Unit 1/Week 5

Title: The Astronaut and the Onion

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.4; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9; SL.4.1; L.4.1, L.4.2, L 4.4

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

Mentor can help you believe that you can accomplish anything you want as long as you believe in yourself and you stay focused and dedicated.

Synopsis

Realistic fiction tells made-up stories about things that could really happen. Gloria waits in a checkout line, tossing around the onion her mother had sent her to buy. She tosses it too far and fears it’s going to knock over a display of glass jars. A woman catches it in time, though. Gloria recognizes her – she‘s an astronaut! They talk about what it was like in space. The woman tells Gloria that could be an astronaut too. She just needs to work hard and overcome her fears. After the woman leaves, Gloria thinks about how the onion led to the meeting.

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** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Describe Gloria using evidence from the text. | **Gloria isn’t just satisfied with the average** – she makes sure she picks out the best onion. **She pushes herself and tests her own** **abilities** –by counting all the jars and by tossing the onion harder so it is harder to catch. As noted in the text, Gloria could be considered an individual who is not satisfied with just being average, and is willing to push herself and test her abilities to the fullest capacity. |
| After Gloria tosses the onion and misses it – what is stated in the text that helps to understand that the onion did not hit the castle of baby jars? | Gloria felt a tap on her shoulder and heard a lady’s voice that say, “I have your onion.” She handed Gloria the onion. |
| What specific details about Dr. Street’s appearance does Gloria notice? Support your answer with evidence from the text. | She notices her sparkly brown eyes, her hair is shiny black ringlets, and she is wearing earrings that spin around and look like Earth. |
| How does Gloria figure out the identity of the woman? | * Her Earth earrings * She mentions her trip * Recalls seeing her on television * She remembers that the woman used to live in Gloria’s town * Gloria recalls Dr. Streets name and that she is an astronaut |
| Dr. Street gives Gloria advice. What did Dr. Street say and what was Gloria’s response? | She advises Gloria to try and succeed at doing difficult things. She also explains how to gain confidence. |
| Referring to the text, describe Dr. Street. | She believes in trying to succeed and she is confident. |
| How does Dr. Street know that Gloria is curious about Dr. Street’s experience in space? | Gloria asks several questions and when Dr. Street asked her if she really wanted to know. Gloria replied, “Yes.” |
| How did Dr. Street’s experience affect Gloria? | It made her shiver. She tried to imagine everything Dr. Street had seen. |
| What does Dr. Street tell Gloria that makes Gloria think she may have the chance to become an astronaut? Use specific evidence from the text to support your answer. | Dr. Street says, “You might be one of the people who do,” but you will never do anything you want to do if you keep saying, “Probably I couldn’t.” |
| How is the word *paralyzed* used in the text to compare how Gloria felt after she threw the onion and how Dr. Street explains Gloria’s attitude? | Gloria felt paralyzed when she threw the ball, she felt like she couldn’t do anything. She did not enjoy it one bit.  Dr. Street said, “If you don’t want to be paralyzed be careful what you tell yourself – because whatever you tell yourself you’re likely to believe.” Paralyzed has multiple meanings for example – paralyzed can mean to bring a condition of helpless stoppage, inactivity, or inability to act (Gloria felt this way). |
| What advice does Dr. Street give to Gloria about becoming an astronaut? | * You need to do well in school * Tame your fears – not get rid of them – just tame them * Do things that are difficult – count on yourself and you will gain confidence * Keep a little bit of fear – that keeps you careful |
| Dr. Street said, “Big things are really little.” What does she mean by this? | At times difficult things may seem big when you can’t do something, but once you learn how to do it – it is not that big after all. For example, learning a new concept may seem impossible (big), but once you learn it isn’t that big after all. |

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** | display  paralyzed  protested  realistic | ducked  aisles  daring  continents  time warp  amazed  orbiting succeeding |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  **sufficient context clues are provided in the text** | hollering  fright  endless  sensible | checkout line  tame your fears  confidence |

Culminating Task

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write
* Based on class discussions and your own understanding of the story, “The Astronaut and the Onion”, write one well-developed paragraph explaining the theme of the story. Support your thoughts with evidence from the text pertaining to character, setting, and how the plot unfolds.
  + Answer

The realistic fiction text titled “The Astronaut and the Onion” describes Gloria’s encounter with a real-life astronaut at a grocery store. The main character of the text is Gloria. Gloria is a young girl who pushes herself and is not satisfied with just being average. At the store, Gloria spends time looking for the perfect onion. She then begins tossing the onion lightly from one hand to the other, but then starts tossing harder and it is during this tossing that she tosses it too far and realizes she just might knock over the glass jar display. Gloria becomes paralyzed, because she can only think about is what is going to happen when the onion knocks over the display, but suddenly a woman wearing a jogging suit taps Gloria’s shoulder and tells Gloria she has her onion.

Gloria looked at the women as she said, “Lucky I played baseball.” The lady had beautiful blue/green Earth earrings that spun when the lady would tilt her head. Gloria realizes that the lady is an astronaut that she saw on TV and her name was Dr. Grace Street. Gloria begins speaking to Dr. Street and explains that she learned about the space station in school. Dr. Street described her job and how much she enjoyed fixing things outside of the station. Gloria said she would like to be an astronaut and Dr. Street gives her the advice that Gloria needs to tame her fears and that Gloria could do whatever she wants as long as she believes she can. Dr. Street’s advice gave Gloria the confidence to stay focused on her dream and if she does well in school and keeps in mind the “big things are really little” all goals are attainable.

Additional Tasks

* Students will create a comic strip (6-8 panels). They will use the key details from the text to determine the theme (summarizing the text – conversation between Dr. Street and Gloria). Students are evaluated on their use of key details to summarize the text and the theme. Grouping: Pair or individual
* Students will create a print advertisement for the text. They will refer to explicit details and examples from the text for their advertisement. They may also draw inferences from the text that they include in promoting the text in advertisement form. Students are assessed on their explicit references to details and examples from the text when explaining in their advertisement. Grouping: small group or individual

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**“The Astronaut and the Onion”**

1. Describe Gloria using evidence from the text.
2. After Gloria tosses the onion and misses it – what is stated in the text that helps to understand that the onion did not hit the castle of baby jars?
3. What specific details about Dr. Street’s appearance does Gloria notice? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
4. How does Gloria figure out the identity of the woman?
5. Dr. Street gives Gloria advice. What did Dr. Street say and what was Gloria’s response?
6. Referring to the text, describe Dr. Street.
7. How does Dr. Street know that Gloria is curious about Dr. Street’s experience in space?
8. How did Dr. Street’s experience affect Gloria?
9. What does Dr. Street tell Gloria that makes Gloria think she may have the chance to become an astronaut? Use specific evidence from the text to support your answer.
10. How is the word *paralyzed* used in the text to compare how Gloria felt after she threw the onion and how Dr. Street explains Gloria’s attitude?
11. What advice does Dr. Street give to Gloria about becoming an astronaut?
12. Dr. Street said, “Big things are really little.” What does she mean by this?