Unit 4/Week 5

Title: The Gymnast

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.4; W.5.2, W.5.4, W.5.9; SL.5.1; L.5.1, L.5.2

Teacher Instructions

**Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Through the act of retelling his story, Gary Soto is able to show that the right motivation is essential when striving to change or improve oneself.

Synopsis

Gary Soto writes an autobiography about a time when he was eleven years old, wanting to be a gymnast like his cousin. He thinks it is important that he *look* like a gymnast. He tries unsuccessfully to teach himself and after several humorous, yet failed attempts, he gives up the idea of becoming an Olympic gymnast.

1. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Based on the evidence on page 496, why was Gary Soto feeling jealous? | The author states that Gary’s mom was “yapping” about his cousin Isaac who was taking gymnastics and “how proud she was of him.” Gary had also watched his share of Wide World of Sports and knew that people admired an athlete who could somersault without hurting himself. |
| Reread the last sentence in the first paragraph.  What do you learn about Gary from what he says? | Gary is spending some time alone playing, a “solitary game of Chinese checkers.” Gary is interested in gymnastics, but doesn’t know how to do it as he “spent a few minutes rolling around the backyard until I was dizzy and itchy with grass.” He was doing these things alone. |
| On page 496, what did Gary observe about his cousin?  What do these observations say about Gary’s feelings towards Isaac? | Gary watched his cousin “dressed in gymnastic shorts and top do spindly cartwheels and back flips in his backyard. While doing his cartwheels, Isaac instructed Gary by saying, “This is the correct way.” “He breathed in the grassy air, leaped, and came up smiling the straightest teeth in the world.” In the front yard, Isaac “did a back flip and looked out the side of his eyes to see if any of the passengers were looking.” From these observations Gary probably felt envious of his cousin’s ability and the attention that he received. |
| What evidence does the author provide that explains why Gary envies Isaac’s cloth gymnast shoes? (page 499) | In the story, Gary writes that he liked the way the shoes looked, “slim, black, and cool.” They seemed special, something he could never slip onto his feet. |
| Based on the reading on page 499, what else motivates Gary to want to become a gymnast? | From the reading, Gary says, he “liked the tape as well and tried to paste it around my wrists.”  “I asked him again if I could wear his shoes.”  “The shoes were loose, but I liked them. I went to the front yard with my wrists dripping tape and my hands as white as gloves. I smiled shyly and thought I looked neat.” |
| Give evidence from what we have read so far to support the idea that Gary did not have the right motivation to become a gymnast. | On page 496, he was jealous because of his mother’s admiration of Isaac. He wanted to be like the athletes on the TV show, Wide World of Sports, who are admired for their abilities. On pages 496 and 499, after observing his cousin, Gary borrowed his cousin’s shoes, tape and powder to imitate what he saw his cousin doing. Gary wanted to look cool and look the part of a gymnast. It is as if the clothing would give him the skills of a gymnast. |
| What items did Gary use to make himself *look like* a gymnast? (page 500) | In the story, Gary found a pair of old vinyl slippers in the closet. He found circle bandages in the medicine cabinet, which he circled around his wrist. He dipped his hand in flour to keep them dry. |
| On page 500, how do we know that the shoes were too small for Gary? | Gary pushed his feet into the shoes, tugging and wincing because they were too small, “but he forced them on anyway.” |
| What evidence does the author give that he was unsuccessful as a gymnast? (page 500) | He finally, after much hesitation, did a backflip that “nearly cost him his life” when he landed on his head. He crawled to the shade, “stars of pain pulsating in his shoulder and his neck.” Note that the author uses figurative language (exaggeration and alliteration). |
| What words, phrases, or sentences help you know that Gary wanted to be left alone? Why did he want to be alone?  (Page 500) | When Gary’s brother stared at him and asked him why he was wearing slippers, Gary didn’t answer him. His brother asked him about the flour on his hands and Gary told him to leave him alone. He was embarrassed by what he was doing. |
| On page 500, what is going wrong with Gary’s plan to be a gymnast? | The vinyl slippers he wore were too small and caused his feet to throb. Instead of receiving admiration from other people, he was asked questions such as, “Why are you wearing slippers?” “Why is there flour on your hands?” It caused him great pain every time he tried to do a backflip. |
| How much time did he spend on appearance? On learning gymnastics? | Gary took more time with his appearance than with learning how to do gymnastics. He took the time to assemble what he needed: slippers, tape, and flour, but there is no evidence in the story that he took any lessons that would show him the correct way to do a backflip without hurting himself. |
| At the end of the story, on page 503, Gary Soto states, “I ate a plum and pictured my cousin, who was probably cartwheeling to the audience of one sleeping dog.” Why this abrupt end to his desire to become a gymnast? What does he realize about himself? | After dinner, Gary went outside, stuffed his feet into the slippers and did cartwheels by the dizzy dozens. After a while they were easy, and then he tried a backflip. He landed on his neck again and this time saw an orange burst behind his eyes. He realizes that his motivation to become a gymnast was for the attention he thought he would receive, not for his skill. |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING** | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING** |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | Page 496 - gymnastics  Page 499 - limelight  Page 500 - vinyl | Page 496 - jealous  Page 499 - disdain  Page 499 – nutrients  Page 499 - envied  Page 500 - skidded  Page 500 - hesitation |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | Page 495 - gymnast  Page 496 - somersault  Page 496 - cartwheels  Page 496 - back flip  Page 496 - yap | Page 500 - bandages  Page 500 - wincing  Page 500 - slippers  Page 503 – throbbing  Page 503 - summery |

Culminating Task

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write
* *Eleven-year-old Gary Soto was motivated to become a gymnast, just like his cousin.* *Using details from the story, explain why Gary’s reasons for wanting to be a gymnast did not help him achieve his goal.*
  + Sample Answer:

Gary Soto’s motivation to become a gymnast like his cousin Isaac was that he wanted to be admired by other people. Gary’s mother said about Isaac, “She was proud of him.” (p. 496) Gary stated that he was jealous of the athletes on Wide World of Sports because “people admired an athlete who could somersault without hurting himself” (p. 496). Gary noticed that some passengers in cars watched Isaac as he did gymnastics exercises on the front lawn (p. 496). Gary was also motivated to become a gymnast because he liked the equipment used by gymnasts and felt that just wearing the shoes, tape, and powder like Isaac would make him an admired gymnast. For example, on page 500, he “found a pair of old vinyl slippers.” Gary says he, “looked for tape to wrap his wrists, but could only find circle bandages.” Finally, Gary tells us, “I dipped my hands in flour to keep them dry.” He became frustrated by the constant questions asked by other people, such as “Why I was wearing slippers?” (p. 503) or “Why I had white powder on my hands?” (p. 503) Gary eventually ends up giving up because he was unable to do a backflip without causing himself pain, “I landed on my neck again, this time I saw an orange burst behind my eyes.” He realized that his initial idea about being an admired gymnast was not going to happen, because being an admired gymnast requires a lot of hard work, not just the right clothing.

Additional Tasks

* Imagine that this selection was written from the point of view of Gary Soto’s cousin Isaac. Rewrite one paragraph from the story, including thoughts and feelings that you imagine Isaac may have had.
  + Sample Answer (page 496 – paragraph #2):

That Saturday, my cousin, Gary came to my house to watch me as I practiced my gymnastic exercises. Gary sat under an aluminum arbor, eating a plum. I enjoy people watching me as I do my gymnastics, but I think Gary thinks that gymnastics is easier than it is. As I did cartwheels and back flips, I instructed him on the correct way to do them. I could tell that he and the other people that passed by were impressed.

Note to Teacher

* A class discussion about what motivates people to act and the sharing of examples will be helpful before students attempt the culminating writing task.

Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs)

to use with Basal Alignment Project 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 Basal Alignment Project Lessons to help support your ELLs. They are grouped by when they would best fit in a 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 the reading:**

* Read passages, sing songs, 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 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, or 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.
  + Practice spelling the words using different spelling practice strategies and decoding strategies. Students could take turns spelling with a partner.
* Use graphic organizers to help introduce content.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students fill in a [KWL chart](http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html) about what they will be reading about.
* Have students research setting or topic using a pre-approved website and fill in a chart about it. You could even have students work in groups where each group is assigned part of the topic.
* Have students fill in a bubble map where they write down anything that they find interesting about the topic while watching a video or reading a short passage about the topic. Then students can discuss why they picked the information.

**During reading:**

* Read the text aloud first so that ELLs can hear the passage read by a fluent reader before working with the text themselves.
* 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.
* Encourage students to create sketch-notes or to storyboard the passage when they are reading it individually or with a partner. This will help show if they understand what they are reading as they are reading it.
* Ask questions related to the who, what, when, why, and how of the passage. For students that may need a little more help, provide them with [sentence stems](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion).
* Continue to draw attention to and discuss the words that you introduced before the reading.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students include the example from the text in their glossary that they created.
* Create or find pictures that represent how the word was used in the passage.
* Practice creating sentences using the word in the way it was using in the passage.
* Have students discuss the author’s word choice.
* Use graphic organizers to help organize content and thinking.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students fill in a chart to keep track of their 5ws while they read to help them summarize later and figure out the central idea of a passage.
* It may again be beneficial to have somewhere for students to store new words that they encounter while reading the text. Students could use a chart to keep track of these new words and their meanings as they read.
* If you had students fill in a KWL, have them fill in the “L” section as they read the passage.
* Utilize any illustrations or text features that come with the story or passage to better understand the reading.
* Compare/contrast the passage with what the illustrations convey about the passage. Have students consider if the illustrations look the way they visualized the passage in their own minds or if the passage matches their predictions based on the illustrations.
* Identify any text features such as captions and discuss how they contribute to meaning.

**After reading:**

* Present directions for any post-reading assignments orally and visually; repeat often; and ask English Language Learners to rephrase.
* 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 the objective(s) that were shared with students.
* 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/).
* Reinforce new vocabulary using multiple modalities

**Examples of activities:**

* Using the words that you had students work with before reading, have students write sentences in reference to the passage that you just finished reading.
* Require students to include the words introduced before reading in the culminating writing task.
* For newcomers, print out pictures that represent the words that you focused on and have students match the words to the pictures.
* Based on different features of the words, have the students sort them into different categories and explain their choices. For example, the students could sort the words by prefixes, suffixes, connotation, etc.
* 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).
* Provide differentiated scaffolds for writing assignments based on students’ English language proficiency levels.

**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.
* To further discussion about the passage, have students create their own who, what, when, where, why, and how questions related to the passage to ask each other and have students pair up and practice asking each other the questions. If available, pair students of the same home language to support the use of language still under development.