



# Indigo Love of Reading Inclusive Lesson Plans—Grades 4-8



This resource is brought to you in partnership with the  
Indigo Love of Reading Foundation and The Critical Thinking Consortium



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**Grades**

4-8

**Lesson title**

- What voices need to be heard?
  - How can we respond to emotions?
  - What does the story really say?
  - What does it take to make a difference?
-



# What voices need to be heard?

In this lesson, students identify, assess, and recommend voices and stories that should be added to a classroom or school library.



## Lesson Challenge

- o Recommend voices and stories that should be added to a classroom or school library.

## Learning Goals

- o Understand how to identify voices and stories that should be considered
- o Understand how to use criteria to rate the importance of voices and stories
- o Understand the value of including a range of voices and stories

## Suggested materials

- o Activity sheet: What voices should be included? (one copy per pair of students)
- o Activity sheet: Rating the voices and stories (one copy per pair of students)
- o Activity sheet: Recommending important voices and stories (one copy per student)
- o Chart paper



## Lesson Timeline

### ● Introduce the strategy

### ● Develop criteria

### ● Share the lesson challenge

### ● Practice the strategy

*For guidance using books and stories that may include sensitive topics or content, please remember to consult your school or district resources.*

- Organize your students into pairs and provide each group with a copy of the Activity sheet: What voices should be included? Read aloud the scenario and invite groups to determine which voices and stories are being considered for the news story.
- Invite students to share their ideas with the class. Student responses should include the school principal and a parent.
- Ask groups to suggest what voices were not included or considered for the news story. Encourage them to suggest voices and stories that might provide a more accurate description of the competition. Prompt groups to note their ideas in the left-hand column of the activity sheet.
- Invite students to share their ideas with the class. Student responses might include a current member of the group, the leader of the group, a former member, a robotics expert, and spectators.
- Ask students to suggest what might make a voice or story important. As students share their ideas, co-develop or present criteria for rating the importance of a voice or story:
  - Different: How different is the voice from others that are already included?
  - Revealing: Will the story help provide a more complete picture?
- Guide groups in using the scales on the activity sheet to rate the importance of each of the voices and stories. Invite students to share their ratings and thinking with the class.
- Direct students' attention to the right-hand column of the activity sheet. Encourage students to list any sources that might provide more information about each of the voices and stories. Invite students to share their ideas and thinking with the class.
- Explain that the challenge of this lesson is to recommend voices and stories that should be added to a classroom or school library.
- Invite your students to speculate on the voices and stories found in a classroom or school library: What voices and stories are most often included? Which voices or stories are most often left out or ignored? Consider noting student suggestions on chart paper for use later in this lesson.
- Provide each group with a copy of the Activity sheet: Rating the voices and stories. Guide your students' attention to the image of the books and ask students to imagine that they've been asked to decide how well the books tell a complete history of Canada. Explain that their challenge is to rate the effectiveness of the books.





- Review lesson challenge
- Respond to the challenge









- Assessing thinking
- Possible extensions

- Prompt groups to carefully examine the book titles, then rate their effectiveness by colouring in the stars.
- As groups share their rating and thinking with the class, use their ideas to explain that a complete history of Canada would be inclusive of a wider range of events and perspectives.
- Ask groups to complete the remainder of the activity sheet and recommend the three most important voices or stories that should be included to tell a complete history of Canada. Encourage your students to use the criteria to guide their thinking.
- Invite groups to share their decisions and thinking with the class.
- Remind students the challenge of this lesson is to recommend voices and stories that should be added to a classroom or school library.
- Provide each student with a copy of Activity sheet: Recommending important voices and stories. Briefly explain that this strategy can also be used to ensure that the books in a classroom, school library, or even in a bookstore are inclusive of many voices, stories, and perspectives.
- Assign a small section of a library shelf or small collection of books to pairs of students.
- After groups determine what voices and stories are included in their assigned section or collection, and direct them to identify other voices and stories that could be included.
- Ask groups to recommend the three voices or stories that should be added to make their assigned section or collection more inclusive.
- Invite groups to share their recommendations with the class. Guide your students' attention back to their ideas about the voices and stories that are most often included and left out. Ask students what they noticed: What voices and stories are most often included? Which voices or stories are most often left out or ignored?
- Conclude the lesson by encouraging groups to present their recommendations with a librarian, principal, or other authentic audience.
- While observing or listening to student thinking, notice the extent to which students are able to:
  - identify voices and stories that are included and not included
  - use criteria to rate and recommend additional voices and stories
- Invite students to use the strategy to “champion” a book that should be added to a classroom or school library in a “Canada Reads”-style event

# Reading List:

## What voices need to be heard?







TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>You Matter</u></b> written and illustrated by Christian Robinson	An important book that shows us the importance of realizing that all people of all identities matter and belong.	
<b><u>Milo Imagines the World</u></b> written by Matt De La Pena and illustrated by Christian Robinson	We learn the important perspective and lived experience of children who have a parent who is incarcerated. We also learn how families look different but are beautiful in their own ways.	
<b><u>You Are Enough: A Book About Inclusion</u></b> written by Margaret O'Hair and illustrated by Sofia Cardoso	An empowering book that shows us the importance of building a strong sense of self and respect for others. It is inspired by Sofia Sanchez who is a young model and actress with Down Syndrome. We learn that by seeing our differences we can work towards building an inclusive world.	
<b><u>Miimaanda ezhi-gkendmaanh/ This is How I Know</u></b> written by Brittany Luby and illustrated by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley	An important story that teaches readers about the four seasons. It is written in Anishinaabemowin and English and readers follow the grandmother and child as they explore and learn.	
<b><u>Where Are You From</u></b> written by Yamile Saed Mendez and illustrated by Jaime Kim	Readers learn about the intricacies of this question, 'where are you from' and how to think about it critically.	 ALSO AVAILABLE IN SPANISH
<b><u>We Are Water Protectors</u></b> written by Carole Lindstrom and illustrated by Michaela Goade	Students learn about Indigenous led movements to protect water and the earth. It demonstrates the relationship between the author's Indigenous cultures and the land. It encourages the reader to speak up when other voices cannot speak for themselves.	

# Reading List:

## What voices need to be heard?



TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>Introducing Teddy</u></b> written by Jessica Walton and illustrated by Dougal MacPherson	Teddy wants to be a girl teddy (not a boy teddy) and is worried about how their friends will react. Readers will find that being a good friend means helping others to be true to themselves.	
<b><u>Eyes that Kiss in the Corners</u></b> written by Joanna Ho and illustrated by Dung Ho	Readers are encouraged to recognize and value the beauty in their differences. In this story a girl realizes that her eyes are beautiful and mirrored in her family.	
<b><u>A Friend for Henry</u></b> written by Jenn Bailey and illustrated by Mika Song	Henry is on the autism spectrum and is searching for a friend. The reader is given insight into Henry's experiences and feelings, including the quiet joy of finding a first friend.	
<b><u>I Am Every Good Thing</u></b> written by Derrick Barnes and illustrated by Gordon C. James	This book is filled with positive and inspiring affirmations. It highlights the importance of Black children and the inspiring contributions they do and will make on the world.	
<b><u>Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon</u></b> written by Simran Jeet Singh and illustrated by Baljinder Kaur	The true story of world record holder, Fauja Singh, who fought many obstacles to learn to walk, farm and run. Readers will learn that believing in yourself and never giving up will help you achieve your goals.	 

FOR GUIDANCE USING BOOKS AND STORIES THAT MAY INCLUDE SENSITIVE TOPICS OR CONTENT,  
PLEASE REMEMBER TO CONSULT YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT RESOURCES.



# Activity Sheet:

## What voices should be included?

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### SCENARIO

A robotics team from your school has just won an award for the best robot at a provincial competition. It was the seventh year in a row that the award was won by a group from your school. A local television reporter has interviewed the school principal and a parent to learn more about the robotics group.

**What other voices and stories should the reporter consider?**

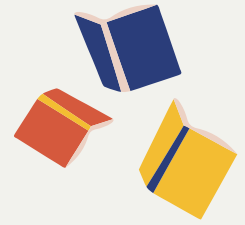


**VOICES AND STORIES ALREADY INCLUDED:**

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# Activity Sheet:

## What voices should be included?



### OTHER VOICES AND STORIES

WHAT ADDITIONAL  
VOICES AND STORIES  
COULD BE INCLUDED?

### REASONS

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT  
TO INCLUDE THIS  
VOICE AND STORY?

### RATE THE IMPORTANCE

HOW DIFFERENT IS THE VOICE FROM  
THOSE THAT ARE ALREADY INCLUDED?  
WILL THE STORY HELP PROVIDE A MORE  
COMPLETE PICTURE?

### WHERE COULD I LEARN MORE?

WHAT OTHER SOURCES MIGHT  
HELP YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT  
THIS VOICE AND STORY?



Not  
Important

Very  
Important



Not  
Important

Very  
Important



Not  
Important

Very  
Important

# Activity Sheet:

## Rating the voices and stories

**THE HISTORY  
OF MANITOBA**

**THE HAPPY HISTORY  
OF CANADA**

**THE MOST IMPORTANT  
PRIME MINISTERS**

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE WORLD**

**CANADA'S CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO THE WARS**

**INQUIRY QUESTION:**

How effectively would these books tell a complete history of Canada?



Rate the effectiveness by colouring in the stars.

No stars coloured = not at all effective  
All three stars coloured = very effective

**WHAT VOICES AND STORIES  
ARE INCLUDED?**

**WHAT ADDITIONAL VOICES  
AND STORIES COULD BE ADDED?**

**WHICH THREE VOICES OR STORIES WOULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO ADD?**

1.

2.

3.

Reasons to support your decisions:

Criteria for rating the importance of a voice or story: Different: How different is the voice from others that are already included?  
Revealing: Will the story help provide the most complete picture?

# Activity Sheet:

## Recommending important voices and stories

### TOPIC OR QUESTION FOR INQUIRY:

How useful would the books be for telling the story or answering the question?

Rate the usefulness by colouring in the stars.

No stars coloured = not at all effective  
All three stars coloured = very effective



### WHAT VOICES AND STORIES ARE INCLUDED?

### WHAT ADDITIONAL VOICES AND STORIES COULD BE ADDED?



### WHICH THREE VOICES OR STORIES WOULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO ADD?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Reasons to support your decisions:

Criteria for rating the importance of a voice or story: Different: How different is the voice from others that are already included?  
Revealing: Will the story help provide the most complete picture?

# How can we respond to emotions?



In this lesson, students learn how to thoughtfully recognize and respond to emotions that may develop while reading a story.



## Learning Goals

- o Understand how to recognize different emotions that can emerge when reading
- o Understand the effects that emotions can have on learning and thinking
- o Use a strategy to respond to emotions that emerge when reading

## Lesson Challenges

- o Thoughtfully respond to the emotions that may arise when reading a story.



## Suggested materials

- o Chart paper or white board
- o Activity sheet: Thinking through emotions when reading (one copy for each student)
- o Activity sheet: How does the emotion affect my learning? (one copy for each student)



## Lesson Timeline

- Activate prior knowledge
- Make predictions
- Share the lesson Challenges
- Develop steps for responding to emotions

## Before Reading

*For guidance using books and stories that may include sensitive topics or content, please remember to consult your school or district resources.*

- Explain that most sources identify five main emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, and sadness.
- Organize your students into small groups (2-4 students). Ask groups to suggest which of the emotions would hinder and which would help learning the most. Invite groups to share their ideas with the class.
- Briefly explain how emotions can impact our learning: emotions prompt our bodies to release chemicals in our brains, and these chemicals then influence how we think and learn. Less stressful memories and emotions allow our brains to think and learn, while more stressful memories and emotions can hinder our ability to learn and think.
- Prompt students to suggest how the emotions felt in their situations might impact their ability to think and learn.
- Show students the cover and read the synopsis of the book that they will be listening to or reading. Ask them to use details from the covers to predict what emotions the book might cause them to feel.
- As students share their predictions, invite them to suggest how these emotions might affect a reader.
- Inform students that books can evoke strong emotions. These emotions can help or hinder their reading. Ask students to suggest why it might be important to read about events, issues, or experiences even though doing so might be emotionally uncomfortable.
- Explain that the challenges for this lesson are to:
  - accurately identify emotions that arise when reading a story
  - thoughtfully respond to the emotions that may arise when reading a story.

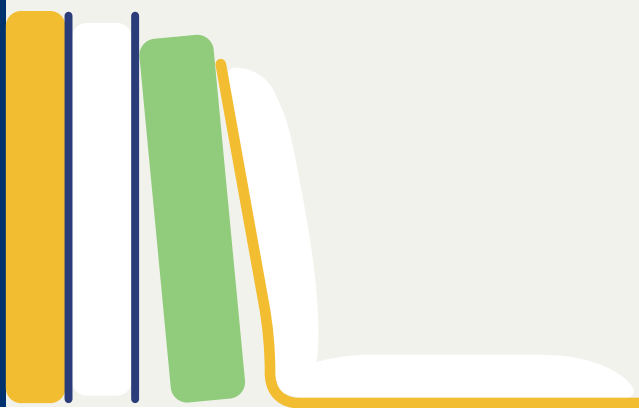
## During Reading

- Organize your students into pairs and provide each student with a copy of Activity sheet: How does the emotion affect my learning? Ask groups to decide which emotions might be felt in each situation, and how the emotions might affect their thinking and learning.
- Ask students to suggest thoughtful actions or steps that could be used to explore and respond to the emotions that arise in these situations.
- As students share their suggestions with the class, emphasize the importance of not denying, “squashing” or suppressing, or judging any emotion that may arise when reading. Use students’ suggestions

### ● Model effective thinking

to co-develop or present the following steps to engage any emotions that may arise when learning:

1. Identify the reactions: What reactions or physical sensations does the content or situation cause you to feel?
  2. Name the emotion: What emotion is causing these reactions and sensations?
  3. Reflect on the source: What about the content or situation prompts you to feel this emotion?
  4. Determine the impacts: How might this emotion help or hinder your ability to read?
  5. Select a strategy: What strategy might help you to continue reading? Strategies could include talking with a trusted friend or adult, breathing exercises to help reduce stress, using art to express an emotion, or other similar mindfulness practices.
- o Provide each student with a copy of the Activity sheet: Thinking through emotions when reading. Help students see how the steps can help them recognize and work with any emotions that develop when they are reading. Pay particular attention to the final step, discussing what strategies might be used while reading.
  - o Read the selected story, pausing to demonstrate thoughtful reading:
    - If reading aloud to students, demonstrate how you might use the steps to respond to words, actions, or events from the story that prompt emotions.
    - If students are reading on their own, consider using an example from the book to practise the steps from the activity sheet.
  - o Continue reading the story, encouraging your students to use the steps whenever they encounter words, actions, or events that prompt emotions.



- Review lesson challenges
- Respond to the challenges
- Assessing thinking

## After Reading

- o After reading the story to the class, remind them of the lesson challenges:
  - Accurately identify emotions that arise when reading a story
  - Thoughtfully respond to the emotions that may arise when reading a story.
- o Guide a discussion of the emotions that emerged while reading the story. You may wish to provide students with more time to reflect on the emotions that can arise when reading challenging content or questioning dominant narratives. To create and hold space for this, consider inviting students to work with trusted classmates or using a sharing circle.
- o While reading or listening to student thinking, notice the extent to which students are able to:
  - accurately identify the emotions that may emerge when reading; and
  - thoughtfully use strategies to respond to emotions that may emerge when reading.






# Reading List:

## How can we respond to emotions?







TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>The Day You Begin</u></b> written by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by Rafael Lopez	The girl in the story is new to the school and community. She grapples with finding her space and navigating all of her emotions.	
<b><u>Saturday</u></b> written and illustrated by Oge Mora	The characters in the story are looking forward to Saturday because it is the day the mother does not have to work. They have a plan of everything they are going to do but it does not go as planned. The characters learn to manage and respond to their emotions.	
<b><u>Kalamata's Kitchen</u></b> written by Sarah Thomas and illustrated by Jo Kosmides Edwards	Kalamata is new to her school. She is trying to navigate her emotions and learn to be brave through exploring her identity, especially her love for her family's food and traditions.	
<b><u>The Many Colours of Harpreet Singh</u></b> written by Supriya Kelkar and illustrated by Alea Marley	Harpreet Singh's Patkas represent the many different emotions he is feeling and navigating as he has different experiences.	
<b><u>Tough Like Mum</u></b> written by Lana Button and illustrated by Carmen Mok	Readers will learn how the main character navigates her mom's mental health and explore what it means to be 'tough' and ask for help.	
<b><u>Each Kindness</u></b> written by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by E. B. Lewis	In this emotional story, a girl realizes that she has been unkind to the new girl and decides to start small by offering a smile. Unfortunately, her realization comes too late.	

# Reading List:

## How can we respond to emotions?



TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>Not My Girl</u></b> written by Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton and illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard	Margaret is excited to be home from residential school but feels like an outsider to her family. In this true story, Margaret works through the pain of being forced to forget her language, her food and her best friend.	
<b><u>I Am Enough</u></b> written by Grace Byers and illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo	The words and illustrations work together to beautifully promote ways to be yourself, to be respectful and to be kind to others. The reader is encouraged to be who they are and recognize their self worth.	
<b><u>Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao</u></b> written by Kat Zhang and illustrated by Charlene Chua	Amy is frustrated that she can't make her bao perfect like her family. Her bao always ends up wrong. Her frustration is eased when she realizes that perfect doesn't mean every bao has to be the same.	
<b><u>Boonoonoonous Hair!</u></b> written by Olive Senior and illustrated by Laura James	Jamilla hates her hair. With the help of her family, she learns to love her hair and herself. This story highlights the importance of positive talk and positive self-talk with respect to self-worth.	



FOR GUIDANCE USING BOOKS AND STORIES THAT MAY INCLUDE SENSITIVE TOPICS OR CONTENT, PLEASE REMEMBER TO CONSULT YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT RESOURCES.

# Activity Sheet:

## Thinking through emotions when reading



### 1. IDENTIFY THE REACTIONS

What reactions or physical sensations does the content or situation cause you to feel?



Your Reflections and Ideas

Your Reflections and Ideas

2. NAME THE EMOTION  
What emotion is causing these reactions and sensations?

3. REFLECT ON THE READING  
What about the topic or situation prompts you to feel this emotion?

Your Reflections and Ideas

# Activity Sheet:

## Thinking through emotions when reading

### 4. DETERMINE THE IMPACTS

How might this emotion help or hinder your ability to think and continue reading?



Your Reflections and Ideas

Your Reflections and Ideas

### 5. SELECT A STRATEGY

What strategy might help you to continue reading?



HOW CAN WE RESPOND TO EMOTIONS?

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# Activity Sheet:

## How does the emotion affect my learning?

SITUATION	WHAT EMOTION DOES THIS MAKE ME FEEL?	HOW MIGHT THIS EMOTION AFFECT MY LEARNING?
A. Hearing that a student in your class has been diagnosed with a serious illness, then discovering that illness is the focus of today's science class.	<input type="radio"/> Anger <input type="radio"/> Disgust <input type="radio"/> Sadness	<input type="radio"/> Happiness <input type="radio"/> Fear <input type="radio"/> _____
B. In one of your classes you start reading about the many times in the past when your community was destroyed by fire.	<input type="radio"/> Anger <input type="radio"/> Disgust <input type="radio"/> Sadness	<input type="radio"/> Happiness <input type="radio"/> Fear <input type="radio"/> _____
C. To complete an assignment you are asked to read stories from immigrants wanting to move to Canada.	<input type="radio"/> Anger <input type="radio"/> Disgust <input type="radio"/> Sadness	<input type="radio"/> Happiness <input type="radio"/> Fear <input type="radio"/> _____
D. In social studies class you listen to a song about a boy who died while trying to escape a residential school.	<input type="radio"/> Anger <input type="radio"/> Disgust <input type="radio"/> Sadness	<input type="radio"/> Happiness <input type="radio"/> Fear <input type="radio"/> _____

# Activity Sheet:

## How does the emotion affect my learning?

SELECTED SITUATION:

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WHAT STEPS OR ACTIONS MIGHT HELP CONTINUE THE LEARNING?

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HOW CAN WE RESPOND TO EMOTIONS?

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# What does the story really say?

In this lesson, students use a critical reading strategy to identify the purposes and perspectives of a story.



## Lesson Challenges

- o Accurately identify an author's purpose.
- o Use a strategy to identify the perspectives that are included and not included in a story.
- o Identify valuable lessons from a story.

## Learning goals

- o Identify the purpose of a story
- o Read for a variety of purposes
- o Identify perspectives that are not included in a story
- o Use relevant details from the story to support thinking and decisions
- o Make personal connections
- o Question a story to reveal inequities or social justice issues

## Suggested materials

- o Chart paper or white board
- o Activity sheet: Questioning the sources (one copy for each pair of students)
- o Activity sheet: Questioning the story (one copy for each student)

## Lesson Timeline

- Activate prior knowledge
- Anticipate purpose and perspectives
- Share the lesson challenges

## Before Reading

*For guidance using books and stories that may include sensitive topics or content, please remember to consult your school or district resources.*

- Organize your students into pairs and provide each group with one copy of the Activity sheet: Questioning the sources. Read the two sources with your students, and invite groups to decide which expresses the strongest opinion.
- Invite students to share their decisions and thinking with the class. As students share, ask students to respond to the question “Is it possible for a text or source to be “perspective-free”?” If necessary, share the definition of perspective: a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something.
- Encourage students to share their thinking with the class. Explain that all sources and books include perspectives and views, and all sources and books are written for a purpose.
- Revisit the two sources shared at the beginning of the lesson and discuss the purposes and perspectives found in each, especially the source about youth cellphone use.
- Show students the cover of the book they will be listening to or reading and perhaps read the synopsis on the back cover. Ask groups to suggest the most helpful questions for determining the purpose and perspectives of the book. Prompt students to note their questions on the web at the bottom of the activity sheet.
- As groups share their ideas, explain that the purpose of this lesson is to develop questions to critically question any text or story and reveal its real intentions and purpose. This is similar to how a detective might question or interrogate a suspect, and is often called critical literacy.
- Provide each student with a copy of the Activity sheet: Questioning the story. Guide students in using their observations about the book cover and synopsis to respond to the “Questions to ask before reading.” Invite groups to share their ideas with the class.
- Introduce the lesson challenges:
  - Accurately identify an author’s purpose.
  - Use a strategy to identify the perspectives that are included and not included in a story.
  - Identify valuable lessons from a story.





- Model effective thinking

- Review lesson challenges

- Respond to the challenge

- Assessing thinking



## During Reading

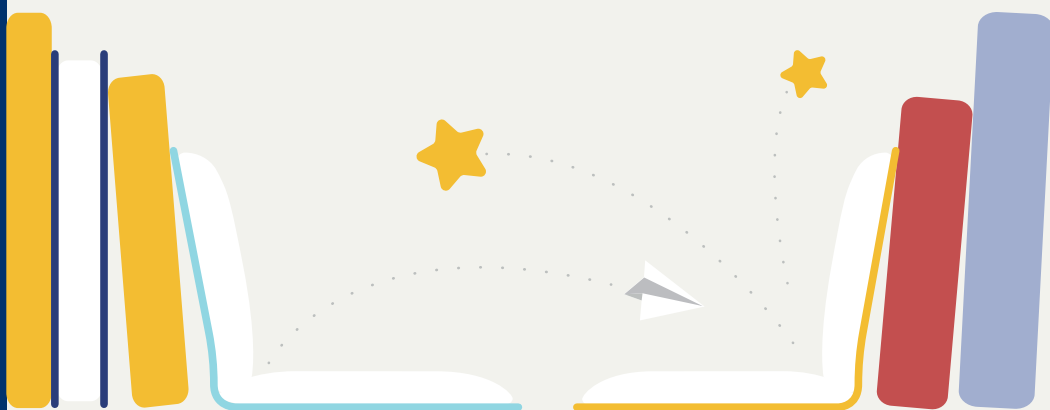
- Guide students' attention to the "Questions to ask during reading." Explain that the next step is to use the questions and details from the story to decode the purpose and perspectives of the story.
- Read the selected story, pausing to demonstrate thoughtful reading:
  - If reading aloud to students, demonstrate how you might use details from the story to answer the questions.
  - If students are reading on their own, consider using an example from the story to respond to the questions from the activity sheet.
- Continue reading the story, encouraging your students to note any details from the story that could help them determine the purpose and perspectives of the story.
- During reading, invite students to look for any connections between the story and their lives.
- Encourage groups to share their responses and connections with the class.

## After Reading

- After reading the story to the class, remind them of the lesson challenges.
- Direct students' attention to the "Questions to ask after reading" section. Explain that the last step is to reflect on the implications of the perspective and purposes of the story. Ask groups to discuss the questions in this section, and encourage them to note their responses on the activity sheet.
- Guide a discussion about what might be learned from the story, paying particular attention to how ideas from the story might be used to take action or contribute to a change or improvement. You may wish to provide students with more time to reflect and discuss their reactions to the story. To create and hold space for this, consider inviting students to collaborate with trusted classmates or using a sharing circle.
- While reading or listening to student thinking, notice the extent to which students are able to:
  - use relevant details from the story to identify the purpose and perspectives of the story; and
  - identify valuable lessons from the story.

- Possible extensions and modifications

- If your students would benefit from additional practise using the questions to identify purpose and perspective, consider demonstrating how the during and after reading questions could be used to examine the sources from the Activity sheet: Questioning the sources.
- Invite students to use their responses to the “Questions we can ask during reading” to write, dramatize, or artistically rework an event, conversation, or section from the story to more accurately feature missing or misrepresented voices and perspectives.
- If students are reading text or stories that may cause emotions and feelings to arise, consider using the lesson “How can we respond to emotions?”



# Reading List:

## What does the story really say?



TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>Amira's Picture Day</u></b> written by Reem Faruqi and illustrated by Fahmida Azim	Amira has to choose between attending Eid celebrations or school pictures. Readers learn to think critically about creating inclusive spaces so people don't have to choose between two different events.	
<b><u>Home is in Between</u></b> written by Mitali Perkins and illustrated by Lavanya Naidu	Readers learn about the lived experiences of moving to another country and all of the experiences that comes with being 'in between' countries and cultures.	
<b><u>Outside, Inside</u></b> written and illustrated by LeUyen Pham	Readers learn about the different individual and collective experiences that have arisen due to the pandemic and how the community is coming together.	
<b><u>A Place Inside of Me</u></b> written by Zetta Elliott and illustrated by Noa Denmon	Readers will learn about important relevant current events happening locally and globally and the feelings that can arise from them.	
<b><u>Your Name is a Song</u></b> written by Jamilah Thompkins- Bigelow and illustrated by Luisa Uribe	Readers learn that all names are 'normal' and that we can celebrate all of our beautiful names.	
<b><u>Where Are You From?</u></b> Written by Yamile Saied Mendez and illustrated by Jaime Kim	A girl who looks and feels like she doesn't belong is asked where she's really from. Not sure how to answer, she asks her Abuelo for help. He helps her navigate her identity and sense of belonging.	 ALSO AVAILABLE IN SPANISH

# Reading List:

## What does the story really say?



TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>The Paper Kingdom</u></b> written by Helena Ku Rhee and illustrated by Pascal Campion	Daniel's family turns a night time cleaning job into a magical kingdom when the babysitter cancels. Readers will learn about the spirit of family, the value of hard work and the ability to find beauty in any situation.	
<b><u>The Barnabus Project</u></b> written and illustrated by the Fan Brothers	Barnabus and his friends are not quite perfect pets. They are hidden in a lab and must work together to find their freedom. Readers learn that there is value in everyone and that nothing is impossible.	
<b><u>Out</u></b> written by Angela May George and illustrated by Owen Swan	A brave girl shares her story of escaping horrible things and finding refuge in a new country. She shares her heartache, fears and hope as she navigates her life in this new place.	
<b><u>Jacob's New Dress</u></b> written by Sarah & Ian Hoffman and illustrated by Chris Case	Jacob loves dress-up and wants to wear a dress to school but his parents are apprehensive. Readers will think critically to understand his parents' apprehension.	



FOR GUIDANCE USING BOOKS AND STORIES THAT MAY INCLUDE SENSITIVE TOPICS OR CONTENT,  
PLEASE REMEMBER TO CONSULT YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT RESOURCES.

# Activity Sheet:

## Questioning the Sources



### SOURCE A

#### LETTER TO THE EDITOR: WHY TEENS DON'T NEED CELL PHONES

Everywhere I look there are teens on cell phones—texting, tweeting, whatever they're doing—looking down, distracted and addicted. In fact, I don't often see a teen that isn't attached to a phone! Why do teens think they need to be on their phones all the time? Back in the day, we didn't have cell phones and we did okay. We talked to each other, read books, and found other ways to entertain ourselves. I am not sure that there's any benefit to always having access to a phone. Governments pass laws to protect people from dangerous things like lawn darts and drugs; maybe there should be laws making teens wait until they're 17 or 18 before they can have a cell phone.

### SOURCE B

#### FACTS ABOUT TEEN CELL PHONE USE

- 24% of students in Grade 4, 52% of students in Grade 7, and 85% of students in Grade 11 own cell phones.
- Students from wealthier families had greater access to technology than students from less wealthy families: portable computers (74% vs. 61%), cellphones (49% vs. 41%), and game consoles (45% vs. 38%).
- 49% of youth said they would be upset or unhappy if they could not go online for anything other than school or work for a week.
- 5% report that they would be relieved or happy to go offline.

(from "The Online Lives of Canadian Youth." Accessed from <https://vanierinstitute.ca/online-lives-canadian-youth/>)

WHICH SOURCE EXPRESSES  
A STRONG OPINION?

● SOURCE A    ● SOURCE B

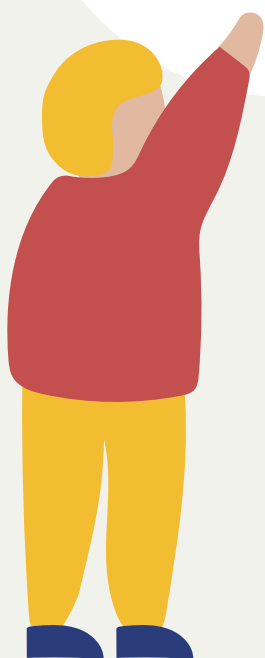
Evidence from the source that  
supports my decision:

# Activity Sheet:

## Questioning the sources

QUESTIONS I CAN ASK TO LEARN MORE  
ABOUT THE PURPOSE AND PERSPECTIVES OF A SOURCE

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# Activity Sheet:

## Questioning the story



BOOK OR STORY:

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### QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE READING

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- o What do you know about this story?
- o What do you already know about the topic of this story?

### QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING READING

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#### THINKING ABOUT PURPOSE

- o Who wrote the story?
- o When was this story created?
- o Where (what place or location) is the story come from?
- o What does the author want the reader to think?
- o What is the purpose of this story?

# Activity Sheet:

## Questioning the story



### QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING READING

#### THINKING ABOUT PERSPECTIVES

- o What voices or identities does the story include?
- o How are different voices and identities treated in the story?
- o What voices or identities are missing or left out of the story?

### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER READING

#### THINKING ABOUT THE PURPOSE

- o What lessons about life could this story teach?
- o Are there any beliefs or ideas in the story that you don't agree with?
- o Where could you go to learn more about the beliefs and ideas from this story?



# Activity Sheet:

## Questioning the story



### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER READING

#### THINKING ABOUT PERSPECTIVES

- o Are there any voices or identities that are treated disrespectfully in the story?
- o What would it look like if other voices were respectfully included in the story?



### QUESTIONS TO ASK AFTER READING

#### REFLECTING ON MY THINKING

- o How did this story make you feel?
- o What valuable lessons did you learn from the story?
- o What details or learning from this story could you use to take action or contribute to a change or improvement?

# What does it take to make a difference?

In this lesson, students decide which of the character's characteristics or character traits were most important in achieving her goals or make a difference.

This lesson can be adapted to include making personal connections, reflecting on personal goals and planning to develop helpful characteristics.

## Learning goals

- o Identify character traits and their impact on actions
- o Make personal connections
- o Develop a plan for personal growth and improvement



## Suggested materials

- o Chart paper or white board
- o Activity sheet: Thinking through emotions when reading (one copy for each student)



## Optional materials

- o Activity sheet: Understanding the character
- o Activity sheet: Looks like/sounds like
- o Activity sheet: My action plan
- o Activity sheet: Reflecting on my progress
- o Activity sheet: Final self-reflection



## Lesson Timeline

- Activate prior knowledge
- Share reading experiences
- Share the lesson challenges
- Start a Thoughtbook



## Before Reading

*For guidance using books and stories that may include sensitive topics or content, please remember to consult your school or district resources.*

- Invite students to share answers to this question:  
“What are some of the reasons authors might write a story?”  
Record student answers for use later in the next step.
- Show students the cover of the book they will be reading and perhaps read the synopsis on the back cover. Invite them to speculate on the author’s purpose, drawing on the list of recorded possible reasons.
- Share that authors often write stories because they have a message for readers to think about. Stories can also change how we think about ourselves, about others, or about the world. The characters in stories can also help us see ourselves and others in new ways, and help us think about who we are, who we want to become, and how we might act.
- Invite students to think about a character they admire from a book they have read or a movie they have watched. Ask them to think of three words that describe that character. Distribute the *Character traits word bank* and suggest that they can use it to find adjectives to describe their character.
- Encourage them to describe to a partner their character’s traits and one event from the story that reveals each character trait.
- Explain that as they read the story, they’ll think about which personal characteristics help the character make a difference.  
Share that their challenges are:
  - select the characteristic that was the most important in helping a character achieve goals or make a difference; and
  - identify any evidence (actions and decisions) that reveal the strength of the characteristic in the character(s).

## During Reading

- Provide each student with a copy of *My Thoughtbook: What does it take to make a difference?* Assure students that their Thoughtbook is a safe place for their thinking to be “messy.” They can write down the beginnings of ideas, change ideas, and refine ideas before making a final decision.
- If you are reading the book as a class, you may wish to pause and model the use of the Thoughtbook. Consider how you might

### ● Model flexible thinking

### ● Review lesson challenges

### ● Develop Criteria

demonstrate how effective thinkers note partial ideas and then refine these ideas after further reading or learning.

- At various points during reading, consider pausing and inviting students to share their thinking from their Thoughtbooks with partners, with the class, or with you. You might encourage them to share their original thoughts, how their thinking has changed, or how the story influenced their thinking.
- You may wish to use any or all of the additional Activity Sheets to support student thinking as they work towards the challenge. These include:
  - Activity sheet: Understanding the character
  - Activity sheet: Looks like/Sounds like

## After Reading

- Remind students of the challenges:
  - Select the characteristic that was the most important in helping a character achieve goals or make a difference
  - Identify evidence (actions and decisions) that reveal the strength of the characteristic in the character(s)
- Guide your students' attention back to their Thoughtbooks, and ask them to find all the different characteristics they learned about the character(s). Prompt them to select the ones that seemed important to helping the character(s) achieve goals or make a difference.
- Organize your students into pairs and ask partners to share their initial thoughts about which characteristics were the most important.
- Encourage students to share their thinking with the class. As they share, co-develop or present the criteria that will help them make their final decisions. Criteria for an important characteristic might include:
  - Helped the character in many situations in the story
  - Helped the character with the most difficult challenges on the way to achieving goals
  - Inspired other character to take steps towards goals or to make a difference



- Respond to the challenges

- Assessing thinking

- After students have sorted their characteristics according to the criteria and noted evidence of important characteristics, invite them to share their decisions orally or in writing. Students could share their conclusions in a format of their choice, including:
  - a reading response
  - a “pitch” to recognize their character with an award for their accomplishments,
  - a personal reflection comparing their character to themselves and who they would like to be or what they would like to accomplish. If they will engage in this, you may wish to support their thinking with the additional activity sheets including:
    - Activity sheet: My action plan
    - Activity sheet: Reflecting on my progress
    - Activity sheet: Final self-reflection
- While reading or listening to student thinking, notice the extent to which students:
  - clearly state a conclusion about which characteristic was most important;
  - refer to specific evidence from the book;
  - explain the connection between the evidence and their conclusion; and
  - make personal connections to the characteristics they want to develop (optional)



# Reading List:






## What does it take to make a difference?

TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>Thao: A Picture Book</u></b> by Thao Lam	Thao's name gets mispronounced and she becomes embarrassed by it. She wants to change her name to something easier. She learns that her name is part of her identity and learns to love it.	
<b><u>Not Quite Snow White</u></b> written by Ashley Franklin and illustrated by Ebony Glenn	Tameka is excited to audition for Snow White. But she hears some people saying that she is not princess material and "too brown". She learns to believe in herself and try out for the role.	
<b><u>Between Us and Abuela</u></b> <b><u>A Family Story from the Border</u></b> written by Mitali Perkins and illustrated by Sara Palacios	The family goes to meet their grandmother at the US/Mexico border for La Posada Sin Fronteras. They are unable to give their gifts through the fence. The girl thinks of an idea creatively to deliver the present to her grandmother.	
<b><u>Amara and the Bats</u></b> written and illustrated by Emma Reynolds	Amara loves and is interested in bats. She learns that they are losing their habitat and mobilizes to make a difference.	
<b><u>Rise Up and Write it</u></b> written by Nandini Ahuja and illustrated by Anoosha Syed	Readers learn the different ways to take civic action in their communities for a cause they care about. They learn how each one of us can make an important difference.	
<b><u>Front Desk</u></b> written by Kelly Yang	Mia lives in a motel that she helps her immigrant parents to manage. Mia's hard work, positive attitude and empathy, help her to create a community and a better life for her family.	



# Reading List:

## What does it take to make a difference?

TITLE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK	HOW BOOK CONNECTS TO LESSON FOCUS	AVAILABLE THROUGH INDIGO?
<b><u>Intersection Allies: we make room for all</u></b> written by Chelse Johnson, LaToya Council & Carolyn Choi, illustrations by Ashley Seil Smith	Readers learn that being a friend means making room for all people, acknowledging identities and taking positive action to show respect to everyone.	
<b><u>Prairie Lotus</u></b> written by Linda Sue Park	It is 1880, and Hanna is traveling with her father through America's heartland. She is determined to get an education and be a dressmaker. But being half-Chinese, she experiences prejudice when all she wants is to fit in.	
<b><u>Alma and How She Got Her Name</u></b> written by Juana Martinez-Neal	Alma thinks her name is too long. Alma is curious and learns that she shares traits with so many of her namesakes. Eventually, she learns that her name is all hers and that she has her own story to tell.	
<b><u>Amina's Voice</u></b> written by Hena Khan	Amina is Pakistani-American and trying hard to fit in. She thinks about changing herself to be more "American" when an act of hatred encourages her to bring her community together.	
<b><u>Hello, Universe</u></b> written by Erin Entrada Kelly	Valencia Somerset and Kaori Tanaka are two of four main characters. Together, these middle schoolers go on a quest to save their friend and put a bully in their place.	



FOR GUIDANCE USING BOOKS AND STORIES THAT MAY INCLUDE SENSITIVE TOPICS OR CONTENT, PLEASE REMEMBER TO CONSULT YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT RESOURCES.

# My Thoughtbook:

## What does it take to make a difference?

MY SELECTED CHARACTER:

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### CHARACTERISTIC

List the character traits of the character you notice as you read

### EXPLANATION

(You could use a page number or use a post-it note to mark where you noticed it)

### THIS CHARACTERISTIC WAS HELPFUL BECAUSE...

### HOW IMPORTANT WAS THIS CHARACTERISTIC?

(check the criteria)

- ☐ Crucial
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Irrelevant

- ☐ Crucial
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Irrelevant

- ☐ Crucial
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Irrelevant

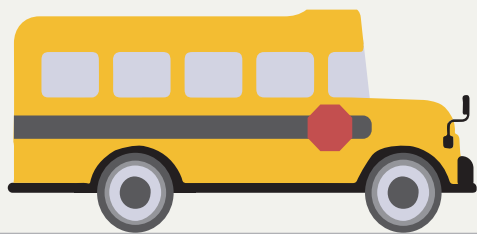
- ☐ Crucial
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Irrelevant

CRITERIA FOR AN IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC:



# Character Traits

## Word Bank



adventurous ambitious bold brainy brave brilliant calm careful  
cautious childlike confident courageous curious compassionate  
demanding eager easygoing empathetic energetic faithful fearless  
forgiving friendly funny gentle generous graceful guilty happy

helpful honest hopeful humble imaginative impatient  
innocent inventive intelligent jealous kind lonely  
loving loyal lucky mature mysterious nervous nice

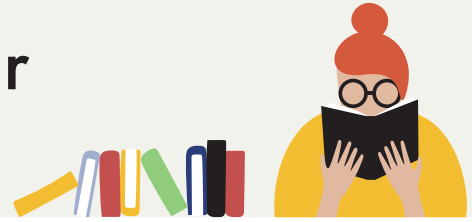
noisy obedient optimistic patient peaceful  
perseverant polite proud quiet rebellious  
reliable respectful responsible risk taker

rough scared selfish serious shy silly sly  
smart sneaky strange strong sweet talented  
thoughtful trusting trustworthy visionary  
vulnerable warm weak wise worried zany



# Activity Sheet:

## Understanding the character



IF YOU WERE DESCRIBING THE CHARACTER TO SOMEONE THAT DID NOT KNOW HER, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY? DESCRIBE HER CHARACTER TRAITS.

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HOW SIMILAR ARE YOU TO THE CHARACTER?      ● A lot      ● A little      ● Not at all

USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES TO EXPLAIN YOUR CHOICE.

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# Activity Sheet:

## Looks like/Sounds like



THE CHARACTERISTIC I WANT TO DEVELOP OR IMPROVE IS:

---

I CHOSE THIS CHARACTERISTIC BECAUSE:

---

LOOKS LIKE

---

SOUNDS LIKE

---



# Activity Sheet:

## My action plan



CHARACTERISTIC I WANT TO DEVELOP OR IMPROVE:

---

### ACTION #1

What can I try?  
What? When? Where?

Potential challenges

### ACTION #2

What can I try?  
What? When? Where?

Potential challenges

# Activity Sheet:

## Reflecting on my progress

Over the next two weeks, record three significant situations where you will try to be more (your selected characteristic):



### ACTION

WHAT I DID

### EXPLANATION

HOW MY ACTION DEMONSTRATED OR DID NOT  
DEMONSTRATE MY CHOSEN CHARACTERISTIC  
EVENTS, CHARACTERS, IDEAS, EVENTS

### DISCOVERIES

DISCOVERIES AND CHALLENGES  
I ENCOUNTERED

Date:

Situation:

Date:

Situation:

Date:

Situation:

# Activity Sheet:

## Final self-reflection



SELECTED SITUATION:

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HOW SUCCESSFUL WERE YOU IN  
MEETING YOUR IDENTIFIED GOAL?

● Anger ● Disgust ● Sadness

Possible criteria indicating success

- Completed my actions in most situations
- Thought more about the attribute
- Affect me personally

WHAT CHALLENGE(S)  
DID YOU FACE?



WHICH WAS THE MOST  
SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE?



Criteria for a significant challenge

- occur frequently
- Effect my ability to carry out actions

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Tips for Teachers

# Reading as Thinking:

## Ten tweaks for your questions

Whenever students read, there are many opportunities to invite them to go beyond providing a casual answer and to think more deeply. Often all that is required is a simple tweak or follow up to the question we often ask.



READING TASK	COMMON QUESTION	QUESTION TWEAKED FOR DEEPER THINKING
<b>Inferring</b>	What do you think is happening? How do you think the character might feel?	What conclusions about the events/character's feelings can be drawn from the clues in the story?
<b>Thinking about cause and effect</b>	How did the event affect the characters? What caused the event to happen?	What was the biggest effect of the event on the characters? Which cause contributed the most to the event?
<b>Activating prior knowledge</b>	What do you already know about this topic?	Of all of the ideas that the class has shared about this topic, which might be the most relevant/useful for helping us understand the story?
<b>Thinking about details</b>	How would you describe the event/character?	What are the five most important things to know about this event/character?
<b>Explaining</b>	Why do you think the event happened?	What's the most plausible explanation for why the event happened?
<b>Predicting</b>	What do you think will happen next?	Given the clues and evidence that we've seen thus far in the story, what do you think is most likely to happen next?



# Reading as Thinking:

## Ten tweaks for your questions

Whenever students read, there are many opportunities to invite them to go beyond providing a casual answer and to think more deeply. Often all that is required is a simple tweak or follow up to the question we often ask.

READING TASK	COMMON QUESTION	QUESTION TWEAKED FOR DEEPER THINKING
<b>Understanding perspective</b>	What are the points of view/ perspectives in the story?	How similar or different are the characters' points of view/ perspectives?
<b>Assessing merit</b>	What did you like about this character/story/book?	Was the character a good friend? Which is the most important lesson from this story? Is this a book that everyone should read?
<b>Examining an image</b>	What do you notice about the image?	Using clues in the image, what may have happened immediately before or after what is shown in the image? Which clues from the book's covers might tell us the most about the theme of the book?
<b>Assessing my understanding</b>	Can I explain what I just read in my own words?	How well do I understand what I just read: very well, somewhat, or not very well? Which reading strategies or thinking tools would best help me understand what I am reading?

