Unit 2/Week 1

Title: Tomás and the Library Lady

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.4, RL.4.6, RL.4.7; RF.4.4; W.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9, W.4.10; SL.4.1, SL.4.2, SL.4.6; L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.4, L.4.5

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 their work with this text.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

With kindness, all people are encouraged to grow and change.

Synopsis

This typical Iowa farm summer becomes a special one for young Tomás when he is befriended by the local librarian. Eager to read and share his gifts, Tomás is encouraged to assume the role of family storyteller, finding that he cannot only be a learner but a teacher as well. This gentle story details the relationship between Spanish-speaking Tomás, his family and the English-speaking librarian and the encouragement and comfort it provided him.

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 without interruption.
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 return to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (e.g., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| **What time of year is it when the story begins? How do you know?** | It is summer. We know because the family is in the car traveling to Iowa and it is hot. The family works for farmers in Texas in the winter and for Iowa farmers in the summer “year after year”. |
| **Describe how the author introduces the reader to Tomás. Who is telling the story?** | The family is in the car in the middle of the night traveling from Texas to Iowa to farm for the summer “again”. Tomás misses his bed at home and tells his mother he is hot by saying, “if I had a glass of cold water…I would pour the last drops of water on my face.” He helps his grandfather out of the car, bids his family members “Buenas noches” and “curls up on the cot” to sleep. The story is told by a third person narrator. The evidence is the use of the pronouns he, they, and his. |
| **Why are the words, “Buenas noches” in a different font? How do you know what these words mean?** | These words are spoken by Tomás in Spanish. The author follows these words with the English translation – “Good night”. |
| **Thorny means having sharp points along the stem of a plant. Why did Papá Grande laugh when Tomás answered his question with, “A thorny tree” when he was telling his story?** | Papá Grande laughed because Tomás knew the ending of the story. Tomás had said, “Tell us the story about the man in the forest.” He also knew the character in the story was held by a “thorny tree” and had scared himself. We can infer he has heard this story many times. |
| **How does Tomás feel as he approaches the library? What words and phrases does the author use to show you? How does the illustration help the reader?** | Tomás is intimidated by th “big library” with its windows “like eyes **glaring** at him.” “He walked around and around…” “He slowly started climbing up, up the steps.” “His mouth felt full of cotton.” “He peeked in” to the “huge” library! The illustration shows just how small Tomás is as he “peeked in.”He jumped when the librarian tapped his shoulder. |
| **In your own words, describe what happened during Tomás’ first visit to the library.** | The librarian welcomed Tomás “come inside” and gave him a drink of water. She asked his name and brought him books about “tigers and dinosaurs.” She gave him a chair, let him read and sent him home with books. |
| **What did it mean when the librarian said, “I will check them out in my name.”?** | Students will know that to check out a book means to be able to take it with you – to borrow it. Because Tomás has never been to the library before, the reader has to infer that he cannot borrow books because he does not have a card or account. The librarian is being kind when she “checks the books out” and lets him take them. She trusts him. |
| **Tomás left the library, “eager to show the new stories to his family.” How do you know what eager means? How is “eager” different than “excitement”?** | Eager means he is excited in a hurry to show his family. He wants to do it and is looking forward to it. He “ran home” to show the books to his family and he reads them the story that day. Eager is different than excitement because at the root of his excitement, or stirred up feelings, is the yearning, this desire to read to the family from his new books. |
| **What does, “He would put the books in the sun to bake away the smell mean”? Why use these words?** | Tomás found the books at the dump so they smell bad from the garbage. By “baking” them in the hot sun, the smell is diminished. “Baking” reinforces how hot the summer sun is in Iowa and helps us understand why Tomás is glad to be inside with cool water to drink when he is in the library. |
| **What evidence in the story shows that Tomás is a good storyteller?** | Tomás shows the pictures and reads to Papá Grande “first in Spanish and then in English.” He roars, “like a huge tiger” as he reads. The family laughed and “sat near him to hear his story.” On quiet days in the library, the librarian would say, “Come to my desk and read to me.” Now in the evenings, “he would read the stories to …” The illustrations show the big tiger in the room when Tomás is reading to the family. |
| **What happens to Tomás when he reads to himself? How do the illustrations support this understanding?** | When Tomás reads he looks at the pictures, reads and feels like he is in the stories. “He saw dinosaurs bending their long necks, he heard the cries of a wild snakebird, he felt the warm…he smelled the smoke…he rode a horse…” “He forgot about Iowa and Texas.” |
| **Compare how Tomás feels at the beginning and the end of the story. How does the author conclude the tale?** | At the beginning of the story, Tomás is very hot and tired. He misses his bed. He tells his mom how thirsty he is with the story about the cold water. When the story concludes, Tomás is holding a “shiny new book.” He closes his eyes and “saw the dinosaurs.. heard the cry… felt the warm neck…” He is comforted by the story. |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING**  Words addressed with a question or task | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING**  General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | thorny  downtown  iron | tired (old car)  rusty  curled  chattered  tapped  flapping  package |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | storyteller  borrow  eager | check out  town dump |

Culminating Tasks

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write

1. How does the author show that Tomás is a “storyteller” throughout the narrative? Use examples from the story to support your answer. When the story begins, Tomás uses the little story “if I had a glass of cold water… I would pour the drops of water on my face.” When he reads to the family, he shows the pictures and he makes them laugh. At the end of the story, Tomás is in the car, feeling like he is in the story with “the cry of the wild snakebird…”

2. The three central characters in the story all change this summer. Describe how Tomás, Papa Grande and the librarian are “changed” over the summer by interactions in the story. Tomás visited the library for the first time, then “whenever he could,” learned new stories from the books at the library, and assumed the role of “new storyteller” for the family. Papá Grande listened to new stories in English and the library lady learned Spanish words and phrases, “Buenas tardes”, “pajaro”, and “libro.” She also learned about “pan dulce” or sweetbread that Tomás’ mother sends to thank her. Tomás and the library lady have both made a new friend.

3. Choose one or two words or phrases that describe both the library lady and Tomás. Using evidence from the text, justify your choice of words. Students may choose kind, eager to learn, polite, helpful, encouraging. Accept answers justified with examples from the story.

4. The author uses repetition in the story. For example, in the first paragraph, “the tired old car. Tomás was tired too. Hot and tired.” Find examples in the text where words are repeated and describe how that affects the meaning. The author repeats tired to emphasize how Tomás feels at the beginning of the story. The family “year after year bump-bumped along in their rusty old car” shows how tiring and uncomfortable this trip is for the family. When going to the library Tomás climbed slowly “up, up the steps.” This again, showed his feelings about going to the library for the first time. At the end of the story, the library lady says, “How nice. How very nice. Gracias, Tomás. Thank you.” This shows how she really feels grateful for the gift of the pan dulce.

Additional Tasks

Characters in the story are learning to use English as well as Spanish language. What are some of the words and phrases the author introduces in the story? How does she reveal the meaning of the words? Use the online dictionary at http://www.forvo.com or http://www.wordreference.com/ to find the correct pronunciation of the words and phrases. Create a short dictionary of the words included in the text.