Unit 1

Title: A Christmas Memory

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.4; W.9-10.1, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.2, L.9-10.4, L.9-10.5

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for 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:

Many times, friendship can be life’s greatest gift. It’s better to give gifts from the heart than to receive extravagant things.

Synopsis

This semi-autobiographical text is set in the rural South during the Depression. The text focuses on Buddy’s recollection of the final Christmas season he spent with his cousin when he was seven and she was in her sixties. The text begins with the first chilly day of winter, which prompt’s Buddy’s cousin’s annual declaration, “it’s fruitcake weather.” Together they gather the ingredients they need to bake their thirty holiday fruitcakes. Buddy and his cousin go into the woods to find a Christmas tree. Back home, they decorate the tree with handmade ornaments and then make gifts for family members. Although they would like to give each other extravagant gifts, they have no money and so they build kites for one another. On Christmas Day, while flying their kites together, Buddy and his cousin experience a transcendent moment of happiness. Unbeknownst to Buddy, this is to be their last Christmas together. Buddy is sent to military school and, a few years later, his cousin falls ill and dies. Buddy mourns her death and keeps searching the wintry sky, half-expecting to see a pair of kites sailing together.

1. Read the entire story a time or two, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire story independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. This story is complex in its ideas but not in its syntax or vocabulary, so letting the students read it out loud to each other would be great practice with fluency.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually 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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| The opening scene is set on a winter morning in November in a kitchen. Describe the mood that the narrator uses to set the stage for the text. Find textual evidence illustrating the elements of the setting that create this mood. | The mood at the beginning of the text is set in a kitchen and is described as cozy, warm, and contended. The house is described as “spreading” with a “great black stove” as its central feature. The table and two rocking chairs in front of the fireplace help create an inviting and welcoming visual image. |
| What do you learn about the narrator’s living situation? What can we infer about his feelings toward his living situation based on what he says in this paragraph? Use specific textual examples. | We learn that he is living with several distant relatives who he describes as “other people” and he is closest with his cousin who is much older than him. From his description, we can infer that he feels powerless because he states “they have power over us”. He also states they “frequently make us cry” but they are not “too much aware of them,” which suggests there is tension between Buddy and his cousin and the other relatives. It appears they do not have a close relationship with them. |
| On page \_\_\_, paragraph 3, the narrator, Buddy, declares his age; “I am seven, she is sixty-something.” What is unusual about his declaration in regards to his friendship with his cousin? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. | It is not common for young children to form friendships with older adults. In paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_, however, Buddy states his friend is “still a child.” This statement indicates their relationship may be more playful and child-like in nature. We also learn that they always begin celebrating the Christmas season very early (November). This alludes to ritualistic behavior. |
| Consider the account and use of the buggy on page \_\_\_. From this description, what can be inferred about both the characters and the economic times that they live in? | The buggy is described as dilapidated and previously belonging to the narrator. The wicker “has unraveled” and the wheels wobble like a “drunkards legs”. It is used to collect wildflowers, firewood and during the summer, it is used to haul picnic and fishing supplies. This imagery suggests the buggy has been reused multiple times and these characters are resourceful and inventive. This shows that the characters come from a poor background and must reuse things because they do not have money to buy new things. They must be resourceful to fulfill their needs. |
| What do the details about the friends’ activities in paragraph 2 on page \_\_\_ suggest about the story’s time and place? What can we infer about the characters by their activities and pursuits? Use specific evidence to support your answer. | We can infer that the story takes place in a rural setting because the characters sell hand-picked blackberries at rummage sales and they earn money by “rounding up flowers for funerals and weddings”. Buddy states, “we enter any contest we hear about”. We can infer that Buddy and his cousin are anxious to earn money and pursue any opportunities to earn money they hear about. |
| On pages \_\_\_ and \_\_\_, we learn about the types of activities Buddy and his cousin engage in. How do these activities reveal their unlikely and unconventional friendship? Support your answer with examples from the text. | It is learned in paragraph 6 of page \_\_\_ that Buddy and his cousin spend lots of time together being inventive and creative with the use of the buggy. On page \_\_\_, Paragraph 2, we learn about the many contests they have entered together in an effort to earn money. The mix of the types of contests they enter to earn money reveals they are risk-takers and entrepreneurial. |
| Note the authors repeated use of the word “under” in the second sentence of paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_. What is the effect on this repetition of words? | The repetition of “under” in regards to the hiding place for their money creates a visual image of how carefully Buddy and his cousin have hidden their money. This secrecy also shows they don’t trust anyone else in the house. |
| On the top of page \_\_\_, the narrator shares various things that his cousin “has done, does do.” Attached to each accomplishment, is a parenthetical commentary. What purpose do these parentheses serve in understanding the narrator’s point of view? | The things that the cousin has done are objectively stated by the narrator (e.g., killed a rattlesnake, tamed a hummingbird, etc.) Each recollection is followed by additional subjective commentary by the narrator, emphasizing his regard for his friend by bragging about her abilities. |
| On page \_\_\_, Buddy and his cousin visit Mr. HaHa Jones’s cafe. From the moment they arrive, to the moment they leave, numerous unexpected events occur. Using evidence from the text, indicate how the visit did not go as anticipated. How do these events change their original perceptions of Mr. HaHa Jones? | First, we learn that HaHa Jones is a feared man who lives at a “sinful” address. Buddy details HaHa’s sinister reputation and describes his café as a frightful place of rumored crime. We also learn that his wife is who they’ve encountered on previous visits. HaHa Jones greets them at the door unexpectedly and Buddy paints a subjective picture of him with details that confirm the character Buddy has created in his own mind—someone sinister. However, HaHa Jones is unexpectedly helpful and extends kindness by returning money for the whiskey they purchased. His cousin refers to him as a “lovely man” and decides to “put an extra cup of raisins in *his* cake.” |
| In paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_, the dancing celebration of Buddy and his cousin is interrupted by “two relatives”. Explain how the figurative and literal language used in their response to what they see changes the tone of the celebration. | The relatives are described as being “potent with eyes that scold, tongues that scald.” The imagery of scolding eyes and scalding tongues suggests fury and judgment toward Buddy’s cousin and her decision to let him drink whiskey. Buddy recalls their reprimand as a “wrathful tune”, which interrupts the celebratory, carefree and joyful tone and changes it to one that is fearful, serious and hurtful. Their exclamatory acquisitions are also harsh and critical about his cousin’s behavior as they claim she is “out of her mind” and “loony.” The relatives conclude with a call for her to “kneel, pray, beg the Lord,” further exemplifying harsh judgment and a self-righteous attitude toward her. |
| Re-read the author’s description of the Christmas tree hunt in paragraph 1 and the beginning of paragraph 2 on page \_\_\_. Find examples of figurative language and sensory images that vividly help the reader describe the setting. Determine how these descriptions of the setting affect the mood of this scene. | “…; the sun, round as an orange and orange as hot-weather moons, balances on the horizon, burnishes the silvered winter woods.” (¶1 sentence 1)  “…; of rusty pine needles brilliant with gaudy fungus and molten feathers.” (¶1, sentence 7)  “…an ecstasy of shrillings” (¶1, sentence 8)  “Always, the path unwinds through lemony sun pools and pitch vine tunnels” (¶1, sentence 9)  “…speckled trout froths the water round us…” (¶1, sentence 10)  “…frogs the size of plates practice belly flops…” (¶1, sentence 10)  “…beaver workmen are building a damn.” (¶1, sentence 10)  “…and inhales the pine-heavy air.” (¶1, sentence 13)  “Red berries shiny as Chinese bells…” (¶2, sentence 1)  “Black crows swoop upon them screaming.” (¶2, sentence 1)  These descriptions of the setting affect the mood by conjuring up images that are happy, enthusiastic, and appreciative of beauty. |
| At the end of paragraph 1 on page \_\_\_, a mill owner’s wife offers Buddy’s cousin money for the Christmas tree they found. Declining, she responds to the wife’s statement that she can get another one by answering, “I doubt it. There’s never two of anything.” What can we infer about his cousin from her response to this woman? Use evidence from the text to support your inference. | Her response indicates she has a high regard for the uniqueness of “things” and that she has a spiritual appreciation for both the tree and other “things” in life. Her response is also in contrast to the apparent wealth of the mill owner’s wife, suggesting that she would rather reap the reward of their hard-work in finding the perfect tree than be rewarded with money. |
| (page \_\_\_, ¶ 1-3) What do the gifts that Buddy and his cousin *wish* they could give each other and the gifts they *actually* give each other reveal about their relationship? Use textual evidence to support your answer. | Buddy states he would like to buy her a “whole pound of chocolate-covered cherries.” He recalls how his cousin tasted them once and said she could “live on them”. His memory of the cherries and her reaction alludes to his love for his cousin in that he is was attentive to what makes her happy and desires to give her a gift that he knows she would enjoy so much. Similarly, his cousin wants to give him a bicycle because even though she goes without, it is painful for her to see him go without the things he wants and she also desires to see him happy. It is learned that they both end up making each other kites as in years before. Because of the laughter they share in giving each other the same gift, the reader senses that their shared experience of flying kites together was memorable and has kept their bond special. |
| Using paragraph three on page \_\_\_, cite specific examples from the text that illustrate the child-like anticipation Buddy and his cousin share regarding Christmas morning and elaborate on the meaning of these examples. What inference can be made about their motivation for each action they take? | His cousin states, “Buddy, are you awake?”… “Well I can’t sleep a hoot” she declares, “my mind’s jumping like a jackrabbit.”  “Possibly we doze; but the beginnings of dawn splash us like cold water.” “We’re up, wide-eyed and wandering while we wait for others to waken.” The reader senses that both Buddy and his cousin could not sleep because of their excitement.  “Quite deliberately my friend drops a kettle on the kitchen floor.” “I tap dance in front of closed doors.” Both Buddy and his cousin are intentionally trying to wake others in the house by making noise.  “Frankly, we’re so impatient to get at the presents we can’t eat a mouthful.” Buddy and his cousin are so consumed with excitement they aren’t hungry for breakfast. |
| At the beginning of paragraph 4 on page \_\_\_, Buddy’s cousin declares, “My, how foolish I am!” What does she believe she has been foolish about? Trace her new understanding of how she views God’s presence and explain the affect this has on her. | Buddy’s cousin reflects that she had always thought “a body would have to be sick and dying before they saw the Lord.” She compares the experience with a “Baptist window” and admits she had thought the “shine taking away the spooky feeling” would be a comfort. Then she “wagers it never happens” and states “the Lord has already shown Himself. That things are as they are.” She also gestures during this revelation indicating that God’s presence has been with her throughout life and it was found in ordinary things like the clouds, kites, grass and her dog Queenie. She concludes her epiphany with a statement, “As for me, I could leave the world with today in my eyes.” At this point, she is at peace with life and wants to keep the memory of flying kites together as she passes on. |
| Re-read paragraph 6 on page \_\_\_ and consider footnote number 14. Look for alliterations in this paragraph. Why does the author use this literary device to draw attention to the narrator’s feelings about his situation? | In paragraph 6, the alliterations used by the author are in the descriptions about the military schools. He calls them “bugle-blowing prisons” and “grim reveille-ridden” summer camps. These phrases highlight his negative feelings about the militaristic nature of the schools and camps and the disciplined nature of his experience. |
| Consider the last paragraph of the text. What conclusions can be drawn about Buddy’s acceptance of his cousin’s death from the imagery in this paragraph? | The simile “…severing from me an irreplaceable part of myself, letting it loose like a kite on a broken string” shows the reader that Buddy is letting go of his cousin and their relationship. He understands that his cousin is gone and he looks to the sky expecting to see “rather like hearts, a lost pair of kites hurrying toward heaven.” This metaphorical expectation is symbolic in that he and his cousin are now separated and “lost” without each other but will find each other again in heaven. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | glowers  saturate  goad  confound | enterprise  commenced  wallowing |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | \*inaugurating  \*exhilarates  Sprightly  hulling  \*dilapidated  \*paraphernalia  Squander  \*carnage  \*suffuse  Wager  \*definition given in text | sacrilegious  conspiracy  \*prosaic  chastising  Renegade  \*disposition  \*definition given in text |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt
* *“A Christmas Memory” by Truman Capote is a story of an unconventional childhood friendship between a young boy (Buddy) and his elderly cousin. Their relationship enables them to cope with the hard economic times of their day and it gives them strength to face their fears. Compose a well-developed essay tracing how their friendship was a source of refuge, courage, and strength for Buddy and his cousin to cope with hard times and accept the inevitability of their parting. Support your claims with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence from the text, including direct quotes and page numbers. Be sure to check your work for proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.*
* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided. Class discussion of the TDQs for the story should help to clarify the students’ understanding of the story. Through discussion on these questions, the teacher should be able to discern whether or not the students are prepared to write.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Page number*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “Other people inhabit the house, relatives; and though they have power over us, and frequently make us cry, we are not, on the whole, too much aware of them. We are each other’s best friend.” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 3 | Buddy explains here that while he and his cousin (“best friend”) live in the same house as their relatives, they are not close to them and are largely ignored by them. |
| “Who are they for? Friends. Not necessarily neighbor friends; Indeed, the larger share are intended for persons we’ve met maybe once, perhaps not at all.” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 9 | Buddy and his friend do not feel close to other members of the house or the town, but when they send out fruitcakes, they feel themselves linked to many interesting people from other places. |
| “These moneys we keep hidden in an ancient bead purse under a loose board under the floor under a chamber pot under my friend’s bed.” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 3 | Gathering enough money throughout the year is very important to Buddy and his cousin; they clearly do not want others to know what they are doing or to help out in any way. This adds to the notion that they are each other’s best friend. |
| Mr. Jones is described as being “gloomy, a man who never laughs.”  “Footsteps. The door opens. Our hearts overturn. It’s Mr. Haha Jones himself! And he *is* a giant he *does* have scars; he *doesn’t* smile. No, he glowers at us through Satan-tilted eyes and demands to know: ‘What you want with Haha?’ “ | \_\_\_  Paragraph 2  \_\_\_  Paragraph 1 | These two quotes support the idea that Buddy and his friend face Mr. Haha Jones together as an act of courage and strength. All of the rumors about what Mr. Jones character are confirmed when they knock on his door. |
| “Tell you what, just send me one of them fruitcakes instead.” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 6 | Again, the two face and confront Mr. Jones by refusing to agree to this deal. |
| “Home is where my friend is, and there I never go.” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 6 | Buddy has been sent away from what he considers his true home; this has been done by those who think they know what is best for him. This admission punctuates his loneliness without his true friend. |
| “For a few Novembers she continues to bake her fruitcakes single-handed; not as many, but some: And, of course, she always sends me ‘the best of the batch.’” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 7 | Buddy’s friend shows signs of decreasing strength and ability to maintain her past practice of baking fruitcakes. This portends Buddy’s acceptance that he and his friend will soon be parted by death. |
| “A morning arrives in November, a leafless birdless coming of winter morning, when she cannot rouse herself to exclaim: ‘Oh my, it’s fruitcake weather!’ “ | \_\_\_  Paragraph 7 | Her (the friend and cousin) mind and body are failing. She is ill enough that she can’t get out of bed even to make her holiday fruitcakes. This contrasting image of November from the beginning of the story to the end suggests that death and separation are near. |
| “A message saying so merely confirms a piece of news some secret vein had already received, severing from me an irreplaceable part of myself, letting it loose like a kite on a broken string.” | \_\_\_  Paragraph 8 | This metaphor explains his intuition that his friend has passed and sets up the final image of the story which finds Buddy expecting to see a symbolic lost pair of kites in the sky. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer

In the semi-autobiographical text “A Christmas Memory”, the protagonist, Buddy, recollects the final Christmas season he spends with his much older cousin. The text is set amid the context of the Depression with vivid descriptions of an enduring friendship that develops almost unnoticed among relatives of both Buddy and his cousin. Told in flashback, the two are described as developing a friendship which is a source of refuge, courage, and strength.

The text begins with a reflection back twenty years when Buddy and his cousin are described as living together, yet “other people inhabit the house, relatives; and though they have power over us, and frequently make us cry, we are not, on the whole, too much aware of them.” (p. \_\_\_) This acknowledgement sets the stage in this particular time of their life for the two to develop their own relationship, apart from others, during the beginning of the Christmas season. The two set out to bake their traditional thirty fruitcakes, which we learn are not meant for anyone in their immediate family: “Who are they for? Friends. Not necessarily neighbor friends: Indeed, the larger share are intended for persons we’ve met maybe once, perhaps not at all.” (p. \_\_\_) This information supports the idea that the friendship shared by Buddy and his cousin is a source of refuge in a world where they seem happy to be left alone. They spend most of the year saving money for their Fruitcake Fund, hiding the money under an “ancient bead purse under a loose board under the floor under a chamber pot under my friend’s bed” (p. \_\_\_) and give them to individuals other than their family members.

Buddy and his cousin face many situations during their time together that require them to exhibit courage and strength. During a visit to Mr. Haha Jones’ business the narrator shares their fear when Mr. Haha Jones himself appears at the door, and that he “glowers at us through Satan-tilted eyes”, causing near paralysis on the part of the older cousin (p. \_\_\_). This fear of a man, described as a man who is “gloomy, a man who never laughs,” is assuaged when the two are actually offered what they have come for. When Mr. Haha Jones tries to negotiate with the two (“Tell you what, just send me one of them fruitcakes instead”), the two are courageous enough to refuse and continue on their way. As time passes, Buddy is sent away to military school by “Those who Know Best” (p. 60), and the cousin continues to bake fruitcakes, but “not as many, but some” (p. 60). This separation weighs on Buddy as he admits that “Home is where my friend is, and there I never go” (p. \_\_\_) and as he knows intuitively that his cousin has passed away, describing that a “message saying so merely confirms a piece of news some secret vein had already received, severing from me an irreplaceable part of myself…” (p. \_\_\_).

The mood of the “fruitcake weather” at the end of the text supports Buddy’s acceptance and inevitability of his cousin’s death: “a leafless, birdless coming of winter morning” (p. \_\_\_) during which time Buddy is no longer with his cousin. The mood is bleak and cheerless now that his friend has passed on. The courage and strength required to sustain such heartbreak is described by his attempt to find, searching in the sky, “a lost pair of kites hurrying toward heaven” (p. \_\_\_). This is Buddy’s attempt to repair the metaphorical “broken string” of their unusual friendship. The inevitability of their parting is evident when the older cousin confuses Buddy with one of her friends with the same name and when a morning arrives in November and she is unable to rouse herself from bed with the same excitement as every November before. The mood at the end of the text is bleak and cheerless now that his friend is dead. The setting reinforces the theme of the preciousness of a true friend and the poignancy of loss.

Additional Tasks

* *Buddy and his cousin give simple, home-made gifts from the heart that seem to mean more than gifts that money can buy. Find examples from the text of a few of the gifts that demonstrate their resourcefulness and explain in a paragraph why it is better to give gifts from the heart than to receive extravagant things.*
  + Answer: After the Christmas tree has been cut and decorated, Buddy and his friend commence the annual fashioning of family gifts. The various gifts they make are not intended to be fancy or expensive. To the contrary, the gifts they make are for practical use. For example, home-brewed lemon, licorice, and aspirin syrup are intended to be used when the symptoms of a cold are present. Similarly, scarves are made for ladies to use during the winter months. When Buddy and his friend begin making gifts for each other, they decide to do this secretly, thus emphasizing their desire to surprise their very best friend. Each expresses the desire to purchase something expensive and nice for the other (he would like to buy her a pearl-handled knife, she would like to buy him a bicycle) but they both end up making each other the same gift: a kite. Because of the backdrop of the difficult economic times, it becomes obvious that neither one of them has the means to buy the other something fancy. When they realize that they have made each other the very same thing, they laugh at this coincidence.

After Buddy and his friend exchange their special gifts, they open more traditional gifts from the relatives with whom they live. Buddy expresses great disappointment with his clothing and year’s subscription to a religious magazine. There is nothing personal about these gifts; they are simply useful – not fun or imaginative. After his friend opens her more traditional gifts, she admits that the kite is her most treasured gift. These homemade “gifts from the heart” represent the true spirit of giving. Surely anyone can purchase a gift; not everyone can make a special gift designed specifically for someone else.

* *Compare the description of the “coming of winter morning” in the opening paragraph to the description of the “coming of winter morning” at the bottom of paragraph seven at the end of the text. How has the tone changed? What does this signify?*
  + The winter setting at the beginning of the text creates a warm, nostalgic atmosphere. The kitchen during late November, or during “fruitcake weather”, is described as being part of an old house in a country town; next to the roaring fireplace are two rocking chairs, presumably for Buddy and his best friend. Once the ingredients for the thirty fruitcakes are gathered, the kitchen in this cozy county home is described as being the center of great activity; at the end of the day, the warm kitchen is the place where the two can finally rest after a long productive day.

At the end of the text, Buddy’s friend cannot rouse herself to express her usual excitement that it is, indeed, “fruitcake weather”. The November morning is described as being “leafless” and “birdless”, thus signaling a distinct departure from the cozy kitchen described at the beginning of the text. This contrast marks the inevitable loss that Buddy feels upon learning of his friend’s death. The mood at the end of the text is bleak and cheerless.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**“A Christmas Memory”**

1. The opening scene is set on a winter morning in November in a kitchen. Describe the mood that the narrator uses to set the stage for the text. Find textual evidence illustrating the elements of the setting that create this mood.
2. Reread paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_. What do you learn about the narrator’s living situation? What can we infer about his feelings toward his living situation based on what he says in this paragraph? Use specific textual examples.
3. On page \_\_\_, paragraph 3, the narrator, Buddy, declares his age; “I am seven, she is sixty-something.” What is unusual about his declaration in regards to his friendship with his cousin? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
4. Consider the account and use of the buggy on page \_\_\_. From this description, what can be inferred about both the characters and the economic times that they live in?
5. What do the details about the friends’ activities in paragraph 2 on page \_\_\_ suggest about the story’s time and place? What can we infer about the characters by their activities and pursuits? Use specific evidence to support your answer.
6. On pages \_\_\_ and \_\_\_, we learn about the types of activities Buddy and his cousin engage in. How do these activities reveal their unlikely and unconventional friendship? Support your answer with examples from the text.
7. Note the authors repeated use of the word “under” in the second sentence of paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_. What is the effect on this repetition of words?
8. On the top of page \_\_\_, the narrator shares various things that his cousin “has done, does do.” Attached to each accomplishment, is a parenthetical commentary. What purpose do these parentheses serve in understanding the narrator’s point of view?
9. On page \_\_\_, Buddy and his cousin visit Mr. HaHa Jones’s cafe. From the moment they arrive, to the moment they leave, numerous unexpected events occur. Using evidence from the text, indicate how the visit did not go as anticipated. How do these events change their original perceptions of Mr. HaHa Jones?
10. In paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_, the dancing celebration of Buddy and his cousin is interrupted by “two relatives”. Explain how the figurative and literal language used in their response to what they see changes the tone of the celebration.
11. Re-read the author’s description of the Christmas tree hunt in paragraph 1 and the beginning of paragraph 2 on page \_\_\_. Find examples of figurative language and sensory images that vividly help the reader describe the setting. Determine how these descriptions of the setting affect the mood of this scene.
12. At the end of paragraph 1 on page \_\_\_, a mill owner’s wife offers Buddy’s cousin money for the Christmas tree they found. Declining, she responds to the wife’s statement that she can get another one by answering, “I doubt it. There’s never two of anything.” What can we infer about his cousin from her response to this woman? Use evidence from the text to support your inference.
13. What do the gifts that Buddy and his cousin *wish* they could give each other and the gifts they *actually* give each other reveal about their relationship? Use textual evidence to support your answer.
14. Using paragraph 3 on page \_\_\_, cite specific examples from the text that illustrate the child-like anticipation Buddy and his cousin share regarding Christmas morning and elaborate on the meaning of these examples. What inference can be made about their motivation for each action they take?
15. At the beginning of paragraph 4 on page \_\_\_, Buddy’s cousin declares, “My, how foolish I am!” What does she believe she has been foolish about? Trace her new understanding of how she views God’s presence and explain the affect this has on her.
16. Re-read paragraph 6 on page \_\_\_ and consider footnote number 14. Look for alliterations in this paragraph. Why does the author use this literary device to draw attention to the narrator’s feelings about his situation?
17. Consider the last paragraph of the text. What conclusions can be drawn about Buddy’s acceptance of his cousin’s death from the imagery in this paragraph?

Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) to use with Anthology Alignment Lessons

When teaching any lesson, it is important to make sure you are including supports to help all students. We have prepared some examples of different types of supports that you can use in conjunction with our Anthology Alignment Lessons to ensure ELLs can engage fully with the lesson. While these supports reflect research in how to support ELLs, these activities can help ALL students engage more deeply with these lessons. Note that some strategies should be used at multiple points within a lesson; we’ll point these out. It is also important to understand that these scaffolds represent options for teachers to select based on students’ needs; it is not the intention that teachers should do *all* of these things at every lesson.

**Before reading:**

* Read passages, watch videos, view photographs, discuss topics (e.g., using the [four corners strategy](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/four-corners)), or research topics that help provide context for what your students will be reading. This is especially true if the setting (e.g., 18th Century England) or topic (e.g., boats) is one that is unfamiliar to the students.
* Provide explicit instruction, using multiple modalities, on selected vocabulary words that are *central to understanding the text*. When looking at the lesson plan, you should note the Tier 2 words, particularly those words with high conceptual complexity (i.e., they are difficult to visualize, learn from context clues, and are abstract), and consider introducing them ahead of reading. For more information on selecting such words, go [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3167/selecting-and-using-academic-vocabulary-in-instruction). **You should plan to continue to reinforce these words, and additional vocabulary, in the context of reading and working with the text. (See additional activities in the During Reading and After Reading sections.)**

**Examples of Activities:**

* Provide students with the definition of the words and then have students work together to create [Frayer models](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/frayer-model) or other kinds of word maps for the words.
* When a word contains a prefix or suffix that has been introduced before, highlight how the word part can be used to help determine word meaning.
* Keep a word wall or word bank where these new words can be added and that students can access later.
* Have students create visual glossaries for whenever they encounter new words. Then have your students add these words to their visual glossaries.
* Create pictures using the word. These can even be added to your word wall!
* Create lists of synonyms and antonyms for the word.
* Have students practice using the words in conversation. For newcomers, consider providing them with [sentence frames](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion) to ensure they can participate in the conversation.
* Use graphic organizers to help introduce content.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Complete a [Know, Want to Learn, Learned (KWL) graphic organizer](http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html) about the text.
* Have students research the setting or topic and fill in a chart about it. You could even have students work in groups where each group is assigned part of the topic.
* Fill in a bubble map where they write down anything that they find interesting about the topic while watching a video or reading a passage about the topic. Then students can discuss why they picked the information.

**During reading:**

* Allow ELLs to collaborate in their home languages to process content before participating in whole class discussions in English. Consider giving them the discussion questions to look over in advance (perhaps during the first read) and having them work with a partner to prepare.
* Allow ELLs to use English language that is still under development. Students should not be scored lower because of incorrect spelling or grammar (unless the goal of the assignment is to assess spelling or grammar skills specifically). When grading, be sure to focus on scoring your students only for that objective.
* Scaffold questions for discussions so that questioning sequences include a mix of factual and inferential questions and a mix of shorter and more extended responses. Questions should build on each other and toward inferential and higher order thinking questions. There are not many factual questions already listed in the lesson instructions, so you will need to build some in as you see fit. More information on this strategy can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/aligned/creating-sequencing-text-dependent-questions-support-english-language-learners/).
* Provide explicit instruction, using multiple modalities, on selected vocabulary words (e.g., 5–8 for a given text) that are central to understanding the text. During reading, you should continue to draw attention to and discuss the words that you taught before the reading.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students include the example from the text in a student-created glossary.
* Create pictures that represent how the word was used in the passage.
* Create sentences using the word in the way it was used in the passage.
* Have students discuss the author’s word choice.
* Examine important sentences in the text that contribute to the overall meaning of the text.
* Examine sentence structure of a particular sentence. Break down the sentence to determine its meaning. Then determine how this sentence contributes to the overall meaning of the passage. Determine if there is any figurative language in the sentence and have students use context clues to determine the meaning of the figurative language.
* Use graphic organizers to help organize content and thinking.

**Examples of Activities:**

* While reading the text, have students fill in a story map to help summarize what has happened.
* Have students fill in an evidence chart while they read to use with the culminating writing activity. Make sure to model with the students how to fill in the evidence chart by filling in the first couple of rows together as a class. Go over the prompt that the evidence should support, making sure to break down what the prompt means before having the students get to work. If some of your students frequently struggle to understand directions, have the students explain the directions back to you.
* Provide somewhere for students to store new words that they encounter. Students could use a chart to keep track of these new words and their meanings as they read.
* If you had students start a KWL before reading, have them fill in the “L” section as they read the passage.

**After reading:**

* Reinforce new vocabulary using multiple modalities.

**Examples of activities:**

* Using the words that you had students work with before the reading, require students to include the words in the culminating writing task.
* Create Frayer models with the words. Then cut up the Frayer models and have the students put the Frayer models back together by matching the pieces for each word.
* After reading the passage, continue to examine important sentences (1–2) in the text that contribute to the overall meaning of the text. Guide students to break apart these sentences, analyze different elements, and determine meaning. More information on how to do this, including models of sentence deconstruction, can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3160/juicy-sentence-protocol).
* When completing the writing assignments after reading, consider using these scaffolds to support students depending on their English proficiency.

**Examples of Activities:**

* For all students, go over the prompt in detail making sure to break down what the prompt means before having the students get to work. Then have the students explain the directions back to you.
* Have students create an evidence tracking chart during reading, then direct them to look back over their evidence chart and work with a group to see if their evidence matches what the rest of the class wrote down. If some of the chart does not match, students should have a discussion about why.
* For students who need more support, model the proper writing format for your students and provide them with a properly formatted example for reference.
* For newcomers, you may consider creating sentence or paragraph frames to help them to write out their ideas.