JUNIOR GREAT BOOKS

Read-Aloud Program

Sample Unit

Common Core State Standards Edition

Sailing Ship Series
VOLUME 1

Pegasus Series
VOLUME 1

Dragon Series
VOLUME 1

Sun Series
VOLUME 1

read.think.discard.grow.
The Junior Great Books® Read-Aloud Program

In the Read-Aloud program, children begin to develop the reading, writing, oral communication, and thinking skills needed to become good readers. The Read-Aloud program bridges the gap between children’s limited decoding skills and their capacity for complex, critical thinking. Students exercise a wide range of language arts skills as they discuss ideas, share questions, and reflect on what they read. Activities include:

- Asking original questions
- Drawing key characters and scenes
- Acting out significant story events
- Group creative writing
- Reading and responding to questions at home with parents
- Group discussion of interpretive questions

Each Read-Aloud series has nine units, including poetry, folktales, and children’s fiction. Each student anthology is packaged as three soft-cover volumes; each volume includes text, activity pages, and space for children to draw their own illustrations. The Teacher’s Edition for each series includes the literature selections, classroom activities, annotated copies of all student materials, and an appendix with sample letters to parents and suggestions for extensions into other curriculum areas. A complete set of audio CDs is available for each series.

This sample unit from the Teacher’s Edition of the Sun Series illustrates how teachers and volunteers would conduct a week’s work on a story. Throughout this unit, children interact with “The King of the Frogs” in a variety of concrete ways that encourage active reading and creative personal interpretations. To demonstrate the range of possible student responses, this sample unit provides examples of students’ artwork and writing.

Once children complete the activities in a volume, they possess a personalized record of their thinking over the course of each unit. Completed volumes reinforce the important message that ideas build on one another—that in order to discover meaning in literature, one must continually return to the text.

Although not reproduced in this sample unit, each student anthology includes a note to the parent or other adult who will be reading the story to the student. The note introduces the character “G.B.” and instructs the adult to pause during the at-home reading to ask G.B.’s open-ended questions. Children’s answers to G.B.’s questions will be discussed in class the next day. The Teacher’s Edition includes suggested follow-up questions that can help teachers and volunteers draw out students’ thinking.

Great Books Programs Meet the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

Look for the color-coded icons in this sample unit that show how the Junior Great Books Read-Aloud activities meet Common Core State Standards in:

- Reading
- Speaking and Listening
- Writing

The standards that each activity addresses are described in detail on pages 22–25.

Visit www.greatbooks.org/corestandards to view or download “Great Books Programs and the Common Core State Standards.”

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THE KING OF THE FROGS

AFRICAN FOLKTALE
AS TOLD BY
HUMPHREY HARMAN

OVERVIEW

SESSION 1
This session consists of an introduction and first reading of the story, followed by a brief sharing of questions and comments, a performance of the frogs’ chorus, and an art activity in which children draw their interpretation of the frogs.

AT-HOME WORK
During this second reading, the adult partner encourages the child to join in saying the underlined words and phrases, and pauses to discuss G.B.’s three questions. Children respond to these questions by circling their answers.

After reading, the adult writes the child’s own question about the story into the book in preparation for the Sharing Questions Discussion (Session 4).

SESSION 2
During this reading of the story, you will collect students’ responses to G.B.’s questions and lead a discussion of them. The session concludes with an art activity in which children draw their interpretation of Mmumi.

SESSION 3
This session consists of an evaluative discussion in which children consider other ways the frogs could have made their lives orderly, and an art activity in which children draw their interpretation of King Mamba and the frogs.

SESSION 4
This session consists of a Sharing Questions Discussion and a group creative-writing activity in which students compose a poem about quiet fun and noisy fun.

*The King of the Frogs*, from TALES TOLD NEAR A CROCODILE, by Humphrey Harman. Copyright © 1962 by Humphrey Harman. Published by Hutchinson. Reprinted by permission of the Random House Group, Ltd.
SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION

Begin the session by telling your class that this is a story from Africa. Write on the board the names “Mmumi,” “Gogo,” and “Mamba,” and ask children to repeat them after you.

FIRST READING AND SHARING OF RESPONSES

Ask children to listen as you read the story aloud. After the reading, allow a few moments to clear up unfamiliar vocabulary and to let students ask questions and share their initial reactions to the story. Encourage children to offer their opinions about which parts of the story they especially liked and why.

CHORAL ACTIVITY

Reread the first paragraph of the story, which describes the different kinds of noises the frogs make. After you read the description of each noise, have children practice making it. When the paragraph is finished, divide the children into five groups, one for each noise. Let children combine their noises into a “Frog Chorus.” Then have them practice becoming suddenly so quiet “you can hear the whole world breathe.”

ART ACTIVITY

Have children turn to the frontispiece, captioned “The Frogs Do As They Please.” Tell them that they are going to draw a picture of what they think the frogs’ life is like at the beginning of the story, when the frogs do as they please. Help children get ideas for their pictures by asking such questions as Do you think the noise and untidiness would have been fun or unpleasant? Why do the frogs all want to shout at once?

Allow time for students to share and compare their drawings.

SESSION 2

POSTING “MY QUESTIONS”

Have students cut out the questions they wrote at home and pin them on the Sharing Questions bulletin board. Children who have not had an at-home reading can dictate their questions to you at this time. Encourage children to look at the Sharing Questions bulletin board during the week, to point out their own questions, and to ask about those of their classmates.

READING AND REVIEW OF G.B.’S QUESTIONS

Read the story aloud, encouraging students to follow along in their books. Pause to collect students’ responses to G.B.’s questions (pages 12, 14, and 16). To help students think further about their responses, ask additional questions such as those given in the margin of your text.
SESSION 2 (continued)

ART ACTIVITY
Ask students to turn to the page captioned “Mmumi.” Tell them that they are going to draw a picture of Mmumi, showing what kind of personality they think he has. If you think it necessary, review some of the ideas about Mmumi that children brought up earlier in the session when discussing G.B.’s questions.
Allow time for students to share and compare their drawings.

SESSION 3

EVALUATIVE DISCUSSION
Introduce the activity by reminding children that at the beginning of the story the frogs do as they please and do not like it, while at the end they have a king who keeps them orderly but also eats frogs. Tell students that now they will have a chance to think about other ways in which the frogs might have been able to lead an orderly life.
Briefly outline three possibilities: choosing one of the frogs to be king, having as king a more powerful animal who doesn’t eat frogs, or making rules for themselves without the help of a king. Write on the board the headings “Frog King,” “Other Animal King,” and “Make Their Own Rules.” Ask children which situation they think would have been best for the frogs and have them give their reasons, with support from the story. Write down children’s ideas under the appropriate heading.
After the class has debated the question for five or ten minutes, ask children to turn to the page at the end of the story with the heading “What do you think the frogs should do?” Have children circle their answer and write their reason on the lines provided.

ART ACTIVITY
Have children turn to the page at the end of the story captioned “King Mamba and His Subjects.” Read aloud the last two paragraphs of the story, beginning “The frogs developed the greatest respect…” Help students think about different ways the frogs might feel about having Mamba as king by asking such questions as Is the frogs’ life terrible or not so bad with Mamba as king? Do they like being orderly after all? Do the frogs dislike Mamba? Are they proud to have such a fierce king?
Then have students draw pictures of Mamba and the frogs. Allow time for students to share and compare their drawings.
SESSION 4

SHARING QUESTIONS DISCUSSION

Prepare for discussion as usual, deciding on the five or six interpretive questions you intend to ask the class. Note which of the children’s questions are similar to those you plan to lead and try to include three or four of their questions in your final list. When you write your questions on the board, include children’s names as appropriate.

Suggested Interpretive Questions

Why does the wise old frog go back to Mmumi after Gogo doesn’t work out?

Are the frogs better off with Mamba to keep them orderly than they were when they lived in disorder at the beginning of the story?

Why do the frogs need a king to keep them orderly?

GROUP CREATIVE WRITING

Remind students that at the end of the story the frogs live quietly, something they could not do before, though sometimes they “break out” in noise as they used to do. Tell children that now they are going to create a poem about quiet fun and noisy fun. Ask the class to think briefly about things they enjoy doing that are quiet, and things they enjoy doing that are noisy.

Then write on the board, “In a quiet mood, I…” and ask the class to suggest lines describing quiet fun. Encourage students to make their lines descriptive, showing how the quietness is important to the fun. Write their lines on the board. When you have collected several lines, write “In a noisy mood, I…” and repeat the process for noisy fun.

When the poem is completed, prepare copies for children to paste into their books, or ask them to copy the entire poem or their favorite lines on the page titled “Quiet and Noisy.”
THE KING OF THE FROGS

AFRICAN FOLKTALE
Each activity in the Read-Aloud program is story specific, aimed at engaging children with the ideas and themes of a rich work of literature. After the first reading and a choral activity, children create the frontispiece for “The King of the Frogs” by drawing a picture of what they think the frogs’ life is like at the beginning of the story. Whenever children are asked to visualize a scene through drawing, they are learning to translate the language of literature into concrete pictures. Words on a page are no longer abstractions but become real to children as they draw.
Have you ever been beside a lake in Africa at night and listened to the frogs? You haven’t? Then you cannot imagine what the noise is like. And it’s not just one kind of noise, it’s several. Over there for instance are a thousand creaking doors that have never had their hinges oiled and someone opens and shuts them—and keeps on doing just that. Over there are a thousand fat men snoring and no one wakes them up. Then there are a thousand carpenters sawing planks and all the saws want a touch of grease, and a thousand little bells are being struck and a thousand corks are being pulled out of bottles.

Noise! You can hardly hear yourself think.
Then you go a little closer until you can just see the edge of the water and perhaps a reed or two and there is silence. Just the splash of a frog jumping into the water late because he was asleep and didn’t hear you coming. Then nothing, and you can hear the whole world breathe.

There’s a story about this.
Long ago the frogs did as they pleased and the result was dreadful. Not one of them would listen to what another said and they all shouted at once. Children wouldn’t obey their parents and even wives wouldn’t listen to their husbands, which is, indeed, something hardly to be understood. It was all noisy and untidy beyond bearing and nothing ever got done.

At last a wise, wise old frog called everyone to a meeting and, since he had a very fine voice and went on shouting for long enough, he managed to get them all there at once, for to tell you the truth they were pretty sick of living the way they did.
“Frogs!” said the old frog, puffing himself up. “We cannot go on like this. It’s no sort of life for anyone and, anyway, when you see how all the other creatures live it makes one ashamed of being a frog. There is only one thing to do. We must get a king. When people have kings there is peace and order and everyone does as he is told.”

“Agreed!” they all shouted and they stayed long enough to commission the old frog to see what he could do about getting them one, before everybody fell to quarreling and pushing and splashing and the meeting broke up in disorder. As usual.

Then the wise, wise old frog went to see the Great God Mmumi (you will say the two m’s correctly if you hum a little before you begin the word). Mmumi happened to be in charge of that part of the world.
After reviewing G.B.'s questions in the second session, children draw pictures of Mmumi that show their interpretations of his personality. Here, children have interpreted the god Mmumi as (a) terrifying and monstrous, (b) good-natured but somewhat amorphous, and (c) familiar and human.
He is a very slow god and usually
gives people more than they bargain for.
He agreed drowsily that the frogs needed
a king and promised to do something
about it. Then he went to sleep again.

So the frogs went on as usual,
which was badly, until one day Mmumi
woke up, remembered his promise,
took a great green mossy boulder which
had the rough shape of a gigantic frog and
threw it into the water. SPLASH!

“There you are!” he shouted
(it sounded like thunder). “There’s your
king. His name’s Gogo and like me he
doesn’t want to be disturbed. Respect
him and be satisfied.”

Do you think
Mmumi gives the
frogs Gogo because
Mmumi is:

LAZY
WISE
MAKING FUN
OF THEM

(Circle your answer.)

Does Mmumi think that Gogo
will be a good king for the frogs?

Does Mmumi want the frogs to
find out that Gogo is just a
stone?
The whole lake was shaken by Gogo’s fall. The waves washed through the reeds and tore up the shore, and in the middle of a great cloud of mud Gogo settled on the bottom and the fat green waterweeds curled round and over him. He looked shocking.

The frogs were terrified and fled under stones and into dark corners and holes under the bank. Their long white legs streaked behind them as they swam. Parents found their children and husbands their wives and then settled down to explaining what had happened.
“This is our king,” they said, “and a fine terrible one he seems, and from the splash he made not the sort to fool about with. Now all will be well and this scandalous behavior will stop.”

And so it did, for a while.

But although Gogo had made such a wonderful first impression, as time passed they noticed that he never moved. He just sat quietly in the mud and stared in the same direction. Presently they began to get used to him, until finally some young, bold, bad frogs ventured to swim close to him and then one of them touched his nose.

And still Gogo said and did nothing.

“Bah! He’s not a king!” they shouted. “He’s not even a frog. He’s just an old stone and couldn’t hurt anyone.” And they swam round him until they were dizzy and jumped all over his back and went away and spoke rudely about him to their elders.
At first none of the elders believed them. They had told their children Gogo was a king and a king he had to be, but soon it was impossible to deny that the children were right and then... Well, the noise began again and things were as they had always been, only worse. **Terrible!**

The wise, wise old frog sighed and set out to see Mmumi again, who was not at all pleased at being woken a second time.

“All right!” he shouted in a passion. “All right! You aren’t satisfied with the king I’ve given you. Is that the way it is? Very well, you shall have another and I hope you like him.”

And the very next night he gave them Mamba the Crocodile.

Gogo had come to his people with a splash that shook the lake
but Mamba slid into the water with only a whisper and left but one small ring spreading gently to show that he had come. Then he swam, silent as a shadow, lithe and long and secret, his jaws grinning like a trap. Gogo had never visited the people he had been given to rule but Mamba visited them often and suddenly, and whenever he met a subject the great jaws gaped and closed and often it was the last of that frog.

The frogs developed the greatest respect for their new king and lived quietly, looking over the backs of their heads as frogs can. Now and again at night they break out but they keep their ears open and if you go near the lake they shut up.

They think that it’s Mamba coming to put a little order into them and they keep quiet.
After engaging in an evaluative discussion during the third session, children draw their interpretations of King Mamba and his frog subjects. Children’s drawings reflect their interpretations of how the frogs feel about having a king who keeps them orderly but also eats frogs. The children’s drawings pictured here show a variety of interpretations: (a) the frogs are happy but cautious of King Mamba, (b) the frogs are respectful and pleased with their fearsome king, and (c) the frogs are saddened by King Mamba, who eats his subjects.

Drawing answers to an interpretive or evaluative question enables all children, whatever their level of language skill, to communicate their thinking about the selection. As children share and compare their drawings (an essential part of the Read-Aloud routine), they informally articulate their ideas about the story and hear each other’s opinions and insights.
What do you think the frogs should do? (Circle one.)

1. Have a frog king

2. Have another animal as king

3. Make their own rules

Why? Because the frog's will agree with the frog king.
A frog king is good for frogs because he will not eat them and he will be nice to them and be fierce.

Why?

Because they won’t worry about having a king.

After participating in an evaluative discussion, children circle their answers to the question “What do you think the frogs should do?” and write their reasons. By backing up their answers with reasons, children reflect on and apply their more developed understanding of the text. Throughout the Read-Aloud program, group creative-writing projects, such as the poem “Quiet and Noisy” (right), help students consolidate their previous interpretive work and think further about the selection.

As an author, a child gains a sense of confidence in approaching any language-related work and develops a new way of appreciating literature.

Like the art activities, the Read-Aloud writing activities are done in the children’s own books, enabling students to keep a permanent record of their thoughts about each selection.
My Favorite Words

lake
long
frog
go go go
spiders
king
not
direction
shook
away
splash
LEFT: "My Favorite Words" is an optional Read-Aloud activity that children can complete in class or at home with a parent. Students record their favorite words from the selection in their books, illustrate them if they wish, and even write stories using them. Since the stories and poems in the Read-Aloud program are chosen in part for the excellence of their writing, children might select new and unfamiliar favorite words or choose phrases that are unusual or especially appealing. Encouraging children to focus on words in this way helps them discover that words contain meanings and associations that can be explored, played with, and savored.

RIGHT: At the end of the at-home session, the child expresses curiosity about the story by asking a question, which the parent or adult partner records here. Teachers are encouraged to use students' questions throughout the week, and especially during Sharing Questions Discussion, the culminating interpretive discussion. Some examples of first graders' questions:

"Why were the frogs noisy?"

"Why weren't the frogs kind to each other when there was not a king?"

"Why couldn't the wise old frog be the king?"

"Why did Mmumi give the frogs a king that was made out of stone?"

"Why did Mmumi pick a crocodile for the frogs' king?"
Read-Aloud Sample Unit Aligned to Common Core State Standards

Grade Level 1

Page 1: Overview

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards:

**Reading**

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**Speaking and Listening**

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Writing**

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Page 2: Session 1

**Reading**

RL 1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
RL 1.10 With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL 1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
Page 2: Session 1, continued

**Speaking and Listening**

SL 1.3  Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

SL 1.5  Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

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Page 2: Session 2

**Reading**

RL 1.1  Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 1.3  Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

RL 1.9  Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL 1.1  Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL 1.2  Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL 1.3  Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

SL 1.4  Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

SL 1.5  Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

SL 1.6  Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

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Page 3: Session 3

**Speaking and Listening**

SL 1.4  Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

SL 1.5  Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

SL 1.6  Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

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Page 4: Session 4

**Reading**

RL 1.4  Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

**Speaking and Listening**

SL 1.1  Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
Common Core State Standards

**Page 4: Session 4 (continued)**

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**Writing**

| W 1.5 | With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed. |

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