SCHOLASTIC
Moving Up
with Literacy Place
4-6

Illustrious
by Janet M. Whyte

ILLUSTRIOUS

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TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Narrative—Fantasy Story
GUIDED READING LEVEL: W/X

SUMMARY: In the year 2070 a worldwide 'literary outbreak' occurs. People begin to believe they are characters from books throughout history. Jenna MacArthur, a Grade 6 student who has been affected by the outbreak and starts acting like the 'Paper Bag Princess,' travels with her parents and teacher to England to try and solve this odd mystery. In a secret lab under the University of Cambridge Library, Jenna and the others find the cause of the outbreak and help return everything to 'normal.'

TEXT FEATURES
- highlighted and enlarged text quotes
- bolded/enlarged introductory text
- italics

VISUAL LITERACY
- illustrations

TEXT SUPPORTS
- sequential plot
- descriptive language

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES
- students might be unfamiliar with some literary references
- vocabulary created to explain processes and gadgets related to the fantasy setting, e.g., 'Picspeak,' 'Expounder,' 'Identi-pic'
- some challenging words, e.g., 'Illustrious,' 'repository,' 'Phosphorescent,' 'gastropods'
- punctuation; use of dashes

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY
- making connections: text to text

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGY
- inferring

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES
- Think-Pair-Share strategy
- discussing with a partner
- discussing with a group
- Say it Like the Character activity (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS
- language predictability: using language strategies to support predictions for unfamiliar words in context

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Observe each student's ability to:
- make connections to their own life and technology
- make connections to other texts (with use of T-chart)
- identify features of a fantasy text
- infer why the author made certain choices
- evaluate the author's craft

ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Select from the following:
- Making Connections Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

Making Connections: Text to Self

- Tell students the story they are about to read is a fantasy set in the future. Explain that technology plays an important part in this story. Using the Think-Pair-Share strategy (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*) pose the following question to partnered students: *How do you use technology in your life?* Encourage partners to think about the different aspects of their life, e.g., school, home, travel, entertainment, communication, and so on. Provide students with the opportunity to think about the question and share ideas with their partner.

Inferring

- Show the title of the story to students. Ask students the meaning of the word 'Illustrious.' Remind them that sometimes the meaning for the titles of some stories is not directly expressed. Ask students to think about the reasons the author may have titled the story 'Illustrious' as they read. Encourage students to think about the meaning of the word, clues provided by the author, and perhaps their own experiences to come up with a response.

Introduce supports and challenges

Text Features

- As a group, discuss the differences and similarities between fantasy and other genres of fiction writing. Jot responses on a whiteboard.

- Direct students to page 2 of the story and point out the dash in the second paragraph. Remind students that a dash can be used to show a change of thought or idea, to indicate a break in a sentence, or in place of parentheses.

Language Predictability

- Remind students that the story is set in the future and the author has developed new words to name activities and objects that do not exist in our world. Refer to the word 'Picspeak' on the first page (third paragraph). Ask students to discuss some strategies they can use to support their predictions for the meaning of this and other words in context, that they will encounter while reading.

Set a purpose for reading

Making Connections: Text to Text

- Tell students that the characters in the story begin to act like characters from well-known books when they are affected by a 'literary outbreak.' As students read the story ask them to identify the famous literary characters that 'inhabit' Jenna, Sam, Mom, and Dad. Ask students to also select a fifth famous literary character of their choice mentioned in the story (e.g., the Grinch). Next, ask them to make a text to text connection by thinking of a character (Connection Characters) from a different book, story, comic, or movie that reminds them of the famous characters presented in the text. Remind students there should be similarities between the famous literary character seen in 'Illustrious' and their Connection Characters. Students should be able to explain the reasons they made their text to text connections.

Provide for early finishers

■ Encourage students who finish early to list as many other famous literary characters as they can think of. This can be done in small groups if there are enough early finishers.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

■ Listen to individual students read aloud to you. Provide assistance with word solving, vocabulary, and comprehension. Ensure that some comprehension prompts provided highlight the main focus strategy (making connections: text to text), e.g., *Does this literary character remind you of another character from another book? How is the literary character in 'Illustrious' similar to a character you've encountered in another text? What information is the author giving you about this character?*

Observe

■ Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Making Connections Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide.*)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

Making Connections: Text to Text

■ On the top of four separate pieces of chart paper write the names: 'Jenna,' 'Sam,' 'Mom,' and 'Dad.' Ask students to identify the famous literary character each of these 'Illustrious' characters act like when affected by the outbreak. Write these names on the appropriate piece of chart paper, beside the 'Illustrious' character's name (e.g., 'Dad/ Sherlock Holmes'). Provide students with four sticky notes and ask them to write the names of the Connection Characters from their own readings that remind them of the famous literary characters in 'Illustrious.' Place the sticky notes on the appropriate piece of chart paper. Discuss as a group why students selected the characters they chose, giving reasons. On a fifth piece of paper make a T-chart. Place the headings 'Fifth Character' and 'Connection Character' on the chart. Ask students to share with the group the name of another famous literary character mentioned in the story and a character it reminded them of from their own readings. Provide students the opportunity to give reasons for their choices. List these connections on the chart. Explain to students that sorting and classifying ideas and connections like this is a great way of assisting them in developing written assignments.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Did students make appropriate connections? Did students adequately explain the reasons for their choices? How are students faring with challenging words like 'repository' and 'Phosphorescent'?

Note successful strategy use

- Highlight a student who reads the text with use of a reading strategy, e.g., *Aziz made a text to text connection between the characters of Princess Elizabeth, from 'The Paper Bag Princess' story, and Rosamund, from the book 'The Tough Princess.' He said Rosamund was very much like Princess Elizabeth in that both characters didn't wait to be saved by the prince; in fact, they saved the prince! Both characters weren't afraid to be themselves.*

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Making Connections: Text to Text

- Invite students to imagine they are a part of the 'literary outbreak' of 2070. What famous literary character would they become? Ask students to write three or four paragraphs about their experience as the character of their choice. Encourage the use of vivid language and innovative expressions (unusual adjectives, specific nouns, and so on) to enhance interest in their work.

> **ESL NOTE:** Keep in mind that your ESL students can be encouraged to choose a famous literary character from their own culture.

Artistic

Synthesizing

- Ask students to select a gadget (e.g., the 'Identi-pic'), service (e.g., 'SkyTrain'), or activity (e.g., 'Picspeak') presented in the story. Create an advertisement to sell the product or service. The advertisement should include a design representing the product or service and a catchy description to make its audience want to purchase it.

Oral/dramatic

Inferring

- Assign an appropriately levelled text selection from 'Illustrious' that contains dialogue for reading in a Say it Like the Character activity (see Fluency Activities in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*). Allow students to read the text selection, and then discuss the dialogue and the personalities of the characters speaking. Encourage students to focus on a character's 'voice' when reading. Discuss with students various strategies they might wish to use to enhance the impact of their oral delivery. Allow them to perform the dialogue for other groups.