

Lesson Skill: Comparing texts to determine how authors shape the intended meaning

Strand Reading—fiction/nonfiction

SOL 9.4, 9.5
10.4, 10.5
11.4, 11.5
12.4, 12.5

Materials

- A children’s book and a literary text on the same topic
- Author’s Tool Table handout
- Sticky notes
- Venn diagram

Lesson

1. Students explore two different texts on the same topic. However, each offers a different point of view. Students examine how author’s intentionally use the elements of literature and words for a purpose.
2. Distribute the Author’s Tool Table handout. Review each of the tools with the students.
3. Present the children’s book. [Consider showing under a document camera or scanning the images to project for the entire class.] As the story is read, students determine the intended message. The students also determine how the author uses the elements of literature and word choice to convey the message.
4. After the story is read, refer the students back to the Author’s Tool Table. Collaborate to determine the story’s message (theme) and the author’s purpose. Record accurate responses onto the class table.
5. Model, through a think aloud, determining key images and details the author uses to develop the characters and establish the setting. Think aloud the relevant details included in the plot development. Collaborate with the students to determine words that create a specific tone. Determine details used by the author to convey the point of view. As all details are identified turn to the section of text and display it for the entire class. Record all accurate responses onto the class table.
6. Arrange the students in groups of three. The groups reflect on the responses recorded onto the Author’s Tool Table to determine the impact of the message.
7. Allow volunteer groups to share responses with the class. Record responses onto the class chart.
8. Distribute copies of the literary text or allow students to access the text via Internet
9. Distribute sticky notes. Students read silently. While reading, students use the sticky notes to mark details that show how the author’s tools are used to develop message. After the piece has been read, groups will collaborate to complete the Author’s Tool Table.
10. Groups share their responses with the class. Record accurate responses onto a class chart. Require students to refer to the paragraph where details are found as they are shared.

11. The students collaborate to determine the impact of the message.
12. Distribute chart paper to each of the groups. Students draw a Venn diagram. Students compare and contrast the author's use of tools to establish their messages. Model, through a think aloud, using the details from the Author's Tool Table to determine one difference and one similarity. Allow the groups to collaborate to determine additional similarities and differences.
13. Groups post their complete Venn diagrams onto the class wall. Challenge groups to a game of Last Man Standing! Each group shares one similarity or one difference. Groups rotate until all viable similarities and differences have been shared. The last group who is able to offer an acceptable response is the winning team.
14. As a 3-2-1 exit slip students will determine which text was the most effective in conveying the author's message. The students will give 3 reasons their choice of text was the most effective, 2 of the strongest examples of word choice used by the author, and 1 of the most memorable parts of the narrative's plot.

*This lesson can be adapted to compare a fiction and a nonfiction text.

