Title: Jabberwocky

Suggested Time: 3 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.3, RL.7.4; W.7.2, W.7.4, W.7.9; SL.7.1,

SL.7.2; L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.4

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

There is sense in the nonsense that surrounds us, but we are able to overcome difficulties in spite of the nonsense.

Synopsis

Jabberwocky is an epic poem told through nonsense words. The poem relates a father’s quest for his son that involves the slaying of a beast (The Jabberwock). The poem charts the son’s progress from his departure to his successful return.

1. Read the entire selection, 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. (The purpose of this activity is for the student to gain an understanding of what is happening in the poem in spite of the nonsense words, so trying to teach a meaning for these words is not necessary.)

**During Teaching**

1. Read the poem to the students using excitement and inflection to help students gain a possible insight.

1. Students read the entire selection independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, 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, 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

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Describe the scene in the first stanza. What is the tone of stanza 1? Supply the evidence from the text that supports your answer. | It seems to be serene; however, maybe a little unease is lurking in the shadows – toves, borogroves, and momes. |
| Rewrite stanza 1 in your own words. | Answers will vary  Possible:  Twas early, and the fluffy clouds  Did float and dance in the sky  All excited were the crowds  And the lazy animals sighed. |
| Reread stanza 2. Using the real and nonsense words to explain what is happening. | The father is warning the son of the dangers that he may face in his quest to find the Jabberwock, the Jubjub bird and the Bandersnatch |
| Characterize the Jabberwock. Supply the evidence from the text that supports your answer. | Jaws that bite, claws that catch, Bandersnatch, uffish, eyes of flame, whiffling, burbled --These words pose a danger to the son. Biting and catching claws are descriptors with negative connotations. |
| In stanza 3, who is “he”? What is he doing? | He is the son. The son is searching for the Jabberwock. He tires, and rests by the Tumtum tree and thinks about what he is going to do. |
| Explain what happens in stanza 4. | While the son is resting, the Jabberwock, with his eyes flaming, comes trampling through the wood. |
| Explain what the author means in stanza 5 by, “And through and through/The vorpal blade went snicker-snack.” | The son stands firm and stabs the Jabberwock with his large blade - back and forth eventually cutting off the head of the creature, |
| In stanza 6, who “chortled in his joy”? Why does he chortle? | The father chortles because he is happy that his son who has returned and is proud of his son for slaying the Jabberrwock. |
| Reread stanza 6. What mood is evident in this stanza? Supply the evidence that supports your analysis and thinking. | The mood is joyful. The father is praising his son by using words such as Callooh! Callay! Frabjous day! In addition an exclamation mark indicates excitement. The father chortled in his joy. |
| How many lines are in each stanza?  How many sentences are in the poem? | 28 lines;  14 sentences |
| Identify 3 nonsense words and use context clues to determine the meaning of each. (Hint: Use word endings and articles to help you determine the parts of speech.) | (Galumping and chortle are now in the dictionary, but were nonsense words when this poem was published. We did not count them as nonsense words.)  Frumious – adjective: “ous”  Troves – noun: “the” and an adjective precede  Borogroves – noun: “the” precedes  Beamish – adjective: “ish” |
| Who is the speaker of the poem? What evidence from the poem supports your answer? | The speaker is an unknown narrator. He/she is speaking in third person explaining what is happening in all stanzas of the poem. The speaker refers to the son as “he” in stanzas 3, 4, and 5, but refers to the father as “he” in stanza 6. |
| Why are the first and last stanzas the same? | Answers will vary. Some ideas may include:  The day has moved full circle.  Much has happened in the middle of the day.  Things usually turn back to normal after events.  The son has been through a horrible time, but has finally accepted life as it is, and life is normal again. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **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** | Stanza 3 – foe  Stanza 5 – through  Stanza 5 – galumping  Stanza 6 – slain  Stanza 6 – chortled |  |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** |  |  |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt

In the poem, “Jabberwocky,” by Lewis Carroll, the author tells an epic story using nonsense words. The nonsense words help to create the mood of the poem. Although Carroll does not explicitly explain the events of this narrative poem, you are to analyze the development of the plot in each stanza explaining in standard English the events that occur in each stanza. In addition, determine how the nonsense words and the development of the plot work together to create a mood. Be sure to support your explanation with examples from the text.

* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should guide students in gathering and using any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions earlier. Some students will need a good deal of help gathering this evidence, especially when this process is new and/or the text is challenging!
3. The evidence that follows supports the plot of a father dispatching his son, the epic hero, to slay the Jabberwock.

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| ***Carroll’s Words*** | ***Stanza*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports plot sequence*** |
| Twas brillig Mimsy were the borogoves Mome raths outgabe | STANZA  1  Setting | An afternoon with strange nonsense creatures (borogoves and raths) milling around making noises. A little unease could be lurking amongst these creatures. |
| Beware the Jabberwock Jaws that bite, claws that catch Beware the Jubjub bird and the frumious Bandersnatch! | STANZA  2  Warning | Father warns son to beware of something called a Jabberwocky that has horrible claws and teeth and of other things—the Jubjub bird and the Bandersnatch |
| He took his vorpal sword in hand Rested by the TumTum tree and stood a while in thought. | STANZA  3  Son sets out  STANZA | Son takes his sword and goes looking for the creatures. Along the way he rested and meditated. |
| The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame came whiffling through the tulgey wood and burbled as it came | STANZA  4  Jabberwocky  Attacks | The Jabberwock attacks. It has red eyes like flames and makes noises as it comes out of the woods. |
| The vorpal blade went snicker-snack! He left it dead and with its head He went galumphing back | STANZA  5  Son kills the  Jabberwock | The son kills the Jabberwock by cutting off his head. With the head he goes home. |
| Come to my arms my beamish boy! O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay! He chortled in his joy. | STANZA  6  The son returns victorious | The father is overjoyed and they celebrate together. |
| Twas brillig Mimsy were the borogoves Mome raths outgabe | STANZA 7 Back to Setting | An afternoon with strange nonsense creatures (borogoves and raths) milling around making noises , but at the end of the day the unease could have been diminished just as the Jabberwock was slain.\*\*back to normal |

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 poem “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll, the poet creates an epic story using only seven four-line stanzas with twenty-eight nonsense words. Despite the fact that there are numerous nonsense words, the reader can still make sense of the nonsense by analyzing how the nonsense words are used with the normal words to determine the events of this epic poem. Each stanza adds to the plot line of a young boy whose father warns him of all of the nonsense he will face in life and how he must attack this nonsense in order to learn the real meaning of life. In addition, the mood changes throughout each stanza as tension begins to build and is finally released upon the slaying of the Jabberwock.

Each stanza adds to the plot. The first stanza begins with the setting of the story being an afternoon with strange nonsense creatures, the borogoves and raths, milling around and making noises. It seems serene, yet maybe a little unsettling and uneasy because these creatures seem to be lurking in the shadows.

The second stanza initiates the epic hero’s quest. It is here that the father warns the son to beware of something called a Jabberwock that has “jaws that bite, and claws that catch” and other horrible things including a Jubjub bird and a Bandersnatch.

It is in the third stanza that the son sets off on his quest by taking his “vorpal sword in hand” and going to look for the Jabberwock. Along the way, he “rested by the Tumtum tree” and meditated.

The encounter with the Jabberwock occurs in the fourth stanza when the ugly creature comes from the woods making strange noises and attacks the son. “The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame came whiffling through the tulgy wood and burbled as it came.”

The hero, the son, is triumphant in the fifth stanza when he kills the Jabberwock by cutting off its head. “The vorpal blade went snicker-snack! He left it dead, and with its head, he went galumphing back.” to his father.

In the sixth stanza, the son returns home and the father is overjoyed; they celebrate. “O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!” the father shouts, completing the epic venture.

The last stanza is a repeat of the first stanza with life returning back to the beginning setting, perhaps indicating that life has returned to normal. The unsettled and uneasy feeling of the morning could now be gone due to the slaying of the Jabberwock.

The mood of this poem changes throughout in relation to the setting and character actions. In the beginning it seems there is a sense of normalcy. The mood seems to be serene with the toves, borogoves, and momes existing quietly as they do each day, however there may be a feeling of apprehension in the shadows of these creatures. There is a shift in the second stanza when the father warns the son of the Jabberwock. The frightening image of this monster that has “jaws that bite and claws that catch” creates a fearful mood as the reader knows the son is venturing out to hunt this creature. The son starts his quest and the poem again shifts back to a peaceful time where the son rests and thinks about what is in store for him. The mood shifts to horrific when the Jabberwock viciously interrupts this peaceful scene when he comes “whiffling through the tulgey wood” with flaming eyes. The brave son stands his ground and in an exciting climax, he beheads the Jabberwock with a “snicker-snack” with his “vorpal” blade and victoriously “galumphs” home. Again we feel peaceful but joyous as the father praises the son for completing a rite of passage into adulthood. Finally, things return to normal, and the toves, borogoves, and momes finish the day as quietly as they began.

Additional Tasks

* *In “Jabberwocky” the son is sent by his father to conquer the beast of the forest.* *In our world today, teenagers face many “Jabberwocks” daily. What is your personal Jabberwock? What are ways that you can conquer it? What would it mean to you to actually conquer this “beast”?* Create a flipbook with pictures and paragraphs that thoroughly answer all of the above questions.

Answer: Answers will vary. Students should identify their “Jabberwock” and include at least one way in which they can solve this problem. In addition, they should include their feelings upon solving this problem. They can create a flipbook with a cover, and a section for each of the above questions. They may decorate the cover to reflect their Jabberwock, then in each flap area write paragraphs in response to the questions in the prompt.

Note to Teacher

* It is important that students determine the meaning of this poem without the aid of definitions for the nonsense words. The key idea is that there is sense in the nonsense that surrounds us, but we are able to overcome difficulties in spite of the nonsense.

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

**“Jabberwocky”**

1. Describe the scene in the first stanza. What is the tone of stanza 1? Supply the evidence from the text that supports your answer.
2. Rewrite stanza 1 in your own words.
3. Reread stanza 2. Using the real and nonsense words to explain what is happening.
4. Characterize the Jabberwock. Supply the evidence from the text that supports your answer.
5. In stanza 3, who is “he”? What is he doing?
6. Explain what happens in stanza 4.
7. Explain what the author means in stanza 5 by, “And through and through/The vorpal blade went snicker-snack.”
8. In stanza 6, who “chortled in his joy”? Why does he chortle?
9. Reread stanza 6. What mood is evident in this stanza? Supply the evidence that supports your analysis and thinking.
10. How many lines are in each stanza? How many sentences are in the poem?
11. Identify 3 nonsense words and use context clues to determine the meaning of each. (Hint: Use word endings and articles to help you determine the parts of speech.)
12. Who is the speaker of the poem? What evidence from the poem supports your answer?
13. Why are the first and last stanzas the same?