feel free to adapt these lessons as needed to best fit the unique needs of your classroom.

Thank you for your dedication to fostering a love of reading and learning. If you have any questions or need further assistance, don't hesitate to reach out.

Happy Reading,
CESA 6 Literacy Team



This book is dedicated to the leaders, the dreamers, and the optimists.

Understanding an Interactive Read Aloud

K-6 Interactive Read Aloud Lessons

These lessons use an Interactive Read Aloud routine. An Interactive Read Aloud is a high-leverage instructional routine designed to reduce cognitive load while students build language comprehension skills, preparing them to confidently engage with challenging texts. The purpose of this approach is multifaceted:



Deepens Comprehension

By hearing the text more than once, students can better grasp its meaning, plot, and language. They can revisit parts that may have been confusing or unclear during the first read-through.

Builds Vocabulary

Repeated exposure to the same words and phrases helps students internalize new vocabulary and understand its use in context.

Promotes Active Engagement

During each reading, the teacher encourages students to interact with the text. This could include asking questions, predicting what might happen next, making connections, or discussing themes. The interactive element makes the learning process more engaging and helps students retain information.

Enhances Fluency

With repeated readings, students have the opportunity to hear proper expression, pacing, and intonation, which can model fluent reading for them and encourage their own fluency development.

Supports Diverse Learners

For learners who may need extra support—whether because of language barriers, disabilities, or varying levels of comprehension—a repeated interactive read-aloud provides more chances to practice and make sense of the material.

Fosters a Love of Reading

By making the reading experience interactive and enjoyable, students may develop a stronger interest in reading and storytelling, encouraging lifelong literacy habits.

A Repeated Interactive Read Aloud is a series of 3 interactive read aloud experiences with the same text across multiple days. Each lesson builds upon the previous lesson so that students can experience an increased complexity of understanding the text.

Grades K-2: Duke's Storm

Repeated Interactive Read Aloud Lessons

IRA Text: *Duke's Storm*, written by Ted Neitzke, and illustrated by Allison Disch.

Overall Learning Goal(s)

- Use evidence from the text and illustrations to understand how a character changes.
- Analyze how a character change can help determine the theme (lesson) of the story. *If we face our challenges, we can find success/happiness on the other side of the "storm".

Note! Be sure to number the pages in *Duke's Storm*, beginning with the first story page, as page numbers are referenced throughout the lesson plans.



Before Reading

Establish Purpose for Reading

- Why are you reading this text? What are the main understandings students should take away from reading the text?

Identify Text Structure

- What do students need to understand about text structure?

Background Knowledge

- Identify what students need to know before reading the text.

Select Vocabulary

- What tier 2 words must be taught for students to understand the text?

Identify Challenging Language Structures

- What sentences or phrases might need to be pre-taught or studied?



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- Mark spots throughout the text to allow students to answer questions and **Turn and Talk**.

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- Use a graphic organizer to scaffold and show structure.



After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- Was the purpose for reading met?

Assessment

- Can students express the big ideas from the text?
- Can they use text evidence to support ideas?
- How will you assess?

Strategic 6 Thinking Moves

A typical IRA lesson may address 2-3 of the Thinking Moves. With a Repeated IRA, all of the Thinking Moves are addressed across multiple lessons.

Modeled and Practiced:

Whole Group

- Activate Prior Knowledge
- Notice Structures
- Monitor and Clarify
- Ask and Answer Questions
- Infer
- Summarize

In Text: Partner, Small Group, or Independently

- Activate Prior Knowledge - Connections to Our Lives/ Revisit Prior Reading
- Notice Structures
- Monitor and Clarify
- Ask and Answer Questions
- Infer
- Summarize



"Movie Read"



Before Reading

- Familiarize students with the story, build background knowledge, and engage interest.
- You will want to read the entire text to think about the expression/personalities of the characters. Additionally, as you read, consider the order of the text and the quotes on the page.
 - » Example: On p. 5, you would need to read the text first ("When Duke asked the cows..."), and then read the quote/thought bubble - make sure to discuss how the order of reading impacts comprehension.

Identify Text Structure

- You may need to remind students about narrative/fiction/fantasy vs. informational text elements.
 - » "The animals talk in this book, so that tells us that this book is fiction or make-believe."

Background Knowledge

- Discuss storms.
 - » **Ask**
 - "What do you do during a storm?"
 - "Do you stay inside, hide under a blanket, or watch from a window?"
- Show the book's cover and title.
 - » **Ask**
 - "What do you think the story is about based on the cover?"

Select Vocabulary

- Pre-teach **intentional** (direct instruction) words before the read aloud: courage (bravery to do something scary) and challenge (something hard that you try to do). Use examples:
 - » "**Courage** is when you try something even though you're scared, like raising your hand to answer a tough question."
 - » "A **challenge** is like solving a hard puzzle or learning to ride a bike."
- Define **incidental** (in the moment) words during the read-aloud so that students continue making meaning but don't need to learn the word.
 - » Example:
 - "The cows were very crabby and they weren't very nice to Duke when he asked where his family went. His older cousin scolded him - that means she was kind of mean and yelled at him."
 - You can read the thought bubble now for the first time and make sure your voice is "scolding" in tone.

Establish Purpose for Reading

- Familiarize students with the story, build background knowledge, and engage interest.
- **Explain**
 - » "Today, we are going to meet a little buffalo named Duke. He feels different from others, but he learns an important lesson about facing challenges. Let's find out what happens!"
- **Hook Question**
 - » "Have you ever felt scared but did something brave anyway?"
 - Discuss with students, and consider sharing a personal example as the teacher.
 - "Let's see what Duke does when he faces something scary!"



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- Read the text expressively, modeling curiosity and excitement. Think aloud to answer questions and be explicit about your metacognition.
- After Duke asks the cows about his family, have students think aloud.
 - » **Think Aloud**
 - "Duke walks away sad with his head down. I'm wondering if he feels sad because his cousins yelled at (or scolded) him and made him feel like he should not face the storm because they don't face the storm."
- Stop when Tootsie says, "Buffaloes never act like cows. They always face the storm."
 - » **Turn and Talk**
 - "What do you think Tootsie means?"



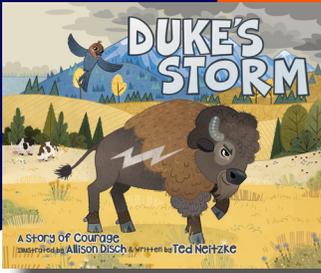
After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- **Turn and Talk**
 - » "What do you think made Duke feel brave in the storm?"
 - The teacher should highlight 1-2 ideas that you heard students say while listening in.

Assessment

- **Formative Assessment**
 - » You can formatively assess student learning through listening to whole group student responses and **Turn and Talks**, providing corrective feedback as needed.



"Reading With the Text"



Before Reading

Before Reading

- Focus on comprehension and deeper engagement with the story's themes.

Establish Purpose for Reading

- Revisit from yesterday
 - » **Turn and Talk**
 - "Why do buffaloes face storms instead of running away?"

Identify Text Structure

- Review narrative text structure through a five-finger retell:
 - » Characters
 - » Setting
 - » Problem
 - » Events in the Story
 - » Solution

Background Knowledge

- **Think Aloud**
 - » "I'm looking more closely at the front cover this time. I notice Duke's eyebrow, his expression, and how he is standing."
 - » "I might say that he looks courageous, like he's ready for a challenge."

Select Vocabulary

- Review **courage** and **challenge**
 - » "Can you think of a time you showed courage (were courageous) or faced a challenge?"

Five-Finger Retell



Identify Challenging Language Structures

- **Pre-teach**

- » "Buffaloes face storms, but cows turn away from them."
 - Highlight how this contrast will be important.
 - "Notice that the comma and the word 'but' tells me that the buffaloes do something different than the cows in a storm. Thinking about what we read yesterday, what do we know about buffaloes?"
 - Have this sentence written on sentence strip in pocket chart or on chart paper as you will revisit it in the next few days.



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- Draw students attention to the illustrations on pages 16 & 17.
 - » You can use the Notice & Wonder protocol to help students analyze illustrations related to Duke, Tootsie, and the cows.
 - **Notice & Wonder**
 - "Let's look at Duke's mom in this picture. I notice that she has lightning strikes around her, I notice her eyes and eyebrows and how she is standing. I wonder how she is feeling right now?"
- Teacher can model with "I think she is feeling... because..." OR students can **Turn and Talk** with the sentence stem.
- Now look at p. 18 and talk about how Duke is feeling and why Tootsie has to act like his cheerleader. Discuss with students.
 - » "What do you notice about Tootsie in this illustration? What do you wonder about why she is wearing goggles?"
 - » "What do you notice about the cows? Are you wondering why they are lying down?"
 - » "Do you notice something about their eyes? What does that tell you?"
- Tip: Noticing and wondering can lead to great inferring practice, and you can use that language with your students!



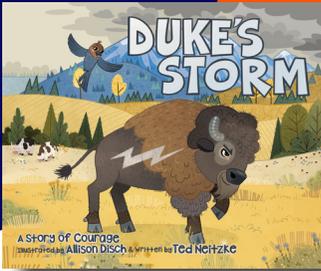
After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- Encourage students to use **courage** and **challenge** in context:
 - » "Tell a partner about a challenge you faced and how you showed courage."

Assessment

- **Formative Assessment**
 - » You can formatively assess student learning through listening to whole group student responses and **Turn and Talks** and providing corrective feedback as needed.



"Reading Critically"

**Before Reading**

- Choose excerpt(s) from the text for student reading.
- Deepen comprehension, connect to life lessons, and apply vocabulary.

Establish Purpose for Reading

- Review the story map.
 - » **Ask**
 - "How did Duke change from the beginning to the end of the story? What helped him?"

Background Knowledge

- Connect to prior knowledge
 - » "Have you ever tried something hard, like Duke did? Let's think about how Duke learned to be brave!"

Select Vocabulary

- Prompt to use the words **courage** and **challenge** when thinking about how Duke learned to be brave.

Identify Challenging Language Structures

- Who/do sentence/syntax lesson:
 - » This is a compare/contrast sentence structure. Use the sentence strip and/or chart paper started on previous day.
 - "Buffaloes face storms, but cows turn away from them."
 - "Let's take a closer look at this sentence. (reread) This sentence compares characters in the story and how they behave differently. Can you figure that out?"
 - **Turn and Talk**
 - "Let's find the who and the do in each part of the sentence to see if you're right..."
 - ✓ **Who:** buffaloes
 - ✓ **Do:** face storms
 - ✓ **Who:** cows
 - ✓ **Do:** turn away
 - "This sentence uses the word (conjunction) 'but' to show how two nouns (buffaloes and cows) act differently. Authors can combine two ideas in a sentence to make meaning in different ways. In this case, the author wanted to make sure that you understand that the buffaloes and cows behave differently when a storm is coming."
 - "How is that demonstrated in the book? Can we find some places where the reader first finds out that

cows don't like to go into the storm?"

- You may also want to bring attention to the word "them" and ensure that students understand that is referring to "storms".
 - You could say, "Let's take a look at the last part of the sentence, when the cows turn away. What are they turning away from? What word did the author use here?".
 - Then you can explain why authors use words like "them" to refer back to people or things previously mentioned in the sentence or conversation.
- » Tip: This short demonstration can lead to expanded sentence/syntax work, following your district scope and sequence. It can springboard extension activities with sentences within this book and outside of this book.



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- Today let's take a deeper look at when Tootsie tells the story about Duke's mom. Reread pages 10-16.
 - » "Why is this story about Duke's mom important for Duke to hear? What does Duke do after he hears this story and what does that tell us?"
 - You may want to have a whole group conversation about this.



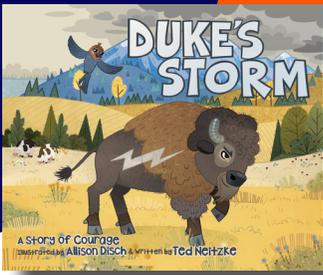
After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- Reread the last page of the book where grandma addressed 'Little Lightning Duke'.
 - » "What did Duke learn about himself, and how do you know?"

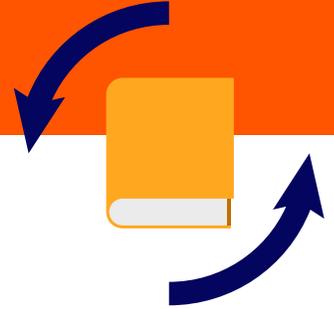
Assessment

- Students can **Turn and Talk**, Stop & Jot, or Act Out (depending on grade level.)
 - » "Duke changes in the story from _____ to _____ because _____ ."



IRA

"Extended Practice"



Before Reading

- Use this text to guide small group instruction for reteaching, or use other texts on animals or people facing challenges.
- Introduce a Text Set on "unlikely duos" or stories of bravery to continue learning.
 - » [See Text Set suggestions starting on page 26](#)

Identify Challenging Language Structures

- Students could write compare/contrast sentences.
 - » You could make the sentences on word cards (or cut up sentence routine) to scramble and put back together, or change the "who" and the "do."
- Students could bring in other ideas for "who/do" and change them within a sentence frame.
 - » Example: "Tootsie encourages Duke, but the cows scold him."
 - **Who:** Tootsie
 - **Do:** encourages Duke
 - **Who:** cows
 - **Do:** scold him (Duke)
 - » Example: You can examine how sentences change if you change 'but' to another conjunction like 'yet' or 'so'. You can use a Sentence Combining routine to continue extended practice.



During Reading

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- Use a story map graphic organizer or sequencing cards. Guide students in retelling the story in their own words, focusing on the beginning, middle, and end.



After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- Have students complete a sentence frame:
 - » "When Duke _____, he felt _____. This helped him because _____."
 - At K, this could be modeled as a whole group in a shared writing or interactive writing routine.
 - At grades 1-2, this could be attempted independently with a sentence frame and shared with a partner/whole group.

Grades 3-4: Duke's Storm

Repeated Interactive Read Aloud Lessons

IRA Text: *Duke's Storm*, written by Ted Neitzke, and illustrated by Allison Disch.

Overall Learning Goal(s)

- Use evidence from the text and illustrations to analyze how a character evolves throughout the story.
- Identify how a character's transformation conveys the theme of the story.
- Evaluate the significance of facing challenges as a means to personal growth.

Note! Be sure to number the pages in *Duke's Storm*, beginning with the first story page, as page numbers are referenced throughout the lesson plans.



Before Reading

Establish Purpose for Reading

- Why are you reading this text? What are the main understandings students should take away from reading the text?

Identify Text Structure

- What do students need to understand about text structure?

Background Knowledge

- Identify what students need to know before reading the text.

Select Vocabulary

- What tier 2 words must be taught for students to understand the text?

Identify Challenging Language Structures

- What sentences or phrases might need to be pre-taught or studied?



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- Mark spots throughout the text to allow students to answer questions and **Turn and Talk**.

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- Use a graphic organizer to scaffold and show structure.



After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- Was the purpose for reading met?

Assessment

- Can students express the big ideas from the text?
- Can they use text evidence to support ideas?
- How will you assess?

Strategic 6 Thinking Moves

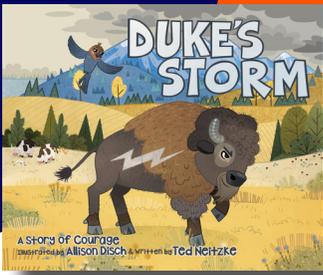
A typical IRA lesson may address 2-3 of the Thinking Moves. With a Repeated IRA, all of the Thinking Moves are addressed across multiple lessons.

Modeled and Practiced: Whole Group

- Activate Prior Knowledge
- Notice Structures
- Monitor and Clarify
- Ask and Answer Questions
- Infer
- Summarize

In Text: Partner, Small Group, or Independently

- Activate Prior Knowledge
- Notice Structures
- Monitor and Clarify
- Ask and Answer Questions
- Infer
- Summarize



IRA First Read

Day

1

"Movie Read"



Before Reading

- Familiarize students with the story, build background knowledge, and engage interest.
- You will want to read the entire text to think about the expression/personalities of the characters. Additionally, as you read, consider the order of the text and the quotes on the page.
 - » Example: On p. 5, you would need to read the text first ("When Duke asked the cows..."), and then read the quote/thought bubble - Make sure to discuss how the order of reading impacts comprehension.

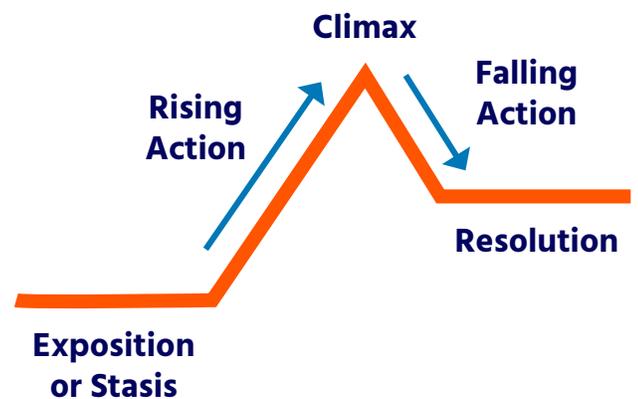
Establish Purpose for Reading

- Develop initial comprehension, establish background knowledge, and engage students in the author's message and story's central conflict.
- **Preview** the title and cover illustration.
 - » **Ask**
 - "What clues do you see that tell you what this book might be about?"
 - » **Explain**
 - "Today, we are going to meet a young buffalo named Duke. He feels different from the other animals around him, let's read to find out how and why he changes throughout the story."

Identify Text Structure

- Briefly review narrative plot structure:
 - » Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution (including characters and setting.)
 - "Today we will mainly focus on setting/ characters, rising action, and climax."
- Create an anchor chart if you don't already have one.

Anchor Chart



Background Knowledge

- **Ask**
 - » "What do you know about how animals behave during storms?"
 - Prompt students to talk about their own pets.
- **Hook Question Options and Turn and Talk**
 - » "Have you ever been scared?"
 - » "How did you act?"
 - » "Have you ever faced a challenge that made you stronger?"
 - » "How did it feel before and after?"

- **Introduce an essential question:**
 - » "As we read this book we're going to keep coming back to this question, How do challenges help us grow?"
 - Post this question for reflection on the book, other texts, and personal experiences.

Select Vocabulary

- **Target words:** **courage, resilience, adversity,** and **perseverance.**
- Start by providing simple, student-friendly definitions for each word. Start an anchor chart with each word, which you will add to in the following lessons. This provides the opportunity for students to see the word as you are discussing the meaning.
 - » For example:
 - **Courage:** The bravery to do something even if you're scared.
 - **Resilience:** The ability to bounce back after something difficult happens.
 - **Adversity:** Challenges or difficult situations.
 - **Perseverance:** The determination to keep trying, even when it's hard.
- Discuss the similarities and subtle differences. Next ask the students to think about times they were **courageous, resilient, faced adversity, or persevered?** And why?
 - » They could use sentences to respond like: I was resilient after I had a bad day at school.
- **Incidental Vocabulary:** Words like **grumble, tingling,** and **energized** should be discussed in context during reading.



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- **Read Aloud with Expression**
 - » Use different tones for the dialogue (e.g., cows' grumbling, Tootsie's excitement, Duke's bravery).
- **Think Aloud**
 - » Think aloud to emphasize key moments like Tootsie's explanation of how buffaloes face storms and Duke's transformation.
 - » Example:
 - "I'm noticing _____ and now I think _____ because _____."
 - » **Turn and Talk**
 - After the cows say, "We always look away and never face the storm,"
 - **Ask**
 - "What do you think it means to face a storm? Why don't the cows face it?"
- **Discuss**
 - » "Tootsie supports Duke's transformation, or how he changes throughout the book, in a few different ways. As I read, see if you can notice them."
 - Here are some examples of what students might notice:
 - Asking why he's alone
 - Promising his mom to watch out for Duke
 - Explaining that buffaloes aren't like cows
 - Sharing the story about his mom
 - Admitting that she was scared also
 - Encouraging Duke to be brave
 - Congratulating him in the end

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- Use the anchor chart to track Duke's transformation. Model how to identify **setting/characters, rising action,** and **climax.**
- Write these key parts of the text onto your chart together with students throughout your discussion. Since this is a first read, it is best to use this chart as an opportunity to review or "retell" the story and capture these ideas after reading the book in its entirety.



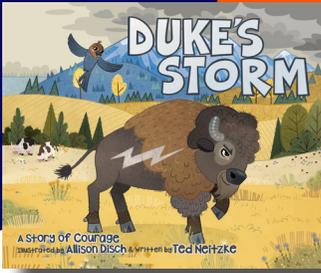
After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- **Ask**
 - » "Why do you think Duke felt different at the beginning of the story?"
 - » "How did he change by the end?"
 - » "What do you think was the most important event that led to Duke's transformation? Why?"
- Tip: Choose one of the questions and try using Think-Pair-Share, followed by a whole class conversation.

Assessment

- **Formative Assessment**
 - » You can formatively assess student learning through listening to whole group student responses and **Turn and Talks** and providing corrective feedback as needed.



"Reading With the Text"

**Before Reading****Before Reading**

- Focus on comprehension and deeper engagement with the story's themes.

Establish Purpose for Reading

- "Today we will be revisiting key passages and analyzing how Duke changes and the lesson he learns."

Identify Text Structure

- Briefly review narrative plot structure:
 - » Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution (including characters and setting)
 - "Today we will mainly focus on falling action, resolution."
- Add to anchor chart.

Select Vocabulary

- Add new words to the anchor chart that you started in the first lesson:
 - » **Confidence:** The feeling of being sure of your abilities.
 - » **Optimism:** The ability to expect the best or see the best in things/people.
- Revisit times students were **courageous, resilient, faced adversity, persevered, were confident, or were optimistic.**
- Model an example:
 - » "I am optimistic that all of my students will stay on task and be successful this school year."
 - **Turn and Talk**
 - "I have faced adversity when _____."
 - "When I was confident about _____ I _____."
- Students should use sentence stems to **Turn and Talk**, listen in, and share out some examples.



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- Reread excerpts and revisit illustrations and dialogue around Tootsie's support of Duke's transformation (choose a few to highlight).
- Engage students in deeper discussion, using the word 'transformation' and cueing them into using text evidence throughout the discussion.
 - » Tootsie's actions to notice:
 - Asking why he's alone
 - Promising his mom to watch out for Duke
 - Explaining that buffaloes aren't like cows
 - Sharing the story about his mom
 - Admitting that she was scared also
 - Encouraging Duke to be brave
 - Congratulating him in the end
- Analyze which action that Tootsie took had the most influence on Duke.
 - » Prepare these ideas (likely noticed in the first read's lesson, and/or added by the teacher) on sentence strips and have the students order them from most influential to least influential.
 - » They need to back up their thoughts with text evidence or real-life/world connections.
 - » This would be a great small group or partner activity that would create practice and discussion opportunities for students, following your few examples that you chose for the whole group conversation in the step before this.
- Text-Dependent and Inference Questions
 - » "Why do you think the cows never face the storm?"
 - » "What does this make you infer about their lives? Their relationships?"

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- Define what a secondary character is:
 - » A **"secondary character"** in a story is like a supporting player who helps the main character, but isn't the star of the story.
- Revisit the story arc from today.
 - » "Even though Tootsie is a secondary character, how did she affect the different stages of the plot?"
 - » "What might we add to the story arc now?"



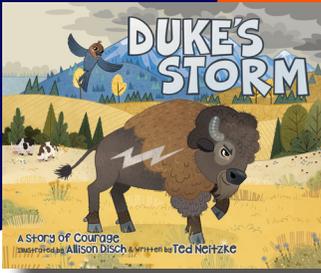
After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- **Turn and Talk**
 - » "Why do you think the author included the contrast between the cows and the buffaloes?"
 - » "Tomorrow, we'll reread parts of the story to figure out the deeper message and how Duke's story can inspire us."
 - Have the students **Turn and Talk** and listen into conversations to formatively assess understanding.
- Tip: You may want to conclude the day with bringing a few of the **Turn and Talk** conversations to a whole class conversation.

Assessment

- **Formative Assessment**
 - » You can formatively assess student learning through listening to whole group student responses and **Turn and Talks** and providing corrective feedback as needed.



"Reading Critically"

**Before Reading**

- Choose excerpt(s) from the text for student reading.
- Deepen comprehension, connect to life lessons, and apply vocabulary.

Establish Purpose for Reading

- Ask one of these questions to launch the lesson, building upon the conversations that you and your students had in days 1 and 2.
 - » **Ask**
 - "What does Duke's story teach us about courage, resilience, facing adversity, perseverance, confidence, or optimism?"
 - "Why do you think his grandma told him, 'Always go to the storm'?"
 - "How do challenges help us grow?"

Select Vocabulary

- Use the vocabulary on the anchor chart to discuss Duke's transformation or how other characters affected his transformation:
 - » **Courageous, resilient, faced adversity, persevered, were confident, or were optimistic.**

Identify Challenging Language Structures

- **Say**
 - » "In the story Duke's Storm he literally charges into or faces a storm."
 - Explain the difference between a **literal** and **figurative meaning**. Then discuss that 'faces a storm' can also be used as a metaphor. A **metaphor** is a saying that compares two things that are not related.
- **Ask**
 - » "If I would say, I faced the storm when I stood up in front of 100 people to give a speech, what am I comparing facing a storm to? (Speaking in front of a big group, stage fright, etc.)"
 - » "What is the figurative meaning of 'face the storm'?"
 - » "Has anyone in your life helped you 'face a storm'?"
 - » "Did you have a secondary character like Tootsie who helped?"



During Reading

Preplan Questions

- **Close Reading of Key Excerpts**
 - » Ask students to use the vocabulary to answer the questions about Duke's transformation or how other characters affected his transformation: **courageous, resilient, faced adversity, persevered, were confident,** or **were optimistic.**
- Reread p. 5 when Duke talks to the cows:
 - » "If Tootsie, Duke's mom, or grandma had been listening in, what might they have said to the cows?"
- Discuss grandma's advice on p. 25:
 - » "What does 'The fastest way through your problems is to go to them' mean?"
 - » "How can this idea help us in real life?"

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- **Retelling and Summarizing**
 - » Use the story arc and prompt students to retell the story to a partner keeping in mind that Duke is the main character, but also including how Tootsie affected the events.
 - » Challenge them to include some of the vocabulary words in the retelling: **courageous, resilient, faced adversity, persevered, were confident,** or **were optimistic.**



After Reading

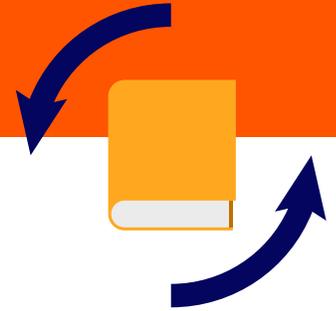
Assessment

- **Evaluate Understanding**
 - » Choose one of these questions/ideas based on your goals and your students. This can be in discussion form, writing, or an exit ticket.
 - Big questions:
 - "What can we learn from the buffaloes about handling challenges?"
 - "How do challenges help us grow?"
 - Respond in one well-organized paragraph:
 - "What lesson do you think the author wants us to learn from Duke's story? What evidence from the text supports your idea?"
 - » Try to use some of the vocabulary words: **courageous, resilient, faced adversity, persevered, were confident,** or **were optimistic.**



IRA

"Extended Practice"



Before Reading

- Differentiated excerpts or tasks:
 - » Use Duke's Storm to guide small group instruction for reteaching. You could use the story arc as an opportunity to retell Duke's Storm or other narrative stories listed in the extension text set.
 - » Another option would be to discuss how other animals or people face challenges. Introduce a text set on "unlikely duos" or stories of bravery to continue learning.
 - [See Text Set suggestions starting on page 26](#)

Identify Text Structure

- Students could read additional fables (see extended text set) to practice completing a story arc, or annotate the fable focusing on analyzing influences of secondary characters on the main character, as well as comparing/contrasting the lesson(s) learned in Duke's Storm.
- Have a **Turn and Talk** about the genre of Duke's Storm:
 - » **Turn and Talk**
 - "What genre do you believe this book is? Why?"
- As students share answers and the elements of the story, reveal that it is narrative, fiction, fantasy, and it also resembles a fable because it features talking animals that embody human traits and by the end of the story it teaches a life lesson.
 - » If students need something more concrete you could draw a flowchart or add to a classroom display on genres.



During Reading

Use Text Structure/Story Mapping to Organize Thinking

- Use a story arc to track the plot of an additional fable. Take turns retelling the fable to a partner that read a different fable. Compare/contrast events, characters, settings, and lessons/themes.



After Reading

Evaluate Understanding

- Students could write a short synopsis to sum up their learning. The fable _____ could be compared to Duke's Storm because _____. However, it could be contrasted to Duke's Storm because _____.
 - » Annotations could be used to evaluate understanding.

Grades 5-6: Duke's Storm

Interactive Read Aloud Planning Template

A Planning Tool For Teachers To Prepare For Interactive Read Alouds

Select the Text

Title of Text: Duke's Storm

Introduce the Text

Background Knowledge

- What is essential for students to know and understand before experiencing the text?
 - » "What do you know about how different animals react to bad storms?" (quick class discussion)
- "Let's take a look at two particular animals today that will be related to our reading."
 - » Show the YouTube video: [Bison Caught in a Thunderstorm!](#) (3:21-5:08)
 - » Show the YouTube video: [The Cows Were Running Around Like Crazy](#) (0:42)

Turn and Talk

- "What do you notice about the bison and the cows related to a storm?"
- "What behaviors did you see?"

Debrief Discussion

- "What if I told you a few more facts about buffaloes? Listen as I tell you more information, and think about how this adds on to your previous conversation."
 - » "In truth, the American bison is a naturally hardy animal at home in a wide variety of climates across the continent. The bison's biological makeup equips it to thrive in winter storms and summer heat. While bison are similar in some ways to cattle, there are significant differences. For example, bison will turn into a snow storm rather than drifting with the wind because they instinctively know that walking into the storm will get them out of the weather quicker. Their massive heads serve as a type of snowplow; by swinging their head to and fro, the animal can sweep away deep snow to find forage below."
 - Source: Buffalo Charge the Storm Story by Rory Vaden

Turn and Talk

- "What else do you now know about bison?"
- "What is the advantage they might have going into a storm?"

Establish Relevance & Purpose

- How does this text connect to students' own lives, context, or learning? What is the purpose for reading this text?
 - » "Today we are going to think about the 'lesson' that we can learn from the bison behavior related to heading into a storm. I wonder what that can tell us about human behavior."

Ask

- "Have you ever had to head into a real, literal, storm? What was that like?"
- "What is another type of 'storm' in life that isn't about weather?" (consider sharing a personal story or example)

Support Vocabulary

Preselect Vocabulary Words

Annotate or mark them with Post-It notes in the text.

Use the Semantic/Word Gradient Routine

The teacher should introduce each word, starting with the words most known to students (each word is on a card as they are introduced.) Then the teacher should give the directions for the activity based on the routine. Each student group or pair has each word on a card. Students discuss and debate where they would put the other words based on what they know and/or can figure out within the discussion. The number of words the teacher chooses is part of the scaffolding needed based on grade level and task.

Weak/Low to Strong/High

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Laziness | 7. Endurance |
| 2. Lack of Effort | 8. Resilience |
| 3. Reluctance | 9. Grit |
| 4. Persistence | 10. Perseverance |
| 5. Determination | 11. Tenacity |
| 6. Strength | 12. Unstoppable |

This progression moves from a general lack of effort or persistence to the highest levels of mental or emotional strength and persistence. Reluctance works as a step between lack of effort and persistence—it's a mild hesitation or unwillingness that could lead to a stronger push forward. Be open to different interpretations of the vocabulary progression if students can back up their ideas with evidence.

- Example: I think persistence is stronger than determination, because without persistence I may give up.

Explicitly Model and Name Thinking and Behaviors

Teacher Think Aloud Opportunities

- Identify 1-3 places in the text where you can model & name the thinking & behaviors that a proficient reader might employ to overcome the complexities of the text.
- Mark these places with annotation or Post-It notes in the text.

Read Duke's Storm

Stop on p. 7:

- Duke told his friend Tootsie that he was really tired from playing all day. Tootsie listened carefully and said, "Duke, buffaloes never lay down during storms."

Think Aloud

"When I read that last line (reread it), it makes me think that it is a metaphor for something more important than just buffalo. I'm thinking about our vocabulary words and how this sentence implies resilience and strength in the face of adversity (or challenge). Buffaloes are often seen as powerful animals, and the idea that they "never lay down during storms" suggests that they face challenges head-on instead of avoiding or hiding from them. I think this is a metaphor, or figure of speech, (this has likely already been taught in previous ELA work) means that, like buffaloes, people should confront difficult situations or tough times with courage and endurance rather than retreating or giving up. The message seems to encourage persistence, suggesting that the best way to handle struggles is to face them directly and not let fear or hardship make you give up or fall down."

Turn and Talk

- "Why do you think Tootsie tells Duke this? What is her goal?"
 - » You may want to discuss: In the context of the character "Duke" being told this by Tootsie, it could indicate that he needs to rise above whatever personal storm or challenge he's facing, to stand strong and keep moving forward.



Actively Engage Students in Thinking Strategies

Prepare

Prepare 2-4 higher-level thinking questions that give students opportunities to practice the thinking and behaviors that will help them navigate this text's complexities.

Page/Paragraph

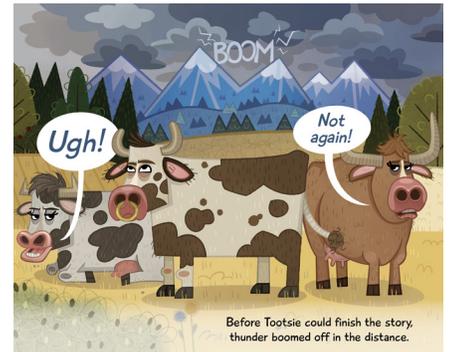
Stop at the text:

- Tootsie said, "I learned this from your mom last year, and then I saw her do this the night before you were born. The night your mom challenged the largest storm ever."



Turn and Talk

- "What clues in the text signal to the reader that this is a flashback?"
- "Ok, now as I continue reading, I want you to notice when the reader knows the flashback is over. When we get to that spot raise your hand and be ready to say how you know!"
- Students should raise their hand and indicate they know because of the text "Before Tootsie could finish the story, thunder boomed off in the distance."
 - » Discuss this and then confirm when you turn the page.
 - » You can also take the opportunity to examine the structure of that sentence, and the cue words that the author used.



Gradually Release Responsibility/Gradually Increase Students' Cognitive Load

Determine Support

- Determine the level of support students will need to comprehend the next section of the text.
 - » Make decisions based on the needs of your students.

Actively Engage Students in Discussion of Text During Reading

Options

Options could include open discussion, retelling, or posing high-level questions that support your learning goals. May include a writing/formative assessment opportunity. Should connect to learning intention and success criteria.

Direct Students Back To The Text

Stop at page 19:

- Then lightning struck and Duke, the buffalo felt something he never felt before, it was a tingling and he felt like he had just been energized. He smiled at Tootsie and yelled out, "Charge!"



Turn and Talk

- "Reread this text with a partner." (could have this page projected and/or printed as a handout for students.)
- "What idea is the author trying to explain through the metaphor?"
- As you listen in to conversations, listen for ideas and themes. You may want to discuss:
 - » In this passage, the metaphor involving Duke the buffalo feeling "energized" after lightning strikes and yelling "Charge!" represents a moment of awakening, empowerment, or a surge of motivation in the face of adversity.
 - » For humans, this could symbolize how someone, after enduring a tough or challenging experience, might feel a sudden surge of strength or inspiration that propels them to take action. The lightning could represent a transformative moment or a realization that sparks newfound energy or purpose, leading someone to move forward with vigor and determination.
 - » In a broader sense, "Charge!" suggests a call to action, a moment when the character or person decides to confront their challenges head-on with renewed energy and confidence. Just as the buffalo, after the storm or challenge, becomes empowered to move forward, humans, too, can experience moments where difficult experiences or setbacks lead to a burst of strength, courage, or clarity, motivating them to take bold steps and face obstacles with resolve.
- Debrief whole class conversation about the meaning of the **metaphor** and **theme** of the text/lesson learned.

Actively Engage Students in Discussion of Text After Reading

- As you come to the last page and read the advice that Duke's grandma gives to Duke, open a class discussion about the theme (or overall message) of the story.
- **Turn and Talk**
 - » "What does Duke's grandma mean when she tells Duke to always go to the storm?"
- Engage students in a final whole group discussion about how we can take Duke's story and apply it to our own challenges. Revisit the vocabulary words and allow for students to share insights about the message of "going into the storm" in real life. (Feel free to structure this conversation in any way that fits your class, could be small groups or partners and then whole group, etc.)

Link Learning

Reiterate and Consolidate

How will you reiterate and consolidate the learning students just did? Consider how you will add to an anchor chart or have students add to notes, as well as how you will connect this to other learning/other portions of the class.

- **Theme**
 - » Watch [Buffalo Charge the Storm](#) (4:06) and have students discuss in triads how this emphasizes the message of the story.
 - What is a storm that you have faced or might face as you grow up? How did you react? What actions could you take to be more like a buffalo? (this could be a discussion or an essay.)
- **Leadership**
 - » Listen to the podcast [Buffaloes Run Into the Storm](#) (and read along.)
 - Students work alone, in pairs, or in small groups to make a poster and slogan to capture the theme with the goal as a message for leadership.
 - Use at least one key vocabulary word from the gradient.
 - Clear leadership or self-improvement message.

- **Knowledge Building**

- » Students partner read the infographics from [The Bison Advantage](#).
 - Gather 6-star facts about buffalo (could have a variation of this task with number or category.)
 - Jigsaw where small groups each have one page of the infographic, gather facts, and share out with the class/make a poster, etc.

Purpose of Supporting Text Sets



A text set is a curated collection of related texts—such as books, articles, poems, multimedia, and other resources—that are grouped together around a common theme, topic, or concept. The purpose of using a text set includes several key benefits:



Builds Background Knowledge

A text set exposes students to multiple perspectives and sources of information on a topic, helping them build a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This broadens their knowledge base and helps make new learning more meaningful and accessible.

Supports Diverse Learning Styles

Text sets can include various types of texts (fiction, nonfiction, visual media, etc.), which cater to different learning preferences. For example, some students may engage more with visual materials, while others may prefer detailed written explanations or narratives.

Promotes Critical Thinking and Discussion

By engaging with different texts that approach the same topic from various angles, students can develop their critical thinking skills. They can compare viewpoints, analyze different kinds of evidence, and discuss the merits and limitations of each source. This promotes deeper analysis and reasoning.

Encourages Engagement and Motivation

A well-curated text set can pique students' interest by offering a range of materials that appeal to their curiosity. The diversity in content can help keep students engaged and motivated, as they explore a topic from multiple directions and formats.

Fosters Cross-Text Connections

With a text set, students have the opportunity to make connections between different texts, understanding how themes, ideas, and concepts can be explored in a variety of ways. This encourages students to synthesize information and draw more complex conclusions.

Supports Differentiation

A text set allows teachers to provide a range of texts that meet the varying reading levels and abilities within a classroom. Students can engage with texts that are appropriate for their individual levels, while still exploring the same thematic content. This helps ensure that all students can access and engage with the material.

Enhances Literacy Skills

The use of different types of texts in a set exposes students to various writing styles, vocabularies, and structures. This diversity helps strengthen overall literacy skills, from reading comprehension to writing and communication.

Scaffolds Learning

A text set can gradually increase in complexity, allowing students to start with simpler texts and build up to more challenging ones. This scaffolding supports gradual learning and helps students develop a deeper understanding of the content over time.

Grades K-2: Duke's Storm

Supporting Text Set



Here are some **children's books** and **online resources** that can be used for a K-2 text set, highlighting themes of **unlikely partnerships, courage, resilience, overcoming challenges,** and **collaborating with others.** These texts would be suitable for a range of learning experiences across different media formats such as books, videos, photographs, and interactive field trips. Each district/teacher should review the curated lists to follow district guidelines.

Informational Articles

Unlikely Animal Partnerships in Nature

- **Impalas and Oxpeckers:** Impalas are often bothered by bugs, but oxpecker birds help by eating these pests off the impalas' bodies. This relationship benefits both animals. https://www.timeforkids.com/k1/natural-partners-k1-2/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- **Symbiotic Animal Relationships:** This educational video introduces various animal partnerships, explaining how different species work together to help each other survive. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EscV2IAzJb4>
- **Symbiosis: The Art of Living Together:** This article from National Geographic Kids explains how different animals form partnerships to help each other survive. It introduces the concept of symbiosis with engaging examples. [National Geographic Education](#)
- **Symbiosis Reading Comprehension:** Softschools.com offers a simple reading passage about symbiosis, discussing how animals interact in nature and form lasting relationships.

Unlikely Human Partnerships in History

- **Helen Keller and Mark Twain:** Helen Keller, who was deaf and blind, formed a surprising friendship with the famous author Mark Twain. Their bond showed that people from very different backgrounds can become close friends. https://listverse.com/2015/06/14/10-of-the-most-unlikely-historical-friendships/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- **Samuel Beckett and André the Giant:** Playwright Samuel Beckett became friends with André the Giant when André was a child. Beckett would give him rides to school, and their friendship is an example of how people of different ages and interests can connect. https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/75595/12-lesser-known-historical-friendships?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- **Historical Figures You Didn't Realize Were Friends:** This article highlights surprising friendships between well-known individuals, demonstrating how people from different backgrounds can form strong bonds. [History Facts](#)

These **stories** illustrate how **cooperation** and **friendship** can occur in unexpected ways, aligning with the themes of courage and overcoming challenges found in "Duke's Storm: A Story of Courage."

Children's Books

- **"The Lion & the Mouse" by Jerry Pinkney**
 - » A beautiful retelling of Aesop's fable about the unlikely friendship between a mighty lion and a tiny mouse. The mouse repays the lion's kindness, showing how even the smallest creatures can make a big difference.
 - » **Theme:** Unlikely partnerships, helping others.
 - » Available in many libraries and bookstores.
- **"Swimmy" by Leo Lionni**
 - » A story of a little fish who leads a group of sea creatures in overcoming a big challenge by using teamwork and clever thinking.
 - » **Theme:** Overcoming challenges, teamwork.
- **"The Cow Who Clucked" by Denise Fleming**
 - » This book tells the story of a cow who sets off on an adventure to help find her missing cluck, and in the process, learns about the importance of working together.
 - » **Theme:** Teamwork, problem-solving.
- **"The Little Red Hen" (Traditional Folktale)**
 - » A classic folktale about the value of hard work and the importance of teamwork when the Little Red Hen faces a task and learns the consequences of not working together.
 - » **Theme:** Teamwork, resilience.
 - » Available in various versions, including as board books for young readers.
- **"A Sick Day for Amos McGee" by Philip C. Stead**
 - » A heartwarming story about Amos McGee, a zookeeper who takes care of his animal friends, and one day, they return the favor when he's feeling ill.
 - » **Theme:** Caring for others, reciprocity, kindness.
- **"The Bear and the Piano" by David Litchfield**
 - » This book tells the story of a bear who finds a piano in the woods and becomes a famous musician. His friends support him, and together they learn the value of both chasing dreams and appreciating what's important.
 - » **Theme:** Dreams, support from others, resilience.
- **"Miss Rumphius" by Barbara Cooney**
 - » The story of a woman who makes a promise to her grandfather to make the world more beautiful, showing the impact one person can have and the importance of perseverance.
 - » **Theme:** Perseverance, making a difference.

Here are some **poems** for K–2 students that align with themes of **partnership, collaboration, and nature**. These poems offer opportunities for K–2 students to explore themes of nature, teamwork, and friendship while building literacy and an appreciation for poetry. These selections are simple, engaging, and fun for younger children.

Poems

"Friends" by Abbie Farwell Brown

A short, sweet poem about the importance of friendship and helping one another.

- [Read the poem here: https://allpoetry.com/poem/8598453-Friends-by-Abbie-Farwell-Brown](https://allpoetry.com/poem/8598453-Friends-by-Abbie-Farwell-Brown)

"Hurt No Living Thing" by Christina Rossetti

A gentle reminder about kindness to all creatures, showcasing respect and care for nature.

- [Read the poem here](#)

"The Crocodile's Toothache" by Shel Silverstein

In this humorous poem, a dentist bravely treats a crocodile's teeth, showcasing an unusual interaction between a human and an animal.

- [Read the poem here: The Crocodile's Toothache](#)

"The Little Turtle" by Vachel Lindsay

A simple poem that describes a turtle's journey, reflecting on the small creature's interactions with the world around it.

- [Read the poem here: The Little Turtle](#)

Online Resources (Photographs, Videos, Interactive Field Trips)

National Geographic Kids: Animals and Their Partnerships

National Geographic offers many resources that show real-life examples of animal partnerships in nature. It includes videos, interactive activities, and articles that explain symbiotic relationships in a kid-friendly format.

[Link: National Geographic Kids](#)

PBS LearningMedia: "Unlikely Animal Friendships"

A video and lesson series that showcases unexpected animal friendships, such as the relationship between a cheetah and a dog or a lion and a lamb, showing how animals from different species can help each other.

[Link: PBS LearningMedia](#)

Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute

Virtual field trips and videos showcasing animal behaviors and conservation efforts. Students can learn about different species and their unlikely partnerships in nature, such as symbiotic relationships between different animals.

[Link: Smithsonian's National Zoo Virtual Tour](#)

Google Arts & Culture: Animals and Humans in Partnership

Explore various online exhibits that highlight the connection between humans and animals across history, including examples of animals assisting humans in tasks such as farming, therapy, and rescue.

[Link: Google Arts & Culture](#)

YouTube Video: "How Animals Help Humans" by Ted-Ed

A short, animated video that illustrates how animals help humans in many different ways, from service animals to therapy animals, and their unique partnerships.

[Link: How Animals Help Humans \(Ted-Ed\)](#)

Interactive Field Trip: "Visit an Elephant Sanctuary"

A virtual field trip that shows how elephants are cared for in sanctuaries and how these magnificent creatures can form bonds with humans and other animals in rehabilitation settings.

[Link: Elephant Sanctuary Virtual Tour](#)

StoryCorps Kids: Unlikely Friendships

StoryCorps provides audio stories where children share their stories of friendship with animals and other children, showing how collaboration and empathy can overcome barriers.

[Link: StoryCorps Kids](#)

Here's a list of **unlikely partnerships** across both **nature** and **history**, highlighting animal-animal, animal-human, and human-human collaborations that have led to overcoming challenges. These examples can engage students and help them make connections to the themes in Duke's Storm: A Story of Courage.

Unlikely Animal Partnerships in Nature

Oxpecker Bird and Large Herbivores (e.g., buffalo, rhinoceros, giraffes)

The oxpecker bird feeds on ticks and parasites found on large herbivores, providing the animals with a cleaner, healthier body. The herbivores, in turn, offer the birds a steady food source. This partnership helps both species thrive.

Cleaner Fish and Host Fish (e.g., cleaner wrasse and larger fish)

Cleaner fish like wrasses clean parasites and dead skin off larger fish, while the larger fish provide food and protection to the cleaner fish. This mutualistic relationship helps keep both species healthy.

Plover Bird and Crocodile

The plover bird will enter the open mouth of a crocodile to clean its teeth and mouth of parasites, which benefits both the crocodile and the bird. The crocodile allows this because it gets a dental cleaning, and the bird gets food.

Ants and Acacia Trees

Acacia trees offer shelter and food to ants, while the ants protect the trees from herbivores and help with pollination. The tree provides the ants with a home in return for protection.

Lemurs and the Ring-Tailed Mongoose

In Madagascar, lemurs and mongooses sometimes form a partnership to search for food. Though they are different species, they share food resources and offer each other protection from predators.

Unlikely Animal and Human Partnerships

Humans and Dolphins (Marine Mammal Training)

Dolphins have been trained by humans for tasks such as search and rescue, military defense, and even therapy for individuals with special needs. These intelligent animals work alongside humans to assist in complex tasks.

Humans and Service Dogs

Service dogs, including guide dogs for the blind, therapy dogs, and emotional support animals, form deep, life-changing bonds with humans, helping with daily tasks and improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Crows and Humans (Birds and Trash Pickup)

Crows are highly intelligent and have been known to help humans by picking up trash in certain areas, demonstrating problem-solving and tool use that help humans in urban environments.

Humans and Horses (Therapeutic Riding and Equestrian Sports)

Horses are used in therapy programs for children with disabilities or emotional challenges. The human-animal bond in therapeutic riding can help improve physical, emotional, and cognitive development in children.

Humans and Elephants (Conservation Efforts)

In some parts of Africa and Asia, elephants have been trained to help humans in conservation efforts, including transporting materials in conservation projects, assisting with reforestation, and guiding tourists in wildlife parks.

Grades 3-4: Duke's Storm

Supporting Text Set



Here is a list of **children's books** and **online resources** for a 3rd-4th grade text set, focusing on **unlikely partnerships, courage, resilience, teamwork,** and **overcoming challenges.** These texts cover both fictional and nonfictional examples that will engage upper elementary students in understanding the complexity of collaboration across different contexts. Each district/teacher should review the curated lists to follow district guidelines.

Picture Books for 3rd-4th Graders

"The Amazing Edie Eckhart" by Rosie Jones

This book tells the story of Edie Eckhart, a young girl who is determined to take on new challenges and prove that she can make a difference. With the help of her friends and family, Edie learns about resilience and the importance of unlikely partnerships.

Theme: Overcoming challenges, friendship, teamwork.

"The Badger's Parting Gift" by Susan Varley

A story about Badger, who is nearing the end of his life, and how his animal friends work together to honor his memory. This story is about loss, the power of friendship, and understanding that even when someone is gone, their impact remains.

Theme: Coping with loss, the power of friendship, resilience.

"The Paper Kingdom" by Helen Yoon

A beautifully illustrated story about a young boy who helps his parents clean offices at night, and together, they create a magical world out of paper. This book shows the power of family partnerships and the importance of working together, even in difficult situations.

Theme: Family, teamwork, resilience, imagination.

"A Big Mooncake for Little Star" by Grace Lin

A whimsical story about Little Star, who helps her mother bake a mooncake, but she can't resist eating it bit by bit. The book emphasizes the importance of patience, working together, and understanding consequences.

Theme: Patience, collaboration, self-control.

Picture Books for 3rd-5th Graders

"Two Mice" by Kristyna Litten

This story follows two mice who are very different from each other, yet they form an unlikely partnership and work together to achieve a goal. The book focuses on how differences can actually make teamwork stronger.

Theme: Friendship, overcoming differences, teamwork.

"The Little Red Fort" by Brenda Maier, illustrated by Sonia Sánchez

A modern retelling of the classic "Little Red Hen" story, where a girl named Ruby decides to build a fort, but her brothers won't help her. She teaches them that working together can accomplish great things.

Theme: Teamwork, resilience, problem-solving.

"Bear and Chicken" by J.R. Krause

A simple yet heartfelt story about two animals who are polar opposites, yet form a strong friendship that helps them navigate their differences and challenges. This book is a great example of unexpected partnerships and mutual support.

Theme: Friendship, overcoming differences, cooperation.

"We Don't Eat Our Classmates" by Ryan T. Higgins

This humorous picture book features a dinosaur named Penelope who struggles with the temptation to eat her classmates (who are humans!). Eventually, she learns about empathy, understanding, and the value of cooperation.

Theme: Empathy, understanding differences, friendship.

"The Lion and the Bird" by Marianne Dubuc

A beautifully illustrated story about a lion who forms an unlikely friendship with a bird that arrives injured. Together, they find joy in each other's company as they work through the challenges of the bird's recovery.

Theme: Friendship, healing, empathy, compassion.

"The Story of Ferdinand" by Munro Leaf

A classic story about Ferdinand, a bull who would rather smell flowers than fight in bullfights. This tale is about the power of being true to oneself and the unexpected results of staying calm in difficult situations.

Theme: Peace, individuality, resilience.

Fables with morals related to courage, perseverance, resilience, teamwork, or overcoming challenges. [Link to many Aesop's Fables.](#)

Fables

The Tortoise and the Hare

Synopsis: A slow but determined tortoise challenges an overconfident hare to a race. The hare, thinking victory is certain, takes a nap, while the tortoise moves steadily and wins.

Moral: Slow and steady wins the race.

The Crow and the Pitcher

Synopsis: A thirsty crow finds a pitcher with water at the bottom. Unable to reach it, the crow drops pebbles in until the water rises high enough to drink.

Moral: Necessity is the mother of invention / Perseverance and intelligence can solve problems.

The Lion and the Mouse

Synopsis: A small mouse accidentally disturbs a lion but promises to repay him someday. Later, the lion is caught in a hunter's net, and the mouse frees him by gnawing through the ropes.

Moral: Even the smallest creature can help the mightiest / Kindness is never wasted.

The Ants and the Grasshopper

Synopsis: While the grasshopper spends summer singing, the hardworking ants gather food for winter. When winter comes, the grasshopper struggles, while the ants thrive.

Moral: Hard work and preparation pay off in the long run.

The Bundle of Sticks

Synopsis: A father shows his sons a single stick breaks easily, but a bundle is strong. By working together, they overcome challenges.

Moral: Unity is strength.

The North Wind and the Sun

Synopsis: The North Wind and the Sun compete to make a traveler remove his cloak. The wind blows harshly, but the traveler only holds his cloak tighter. The Sun shines warmly, and the traveler willingly removes it.

Moral: Gentleness and persuasion are more effective than force.

These **novels** for 3rd-5th graders focus on **unlikely partnerships** and **teamwork**. They incorporate humor, heartwarming moments, and meaningful lessons that will engage students in critical thinking and discussions. These stories also offer valuable insights on empathy, friendship, and the importance of collaboration—perfect for upper-elementary readers!

Novels

Children's Novels

"The One and Only Ivan" by Katherine Applegate

This novel tells the story of Ivan, a silverback gorilla who lives in captivity in a shopping mall. Ivan forms an unlikely friendship with a baby elephant named Ruby, and together, they inspire others to stand up for freedom and kindness.

Theme: Courage, friendship, standing up for what's right.

"Wonder" by R.J. Palacio

Auggie Pullman is a young boy with facial differences who faces numerous challenges as he starts school. The story emphasizes unlikely friendships and the power of kindness and empathy in overcoming obstacles.

Theme: Acceptance, courage, empathy, overcoming challenges.

"Charlotte's Web" by E.B. White

A classic tale about the friendship between a pig named Wilbur and a clever spider named Charlotte. Together, they form an unlikely partnership to save Wilbur's life, highlighting themes of friendship, loyalty, and sacrifice.

Theme: Friendship, sacrifice, problem-solving.

"The Bridge Home" by Padma Venkatraman

Set in India, this novel follows two young girls, Viji and Rukku, as they run away from an abusive situation and find solace and friendship living on the streets of Chennai. They form an unlikely family with other homeless children.

Theme: Resilience, survival, friendship, overcoming adversity.

"The Year of the Book" by Andrea Cheng

This book follows Anna, a fifth grader, as she navigates the challenges of growing up, schoolwork, friendships, and family. Along the way, she learns the importance of unexpected partnerships and the value of courage in facing personal challenges.

Theme: Friendship, self-discovery, overcoming social challenges.

"The Wild Robot" by Peter Brown

This novel tells the story of Roz, a robot who is stranded on an island and must learn to survive by forming partnerships with the animals around her. The themes include problem-solving, adapting to new environments, and forming bonds with others.

Theme: Survival, adaptation, teamwork.

Use these **poems** to explore themes of **unlikely partnerships, collaboration,** and **the beauty of nature,** suitable for students in grades 3–5. They could complement discussions resonating with the themes in "Duke's Storm: A Story of Courage."

Poems

"The Owl and the Pussy-Cat" by Edward Lear

This classic poem tells the whimsical story of an owl and a cat who embark on a journey together, highlighting themes of friendship and adventure between two very different creatures.

[Read the poem here: The Owl and the Pussy-Cat](#)

"The Crocodile's Toothache" by Shel Silverstein

In this humorous poem, a dentist bravely treats a crocodile's teeth, showcasing an unusual interaction between a human and an animal.

[Read the poem here: The Crocodile's Toothache](#)

"The Ant and the Cricket" (Aesop's Fable in Verse)

This poem narrates the story of an ant and a cricket, emphasizing the values of hard work and preparedness, and how different creatures interact.

[Read the poem here: The Ant and the Cricket](#)

"The Little Turtle" by Vachel Lindsay

A simple poem that describes a turtle's journey, reflecting on the small creature's interactions with the world around it.

[Read the poem here: The Little Turtle](#)

"The Mountain and the Squirrel" by Ralph Waldo Emerson

This poem presents a conversation between a mountain and a squirrel, illustrating that every being has its own strengths and weaknesses, and the importance of mutual respect.

[Read the poem here: The Mountain and the Squirrel](#)

Online Resources (Photographs, Videos, and Interactive Field Trips)

PBS LearningMedia: "Unlikely Animal Partnerships"

A video resource that showcases various animal friendships, such as the partnership between a warthog and a meerkat. The video explains how animals from different species can help each other survive and thrive in the wild.

Theme: Teamwork, collaboration, survival.

Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Virtual Tour

Explore different virtual field trips within the Smithsonian, where students can learn about animal behaviors, ecosystems, and unlikely animal partnerships in the wild.

Theme: Animal behavior, interspecies relationships, conservation.

The Story of the Underground Railroad

This interactive website guides students through the history of the Underground Railroad, highlighting the cooperation between enslaved people and abolitionists. The website also includes maps and biographies of key figures involved.

Theme: Human cooperation, courage, freedom.

NASA Artemis Virtual Tour

This interactive field trip explores the Artemis mission and how astronauts and engineers from around the world are working together on an incredible journey to the Moon and Mars.

Theme: Teamwork, resilience, working across cultures.

Google Arts & Culture: Unlikely Collaborations

This resource explores stories of unlikely collaborations between individuals and groups throughout history, from peace treaties between enemies to scientific breakthroughs born from partnerships between scientists from different backgrounds.

Theme: Historical collaboration, overcoming adversity.

Greatest Animal Friendships on YouTube Video Series (YouTube)

A video series that features unusual animal friendships, showing how animals form unlikely bonds in both captivity and the wild.

Grades 5-6: Duke's Storm

Supporting Text Set



This collection of **books, poems,** and **online resources** explores themes of **resilience, teamwork,** and **overcoming adversity.** These texts, spanning fiction and nonfiction, will engage middle school students in critical discussions about collaboration across different contexts. Informational texts and videos that explain the behavior of buffalo charging into storms and cows attempting to avoid them, serving as powerful metaphors for how we can approach challenges in our own lives. Each district/teacher should review the curated lists to follow district guidelines.

Articles and Videos

["Buffalo Charge The Storm Story" by Rory Vaden](#)

This article and video discusses how buffalo instinctively run into storms, thereby reducing the time they spend in adverse conditions, while cows tend to run away from storms, inadvertently prolonging their exposure.

["Be The Buffalo and Face Life's Storms" - The Tennessean](#)

This piece explores the metaphor of buffalo facing storms head-on as a lesson in confronting challenges directly, contrasting it with cows' tendency to move away from storms and thereby experiencing them longer.

["The Cow and Buffalo: Face Life's Storms Head-On"](#)

This video illustrates the contrasting behaviors of cows and buffaloes when encountering storms, emphasizing the lesson of confronting challenges directly.

Children's Novels (Fiction & Nonfiction)

"The One and Only Ivan" – Katherine Applegate

Ivan, a silverback gorilla, has lived in captivity for years but finds hope and purpose through an unexpected friendship with a baby elephant named Ruby. The novel explores courage, resilience, and standing up for what's right.

Themes: Courage, friendship, activism

"Wonder" – R.J. Palacio

Auggie Pullman, a boy with facial differences, navigates middle school, forming surprising friendships and learning the power of kindness and empathy.

Themes: Acceptance, courage, empathy, resilience

"The Bridge Home" – Padma Venkatraman

Two runaway sisters find themselves homeless on the streets of India. With the help of unexpected allies, they create a family and fight for survival.

Themes: Resilience, survival, found family, courage

"The Wild Robot" – Peter Brown

Roz, a robot stranded on an island, learns to adapt by forming relationships with animals in the wild. A blend of science fiction and survival story.

Themes: Adaptation, teamwork, environmentalism

"A Long Walk to Water" – Linda Sue Park

A dual narrative about a boy in 1985 escaping war in Sudan and a girl in 2008 searching for water. Their stories eventually connect in a powerful way.

Themes: Perseverance, survival, global awareness

"Refugee" – Alan Gratz

Following three different refugee journeys—Jewish refugees during WWII, Cuban refugees in the 1990s, and Syrian refugees in the 2010s—this novel highlights unexpected partnerships in times of crisis.

Themes: Courage, survival, global conflict

Poems to help students explore themes of **resilience, cooperation,** and **unlikely friendships.**

Poems

"The Mountain and the Squirrel" – Ralph Waldo Emerson

A playful yet philosophical poem about the strengths of different beings and the value of mutual respect.

Themes: Perspective, teamwork, appreciation of differences.

"The Ant and the Cricket" (Aesop's Fable in Verse)

A classic fable illustrating hard work and survival through the interactions between two unlikely creatures.

Themes: Responsibility, preparedness, working together.

"The Owl and the Pussycat" – Edward Lear

A whimsical poem about an owl and a cat who set out on an adventure together, proving that differences don't prevent friendship.

Themes: Unlikely friendships, adventure.

"The Crocodile's Toothache" – Shel Silverstein

A humorous poem about a daring dentist and an ill-tempered crocodile, demonstrating an unusual interaction between a human and an animal.

"Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou

This poem contrasts the experiences of a free bird and a caged bird, symbolizing the struggle for freedom and perseverance.

"Hope is the thing with feathers" by Emily Dickinson

This poem personifies hope as a bird that endures through storms, symbolizing resilience.

"If—" by Rudyard Kipling (Link: 8 Great Poems on Perseverance)

This poem offers advice on how to navigate life's challenges with integrity and resilience.

"The Rose That Grew from Concrete" by Tupac Shakur

This poem uses the metaphor of a rose growing from concrete to illustrate how individuals can overcome difficult circumstances.

"Invictus" by William Ernest Henley

This poem speaks to the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

"Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes

In this poem, a mother shares experiences of life's hardships to encourage her son to persevere.

"Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou

This empowering poem celebrates resilience and the ability to overcome adversity.

"Don't Quit" by Edgar A. Guest

This poem encourages persistence in the face of challenges.

"The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost

This poem reflects on making choices and persevering through the unknown.

"The Will to Win" by Berton Braley

This poem emphasizes the importance of determination and the desire to succeed.

Informational Articles and Short Stories on Perseverance

"Empower Students with 7 Short Stories about Perseverance"

This article from CommonLit offers a curated list of short stories that highlight themes of resilience and perseverance, suitable for middle school readers. These narratives can inspire students by showcasing characters who overcome challenges through determination and support.

"9 Inspiring Stories of Overcoming Obstacles"

This article highlights several individuals who have faced significant challenges and achieved success through perseverance. While some stories feature well-known figures, they serve as motivational examples for students.

"10 Inspiring Stories of People Who Overcame Adversity"

This piece presents accounts of individuals who have faced and surmounted various obstacles, offering lessons in resilience and determination. Citeturn0search1

"Be the One: Six True Stories of Teens Overcoming Hardship with Hope"

This book by Byron Pitts shares the stories of six young people who overcame impossible circumstances with extraordinary perseverance. While it's a published book, summaries or excerpts may be available online. Citeturn0search4

Video Resources

[Zeke's Story: Overcoming Obstacles](#)

This video is about Zeke McKeona, kindergartner at Three Oaks Elementary. Although he proves every day he is no different than any other student, he has an inspiring story of overcoming obstacles.

["Matthew Morin: Overcoming Adversity"](#)

In this heartfelt talk, Matthew Morin shares his personal story of overcoming adversity to connect with his dreams and inner strength. Supported by relationships and school experiences, his journey exemplifies emotional growth and the power of a supportive environment.

Online Resources (Videos, Interactive Sites, and Virtual Field Trips)

NASA Artemis Program: "Moon to Mars" Virtual Tour

A virtual experience highlighting international teamwork in space exploration.

Themes: Collaboration, scientific discovery, resilience

- [NASA Artemis](#)

The Story of the Underground Railroad (Interactive Website)

Explores the cooperation between enslaved people and abolitionists who risked their lives to fight for freedom.

Themes: Human rights, courage, collaboration

- [Underground Railroad Interactive](#)

Informational Articles for Teachers

["Building Student Resilience"](#)

The American Psychological Association provides lessons aimed at helping students adapt and grow academically, emotionally, and socially. These resources are designed to equip educators with strategies to nurture resilience in the classroom.

["5 Ways to Build Resilience in Students"](#)

Edutopia outlines practical strategies for educators to foster resilience among students, including setting brave goals, modeling learning from mistakes, and encouraging responsible risks. These approaches can help students develop the skills needed to navigate challenges effectively.

["Overcoming Adversity: A Story of a Resilient Student and The Power of Relationships"](#)

This narrative highlights the journey of a new middle school student who, despite initial shyness and lack of friends, demonstrates resilience through the support of relationships and experiences at school. It underscores the importance of a supportive environment in overcoming adversity.