Unit 1/Week 3

Title: Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday

Suggested Time: 4 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.7; RF.3.3, RF.3.4; W.3.2, W.3.4; SL.3.1; L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.4, L.3.5

Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

**Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Making thoughtful decisions can affect both short and long term plans or goals.

Synopsis

The story “Alexander, Used to Be Rich Last Sunday” is about a little boy who tries in vain to save, but unfortunately makes poor decisions and squanders his money. Alexander receives a dollar from his grandparents and, at that moment, considers himself rich. As the story progresses, he begins to spend his dollar little by little on such matters as making payment on unwise bets, deceptive magic tricks, and a pet snake for rent. Each time Alexander makes a conscience decision to absolutely, positively save his money, something more enticing comes along and interferes with his plan. At the end of the story, all of his money is gone and once again he is left with bus tokens.

1. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| What language tells us that Alexander is the narrator? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. | The narrator introduces Anthony and Nicolas as his brothers (“It isn’t fair that my brother Anthony has …”, “It isn’t fair that my brother Nicholas has …”). Alexander also uses the contraction I’ve when referring to his thoughts (“It isn’t fair because what I’ve got is … bus tokens”). |
| Alexander uses the word fair to express his thoughts. What does the word fair mean to Alexander in this story? How do you know? | In this story, Alexander thinks the word fair means same or equal. He says, “It isn’t fair that my brother Anthony has two dollars and three quarters and one dime and seven nickels and eighteen pennies. It isn’t fair that my brother Nicholas has one dollar and two quarters and five dimes and five nickels and thirteen pennies. It isn’t fair because what I’ve got is … bus tokens”). This implies that Alexander thinks that he should also have money like his brothers. |
| What does the author tell us about Alexander’s brothers and how they manage their money? | Considering the variety of currency (i.e., dollars, nickels, pennies), students should recognize that Anthony and Nicholas are able to save their money over a long period of time. |
| What did you learn about Alexander when he says, “And even when I’m very rich, I know that pretty soon what I’ll have is … bus tokens”?  Why is he able to save the bus tokens? | Student responses should convey an understanding that even when Alexander has money, he is unable to do the hard work required to save over time. The tone of his language expresses a level of disappointment in his ability to overcome this challenge. He also tells us that shortly after he receives money and considers himself rich, the money will be gone and he will only have bus tokens left.  Be prepared to tell the students that bus tokens can only be used to ride public buses. You cannot purchase candy in a store or use them to pay for lunch. |
| According to Alexander, he was rich last Sunday. What happened last Sunday to make him think that he was rich? | Students should mention that Alexander’s grandparents gave him one dollar last Sunday and now he only has bus tokens left. |
| What suggestions did Alexander’s family make about how he should manage his money? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. | Students should provide evidence from the text indicating that Alexander’s father suggested he save the money for college. His brothers taunted him with suggestions like getting a new face and burying the money in the garden to grow a dollar tree. Alexander’s mom encouraged him to save his money for the walkie-talkie he truly wants. |
| TURN AND TALK: What did Alexander buy first? Based on what you know about Alexander’s goal for his money, is this a good or poor decision? Use details from the text to support your ideas. | Students should mention that Alexander bought fifteen cents worth of bubble gum. Students should conclude that buying bubble gum is a poor decision because Alexander really wants to save enough money to buy a walkie-talkie. Also, gum can’t be kept forever. This decision makes it harder for him to accomplish his goal. |
| What does the author tell us about how Alexander uses his money? | Alexander uses fifteen cents to pay for bets he made with his brothers and mother. Then he uses twelve cents to rent Eddie’s snake for an hour. |
| Why did Alexander repeat the phrase “good-bye \_\_ cents”? | The author may have repeated the phrase because it is funny or odd that Alexander is talking to money. It also reminds the reader that Alexander continues to spend his money regardless of his efforts to save for a walkie-talkie. |
| Alexander tells us that his father fined him for saying certain words to his brothers. Using evidence from the text, what does fine (fined) mean in this story? | In this story, the word fine means to pay a certain amount of money as a penalty or punishment. Alexander has to pay five cents to both of his brothers for saying unkind words. |
| Alexander says, “Good-bye eight cents, and the butter knife, and the scissors.” What did he mean by this? | Students should state that Alexander lost eight cents through a crack in the floorboards and in trying to retrieve the money, he broke both the butter knife and scissors. |
| What decisions did Alexander make? | Students should state that Alexander decided to rescue a chocolate bar that belonged to Anthony. He had to pay eleven cents for that decision. Then his brother Nick preformed a magic trick that made four cents vanish in thin air. Alexander did not get his money back. |
| What did Nick mean when he said Alexander should be locked in a cage. Use this phrase and the illustrations to describe Alexander’s feelings and behavior at this time? | The phrase “lock in a cage“ is usually used in reference to an animal. Nick made this remark because he felt that Alexander was behaving like an animal. In the story, Alexander used unkind words and kicked his brothers in anger. Alexander appeared to be very upset and out of control.  Students should mention that Alexander tried to make a tooth fall out of his mouth, get nickels and dimes from a telephone booth, and return non-refundable bottles to Friendly’s Market to get money.  Alexander wanted desperately to save money for a walkie-talkie. However, he used his money in silly ways and now feels that he must get more money to save towards his goal. Alexander said, “I absolutely was saving the rest of my money. I positively was saving the rest of my money. I absolutely positively was saving the rest of my money. Except I needed to get some money to save”. |
| Why did Alexander ask grandma and grandpa to come back soon? | Students should realize that Alexander was in need of money and there’s a good possibility that his grandparents will give him money on their next visit. |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING** | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING**  General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | tokens  except, absolutely, positively  certain | downtown  stoop  loose  dopey |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | fair  save, bury  fine | vanish into thin air, rescue |

Culminating Task

Alexander’s goal was to save enough money to purchase a walk-talkie. (Have students use a graphic organizer to trace how he used his money throughout the story.) Using examples from the story and your graphic organizer, explain how Alexander’s decisions affected his long-term goal of being able to buy a walkie-talkie.