Unit 3/Week 2

Title: *Water*

Suggested Time: 3 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.6; W.6.1, W.6.2, W.6.3, W.6.4, W.6.9; SL.6.1, SL.6.3; L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.4

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

The ability to communicate opens doors of knowledge and opportunity that are otherwise closed. To communicate effectively it is important to attach meaning to vocabulary through experience or strong emotion.

Synopsis

In “Water”, Helen Keller describes her first experiences with her new teacher. Keller finally grasps the idea that a word Anne Sullivan is spelling *water* corresponds to the water flowing over Keller’s hand. This insight leads Keller to make connections and open doors of knowledge and opportunity previously closed to her.

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.

**During Teaching**

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** |
| “Water” is an excerpt from Helen Keller’s autobiography. Cite examples from the text that show this is an autobiography. | The adult Keller provides insights into the younger Keller’s needs, emotional development, character, thoughts and feelings. Keller tells thoughts and feelings about the events in her life. Examples: my teacher, led me, I was, when I, etc. Written in the first person. |
| How does Miss. Sullivan try to engage Helen in learning about words? | She tries to make it a game of finger play. Helen plays along by imitating Miss. Sullivan and is happy and proud when she imitates the fingering successfully. |
| What does Keller not understand about the words she is spelling? | Keller does not understand that the words stand for specific things or actions. To her, spelling is just “finger play.” |
| What details in this picture show the relationship between Miss. Sullivan and Helen? | Miss. Sullivan’s expression shows that she is a thoughtful woman who cares deeply for Helen. The position of Helen’s head on Miss. Sullivan’s shoulder shows that she trusts her teacher. |
| The definition of persisted is refused to give up. Who do you think is more persistent, Helen or Miss Sullivan? What evidence from the text supports your answer? | Both demonstrate persistence. Miss. Sullivan tries fingering words repeatedly, to help Helen understand that words have meaning. Helen works at learning to communicate with the world around her. |
| How did Helen feel when she broke the doll? | She felt keenly delighted-happy. |
| Why did she feel neither sorrow nor regret? | She did not love the doll. There was no strong feeling attached to it. She didn’t have a word for it. It had no meaning to her. |
| What does Helen mean when she says, “I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed”? | She was frustrated that Miss Sullivan kept trying to make her understand that the fingerings for doll applied to both toys. She thought that if she broke the toy, Miss Sullivan would stop trying. |
| When Helen and her teacher go to the well-house Helen describes the walk. She cannot see the well-house or hear the water. How does she know where the well-house is? | She smells the honeysuckle that covers the well-house. |
| According to the text, what does Ms. Sullivan do to try to teach Helen the word water? | Helen’s teacher puts Helen’s hands into the running water. She starts spelling out the letters of the word water at the same time. |
| Why did this help her understand the meaning of the word water? What is different about this experience from other experiences Miss Sullivan tried? | Miss Sullivan made the word come alive. Helen could feel the sensation of the cool water flowing over her hand. |
| Helen states, “somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me.” What does she mean? | This means that Helen made the connection between the feeling of the water and the word/letters that name it. |
| Why was did Helen say that she was “eager to learn” when she left the well-house? | She finally understood that everything had a name, and that names gave birth to new thoughts. Every object she touched seemed to “quiver with life”. She was eager to learn the names of everything around her. |
| When Helen went back into the house and saw the doll how did she react? Why does she feel that way? | She cried and felt sorry for what she had done because now she knew the name for doll. She had a word to describe the thing she had played with. Helen now has a strong feeling associated with what she had done. |
| What did Helen mean when she wrote, “and for the first time longed for a new day to come”? | Helen was excited about learning and looked forward to learning more. |

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** | blind  Institution  tussle |  |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | imitate  persisted  fragments  sentiment  hearth  keenly  confounding  repentance | consciousness  barriers  \*communication/communicate  blossom |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt
  + *At the end of “Water”, Helen Keller describes herself as having changed from the way she was at the beginning of her autobiographical narrative. Citing evidence from the text, how does the ability to communicate change Helen and what contributed to that change?*
* 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!

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride.” | Helen feels proud that she learned the finger motions for the word doll. |
| “I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor.” | This shows Helen’s frustration. |
| “ somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me.” | Helen finally makes the connection that things have names and words link to things. |
| “awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy set it free!” | Helen feels excited for the first time about learning. |
| “a new day to come.” | Helen is excited about her future. |

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

The ability to communicate opens a whole new world to Helen. After learning that words have meaning she begins to change. Helen goes from being angry and frustrated to being eager and thirsty for new knowledge. In the beginning, Helen is impatient, frustrated and unable to connect words with objects. “I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor.” When Helen had no way to communicate, she could not connect with the world around her. She could not understand people and they could not really understand her. By not being able to communicate Helen could not connect with others. After the incident at the water pump, Helen understands that there is a word for everything. Helen writes, “ somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me.” Helen can now put names to objects. By the end, Helen says, “awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy set it free!” She feels joy. This causes Helen to feel excited and eager to learn and her outlook on life has changed. She goes to bed ready for, “a new day to come.”

Additional Tasks

* *Water* is written from the perspective of Helen Keller. Choose a part of the essay and write it from the perspective of Helen’s teacher, Miss. Sullivan. (W.6.3)
  + Sample Answer: As the morning wore on, I became more and more determined to communicate with Helen. Finally, we took a walk to the well-house. Helen could not see the brilliant colors of spring surrounding us, but she could smell the honeysuckle and feel the water. I knew that if I tried hard enough I could help her understand that the finger movements I was making meant water. I spelled the words over and over into her little hands, until finally, success! I could see the joy on her face. It was a happy moment for us both, and the beginning of something amazing!
* Write a paragraph stating and supporting your opinion as to whether or not Miss Sullivan was a good teacher. (W.6.1)

Note to Teacher

* Have students read and discuss Meet Helen Keller. “A serious illness left Helen Keller blind and deaf before she was two years old. Helen Keller’s family eventually hired Anne Sullivan, a teacher from the Perkins Institution for the Blind, to help her learn to communicate.”
* For more information on Helen Keller visit:
  + <http://braillebug.afb.org/helen_keller_bio.asp>
  + <http://www.afb.org/info/about-us/helen-keller/12>
  + <http://www.afb.org/asm/asmgallery.asp?FrameID=98>
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUV65sV8nu0>