



6TH
GRADE

VOLUME 6.1

Mystery
The Westing Game

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with Bethany Robinson

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Welcome to the C. I. A. Unit of Study for the book *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin

This unit of study was put together for the purpose of teaching students how to read longer, more complex text. Unfortunately, in classrooms where only basal readers are used, many students do not learn how to make the transition from picture books, to series books, to more complex chapter books. As a result, students struggle during independent reading. This unit of study will teach students the fundamental processes of reading text, specifically longer, more complex chapter books. It follows an approach described in its companion text, *Raising the Standards through Chapter Books: The C. I. A. Approach*. I hope you enjoy guiding your students through the authentic work of expert readers!

The Westing Game is a favorite mystery book of many readers, young and old. I first read the book *The Westing Game* when I was in middle school, and it has since been one of my favorite novels. This puzzle-mystery involves sixteen heirs who are all trying to win the inheritance of their “Uncle Sam”—entrepreneur Samuel W. Westing. To win, they must use clues to solve Sam Westing’s murder.

The Westing Game is a challenging text for sixth-graders because of its genre, mystery. When reading a mystery book, readers have to keep track of a long list of characters and plot-twisting events. The reader can expect his or her opinion of the characters to change across the text. Raskin describes the characters in *The Westing Game* as “imperfect,” yet the reader gets to like them and realizes they’re not the way they seem. I hope that, given the tools and scaffolds of the instructional read-aloud, students will be motivated by the challenge of the text, and driven to read books in this exciting genre—mystery!

Symbolism woven throughout the book *The Westing Game* provides another level of challenge. As Raskin began writing *The Westing Game*, she was inspired by Bicentennial celebrations, fireworks, patriotism, and the American Dream. During this unit of study, students will read about the American Bicentennial, the American Dream, American symbolism, the Salem witch trials, and the life of Andrew Carnegie. Students will infer how Ellen Raskin’s story line may have been inspired by these symbols and events.

The book *The Westing Game* connects well to the other units in the C. I. A. series for sixth grade. Students will make inferences about how the American Dream influenced the economy and spirit of the American people during the time of the Great Depression. The students will make connections across texts as they read the books *Children of the Dust Bowl* by Jerry Stanley and *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan.

Throughout this unit, it will be important to keep charts easy to read, colorful, and displayed on the classroom wall, as they will be used often for referencing and for monitoring comprehension.

I know you will find it hard to put the book *The Westing Game* down. Students will be begging to read each day, hoping to unlock more of the clues to solve the mystery!

Before starting this unit of study with your students, you will want to read and label a copy of the book *The Westing Game*, to be used as a teacher guide. You will also want to acquire a class set of books for students to use during read-aloud. Take time to get to know the scope and sequence, and input lessons into your plan book ahead of time.

At the back of this unit you will find a vocabulary handbook. Please print a copy of this handbook for each student. It will be used almost daily and is an essential component of this unit of study. I’ve also included a section where I make suggestions for optional related projects and lessons that might be conducted during your content area literacy block or as independent student activities during the weeks when you are teaching this unit. These activities will further students’ understanding of the topics and themes in *The Westing Game*.

If this is your first time teaching a C. I. A. unit, you will want to first familiarize yourself with the C. I. A. approach. You will then need to lay the groundwork for optimizing your success with this unit in your classroom by:

- Designating a reading block
- Setting up a meeting area
- Planning for turn and talk
- Preparing reader's notebooks
- Preparing for assessment

Get Ready for Vocabulary Instruction

“Teacher read-aloud is one of the major opportunities for children to learn new word meanings” (Cunningham & Allington, 2007, p. 98). Therefore, vocabulary work will be an essential component of the read-aloud block.

Words selected for explicit instruction in this unit of study are words that appear over and over again or are inferred repeatedly throughout the text. Students expand their vocabulary knowledge when they are given the opportunity to learn synonyms and antonyms of key words.

Vocabulary will be reinforced through both turn and talk and writing. Students will be expected to practice using new vocabulary when they are talking in partnerships and writing in their notebooks. Teachers will reinforce the use of new vocabulary through dialogues with students. Vocabulary words taught in the read-aloud unit will be revisited during the paired book club unit.

At the back of this unit, you will find materials that can be copied to create vocabulary handbooks for students to use throughout this unit of study. (The vocabulary handbook is also available to download at readsidebyside.com). Words will be introduced on the days indicated in the scope and sequence. On any given day, the vocabulary mini-lesson precedes the read-aloud, so that right after receiving instruction on a word, students have the opportunity to see the word used in the text and to use the word in their turn and talk. The following routine should be used for teaching vocabulary and should take up no more than 10 minutes of the read-aloud block.

Vocabulary Mini-Lesson Routine

<p>1. Introduce the word and highlight morphemes.</p>	<p><i>Today our target word is...</i> If applicable: <i>What is the root? (underline the root)</i> <i>What is the prefix? (circle the prefix)</i> <i>What does the prefix mean?</i> <i>What is the suffix? (box the suffix)</i> <i>What does the suffix mean?</i></p>
<p>2. Read the context(s) of the word. Highlight any clues that will help the reader infer the meaning.</p>	<p><i>Our target word comes right from our text on page _____. Let's read it together. Are there any clues in the sentence that help us infer what this word means?</i></p>
<p>3. Turn and talk: What does the word _____ mean?</p>	<p><i>Based on the clues, what words or phrases describe this word?</i> <i>Turn and talk.</i></p>
<p>4. Share-out and add to chart.</p>	<p><i>What did you come up with?</i> *add accurate examples to the chart</p>
<p>5. Brainstorm other contexts for this word.</p>	<p><i>In what other contexts might we find this word?</i> *add accurate examples to the chart</p>
<p>6. Turn and talk: What are opposites of this word?</p>	<p><i>What words or phrases describe the opposite of this word? Turn and talk.</i></p>
<p>7. Share-out and add to chart.</p>	<p><i>What did you come up with?</i> *add accurate examples to the chart</p>
<p>8. I will remember this word...</p>	<p><i>How will you remember this word? Draw a picture, or write a phrase that will help you remember this word. Use an example from your own life if possible.</i></p>
<p>9. Link...</p>	<p><i>Today and every day I want you to be looking for forms of this word in your reading. I also want you to practice using this word in your talk and in your writing.</i></p>

The Westing Game Text Complexity

QUALITATIVE MEASURES	QUANTITATIVE MEASURES
<p>Levels of Meaning Multiple themes throughout the book increase the challenge for readers of this text. Themes include but are not limited to the American Dream, self-improvement, redemption, capitalism, and the philosophy of success. These themes are conveyed through the author’s use of symbolism and the development of the problem throughout the book.</p> <p>Structure While this story is told in sequential order, it is a puzzle-mystery, and therefore the plot is complex. Readers will have to keep track of a large list of characters and details related to those characters. In addition, the genre mystery is a more complex genre than realistic fiction because it requires the reader to change his/her opinion of the characters across the text.</p> <p>Language Conventionalilty and Clarity Much of the complex vocabulary needed for understanding is inferred throughout the story. These inferred words are advanced vocabulary words for sixth-grade students.</p> <p>Knowledge Demands While reading, students will need to rely on their understanding of American symbolism and the American Dream. Students will read about the Salem witch trials and Andrew Carnegie in order to gain a deeper understanding of the story line of <i>The Westing Game</i>.</p>	<p>The Lexile level for <i>The Westing Game</i> is 750, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the upper range of the complexity band for 2nd–3rd grade according to the Common Core State Standards. Qualitative demands make this a more appropriate choice for sixth grade.</p> <p>READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to the purpose and complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.</p>

The Westing Game Scope and Sequence

NOTE: The lessons for this unit give page references for the Puffin paperback edition of *The Westing Game* published in 2004.

Unit of Study: *The Westing Game*

Genre: Mystery

DAY	CHAPTER(S)/ PAGES	MINI-LESSON	READ-ALLOUD
1	Blurb	Vocabulary: <i>chain of events</i> Use sticky notes to mark each quadrant of the text.	Search for key story elements in the blurb. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete story elements handout together • Make a prediction
2		Vocabulary: <i>intrigue</i> Use the genre chart to help students understand what to expect from mystery, and to make predictions.	
3	Outside Text Part 1: “Ellen Raskin and <i>The Westing Game</i> ” Outside Text Part 2: “How the American Dream Works: The Origins of the American Dream”		Identify important information while reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a T-chart of information about the American Dream

DAY	CHAPTER(S)/ PAGES	MINI-LESSON	READ-ALoud
4	Chapters 1–2 pp. 1–6	Vocabulary: <i>exclusive</i>	Identify the setting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-create a setting clues list
5	Chapters 2–3 pp. 5–16	Vocabulary: <i>façade</i>	Keep track of important events and make predictions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-create an important events list
6	Chapter 4 pp. 16–21	Vocabulary: <i>patriot</i>	Keep track of important events and make predictions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to co-create an important events list
7	Chapter 4 pp. 18–20	Vocabulary: <i>legacy</i>	Gather information about an important character—Samuel W. Westing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-create a list of character traits <p>Keep track of important events using a timeline.</p>
8	Chapters 4–7 pp. 21–32	Vocabulary: <i>beneficiary</i>	Identify the problems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to add to the important events list, and highlight any problems

DAY	CHAPTER(S)/ PAGES	MINI-LESSON	READ-ALoud
9	Chapter 5 pp. 22–27	Vocabulary: <i>perception</i>	Identify important characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a list of suspects
10	Chapter 7 pp. 31–35	Vocabulary: <i>eccentric</i>	Identify important characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to co-create a list of suspects
11	Chapters 7–8 pp. 35–52		Keep track of important events and make predictions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to add to the important events list, and highlight a problem
12		Retell Summary Writing	
13	Outside Text: “Andrew Carnegie”	Vocabulary: <i>ambition</i>	Build background knowledge about a topic—Andrew Carnegie. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a list of events from Andrew Carnegie’s life
14	Chapters 9–11 pp. 52–64	Vocabulary: <i>defiant</i>	Focus on the main character and infer character traits—Turtle Wexler. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a character traits chart

DAY	CHAPTER(S)/ PAGES	MINI-LESSON	READ-ALoud
15	Chapters 11–13 pp. 64–72	Vocabulary: <i>divisive</i>	Focus on the plot—cause and effect. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-create a cause and effect chart
16	Outside Text: Video: “The Story of the Witch Hunt” Article: “Witch Hunts and Persecution in America”	Vocabulary: <i>hysteria</i>	Build background knowledge about a topic—American symbolism: the Salem witch trials. Make a prediction.
17	Chapter 13 pp. 72–79	Vocabulary: <i>pretentious</i>	Identify important characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to co-create a list of suspects Make a prediction.
18	Chapter 14 pp. 79–87	Vocabulary: <i>resemblance</i>	Identify important characters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to co-create a list of suspects Make a prediction.
19	Chapter 15 pp. 87–94	Vocabulary: <i>interrogate</i>	Focus on the plot—cause and effect. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to co-create a cause and effect chart
20	“The Last Will and Testament of Samuel L. Westing”	Vocabulary: <i>refine</i>	Focus on the author’s craft in order to draw out the author’s message.

DAY	CHAPTER(S)/ PAGES	MINI-LESSON	READ-ALLOUD
21		Lines of Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a list of possible lines of thinking 	
22	Chapter 16 pp. 94–99		Identify a line of thinking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create an evidence collection box
23	Chapters 17–18 pp. 99–111	Vocabulary: <i>deliverance</i>	Gather evidence to support a line of thinking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to co-create an evidence collection box
24	Chapters 19–21 pp. 112–126		Gather evidence to support a line of thinking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to co-create an evidence collection box
25	Chapters 21–22 pp. 126–139		Gather evidence to support a line of thinking—turning point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to co-create an evidence collection box

DAY	CHAPTER(S)/ PAGES	MINI-LESSON	READ-ALoud
26	Video: “The Richest Man in the World: Andrew Carnegie”	Vocabulary: <i>redemption</i>	Use an outside text to gain understanding of the author’s message.
27		Vocabulary: <i>disgraced</i> Turning Point Writing	
28	Chapters 23–24 pp. 140–154	Vocabulary: <i>paranoia</i>	Use the turning point to make predictions.
29	Read-In Chapters 25–30 pp. 154–182		Read for enjoyment.
30		Synthesis Summary Writing	
31	Outside Text: Article: “Napoleon Hill” Video: “Napoleon Hill”		Gain understanding of the author’s message. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create a list of important details from the outside text
32– 40		Formal Writing: Expository Writing	

The Westing Game Stems List

Day 1 – Blurb

When the blurb said _____, I was thinking _____. This helps me understand _____.

Day 2 – Genre

When the chart said _____, I made a prediction. I think _____.

Day 3 – Outside Text, Parts 1 & 2

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Day 4 – Setting

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important detail because _____.

Day 5 – Important Events

When the book said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Day 6 – Important Events

When the book said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Day 7 – Important Character

When the book said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

This helps me understand _____.

Day 8 – Important Events

When the book said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Day 9 – Character List

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important detail because _____.

This helps me understand _____.

Day 10 – Character List

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important detail because _____.

This helps me understand _____.

Day 11 – Important Events

When the book said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Day 13 – Outside Text

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Day 14 – Infer Character Traits

When the book said _____, I was thinking that other people think _____.

This helps me understand _____.

Day 15 – Cause and Effect

When the book said _____, I thought this event was part of a chain of events. I think _____.

Day 16 – Outside Text

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.
This makes me think _____.

Day 17 – Character List

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important detail because _____.
This helps me understand _____.

Day 18 – Character List

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important detail because _____.
This helps me understand _____.

Day 19 – Cause and Effect

When the book said _____, I thought this event was part of a chain of events. I think _____.

Day 20 – Author’s Craft

When Sam Westing’s will said _____, I thought the author was trying to tell me _____.
This helps me understand _____.

Day 21 – Lines of Thinking

One piece of evidence that supports this message is _____. This makes me think _____.

Day 22 – Line of Thinking

When the book said _____, I thought this supported the theme _____ because _____.

Day 23 – Collect Evidence

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important piece of evidence. This helps me understand _____.

Day 24 – Collect Evidence

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important piece of evidence. This helps me understand _____.

Day 25 – Turning Point

When the book said _____, I thought this was an important piece of evidence. This makes me think _____.

Day 26 – Outside Text

When the video said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.
This makes me think _____.

Day 28 – Use the Turning Point to Make Predictions

When the book said _____, I made a prediction. I was thinking _____.

Day 29 – Read-In

When the book said _____, I was thinking _____ because _____.

Day 31 – Outside Text

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

C. I. A. Lesson Plans

The Westing Game

NOTE: The lessons for this unit give page references for the Puffin paperback edition of *The Westing Game* published in 2004.

C

Collect Critical Information

Identify the main story elements:

- Character
- Setting
- Problem
- Main Events



In this quadrant, readers read slowly and often reread in order to monitor their comprehension.



After finishing this quadrant of the text, readers stop to check their understanding. They write a retell summary of the first quadrant of the book, including all the main story elements: character, setting, problem, and main events.

Days 1–12, Chapters 1–8

DAY 1, BLURB

Mini-Lesson

Vocabulary Routine: *chain of events* (L 4, 5)

The phrase ‘chain of events’ means *a series of events so related to each other that each one causes the next.*

In this lesson...you will be modeling how good readers use clues in the blurb to gather critical information about the text—character, setting, problem, and main events. After identifying these important story elements with their partners, students will make predictions.

To prepare for this lesson, make a copy of Notebook Entry #1 for each student. Students will insert this handout into their reader’s notebooks.

Learning Targets:

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RL 1)

- Make predictions

Show understanding of story elements (RL 3)

- Important characters
- Setting
- Problem

Infer genre (RL 5)

Gather and categorize information through note taking (W 8)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

Connect:

We have been learning...

...that good readers preview a book before they read to help them form ideas about the text and to set a purpose for reading.

Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers look carefully at the cover of a book and read the blurb prior to starting the first chapter so that they can begin to think about the story elements. The main elements of the story are character, setting, problem, and main events.

We are going to create the first entry in your notebooks today. I have copied a handout for you. We will be completing the handout together before gluing or taping your copies of the handout into your reader's notebooks. This entry will be a tool that we will use while reading this book; it will help us remember the most important story elements so that we can keep the story in our heads.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk:

When the blurb said _____, I was thinking _____. This helps me understand _____.

Listen and follow along while I read the blurb.

Read the entire blurb aloud.

Model:

As I read the blurb, I noticed the name of one important character. To help me remember this important character as I read, I am going to add this name to my handout. I will also add any important information I have learned about this character.

When the blurb said sixteen people gather for the reading of Samuel W. Westing's will, **I was thinking** that one of the important characters in this book is Samuel W. Westing. **This helps me understand** that the eccentric millionaire is going to be an important part of the story.

(Model adding Samuel W. Westing to the notebook entry.)

Guided Practice:

Now it is your turn to identify important information in the blurb. Please work with your partner to complete the rest of the notebook entry, recording the setting of the story and the major problem in the story. Finally, make a prediction about what you think might happen in this book.

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the blurb said _____, I was thinking _____. This helps me understand _____.

(Discuss students' answers.)

Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to think about the story elements before you start reading the first chapter, by paying close attention to the cover of the book and the information in the blurb. You can also use that information to help you make predictions.

The following is a sample of what your blurb chart *might* look like:

Notebook Entry #1: Finding Story Elements in the Blurb

Before starting to read a book, good readers get the story in their heads by reading the blurb and identifying story elements.

Blurb (Puffin, 2004):

A bizarre chain of events begins when sixteen unlikely people gather for the reading of Samuel W. Westing's will. And though no one knows why the eccentric, game-loving millionaire has chosen a virtual stranger—and a possible murderer—to inherit his vast fortune, one thing's for sure: Sam Westing may be dead...but that won't stop him from playing one last game!

Characters: Samuel W. Westing - millionaire
16 unlikely people

Setting (place):

Setting (time):

Problem: Samuel W. Westing is dead and he may have been murdered!

Prediction: I predict that Samuel W. Westing's murderer will be found.

Notebook Entry #1: Finding Story Elements in the Blurb

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Blurb (Puffin, 2004):

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Characters:

Setting (place):

Setting (time):

Problem:

Prediction:

DAY 1, MARK EACH QUADRANT OF THE TEXT

Mini-Lesson

In this lesson... you will model how readers break a long text into manageable pieces by dividing the text into quadrants. Marking each quadrant will help students set goals as they read. Each student will need three small sticky notes, preferably in different colors.

Learning Target:

Analyze the structure of texts (RL 5)

- how larger portions of the text relate to each other and the whole

Connect:

We have been learning...

...that good readers get ready to read a book by looking at the blurb in order to pull out the most important story elements: character, setting, and plot.

Teach:

Today I am also going to teach you...

...that good readers, before reading, divide a book into four relatively equal quadrants. Good readers use various specific strategies to help them understand the text, depending on which quadrant they are reading in. They also use these divisions to help set their reading goals.

You will need three small sticky notes, preferably in different colors.

Model:

First, open up your book to the last page. There are 182 pages in our book, *The Westing Game*. If we take that number and divide it by 4, we get 45. We are going to divide our book into four quadrants that are each roughly 45 pages long. When marking quadrants, always make sure you end a quadrant at the end of a chapter.

Please place your first sticky note on page 52, at the end of chapter 8. In the first quadrant of the book we will be collecting story elements. We will stop at the end of this quadrant to write a retell summary as a way of monitoring our comprehension while reading.

Place your second sticky note on page 94. When we reach this page, we should have a big idea of what this book is going to be about. Therefore, in this second quadrant we will focus on understanding the genre and looking for patterns in our thinking.

Place your third sticky note on page 139. When we reach this page, we will have found the turning point of the book. The turning point is where the author's message is revealed. Therefore, in the third quadrant we will be collecting evidence to support our thinking about the story's theme.

In the last quadrant of the book, we will be rejecting or confirming predictions and evaluating how the author ties everything up at the end. In addition, we will be considering whether the author's message is one we agree with and can apply to our own lives.

Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to think about dividing the text into four quadrants in order to help focus your thinking and set goals for reading.

Mini-Lesson

Vocabulary Routine: *intrigue* (L 4, 5)

The base word ‘intrigue’ means *to arouse curiosity or interest by unusual qualities*.

Mini-Lesson

In this lesson... you will be activating students’ background knowledge about the genre mystery. For this lesson, I suggest either transferring the sample genre chart for mystery onto chart paper or using the mystery poster found at readsidebyside.com/shop/. Post this chart or poster in the meeting area prior to the lesson. This is the only chart in the unit that will not be co-created. You will use this genre chart to guide your instruction during this mini-lesson. You will model for students how to use information on the chart to predict how the book will go. You might also provide a handout of this chart for students to insert into their notebooks.

To prepare for this lesson, you might also print and photocopy a list of mystery-related vocabulary words for students to insert into their reader’s notebooks. Such a list can be found at Bit.ly/MYSvocab (retrieved June 7, 2018).

Learning Targets:

Show understanding of story elements (RL 3)

- Character
- Setting
- Plot

Use what you know about genre to help you understand the story better and compare texts (RL 5)

- Mystery

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

Connect:

We have been learning...

...that good readers think about story elements before they start a book by looking carefully at the cover and reading the blurb.

Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers also use what they know about the genre of a book to think about character, setting, and plot. Knowledge of character, setting, and plot will be useful as you make predictions about the story. Today we are going to learn about the genre mystery, which is the genre of *The Westing Game*. We will be using the chart I have posted in our meeting area to help us think about this genre.

Notice how I use the information on this chart and information from the blurb to help me make predictions about the book *The Westing Game*.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk:

When the chart said _____, I made a prediction. I think _____.

Model:

When reading a mystery, you can expect the setting of the story to be a realistic or believable place. The story typically is set in the present time.

When reading a mystery, you can expect the characters to be fictional characters who are believable. The main character possesses qualities that will allow him or her to solve a mystery. The main character's opinions about others change over time.

When the chart said that the main character possesses qualities that will allow him or her to solve a mystery, **I made a prediction. I think** the main character of *The Westing Game* will be the person who solves Samuel W. Westing's murder.

Guided Practice:

When reading a mystery book, you can expect other characters in the book to include:

Suspects—people thought to be guilty of a crime;

Witnesses—people who see a crime take place;

A Red Herring—a person who is misleading.

Based on the information in the chart, what are you predicting?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the chart said _____, I made a prediction. I think _____.

Guided Practice:

The main character of a mystery book will have to deal with a real-life problem. The main character gathers clues to solve a mystery. The main character is often put in danger. Therefore it will be important to focus on the main character and the plot as we read this mystery book.

Based on the information in the chart, what are you predicting?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the chart said _____, I made a prediction. I think _____.

Stretch It (Optional):

Discuss mystery-related vocabulary found at Bit.ly/MYSvocab (retrieved June 7, 2018).

Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to think about the genre of the book and use what you know about the genre to make predictions.

Realistic Fiction—Mystery

Setting	A realistic or believable place. The story is typically set in the present time.
Characters	Fictional characters who are believable. The main character possesses qualities that allow him or her to solve a mystery. The main character's opinions about others change over time. Other characters will include suspects, witnesses, and a red herring.
Plot	The main character must deal with a real-life problem. The main character gathers clues to solve a mystery. The main character is often put in danger.
Most important story elements	Character Plot
What readers will think about	How does the main character's opinion of others change throughout the book? How does the main character overcome challenges? What are the main character's beliefs about right and wrong?

Instructional Read-Aloud—Part 1

Topic: “Ellen Raskin and *The Westing Game*,” by Sarah Collinge

This article tells about...the life of Ellen Raskin and what inspired the story *The Westing Game*. Raskin’s work was inspired by Bicentennial celebrations, the philosophy underlying the American Dream, and patriotism.

In this lesson...you be modeling how readers focus on gathering important information while reading. You will teach students that sometimes readers use outside sources to help them build background knowledge about a topic before reading. You will be modeling how to use an outside text to learn about the inspiration for a story.

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will want to photocopy the outside text for all students.

Learning Targets:

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RI 1)

Show understanding of important story elements (RI 3)

- Setting

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

Connect:

We have been learning...

...that good readers use what they know about the genre to think about character, setting, and plot.

Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that prior to reading a book, good readers gather important information from additional resources.

Today we are going to begin by reading about Ellen Raskin and her inspiration for the book *The Westing Game*.

Watch me as I model how I think about what is important in this article.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.



Begin reading “Ellen Raskin and *The Westing Game*.”

Model:



Stop after: “Her early life was a life of poverty, yet her childhood memories became the subject of many of her novels.” (paragraph 1)

When the article said that Raskin’s childhood memories became the subject of many of her novels, **I was thinking this was important because** it tells me that her book *The Westing Game* was, in part, inspired by her childhood—a childhood of poverty.

Guided Practice:



Stop after: “Many reflected on their lives and embraced the idea of a brighter tomorrow.” (paragraph 7)

What did you think was important here?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Guided Practice:



Stop after: “In the puzzle-mystery there is more than one mystery to solve: Who killed Sam Westing? AND is the American Dream still alive?” (paragraph 9)

What did you think was important here?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to use information from an outside source to help you understand the topic of a story better.

Ellen Raskin and *The Westing Game*

by Sarah Collinge

Ellen Raskin was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on March 13, 1928. A year later, the United States fell into a depression that placed millions of Americans out of work. Her early life was a life of poverty, yet her childhood memories became the subject of many of her novels.

As an adult, Raskin began a career in art. She illustrated books and designed over 1,000 book covers. She had a passion for her work, and other people admired her for her energy and determination.

At the age of 38, Raskin published her first picture book, which she both wrote and illustrated. In 1971, she published her first novel, *The Mysterious Disappearance of Leon (I Mean Noel)*. In 1974, she published *Figs and Phantoms*, which received the Newbery Honor. Raskin continued to write puzzle-mysteries, and was finally awarded the Newbery Medal for her book *The Westing Game*, which was published in 1978.

Raskin died at the young age of 56, on August 8, 1984.

Ellen Raskin kept working notes for her book *The Westing Game*, which can now be viewed at www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/authors/raskin/notes.htm. Her notes tell about her inspiration for *The Westing Game*.

When Raskin began writing *The Westing Game*, the United States was preparing for its grandest celebration—the American Bicentennial. More than 25 million Americans helped to get the country ready by restoring historic buildings and planning historic festivals. On July 4, 1976, people enjoyed concerts, parades, and historical reenactments, and watched extravagant fireworks displays.

Throughout these preparations and celebrations, citizens were thinking about what it means to be an American. Many reflected on their lives and embraced the idea of a brighter tomorrow.

The Bicentennial brought to mind a dream of upward mobility and the opportunity to begin again. The term “the American Dream” was first coined in James Truslow Adams’s book *The Epic of America*, in which Adams describes the dream as one of “a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank.”

Raskin used symbolism throughout the novel *The Westing Game* to communicate her own feelings about patriotism and the American Dream. In the puzzle-mystery, there is more than one mystery to solve: Who killed Sam Westing? AND is the American Dream still alive?

Resources:

Adams, J. T. (1931). *The epic of America*. Boston, MA: Little Brown and Co.

Daughter Number Three. (July 7, 2009). Ellen Raskin Speaks About *The Westing Game* [blog post]. Retrieved on September 30, 2013, from <http://daughternumberthree.blogspot.com/2009/07/ellen-raskin-speaks-about-westing-game.html>.

Raskin, E. (2008). *The Westing Game*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Shelfari. (2013). Ellen Raskin. Retrieved on September 30, 2013, from <http://www.shelfari.com/authors/a8434/Ellen-Raskin/>.

Permission to reprint this article has been granted by Sarah Collinge, author.

Instructional Read-Aloud—Part 2

Topic: “How the American Dream Works: The Origins of the American Dream” by Patrick J. Kiger
Retrieved June 7, 2018 from <https://people.howstuffworks.com/american-dream1.htm> or
[Bit.ly/Day3Westing](https://bit.ly/Day3Westing)

This article tells about...the origins of the American Dream, starting with the Puritan colonists in 1630 and moving forward in history to James Truslow Adams, who first popularized the idea of an American dream in 1931.

In this lesson...you be modeling how readers focus on gathering important information while reading. You will teach students that sometimes readers use outside sources to help them build background knowledge about a topic before reading. You will be modeling how to use an outside text to help you think about the inspiration for a story.

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will want to photocopy the outside text for all students; it can be found at <https://people.howstuffworks.com/american-dream1.htm> or [Bit.ly/Day3Westing](https://bit.ly/Day3Westing)

Learning Targets:

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RI 1)

Show understanding of important story elements (RI 3)

- Setting

Recognize author’s craft (RI 4)

Analyze how two texts address similar topics (RI 9)

Gather and categorize information through note taking (W 8)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

Connect:

We have been learning...

...that one of the points of inspiration for the book *The Westing Game* was the idea of the American Dream.

Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers gather important information about a topic prior to reading in order to build their background knowledge.

We will be reading the section headed “The Origins of the American Dream” from the article “How the American Dream Works” by Patrick J. Klinger.

Watch me as I model how I think about what is important in this article.

We will continue to use this stem for turn and talk:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

Open up your reader’s notebooks to a clean page and title it **American Dream**. Below this title please draw a T-chart. Label the left side of the T-chart “who” and the right side of the T-chart “what.” As we read, we will be recording what each person mentioned in the article believed about the American Dream.



Begin reading “How the American Dream Works: The Origins of the American Dream.”

Model:



Stop after: “with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.” (paragraph 1)

When the article said James Truslow Adams described a dream of a better, richer, fuller life for everyone, **I was thinking this was important because** it tells me that his idea of the American Dream was that each person has the opportunity for a better, happier life.

(Model adding this information to the T-chart.)

Guided Practice:



Stop after: “Gradually, that dream of opportunity evolved in colonists’ minds into a God-given right.” (paragraph 2)

What did you think was important here?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

(Model adding this information to the T-chart.)

Guided Practice:



Stop after: “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” (paragraph 2)

What did you think was important here?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

(Model adding this information to the T-chart.)

Guided Practice:



Stop after: “the charm of anticipated success.” (paragraph 3)

What did you think was important here?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

(Model adding this information to the T-chart.)

Guided Practice:



Stop after: “a man in the midst of his money-making, one who had realized the American Dream.” (paragraph 4)

What did you think was important here?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said _____, I was thinking this was important because _____.

(Model adding this information to the T-chart.)

Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to consider how information in outside sources might help you understand the topic of a story better.

The following chart is a sample showing what your co-created chart *might* look like:

<u>The American Dream</u>	
Who	What
James Truslow Adams (1931)	"...that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone. (source: Adams)"
John Winthrop (1630)	"...a society in which everyone would have the chance to prosper."
Thomas Jefferson (1776)	everyone in America is entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (source: Jefferson)"
Alexis de Tocqueville (1830s)	"...anything could be achieved if a person dared to dream big enough."

The American Dream Cont.

Who	What
Sherwood Anderson (1916)	- upward economic mobility - rags-to-riches dream