

Annotated Supports for Students with Language-Based Disabilities

This lesson was reviewed by Robin Hegner, a language disability expert, to highlight effective supports for students with language-based disabilities. Hegner is trained at the Certified level of the Orton-Gillingham Approach and is certified as a structured literacy/dyslexia specialist by the Center for Effective Reading Instruction.

PROLOGUE TO LESSON 20: AT A GLANCE

Focusing Question: What sustained people’s spirits during the Great Depression?

SUMMARY

Students deconstruct important sentences from *Out of the Dust* into words, phrases, and clauses. By focusing on word choice, symbolism, and figurative language, students deepen their understanding of complex language. This work prepares students to analyze the text in Lesson 20.

LEARNING GOAL

Analyze how an excerpt from *Out of the Dust* uses symbolism.

- ✓ Mix and Mingle: “How does this sentence use plants as symbols for hope?”

VOCABULARY

symbolism (n.): the use of objects to represent ideas

MATERIALS

Out of the Dust, Karen Hesse, Pages 57–59

Prologue Glossary

Prologue Handout 20A: Excerpt from “Wild Boy of the Road,” *Out of the Dust*

UNDERSTANDING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

This is an excellent goal for students with language-based disabilities, who frequently struggle with complex and figurative language. These students will benefit from additional time and guided discussion to analyze this text.

Launch

5 MIN.

Draw a heart on the board or on chart paper. Assess and activate prior knowledge by asking these questions:

“What is this?”

“What does it mean?”

Direct students to the word *symbolism* in their Prologue Glossaries. Echo Read the word and then define it.

symbolism (n.): the use of objects to represent ideas

Explain that the drawing of the heart is a concrete symbol that represents the idea of love.

Tell students to draw a box around the word *symbol* inside *symbolism*. Explain that *symbol* is the base word that means “an object,” and *-ism* is the suffix that means “the use of.”

Model using the words *symbol* and *symbolism* with these sentences:

The heart is a symbol for love.

The symbolism of hearts is used on romantic greeting cards.

Demonstrate a thumbs-up and a thumbs-down gesture, and ask what the gestures symbolize. Consider asking students what different emojis symbolize.

Introduce this lesson’s Learning Goal: Analyze how an excerpt from *Out of the Dust* uses symbolism.

Explain that studying a sentence from “Wild Boy of the Road” will help students understand how the author uses symbols to reflect people’s experiences during the Great Depression.

ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Activating prior knowledge will assist students with language-based disabilities in making connections to the lesson content. Assessing prior knowledge allows the teacher to evaluate student misunderstandings.

MORPHOLOGY INSTRUCTION

Morphology instruction is an effective way to help students with language-based disabilities build understanding of specific vocabulary and a broader sense of how words work.

Learn

20 MIN.

Explain that the poem “Wild Boy of the Road” describes the experience of many boys who walked across the country during the Great Depression looking for a better life.

Model fluent reading by reading aloud “Wild Boy of the Road” (Hesse 58–59). Emphasize effective phrasing, and repeat words students may struggle to pronounce.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER AS SCAFFOLDS

Graphic organizers help students focus on specific elements of a text or task. Students with language-based disabilities benefit from this support to focus and organize their responses.

Direct students to the excerpt on Prologue Handout 20A. Reread aloud the sentence. Instruct students to circle the commas in the sentence, and explain that the commas divide the long sentence into clauses. Tell students that reading one clause at a time will help them make sense of the whole sentence.

Echo Read the first line of the excerpt, and encourage students to mimic your phrasing.

Ask: “What do the mothers wish for?”

Explain that the word *that* refers to the previous line. The mothers wish their sons would come home.

Echo Read the second and third lines of the excerpt, and encourage students to mimic your phrasing. Tell students to underline *where* and to draw an arrow between the word *where* and the word *California*. Explain that “where rain comes” describes the state of California. Tell students that this gives the reader important information about why some boys are walking west to California. Display a map that shows the long distance from Oklahoma to California.

Instruct students to draw a picture in the second column of Prologue Handout 20A that illustrates what happens in California.

Echo Read the fourth line of the excerpt, and encourage students to mimic your phrasing. Tell students this line also describes things that happen in California.

Tell students to write “amazing thing” next to the word *miracle*.

Ask: “What does ‘the color green doesn’t seem like such a miracle’ mean?”

Listen for these essential understandings:

- *In California there are a lot of green, healthy plants.*
- *In Oklahoma it seems like a miracle to see a green plant since there are so few of them.*

Instruct students to add more detail to their drawing in the second column.

Echo Read the fifth line of the excerpt. Instruct students to circle the word *like*. Explain that this line uses a simile: a type of figurative language that compares one thing to something else.

EXPLICIT SYNTAX INSTRUCTION

Students with language-based disabilities often struggle with syntax and understanding how complex sentences work. Explicit instruction in how to interpret different types of sentences will help students better understand complex text.

VISUAL SUPPORT

Aligned visuals boost text comprehension for students with language-based disabilities.

FLUENCY PRACTICE

Students with language-based disabilities often struggle with fluent reading. Echo and Choral Reading provide models of fluent reading and an opportunity for supportive practice.

SCAFFOLD

Share additional examples of similes that use familiar concepts and comparisons.

ADDITIONAL SCAFFOLDS

Students with language-based disabilities have a variety of needs. Some students will need additional scaffolds and examples to make sense of the content.

Guide students to notice that the two things the simile compares are hope and sap in a stem. Explain that sap is liquid food inside a plant that rises from the roots through the stem to feed the rest of the plant to help keep it alive.

UNDERSTANDING FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Students with language-based disabilities may be confused by figurative language. This instruction helps students to understand the literal parts of the simile before asking them to consider a figurative interpretation.

SCAFFOLD

Display plant roots and stems or images of these items.

Instruct students to Think–Pair–Share: “Why does the simile compare hope to sap in a stem?”

Give students one minute to silently think.

Form pairs and instruct students to discuss their ideas. Listen to pairs’ discussions to identify responses that are likely to prompt a meaningful discussion.

Then facilitate a whole group discussion.

Listen for these essential understandings:

- *They are similar because they can both rise.*
- *They are similar because plants need sap and people need hope.*
- *They are both found in California.*

Instruct students to add more detail to their drawing in the second column of Handout 20A.

Choral Read the entire sentence on Handout 20A.

Land

5 MIN.

- ✓ Students Mix and Mingle: “How does this sentence use plants as symbols for hope?”

Instruct students to find a partner they haven’t worked with yet. Give them two minutes to discuss the question.

To encourage students to practice using the word *symbol*, display this sentence frame:

Plants are a symbol of hope because _____.

Instruct students to repeat this process with a new partner. Monitor discussions and guide students as needed.

Facilitate a brief discussion about symbols in the poem. Invite volunteers to share what they learned from listening to others’ responses.

Listen for these essential understandings:

- *Plants are a symbol of hope because they are living things that are still growing.*
- *Plants are a symbol of hope because the sap in their stems gives the plants enough food to keep them living and growing for that day.*

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Sentence frames are very helpful to students with language-based disabilities. Students may be unsure how to start or clearly communicate their responses. The sentence frame helps students express their ideas.