Title/Author: *Clara and the Curandera*

Suggested Time to Spend: 5 Days (Recommendation: at least 20 minutes per day)

Common Core Grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.4, RL.1.7; W.1.2,

W.1.8; SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.3; L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.4

Lesson Objective:

Students will listen to an illustrated text read aloud and use literacy skills (reading, writing, language, speaking, and listening) to understand the central message of the story.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students**. This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

When we focus on the needs of others, and not just ourselves, it can bring us happiness and joy.

How does Clara change throughout the story?

Synopsis

In this picture book, a little girl named Clara learns a lesson about the value of focusing on others rather than one’s self. After noticing that Clara is grumpy, her mother sends her to the *“curandera*” (or healer) to get advice. The *curandera* tells her to do chores for her neighbors, share with her brothers and sisters, and read more books. Clara reluctantly obeys and discovers that she enjoys helping and serving her family and neighbors, and she does not even have time to be grumpy. She enjoys being part of her community. When the week is over, the *curandera* tells her she can stop doing these things, but when Clara goes back to her old ways, she becomes grumpy again. In the end, Clara decides to go back to doing the nice things for her friends and family and learns that when you help others, it can bring you happiness.

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes this Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the sources of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Hint: You may want to copy the questions vocabulary words and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| --- | --- |
| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| FIRST READING:  Read aloud the entire book with minimal interruptions. Stop to provide word meanings or clarify only when you know the majority of your students will be confused. | The goal here is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole. This will give them some context and sense of completion before they dive into examining the parts of the book more carefully. |
| SECOND READING:  The purpose of this reading is to learn more about Clara’s character in the story. In order to discover the lesson of the story, the students have to have a deep understanding of her selfishness in the beginning of the story. At the end of this reading, the class will complete the “beginning” section of a beginning, middle, and end character analysis chart. This will guide the students in identifying how Clara changed throughout the story.  **Reread pages 1-2.**  The author says that “Clara was grumpy. . . .” What does it mean to be “grumpy”?  Looking at the illustration, how can you tell that Clara is grumpy?  Why was Clara grumpy?  What do we know about Clara so far in the story?  Why do you think the author begins three sentences in a row with “She was grumpy about having to. . . .”?  **Reread pages 3-4.**  How is Clara’s mother feeling about Clara being grumpy? How do the author and illustrator show you how Clara’s mother is feeling?  What is Mami’s solution to Clara’s grumpiness?  What does it mean to be “wise”?  What do you think a *curandera* is*?*  How does Clara feel about being sent to see the *curandera?*  How do you know Clara feels this way?  What does “stormily” mean?  **Reread pages 5-6.**  Why does Clara tell the *curandera* that she has been grumpy?  Who is Clara focusing on when she says “I’m tired of not having any space or time to myself.”?  What do you notice about the *curandera’s* apartment from the illustration on page 6?  Based on the things you see in the illustration and what the story says, how is a *curandera* similar to a doctor?  *Explain: They are also different. Doctors use man-made medicines to help us heal, and a curandera uses natural herbs, remedies, and folklore to heal the people*.  **Reread pages 7-8.**  What does the *curandera* tell Clara to do?  How does the author say that Clara reacted to the advice the *curandera* gave?  Why do you think she was surprised?  \***Activity**: Think pair share: Have students turn to a partner and discuss their opinion. After pairs have had a chance to share, let a few students share out to the whole group.   * **EL Note**: This is crucial for English learners. The more opportunities they have to listen and speak about the text, the greater their understanding will be.   The author says that “She didn’t want to disobey, so she said, “’Yes.”’ What does it mean to “disobey”?  How does the author show us that Clara respects the *curandera*?  How does the *curandera’s* advice encourage Clara to focus on others?  **Activity**: Teacher will introduce the beginning, middle, and end chart to describe how Clara’s character changed in the story. For the second reading, the class will fill out only the first “Beginning” section.  Example:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Beginning | Middle | End | | Clara is grumpy.  Clara is selfish.  Clara frowns.  Clara does not like to take out the trash.  Clara does not like to read books.  Clara does not like to share her toys. |  |  | | “Grumpy” means easily annoyed or angered.  The illustrator, Thelma Muraida, shows us that Clara is grumpy because she has a frown on her face and looks unhappy in the illustration on page 2.  \*Have studentspractice making a grumpy face together to further demonstrate the meaning of the word.  Clara was grumpy because she does not want to take out the trash, share her toys with her brothers and sisters, or read one book a week for school.  Clara is focusing on herself; she is not thinking about helping or sharing with others. Take the time to discuss with the students what it means to be selfish.  The author starts three sentences with “She was grumpy about having to. . . .” to emphasize that Clara is grumpy about many things. The author repeats the same words to make it clear to the reader just how grumpy Clara was.  Clara’s mother is not happy that Clara is always grumpy. Mom says, “Enough!”\* in the story, and the illustrator drew the mother with an exhausted/tired look on her face and her hand is on her forehead in frustration.  \*Take the opportunity here to point out that when reading this sentence, it should be read with expression. Point out exclamation point and have students practice reading the sentence with expression.\*  “It’s time to see the *curandera* who lives in the apartment 220. She is very wise, and you must ask her what to do. Go!”  When someone is “wise”, he or she shows good sense/thinking or good judgment.  The *curandera* is a wise woman. She gives good advice. She can solve problems. Note: In Hispanic culture, a *curandera* is a female healer, or medicine woman, who uses magic and folklore to treat illness or impart traditional wisdom. If you have not spent time discussing *curandera*, now would be a good time to do this. Explain the idea of a medicine woman to the students. In this story, the *curandera* does not use herbs because Clara is not physically ill; she uses her wisdom to give Clara advice to help her with her grumpiness.  She is very unhappy. She seems angry.  In the text, the author says that she went “grumpily, stormily, unhappily.” We can also see that she does not look very happy to go in the illustration.  “Stormily” means in an angry or violent manner.  “I’m tired of not having any space or time to myself.”  Clara is thinking of herself and what she wants. She is not thinking about others.  There are candles and lights lit. There is an altar behind the table. There are items that she uses to heal the people who come and see her.  They both help people to heal or get better.  “Take out your own trash, but I want you to take out Señora García and Señora Chávez’s trash too/give all your favorite toys to your sisters and brothers/I want you to read not just one book this week, but five.”  “Clara was surprised and upset…”  Clara was surprised because that is exactly the opposite of what she wanted to do. These are the things that were making her grumpy, and now she has to do more of them!  “Disobey” is when you purposely do not do what someone or something in authority tells you to do.  Clara shows respect by agreeing to do the things the *curandera* told her to do, even though it upset her.  Clara is going to focus on others by doing the things the *curandera* tells her to do: helping others, sharing her toys, and reading more books. She will be doing acts of kindness for people instead of focusing on how grumpy she was.  \*Students should actively participate in the shared writing experience by coming up with descriptions, discussing beginning sounds, sounding out words, and sharing the pen. |
| THIRD READING:  The purpose of this reading is tohighlight the change in Clara’s character as a result of going to see the *curandera*. It will focus on how doing things for others made Clara feel.  **Reread pages 9-10**.  Why does the author say that “it was a very busy week for Clara.”?  How does Clara feel about giving away her toys?  How do you know?  **Reread pages 11-12**.  How does her brothers and sisters respond to Clara giving away her toys?  Why does little Tina tell Clara she is “the nicest big sister in the whole world”?  **Reread pages 13-14**.  What part of the *curandera’s* advice is Clara obeying now?  Who is Clara thinking about when she is taking out her neighbors’ trash?  How do her neighbors respond to Clara taking out their trash?  How do the author and illustrator show us how Clara is feeling?  Why does the author say that Clara wasn’t sure why she was happy? What does that mean?  **Reread page 15-16.**  At the beginning of the story, Clara was grumpy about having to read one book a week. How does she feel about reading now?  What is a veterinarian?  What changed her mind?  What does Mami notice about Clara?  **Activity**: Teacher will lead class in discussion about how Clara has changed from the beginning of the story. Students will get into pairs and share before coming together to share whole group. After sharing, teacher will add to chart, filling in middle section.  Example:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Beginning | Middle | End | | Clara is grumpy.  Clara is selfish.  Clara frowns.  Clara does not like to take out the trash.  Clara does not like to read books.  Clara does not like to share her toys. | Clara gives away her toys.  Clara helps her neighbors take out the trash.  Clara reads many books about animals and likes it!  Clara feels happy.  Clara does not frown. |  | | The author says that it was a busy week because Clara was busy doing what she had been told to do, including giving away her toys to her brothers and sisters.  She does not like giving away her toys.  The author says it was “the hardest part.” The illustrator shows us that her face looks sad in the picture where she is giving her little sister her doll.  The text says “her brothers and sisters were so happy that they were extra nice.”  Tina is happy because Clara gave her toys to her brothers and sisters, and they were really enjoying playing with them together.  Clara is not only taking out her family’s trash, but also the trash of her two elderly neighbors.  Clara is not thinking about herself. She is thinking more about her family and neighbors than herself.  “Señora García gave Clara big warm hugs and Señora Chávez said, “’You are such a sweet girl.”’  The author tells “Clara felt happy” and the illustrator shows us by drawing a smile on Clara’s face in the illustration on page 14.  Clara was confused as to why she felt happy because she is doing more of the things that used to make her grumpy, but she does not feel grumpy. The author is showing us that Clara’s feelings are starting to change.  She likes reading the books and decided she wanted to be a veterinarian when she grows up.  A veterinarian is a doctor who takes care of animals.  Her mom took her to the library and she read books about animals.  “Clara, I haven’t seen you frown once this whole week!”  \*Students should actively participate in the shared writing experience by coming up with descriptions, discussing beginning sounds, sounding out words, and sharing the pen. |
| FOURTH READING AND BEYOND:  **Reread pages 17-18.**  Why does the author say that after leaving the *curandera* Clara is “surprised and more confused than ever”?  **Reread pages 19-20.**  Why does the author call it a strange week?  What does “strange” mean?  How does Clara feel now that she can go back to focusing on herself?  **Reread pages 21-22.**  The author says that Clara “realized what was wrong.” What is wrong?  How does the author show us that Clara had changed her feelings about taking out the trash?  **Reread pages 23-24.**  Why does Clara decide she wanted to read more books?  Why do you think the author says Mami smiled after Clara asked her to go to the library?  **Reread pages 25-28.**  What is the other thing that Clara missed doing?  Why is Clara happy?  Why does Clara go see the *curandera*?  The text says, “When she got there, the *curandera* was busy talking to naughty Nicolás from down the hall.” What does “naughty” mean?  What do you think the *curandera* is going to tell Nicolas? Why?  **Activity**: Teacher will lead class in discussion about how Clara has changed from the beginning of the story. Students will get into pairs and share before coming together to share whole group. After sharing, teacher will add to chart, filling in end section.  Example:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Beginning | Middle | End | | Clara is grumpy.  Clara is selfish.  Clara frowns.  Clara does not like to take out the trash.  Clara does not like to read books.  Clara does not like to share her toys. | Clara gives away her toys.  Clara helps her neighbors take out the trash.  Clara reads many books about animals and likes it!  Clara feels happy.  Clara does not frown. | Clara decides to keep helping her friends and family and reading more books even though the *curandera* tells her she does not have to. She decides doing these things brings her happiness. | | Clara is surprised and confused because she was not expecting the *curandera* to tell her to stop doing all the things she did the week before.  The author calls it a strange week because “Clara only took out her family’s trash, read only one book, and didn’t share her new doll.”  “Strange” means different, not normal.  “Clara felt grumpy… and even a little sad.  “She missed taking out the trash…At least she missed their hugs and warm smiles and the special way they made her feel.”  “She decided to keep taking out their trash.”  “If I’m going to be a veterinarian, there’s a lot more I have to read!”  Mami is happy because she knows that Clara has changed. Mami knows this because Clara decided on her own to go to the library to read more books, without anyone telling her to do it.  “Clara missed sharing and laughing and playing with her brothers and sisters.”  Clara is happy because she enjoys spending time with her family, and they have agreed to play soccer after dinner.  “She ran down the hall to thank the *curandera* and tell her what she had learned.”  “Naughty” means badly behaved.  Encourage students to use text evidence to support their opinion. Allow students to share with a partner; optional writing task with this prompt as an extension (see below).  \*Students should actively participate in the shared writing experience by coming up with descriptions, discussing beginning sounds, sounding out words, and sharing the pen. |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK - Culminating Task

* Prompt

What lesson is the author trying to teach us in this story? Use text evidence to support your answer. Use pictures and words to show the lesson Clara learned in this book. Students may use pictures to support the words in their written response.

* Sample Answer

Monica Brown is trying to teach us that doing nice things for others can bring us happiness. In this story, Clara learns that she is happier when she is helping her friends and family than when she is being selfish. She is not grumpy or unhappy when she is taking out her neighbor’s trash and sharing with her family. She went to see the *curandera,* who helped her realize that focusing on others took away her grumpiness.

* *See standards on page 1-2 for more information about expectations for student writing.*

Español:

* ¿Qué lección está tratando de enseñarnos el autor en esta historia? Usa evidencia de texto para apoyar tu respuesta. Usa dibujos y palabras para mostrar la lección que Clara aprendió en este libro. Los estudiantes pueden usar imágenes para apoyar las palabras en su respuesta escrita.
* Ejemplo:

Monica Brown está tratando de enseñarnos que hacer cosas buenas por los demás nos puede traer felicidad. En esta historia, Clara aprende que es más feliz cuando está ayudando a sus amigos y familiares que cuando está siendo egoísta. Ella no está humorada o desgraciada cuando saca la basura de su vecina y la comparte con su familia. Fue a ver a la *curandera*, que la ayudó a darse cuenta de que centrarse en los demás le quitó el mal humor.

Vocabulary

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| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/  processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students ) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part  of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with) |
| Page 15 - veterinarian – a doctor who takes care of animals  Page 19 – strange– different, not normal  Page 27 - naughty – badly behaved | Page 1 - grumpy – easily annoyed or angered.  Page 3 – stormily– in a stormy or violent manner  Page 3 - *curandera* – In Hispanic culture, a female healer, or medicine woman, who uses magic and folklore to treat illness or impart traditional wisdom  Page 7 – disobey – to purposely not do what someone or something in authority tells you to do. |

Fun Extension Activities for this Book and Other Useful Resources

* Students can watch thirty seconds of this YouTube video of a *curandera* practicing her medicine. Teacher can lead discussion contrasting and comparing doctors and *curanderas.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTfikknqMC0>
* Write about what the *curandera* is going to tell naughty Nicolás. (narrative writing)
* Several times the author stops and asks a question to the reader. Teacher can lead students through these places in the story, and examine the affect this has on the story. Why do the author do this?

Note to Teacher

(No special direction needed.)

**What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

Undetermined

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

Implicit Meaning: Altruism

“She missed taking out the trash for Señor García and Señora Chávez! At least she missed their hugs and warm smiles and the special way they made her feel. She decided to keep taking out their trash.”

Sequential structure

Chronological in order with an underlying cause and effect relationship

Complex sentence structure

“The whole family played soccer together after dinner, and before bed, little Tina whispered, ‘”Clara, you’re the nicest big sister in the whole wide world.”’

*Curandera*, healer

“It’s time to see the *curandera* who lives in apartment 220. She is very wise, and you must ask her what to do. Go!”

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

The thing that will likely challenge the students the most is understanding the concept of the *curandera*, or healer. This tradition is uncommon in some cultures, so this is something that may need to be explained in detail before reading so the students do not get hung up on the possibly unfamiliar content.

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

By actively listening to and engaging in discussions around this text, students will gain a deeper understanding of altruism. They will learn more about Hispanic culture and alternative, natural medicine.

1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in?

First grade