

# Mentor Texts That Multitask

## Bonus Chapter and Lesson Sets: Fantasy Fiction Texts

*“Inciting children’s curiosity and imagination by allowing them to explore the realms of wonder and possibility through speculative fiction will help ensure they develop the skills necessary to express themselves creatively. It will also equip them to adroitly navigate the world around them, and enable them to blaze their own paths” (Faulkner, 2015, para. 8).*

Fantasy has deep and far-reaching roots! Whether high or low fantasy, there seems to be something for everyone. Sci-fi, sorcery, superhero stories, traditional tales, magical realism, and of course, the ever-popular dystopian subgenre ignite our imaginations, spark excitement, and offer an escape in stressful times. This genre undoubtedly encourages curiosity and creativity.

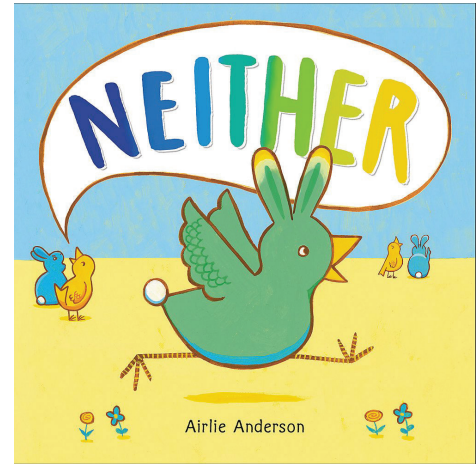
The inquiry work within this bonus chapter centers words and language. As a proud word nerd myself, I earnestly and wholeheartedly believe that students can become fascinated by words, their histories, and how authors weave words together to create images, feelings, reactions in their readers’ minds and hearts. Shared reading continues to provide vision of what integrated literacy practices look like in action. This highly scaffolded structure is an early step in gradual release, which models a framework for thoughtful and measured turnover to the learner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The included lessons designed to support independent practice center around a wide variety of skills often prioritized for learners who demonstrate emerging, developing, and extending “readiness.” Please appreciate that for each book featured in this chapter, every lesson comes from the same 2-page spread within that book. This purposeful choice reminds us of the boundless opportunities we can easily find in whatever mentor text we know, love, have, and feel students will enjoy returning to time and time again. Also remember that many mentor texts are “multilevel” texts and can be used in ways appropriate for students across all stages of development.

**NOTE: Remember to always first enjoy featured texts as a community of readers. Then, *revisit* the text, repurposing it as a mentor text for any number of instructional priorities and goals.**

# Lesson Set Aligned to the Emerging Stage, Featured Text: *Neither*, Words and Art by Airlie Anderson (2018)

## Text Pairings

- *Pink Is for Boys* by Robb Pearlman with art by Eda Kaban
- *I Am Enough* by Grace Beers & Keturah A. Bobo with art by Keturah A. Bobo
- *I Will Be Fierce* by Bea Birdsong with art by Nidhi Chanani
- *Mixed: A Colorful Story* by Arree Chung
- *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae with art by Guy Parker-Rees



### WHAT?

In this book, bunnies and birds live amongst “their own kind.” Then, a new creature, Both, hatches. Both is part bunny, part bird, yet excluded from the two groups. Both goes off in search of a place of acceptance. Both finds *The Land of All*. Here, each being is celebrated for their individuality.

### WHY?

This picture-book tale provides the opportunity to discuss so many important and relevant topics. It creates the space to have discussions about identity, race, gender, and more.

### WHEN?

This text could be a meaningful part of almost any reading or writing unit. In reading, try using this mentor text in a character unit, comprehension unit, or any narrative genre study. When nurturing the next steps of readers, writers, and word explorers, this book fits *particularly* well with genre studies that center around fantasy or traditional literature such as tales, myths, and legends.

## Content Connections

- Art: Color wheels, primary and secondary colors, mixing colors, sketching, watercolor painting
- Social Studies: communities, family
- Personal and Community Wellness: embracing what makes you unique, being comfortable with yourself, inclusivity, celebrating all aspects of identities, recognizing and addressing bullying

# INVESTIGATING IDEAS THROUGH INQUIRY

NEITHER, WORDS AND ART BY AIRLIE ANDERSON (2018)

In this language-themed inquiry, students set out to learn and understand more about common and proper nouns.

**Guiding Inquiry:** *What can we discover about different types of nouns?*

- **Review** what students already know about nouns.
- **Search** the room. Point to and identify a few nouns. Invite learners to do the same.
- **Pose** the question: Why do some nouns start with a capital letter . . . even when they appear in the middle of a sentence? Search the text for examples. Proper nouns within the book include *Neither, Somewhere Else, Land of This and That, The Land of All*.
- **Explore** this wonder and briefly discuss ideas in partnerships or small groups.
- **Elicit** student theories and ideas. Embrace conjectures and nudge conclusions.
- **Review** the nouns shared at the start of the mini-inquiry. Label each as a common or proper noun. For each common noun, if possible, name a more specific, aligned proper noun.
- **Discuss** where and when students can expect to see proper nouns and where, when, and why it would be

most appropriate to use a proper noun as opposed to a common noun. Make sure to tuck in *why* an author chooses to use proper nouns in their writing.

## Check-Up

Observe students throughout the lesson. Invite students to leave the gathering area by naming a proper noun. Note who is currently able to do this. Plan follow-up instruction based on your observations.

## What Else?

You might consider these alternatives:

- Invite students to look in other books and try to find (and sort) common and proper nouns.
- Provide time for students to search their own writing for common and proper nouns. Encourage students to change some of their common nouns to proper nouns.
- Provide additional instruction on using more specific language (including proper nouns) when talking about books. This may mean referencing the title, author, illustrator, names of characters, and names of specific setting-aligned places when speaking about a text.

# BUILDING VISION VIA MODELED AND GUIDED PRACTICE

NEITHER, WORDS AND ART BY AIRLIE ANDERSON (2018)

Repeatedly gather for a cycle of shared reading. Return to the same 2-pages for each session in this cycle (the page that begins with “HONK!”).

## Session 1: Literal Comprehension (retelling)

- **Model** talking about what is happening on these two pages.
- **Ask** and answer questions about the text using some of the 5Ws: Model sharing *who* you see and *where* the characters are.
- **Invite** students to turn and talk with a partner about *what* is happening in this part of the story and *why* the characters are acting this way.
- **Review** ideas together as a class.

## Session 2: Word Work (Blends vs. Digraphs)

- **Reread** the two pages.
- **Review** the difference between a blend and a consonant digraph. Model locating the words with blends on these two pages (-nk, -nd, -st).
- **Ask** students to help you find the words with digraphs on these two pages (wh-, -th-, -th).
- **Brainstorm** and list other words with these blends and digraphs.
- **Remind** students to use what they know about blends and digraphs as they read and write books.

## Session 3: Grammar (end of sentence punctuation)

- **Reread** the two pages.
- **Review** end-of-sentence punctuation marks. Name each. Invite students to air write each punctuation mark as they say its name.
- **Locate** the first two punctuation marks on the page. Identify them.
- **Invite** students to find others.
- **Ask** volunteers to come up and point to (and name) each mark.
- **Remind** students to notice end marks when they read and include end marks when they write.

## Session 4: Fluency (intonation)

- **Reread** the two pages, modeling using end of sentence punctuation to support oral reading fluency.

- **Engage** in echo reading: You read one sentence (modeling your best attention-to-punctuation fluent voice) and invite students to echo you.
- **Repeat** for each sentence on the 2-page spread.
- **Invite** students to discuss what they noticed about how your voices changed as the marks changed.
- **Reread** each sentence one more time, this time chorally. Show off careful attention to punctuation while reading each sentence.

TIP: Save fluency work for the *last* session of a cycle of shared reading. By then, the students will be very comfortable with the words and content. Even if they are not yet reading conventionally, they may have memorized the words after hearing you read (and reread) them at the start of each previous shared reading session. This promotes more active participation.

## ✓ Check-Up

Listen in on partner conversations throughout the cycle of shared reading. If more formal instruction is needed, review these concepts over the coming days and weeks in small groups or 1:1 time. If students seem to understand concepts, promote continued contextualized practice. For example, during word/language study, reading, and writing, encourage students to do the following:

- retell what they read using the 5 Ws
- notice blends, digraphs, and end punctuation while reading
- check for blends, digraphs, and end punctuation in their writing
- reread a portion of a text fluently or reread a text they have written fluently

## ? What Else?

Other sessions of shared reading could focus on these concepts:

- Concepts of print: reading left to right, top to bottom or letter vs. word vs. sentence
- Contractions: *I'm, can't*
- High-frequency words: *what, are, you, you, be*

- Phonological awareness: Choose a word and generate rhyming words (ex: kind, find, bind, lined, hind, rind, whined . . . )
- Inferential comprehension: How is each character feeling in the last frame? How do we know? Have you ever felt like this?
- Writing craft move: onomatopoeia (such as *honk!*)

# NURTURING AND SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

NEITHER, WORDS AND ART BY AIRLIE ANDERSON (2018)

In this lesson, the teacher supports classroom readers in reading fluently.

- **Remind** students of session four of shared reading, where they used echo reading to practice reading like a storyteller.
- **Review** what happened to their voices when they read sentences with a period, a question mark, and an exclamation point.
- **State** that readers read using a storyteller's voice. One way to do this is to pay attention to punctuation while reading.
- **Model** a process for doing this work using 1-2 pages of *Neither*. This may look and sound like:
  - Read a sentence and notice the end punctuation (. ? !)
  - Ask yourself, *how will I show this with my voice?*
  - Go back and reread the sentence again, using a storyteller voice that shows which punctuation mark was used.
- **Encourage** students to try out the same strategy on a different page of the book.
- **Invite** readers to transfer this learning while reading with a partner.
- **Observe** students as they practice reading fluently.
- **Celebrate** efforts. Remind students that the best time for a reader to practice fluent reading is when they are comfortable with the words. This may be when they reread a book to themselves or aloud to a friend.

## ✓ Check-Up

Listen in as students try the spotlighted strategy. Over the coming days, meet 1:1 or in small groups with students. Coach and celebrate as students read their own choice books, showing off what they know about paying attention to punctuation.

You may also choose to have peers provide support to one another. Invite partnerships to share books aloud and listen as their partner shows off what they know about attention to punctuation while reading. If this is a new practice for you, start by using the "fishbowl" strategy where the class watches a proficient partnership in action, coaching and celebrating each other's attempts.

## ? What Else?

Check out the work of Timothy Rasinski, who has written countless professional texts on foundational skills, including fluency.

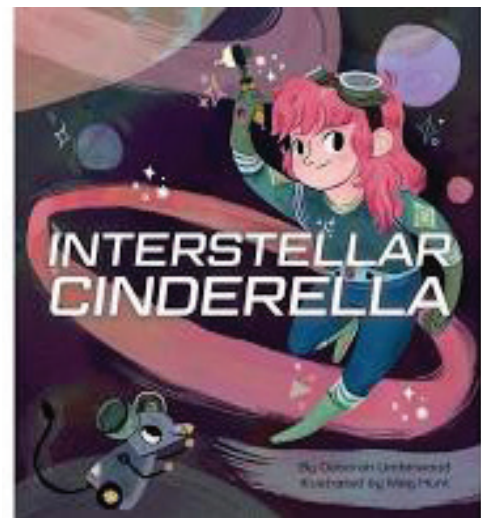
You might also: . . .

- Practice *other* aspects of fluent reading with students (such as reading at a Goldilocks pace, scooping the words while reading, and reading with expression).
- Facilitate a similar lesson during writing time, helping students understand and decide which punctuation marks to use at the end of each of the sentences they write.
- Invite students to reread their writing, looking for end of sentence punctuation and fixing up/improving as needed.

# Lesson Set Aligned to the Developing Stage, Featured Text *Interstellar Cinderella*, Retold by Deborah Underwood, art by Meg Hunt (2015)

## Text Pairings

- Other versions of *Cinderella*, such as these favorites:
  - *Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella* by Robert D. San Souci, with art by Brian Pinkney
  - *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* by Ai-Ling Louie, with art by Ed Young
  - *Adelita* by Tomie dePaola
  - *Rough Faced Girl* by Rafe Martin, with art by David Shannon
  - *The Korean Cinderella* and *The Egyptian Cinderella* by Shirley Climo, with art by Ruth Heller
- *Vasilisa the Wise and Tales of Other Brave Young Women* by Kate Forsyth, with art by Lorena Carrington
- *Fiesta Femenina: Celebrating Women in Mexican Folklore* by Mary-Joan Gerson, with art by Maya Christina Gonzalez
- *Cinderella Liberator* by Rebecca Smith, with art by Arthur Rackham



## WHAT?

In this fractured fairytale, Cinderella lives in outer space. Although she still has wicked stepsisters, that's where the similarities to the classic tale end. This Cinderella is portrayed as strong, smart, capable, and creative. She is a maker, a fixer, and an engineer. In this retelling, Cinderella saves the prince and then turns down his marriage proposal . . . but counteroffers with a job proposal.

## WHY?

Female representation in traditional literature has not always been inspiring. Despite recent efforts to rectify this, far too many children grow up with one-dimensional views of heroines. *Interstellar Cinderella* turns these traditional images upside down! This version of Cinderella is widely appealing to students of all ages. It is light, breezy, and so entertaining. It is told in rhyme, which adds to the story's playfulness.

## WHEN?

Although this book works best in a traditional literature or tale reading unit and fractured tale writing units, it can be used in a variety of places across the year. Of course, it fits under the larger umbrellas of fantasy fiction and fiction in general, and therefore aligns with most narrative reading and writing units.

## Content Connections

- Math, Science, STEM, STEAM
- Personal and Community Wellness: the power of imagination, nurturing our ability to persevere, building self-confidence, friendship, disrupting traditional gender roles, contributing to the community

# INVESTIGATING IDEAS THROUGH INQUIRY

*INTERSTELLAR CINDERELLA, RETOLD BY DEBORAH UNDERWOOD, ART BY MEG HUNT (2015)*

After an initial fun read of *Interstellar Cinderella*, use the two-page spread starting with the words “I’m here- your fairy godrobot!” for this inquiry experience.

**Guiding Inquiry: What are the jobs of lesser-known punctuation marks?**

## Session 1:

- **Reread** this part of the book.
- **Ask:** What punctuation marks do you see on this page?
- **Play** a quick game of I Spy to see how many different punctuation marks students can discover, identify, and name. (They will find periods, exclamation points, quotation marks, dashes, hyphens, commas, apostrophes, and a colon in this spread.)
- **Write** found punctuation marks on different sticky notes. OPTIONAL: Collaboratively select 1-2 marks that students are most interested in learning more about.
- **Investigate** these marks by going on a scavenger hunt. Look for any additional examples around the classroom. Search the classroom (anchor charts and displays), students’ own writing, and published texts.
- **Invite** students to photograph, screenshot, or copy found examples.
- **Review** findings and add discoveries to a class chart.

## Session 2:

- **Review** the work done in the prior session.
- **Pose** the following questions: *What are the jobs of these different punctuation marks? Why would authors choose to use them?*
- **Explore** possible answers to these questions.

- **Develop** theories about the purpose of the target punctuation mark(s). Coach students as they explain and support their theories.
- **Prove/disprove** ideas by engaging in discussion and/or consulting a resource.

## Session 3:

- **Review** previous experiences and gained understandings.
- **Invite** students to transfer gained knowledge by choosing one of the following:
  - Continue to notice marks while reading, appreciate these craft choices, and read as the author intended.
  - Apply new understandings (strategically and purposefully) to writing.

## ✓ Check-Up

Observe, listen in, and coach students as they look for, discuss, and test their theories about different punctuation marks. The general checklists provided in the online companion ([resources.corwin.com/mttm](https://resources.corwin.com/mttm)) may prove useful.

## ? What Else?

- Work in small groups: each group chooses one punctuation mark, delves into that type of punctuation, and shares what they discovered and learned. (See chapter 10 for more information on expert stations and edcamps).
- Over time, revisit this inquiry, each time choosing a different punctuation mark. Use these inquiries as an introduction to forthcoming grammar learning.



# BUILDING VISION VIA MODELED AND GUIDED PRACTICE

INTERSTELLAR CINDERELLA, RETOLD BY DEBORAH UNDERWOOD, ART BY MEG HUNT (2015)

For this cycle of shared reading, keep returning to the same two-page spread, each time with a different lens. (Use the two-page spread that starts with the words “*I’m here - your fairy godrobot!*”)

## Session 1: Comprehension (character relationships)

- **Reread** these two pages.
- **Ponder**, *How would I describe the relationship between Cinderella and her fairy godrobot?*
- **Consider** a few commonly used words (such as *good*), and then model how to nudge yourself to choose a more specific word.
- **Invite** partners to turn and talk to say if they agree or disagree with your opinion of the relationship. Remind classroom readers to refer to the illustrations and words on these two pages as they explain why.
- **Discuss** why students agree or disagree with your opinion.

## Session 2: Word Work (/oo/ sound)

- **Reread** the two pages.
- **Share** that the /oo/ sound can be made many ways.
- **Search** for all the words with the /oo/ sound. (brand-new, tools, suit, too, blue, jewels).
- **Sort** the found words.
- **Generate** and sort other words with the /oo/ sound.
- **Remind** students to use today’s experience when they encounter unknown words while reading and as they polish their writing.

## Session 3: Grammar (punctuating dialogue)

- **Remind** students of previous punctuation inquiry work.
- **Reread** the two pages and study the way the dialogue is written.
- **Ask** students to locate the punctuation marks.
- **Discuss** what students notice about punctuating dialogue.

- **Encourage** students to name takeaways as a statement. For example, “I put quotation marks around the actual words spoken.”

## Session 4: Comprehension (cross-text thinking)

- **Recall** a second Cinderella story (see *Text Pairings* for suggestions). Ideally, you will have already read the second version BEFORE this session of shared reading.
- **Pose** the question: *Do you feel the two versions are more alike or more different? Why?*
- **Invite** students to spend a few minutes jotting initial ideas. Then, ask students to share their ideas with a partner.
- **Discuss** different opinions as a class. Encourage students to use information from the text to support their personal perspectives.

## ✓ Check-Up

Shared reading is a high-support method of teaching. There is no need to formally assess student participation during each session. Instead, informally note more general observations. Consider where the class is most comfortable, and which concepts you will more explicitly teach or review.

## ? What Else?

A few other worthwhile teaching opportunities present on these two pages include:

- Word work: contractions, homophones, r-controlled vowels, different long vowel patterns, compound words, -ed affix
- Grammar: all parts of speech – including prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, possessive pronouns; other punctuation marks; present and future verb tenses
- Comprehension: developing and supporting inferences and theories about characters, lessons, or gender portrayal

# NURTURING AND SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

*INTERSTELLAR CINDERELLA*, RETOLD BY DEBORAH UNDERWOOD, ART BY MEG HUNT (2015)

Here you support classroom readers in using what they explored in their inquiry work and shared reading to support fluency while reading on their own.

- **Review** previous teaching around appropriate expression and intonation when reading fluently.
- **State** that readers try their best to use a storyteller's voice. Share that one way to do this is to pay attention how the characters are feeling and to try to read dialogue in a voice that matches that feeling.
- **Model** an aligned process, using the same two pages from *Interstellar Cinderella* that you used in the inquiry lesson.
  - Read the dialogue.
  - Ask yourself, *how is the character feeling? How can I show this with my voice?*  
TIP: If there is a dialogue tag (such as *bellowed, asked, groaned, begged*), use that to help!
  - Go back and reread the sentence, using a voice that shows you know how the character is feeling.
- **Encourage** students to try out the same strategy on a different page of the book. Support and coach readers as they try this with a partner.
- **Remind** students that fluency is important *whenever* they read, not only when reading out loud. When readers read fluently (even when they read to themselves “in their heads”) they are more likely to stay engaged and better understand what they read.

- **Invite** students to practice this today and whenever they are reading a book with dialogue.
- **Celebrate** student efforts toward becoming more fluent readers.

## ✓ Check-Up

- Periodically, when you meet 1:1 or in small groups with students, invite them to read a small piece of a text with dialogue aloud. Coach and celebrate strategy application. Keep informal anecdotal notes (see [resources.corwin.com/mttm](https://resources.corwin.com/mttm) for printable record-keeping forms).
- Partnerships may provide support to one another. During partner time or partner reading, invite students to locate parts of recent reading with dialogue and then go back and reread these parts aloud. Partners can informally assess (and celebrate!) as they listen to their partner show off their fluency skills.

## ? What Else?

This lesson represents “stepped up” fluency work. It requires students to be comfortable and proficient with inferring character feelings as they read. If more appropriate, you might choose to focus the fluency work on rate, phrasing of longer sentences, or even paying careful attention to end of sentence and mid-sentence punctuation while reading.

# Lesson Set Aligned to the Extending Stage, Featured Text *Dragon Pearl*, By Yoon Ha Lee (2019)

## Text Pairings

- *The Fox Wife* by Beatrice Deer, with art by DJ Herron
- *Aru Shah* series by Roshani Chokshi
- *The Storm Runner* series by J.C. Cervantes
- *Tristan Strong* series by Kwame Mbalia
- *The Scourge* by Jennifer A. Nielson
- Rick Riordan Interviews Yoon Ha Lee (online resource)



## WHAT?

This sci-fi thriller features a strong, smart, and courageous main character who can shape-shift. Thirteen-year-old Min is a fox spirit and incredibly dynamic. This multi-layered story folds in Korean mythology, but no background knowledge is necessary.

## WHY?

A wide range of middle grade readers will find this book engaging: it's sci-fi and Korean mythology... in space! The main character, Min, sets off on an adventure filled with twists and turns. Min is a nuanced character who at times makes questionable decisions. Classroom readers love debating the actions of this "hero" and their opinions about the secondary characters. This story includes nonbinary characters and seamlessly integrates different identities into this high-octane story.

## WHEN?

This text could be a class read aloud or a mentor text in any narrative reading or writing unit. It melds with any type of fantasy reading or writing unit. It is also a great complement to mythology studies. Because this is a longer text, the forthcoming mentor lessons all come from chapter 1. This was intentionally done to show that even when teachers don't read an entire novel aloud, they can use a *part* of that text to pique interest and teach many lessons across the day!

## Content Connections

Personal and Community Wellness: centering and celebrating mythology and traditional stories from different cultures; exploring and learning about different identities; interrogating traditional power structures; contemplating the "gray area" between right and wrong decisions; discussing socially relevant issues (including, but not limited to classism and sexism); contemplating ways of moving from being an ally to becoming an advocate

**NOTE: Before diving into these lessons, read aloud the first chapter of *Dragon Pearl*. Then, revisit this part of the text, repurposing it as a mentor text for any number of instructional priorities and goals.**

# INVESTIGATING IDEAS THROUGH INQUIRY

*DRAGON PEARL*, BY YOON HA LEE (2019)

In this inquiry, students begin to explore mood and tone.

**Guiding Inquiry:** *How does an author set the tone of a scene?*

- **State** that authors are always making strategic and intentional choices. They aim to craft their words so carefully that the reader reacts and feels a certain way while engaging with the text.
- **Explain** that these careful language choices can also help readers understand the book more deeply, collecting more and more examples that lead to bigger thinking about characters and themes.
- **Review** the difference between mood and tone. Explain that essentially, the tone is the feeling *the author* sets in the story. When we consider the tone *an author* is creating, we look at the setting, the imagery, and the words *the author* chooses to use. Mood is *reader-centered*. Mood is related to the feeling *the reader* gets when they read the story. (Many readers find it helpful to remember the distinction by using the mnemonic **Mood=Me**). Share that today, students will inquire, wonder, and investigate both mood and tone using *Dragon Pearl*.
- **Choose** a small excerpt from the text (I recommend the bottom of page 15 – the top of page 17). Set page 15 under a document camera.
- **Pose** the following question: *How does an author create the tone of a scene?*
- **Ask** students to listen and follow along as you reread this small portion of the text, focusing on what they see and hear, specifically considering the language Yoon Ha Lee uses to set the tone of this scene. Remind students this is not about what **THEY** feel, but instead, the word choice and probable intention of the author.
- **Explore** the phrases and imagery that students think were intentionally composed to set the tone. Provide time for students to pour over the words, thinking and jotting.
- **Invite** students to share and compare their thinking with classmates, and use their initial musings to develop a stronger theory.
- **Discuss** ideas as a group: Does the class agree about the tone Yoon Ha Lee has set? Do they have similar supports for this shared claim?

- **Circle back** to the overarching question: *How does an author create the tone of a scene?* Do student theories and findings work here?
- **Summarize** the processes students used in this inquiry session. Remind students that the language an author chooses to use is always purposeful. As readers, we need to pay close attention to the way the author crafts a story and consider their intentions as we read.
- **Invite** readers to next consider the mood created. Reread these couple of pages once more, this time asking students to focus inward and notice the feelings and reactions they have while listening to this small portion of the story.
- **Discuss** ideas. Are the readers in agreement about the mood, or did they have different reactions?
- **Sum up** this experience by stating that not only do readers consider the tone being created, they also take the time to contemplate their reactions to what has been written. End by sharing that when students consider tone and mood, they are more likely to deeply comprehend a story and uncover larger thematic ideas.

## ✓ Check-Up

Mood and tone are challenging concepts. It is unlikely that all students will fully understand mood and tone after this brief inquiry experience. Carefully note student understandings and confusions. Use these informal observations to plan responsive follow-up instruction. Spiral these concepts over the coming days and weeks.

## ? What Else?

Using the same pages, you could instead investigate these language-specific features:

- pronoun case
- independent and dependent clauses
- varied sentence structure
- punctuating dialogue
- ordering adjectives
- purpose and use of dashes and/or italics

- commas (in a series, after an introductory clause, within dialogue, in a compound sentence, in a complex sentence, in ordering adjectives, etc)

If you use the featured inquiry, you may decide to follow up with more explicit, direct teaching. After the described inquiry,

- students could consider the tone and mood in books they are reading independently or in clubs.
- students could return to a recent piece of writing, name their thoughts on the topic, scene, or characters and then work to set that tone through their careful choice of words and imagery.

# BUILDING VISION VIA MODELED AND GUIDED PRACTICE

*DRAGON PEARL, BY YOON HA LEE (2019)*

Remember that in cycles of shared reading, the class returns to the same short text/text excerpt for each session. Use the last paragraph of page 15 through page 17 for the entire cycle described here.

## Session 1: Comprehension (studying character interactions)

- **Reread** the selected pages.
- **Share** with students that as texts get more sophisticated and complex, it becomes important to not only track the main character, but also how the main character interacts with secondary characters. In middle grade books, these interactions often have an impact on how the story unfolds.
- **Model** how to zoom in on and think about character relationships. Share what you learn about Min from the way she interacts with her mom in this scene.
- **Invite** students to share what they now realize about Min based on her interaction with the investigator.
- **Discuss** what the class now understands about Min and how this scene deepened or changed their perspective.

## Session 2: Word Work (comparatives and superlatives)

- **Remind** students of the basics of comparative and superlative adjectives (-er, -est).
- **Reread** and mine these couple of pages, searching for examples.
- **Discuss** found words and note any changes made to the base word before adding the affix. For example:
  - *Bigger*: BIG, double the consonant before adding affix
  - *Densest*: DENSE, drop the e before adding the affix
  - *Heaviest*: HEAVY, change the y to an i before adding the affix
- **Encourage** students to generate additional examples of aligned adjectives, and then use their word knowledge to add comparative and superlative affixes.
- **Summarize** takeaways and remind students to use what they know as they write.

## Session 3: Grammar (subordinating conjunctions and complex sentences)

- **Reread** the select pages together.

- **Highlight** the complex sentences with subordinating conjunctions. Two examples: *“Before I could react, he lunged for me and snatched me up by the throat.”* (p. 16), and *“Before he stood upright again, I snatched up the saucepan and brought it crashing down against his head.”* (p. 17).
- **Ask** students what they notice about these sentences.
- **Discuss** the structure of complex sentences and the role of subordinating conjunctions.
- **Generate** a structurally similar sentence.
- **Challenge** students to compose similar sentences. If you choose to jot down sentences, pay careful attention to spotlighting the subordinating conjunction and the comma.

## Session 4: Critical Thinking (Power Dynamics)

- **State** that readers stay on the lookout for any information about who has the power in a book or scene, and then think more about the implications of this power dynamic. Also share that different readers may interpret power dynamics in different ways; there is often no one “right” answer.
- **Reread** the selected pages.
- **Ask** students to consider who has the power in this scene.
- **Contemplate** what readers learn about the character(s), story, or dynamics because of the inequitable power distribution. Facilitate a short discussion, inviting students to share their thoughts.
- **Remind** students that it is important to consider big ideas related to power and choice because these dynamics often relate to social justice and themes present in books.

## ✓ Check-Up

Cycles of shared reading offer many opportunities for informal assessment. However, because this structure is so highly scaffolded, formal assessment is best saved for another time and place.

During each session, observe students and listen in. Notice which concepts feel like comfortable review and which areas need more instructional attention. Plan future whole-class or small-group instruction using these

informal noticings. Use the checklists and planning forms provided online ([resources.corwin.com/mttm](http://resources.corwin.com/mttm)) to do so.

### ? What Else?

Using these few pages of *Dragon Pearl*, you might consider adding or switching out sessions of shared reading to instead focus on:

- past tense verbs and irregular past tense verbs
- agent noun affixes that are often attached to verbs:  
-er and -or sometimes mean “one who”
- strategies for clarifying the meaning of unfamiliar words
- coordinating conjunctions, commas, and compound sentences
- creating “setting charts” to keep track of the story
- creating “problem charts” to better understand increasingly complex stories with multiple problems and solutions
- using character tracking charts to compare characters or create theories about relationships

# NURTURING AND SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

*DRAGON PEARL, BY YOON HA LEE (2019)*

Revisit the ideas of power and choice –and how both impact the story and a reader’s experience. Support the idea initially introduced in the cycle of shared reading by following up with more explicit instruction. This will prepare students to practice this important work with book clubs, partners, and independently.

- **Review** what was discussed in the last session of shared reading.
- **State** that readers consider big ideas in the books they read by paying attention to power and choice.
- **Model** an aligned process, using pages 15-17 of *Dragon Pearl*.
  - Read or reread a portion of the text that feels especially important.
  - Wonder, *who has the power here? Whose voice are we hearing? Whose voice is missing?*
  - Consider the impacts of these dynamics.  
HINT: take some time to think to yourself, jot in your reading notebook, or share ideas with a classmate.
- **Encourage** students to also try this work with a nearby partner. (You may find it helpful to post *Language Levers* or co-create something similar with students.)
- **Remind** students to practice this work as they read and bring their ideas to partner and/or book club conversations.
- **Observe** and coach students today and in upcoming reading periods.
- **Reflect** on the processes students use to develop their ideas, how it’s going, and why this work matters.



## Language Levers

- *I believe . . . has the power because . . .*
- *I believe . . . does not have the power here. I think this because . . .*
- *I think this is related to the social issues present in the text because . . .*
- *I think this could be related to the theme because . . .*

## ✓ Check-Up

As students work on this skill and related strategies, observe what they do and coach as needed. Don’t forget to celebrate efforts and progress all along the way.

Encourage partners and book clubs to consider issues related to power and choice during their discussion time. Remember (and remind students) that readers do not need to have the same interpretations. Students may have different viewpoints after deeply analyzing the same text. It is just as likely that a teacher and student could have different thoughts regarding power and choice. If a reader can support an idea, it’s valid – even if it differs from yours.

## ? What Else?

Some precursor concepts related to power and choice includes character work around:

- noticing patterns and developing larger theories about a character
- being a flexible and nuanced reader, noticing how characters in middle-grade books are rarely “all good” or “all bad.”
- considering character motivations and delving into related character choices
- considering the decisions characters make and the impact of these decisions.
- noticing when characters act differently and make new kinds of choices
- noticing moments of change in primary and secondary characters
- thinking about relationships between characters
- comparing different characters to further enhance thinking about each

Follow-up work could be related to:

- discussing ideas related to power and choice
- debating theories about power and choice
- considering personal reactions to events and reactions related to power and choice
- considering an author’s perspective
- comparing an author’s possible perspective and comparing it to your own
- using thinking work related to power and choice to develop rich theories around theme within and across texts
- considering what you might do the same or differently after reading about issues related to power and choice