

# GUIDED READING LESSON PLAN—Understanding Characters

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Book *Every Living Thing, "Shells"* by Cynthia Rylant Level \_\_\_\_\_

## Focus/Strategy/Intended Learning (based on students' needs)

Inferring—Developing a Theory about Characters (and their Relationships)

\*examining what characters say, do, think, and feel to develop a theory about them (and their relationship over time)

## Standard(s) Addressed

Comprehension—Explain characters' motives, discuss plot and setting, talk accountably, examine reasons for a character's actions, accounting for situation and motive

**Resources Needed** (e.g., books, visuals and realia, strategy charts, magnetic letters, alphabet charts, word walls, whiteboards)

Small sticky notes

## Text Features that will Support Students

**Potential Text Challenges** (e.g., vocabulary, text features, concepts)

condominium

talc

phenomenon

## Introducing the Text

### • Overview Statement and Connections to Background Knowledge

"In our whole group mini-lessons, we've learned that we will understand and enjoy stories more if we understand the characters. We can make inferences about characters by examining what they say and do—and using that information to develop a theory about them. We're going to continue doing that in our small group today.

Look at the pictures and think about what we know already about Cynthia Rylant's short stories. We can use that information to help us make predictions about this story. We know that in the stories we have read so far, there are characters and animals—AND—there is usually a connection between them in the story. The picture is of a hermit crab. What do you know about hermit crabs? The title is 'Shells.' Based on what we know about Cynthia Rylant's writing and hermit crabs, can we make some predictions about why this selection might be titled 'Shells'?

Take your sticky note and put it at the bottom of page 73."

### • Plan for Reading the Text

Read text in "chunks," gradually adding more text.

Scaffolding needed during reading:

- Author's use of text font and/or punctuation to help us read dialogue effectively
- Accountable talk over increasingly longer sections of text; sticky notes to chunk text
- Continued reminders to examine what characters say and do to develop a theory about them

### • Chunking the Text (early fluent)

Bottom of page 73—"What are you thinking about Michael? About Aunt Esther? What makes you say that?"

Bottom of page 74—"How are you picturing Aunt Esther right now; are you forming a visual image of her? Why do you say that? Do you have any theories about why Aunt Esther is behaving as she is? What in the text would lead you to say that?"

Bottom of page 76—"Based on the theory you've developed about Aunt Esther, how do you think she will react when Michael shows her the crab?"

Read to the end of the story—"Was there a place that surprised you? Has your visual image of Aunt Esther changed? Why or why not? After reading the story, what is your thinking now about the connection between the title, 'Shells,' and the story? So, when you think about reading stories and understanding characters (and their relationships) better, what can you do?"

## Discussion Questions

"What are you thinking about Michael? About Aunt Esther?"

"What makes you say that?"

"What did the character do (think or say) that makes you think that?"

"Can you find the place in the text that made you think that?"

"How did the characters change from the first part of the story? Why did they change?"

**Skills and Strategies** (e.g., comprehension strategy, word-solving strategies, shared writing)

## Extensions (optional)

Students independently complete the graphic organizer, [Inferring: Developing a Theory about Characters](#).