Unit 1

Title: “The Scarlet Ibis”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Suggested Time: 4-5 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.9-10.2, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.5, L.9-10.6

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 text explores the conflicts between love and pride, and draws attention to the effects of familial and societal expectations and stigma of those who are mentally and/or physically handicapped. It also explores the consequences of human selfishness, regret and guilt.

Synopsis

"The Scarlet Ibis" is a troubling tale of two brothers. One brother, called Doodle, has physical disabilities and serious health problems. The other brother, known only as Brother, is desperate to turn Doodle into a "normal" kid in time to face the harsh world of school.

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** |
| Using the narrator’s descriptions of the seasons in the first sentence, make an inference in regards to what possible month the story may be set in? Cite specific textual evidence that helps you to infer this. | The narrator’s descriptions makes one believe that this text began in the month of August or September. It is stated, “…summer was dead but autumn had not been born…” |
| Diction refers to the author’s choice of words. On page \_\_\_, Hurst begins the story by saying “…summer was dead, but autumn had not yet been born…” Consider Hurst’s word choices throughout the first paragraph; what tone does this establish for the reader? Support your response with specific textual evidence. | The tone that Hurst establishes is grave and mournful. He speaks of summer being “dead, and he describes “rotten brown magnolia petals” and “untenanted oriole nests.” He also suggested that “grave yard flowers are speaking softly the names of our dead.” All of these words and images contribute to the overall tone of the piece as somber and serious. |
| How does the second paragraph on page \_\_\_ work to frame the story the narrator will tell? Cite textual evidence that supports your reasoning. | The reader learns the narrator is living in his childhood home and is recalling events from long ago. Even though the home, the garden, and the fence remain relatively the same, change is evident in the “grindstone where the bleeding tree stood” and the “oriole song dying up in the tree.” The grindstone in the front yard reminds him of his brother, Doodle. |
| On the bottom of page \_\_\_ the narrator points out differences between the brothers. What can we infer about how the brother feels about Doodle’s condition? | He is six years older than Doodle. He states “he was six when I was born.” It also states, “…a disappointment. He seemed all head, with a tiny body which was red and shriveled like an old man’s.” This sentence helps the reader understand that Doodle was different than other kids, specifically his brother. This is a source of embarrassment and disappointment for the brother. |
| On page \_\_\_, the narrator says, “They named him William Armstrong, which was like tying a big tail on a small kite.” Explain what the narrator means by this? What does this reveal about the narrator’s character? | The name is too strong for a weakling like Doodle, a small kite with a big tail would not fly well and would look really unusual. This reveals that the narrator has a sense of humor, but he is also judgmental and critical of Doodle. |
| Re-read the 2nd paragraph on page \_\_\_. What differences between the narrator and his brother can you infer? Cite specific evidence from the text that helps you make this inference. | The narrator is healthy and strong; Doodle is not. The texts states that the narrator can do things like “holding my breath, running, jumping or climbing the vines.” The text also states that “but even if Doodle lives, cries Mama, he will never do those things.” The narrator is also smart and Doodle, according to the mother, “…might not… be all there….” This evidence helps the reader see the distinct differences between the two boys. |
| Reread the last paragraph on page \_\_\_; what are the narrator’s feelings about Doodle? Cite specific textual evidence that supports your answer. | The narrator is embarrassed and frustrated. It is very clear in the text when the narrator mentions that, “ It was bad enough having an invalid brother, but having one who possibly was not all there was unbearable, so I began to make plans to kill him by smothering him with a pillow.” |
| Based on page \_\_\_, in what ways is the relationship of the narrator and Doodle typical of brothers or siblings? | The narrator is burdened by Doodle. He says “a long list of don’ts went with him.” He also says he ignored most of them, away from his mother- that is typical of older siblings. He eventually gives in and accepts that Doodle “will cling to him forever.” He takes him to the Old Woman Swamp to show him “the only beauty I know”- he does care for Doodle, despite his frustrations-also typical of siblings. He is also mean to Doodle at times, forcing him to touch his casket. |
| On page \_\_\_, the narrator says “There is within me (and with sadness I have watched it in others) a knot of cruelty  borne by the stream of love…” What does the narrator mean by this? How have the events of this story affected the narrator’s life? What possible theme might be revealed by this statement? | The narrator means that even though we love someone, we can still be cruel to them. Sometimes we are most cruel to the people we love the most. When the narrator says he has “watched it in others with sadness” it shows that he still has regret for the way he treated Doodle. This regret has affected his life. Sometimes our regrets change or deeply impact our lives. |
| Reread the 2nd paragraph of the second column on page \_\_\_. How are the brothers alike at this moment? Cite specific textual evidence that reveals this. | They are both happy that Doodle has learned to walk. “‘Yes, yes,’ I cried, and he cried it too, and the grass beneath us was soft and the smell of the swamp was sweet.” They both no longer have to rely on hope alone, as their dreams have come to fruition. “Hope no longer hid in the dark palmetto… but perched like cardinal…brilliantly visible.” This shows how proud they both are of their accomplishments |
| Reread the 3rd paragraph on page \_\_\_, why is the narrator crying? Why did he really teach Doodle to walk? What possible theme is emerging (or being reinforced) here? | He feels guilty. He only taught Doodle to walk for selfish reasons, “I was ashamed of having a crippled brother.” Again the text is reinforcing the thoughts of regret and how it has stayed with him throughout his life. |
| When the narrator says “Once I had succeeded in teaching Doodle to walk, I began to believe in my own infallibility...” What does this reveal about his character? Cite textual evidence that supports your assumption. | It shows he is naïve and unrealistic. He thinks he can do anything and completely “fix” Doodle. He begins to “develop a program for Doodle- to teach him to run, swim, and climb trees and fight.” This would be typical of a young child. |
| Look back to page \_\_\_ and re-read the portion of the text about the Scarlet Ibis. What do Doodle’s reactions reveal about him? In what way might this serve as foreshadowing, or clues about what will happen next? | It is the first time Doodle takes initiative. “ I’m going to bury him.” He feels a connection to the bird. He is kind and concerned; The text states that he “clasps his hands around his throat” and the narrator “had never seen him stand still so long.”  The Ibis is so delicate that he could not survive a fall, this might hint at something horrible happening to Doodle because of his delicate condition. |
| Reread the last paragraph on page \_\_\_. In what ways is the Ibis symbolic, or representative of something other than its literal meaning? Cite textual evidence that supports your idea. | The ibis is symbolic of Doodle. “I lay there crying, sheltering my fallen scarlet ibis...” The narrator is referring back to the bird that fell from the tree, the one that Doodle buried.  The ibis has a long, slender vermillion neck, legs bent at the knees, and seems weak and fragile. That is how the narrator describes Doodle: “… making his vermillion neck appear unusually long and slim. His little legs bent sharply at the knee…so fragile, so thin.” |
| The author uses color descriptions all through the text, from the very first paragraph to the very last. How does this enhance the tone of the text? How might the tone further enhance the theme of the text? Provide specific examples from the text. | The color red is constantly referenced from the “bleeding tree” to the “broken vase of red flowers” to “his vermilion neck”, the “scarlet ibis” and finally to the “bleeding from the mouth” of Doodle. The constant red descriptions might lead the reader to think of blood, pain, and death. Overall, it gives the text a sorrowful tone. This sorrow enhances the overarching theme of regret and how it impacts a life. |

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** | Page \_\_\_ – outset  Page \_\_\_ – careen\*  Page \_\_\_ – loll  Page \_\_\_ –barring  Page \_\_\_ – serene\*  Page \_\_\_ –unfurled  Page \_\_\_ – mar  Page \_\_\_ – precariously\*  Page \_\_\_ – reiterate\*  Page \_\_\_ – solder\*  Page \_\_\_ – naught\*  Page \_\_\_ - armada | Page \_\_\_ – licked  Page \_\_\_ – sullenly  Page \_\_\_ – imminent  Page \_\_\_ – blighted\*  Page \_\_\_ – doggedness  Page \_\_\_ – heresy\*  Page \_\_\_ – evanesced\* |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | Page \_\_\_ – untenanted  Page \_\_\_ – invalid  Page \_\_\_ – scowling  Page \_\_\_ – gilded  \* = These definitions are provided in the text. | Page \_\_\_ – infallibility  Page \_\_\_ – spite |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt

*“The Scarlet Ibis” is a reflective story. It is told from a first-person point-of-view with the narrator looking back into his past. On page 166 the narrator says, “But all of us must have something or someone to be proud of, and Doodle had become mine. I did not know then that pride is a wonderful, terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death.” What is meant by this statement, and how has the narrator’s life been impacted by what happens to Doodle? How does this reinforce the overarching theme? Using textual evidence, write a well-developed, complex paragraph in response to these questions.*

* 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 remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Page number*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “He was a burden in many ways. ….A long list of don’ts went with him, all of which I ignored once we got out of the house. To discourage his coming with me, I’d run with him across the ends of the cotton rows and careen him around corners on two wheels...”  “A long list of don’ts went with him, all of which I ignored once we got out of the house.” |  | The narrator feels burdened by Doodle. He says “a long list of don’ts went with him.” The narrator also says he ignored most of them, away from his mother.  The narrator is also embarrassed by Doodle and tries many things to make Doodle not want to follow him and hang out with him. The narrator’s pride is what causes him to be embarrassed and also what motivates him to treat Doodle so poorly.  He remembers the events very vividly, suggesting they have had a real impact on his life. |
| “It was bad enough having an invalid as a brother, but having one who possible was not all there was unbearable.” |  | The narrator’s pride causes him to be embarrassed of Doodle’s physical condition, and the prospect of his brother being mentally disabled is unbearable. This no doubt contributes to his treatment of Doodle and his desire to “fix” him. |
| “Once I had succeeded in teaching Doodle to walk, I began to believe in my own infallibility…”  “I would teach him to run, to swim, to climb trees…” |  | The narrator feels a sense of pride in teaching Doodle to walk. He begins to establish an unattainable “program” for Doodle. This no doubt contributes to Doodle’s demise and is a source of regret for the narrator. He realizes, now, how naïve he was to think that Doodle could do these things. Even though he had taught Doodle to walk, he was still disabled and weak; the narrator seems to be oblivious to this. |
| “We never spoke (What are the words that can solder cracked pride?)…” |  | The narrator has realized that he will never be able to teach Doodle all of the great things. Here, the narrators pride is a source of cruelty because he purposefully runs far ahead of Doodle. The reader gets the impression the narrator feels a profound sense of guilt about this particular moment, and it has had a great impact on his life. |
| “For a long time, it seemed forever, I lay there crying, sheltering my fallen scarlet ibis…” |  | This is the most powerful instance of regret and guilt in the story. It solidifies the narrator’s feelings about what happened to Doodle and even creates a sense of regret and despair in the reader. It was the narrator’s pride that brought him, and the reader, to this moment- a tragic and regrettable end. |

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 Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst is a powerful story about the consequences of pride and the effect regret has on a life. When the narrator says that “pride is… a seed that bears to vines, life and death,” he means that pride can be source of great accomplishment and a source of regret, which reinforces the overarching theme of the impact of regret and guilt on people’s lives. From the beginning of the story, the narrator’s pride drives his actions. The narrator states on page \_\_\_ that “He was a burden in many ways. ….A long list of don’ts went with him…” The narrator is burdened by Doodle, his disabled younger brother, and is embarrassed by him. His pride is what drives him to want get away from Doodle. The narrator says he tries to “run with him across the ends of the cotton rows and careen him around corners on two wheels...” The narrator treats Doodle cruelly so that he will not follow the narrator around. Additionally, the narrator’s pride causes him to want to “fix” Doodle. The narrator tries to teach Doodle to be a normal child. On page \_\_\_, it states “It was bad enough having an invalid as a brother, but having one who possible was not all there was unbearable.” The narrator cannot bear the thought of having an invalid, incompetent brother, so he sets out to teach him to walk, which he eventually succeeds in doing. On page \_\_\_ it says, “Once I had succeeded in teaching Doodle to walk, I began to believe in my own infallibility…” and “I would teach him to run, to swim, to climb trees…” The narrator feels a sense of accomplishment at teaching Doodle to walk, but it causes him to believe he can make unrealistic progress with Doodle. This, no doubt, contributes to Doodles eventual demise and the narrator’s deep sense of regret. When the narrator’s attempts to teach Doodle fail, his pride is damaged and it causes him to cruelly run from Doodle. On page \_\_\_, the narrator says, “…What words can solder cracked pride?” The narrator angrily leaves Doodle in a brutal storm, only to return to find him dead. This is the biggest source of the narrator’s regret and the most powerful moment of the story. The narrator’s final words reveal and enhance the overarching theme of the effects of guilt and regret: “For a long time, it seemed forever, I lay there crying, sheltering my fallen scarlet ibis…” (\_\_\_). The narrator’s pride causes both success and regret in the story; in that sense it is “a seed that bears to vines, life and death.”

Additional Tasks

* *How do the narrator’s thoughts and actions reveal the perception of the mentally and physically handicapped at the time of the text? Provide specific evidence from the text to support your ideas in one or two well-developed paragraphs.*

Answer: The narrator’s thoughts and actions show the reader that mentally and physically handicapped were stigmatized and devalued at the time of the text. The family does not bother to name Doodle until he is several months old, showing what little value the place with him. The narrators says, “It was bad enough having an invalid as a brother, but having one who possible was not all there was unbearable.” This evidence shows how embarrassed the narrator is to have a handicapped brother. Obviously, there is a stigma associated with Doodle’s condition in order to provoke such a strong reaction from the narrator. The text also details the mother crying about Doodle not being “all there.” This deeply upsets the mother and causes the reader to assume that if the family is devastated to have a mentally handicapped child. It is clear from the strong reactions of the characters that the mentally and physically handicapped were stigmatized and devalued at the time of the text.

Note to Teacher

* Some questions are scaffolded to be accessible to a variety of learners. Therefore, teachers should consider their students’ needs and ability levels when deciding on what questions to use and in what order. For struggling students, some leading questions and tasks may be necessary to guide them through the actual TDQ.

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.

1. *This story is a “duplicate.” (It is found in other anthologies, as well.) This particular revision was completed by a teacher who uses a different anthology than you, so the page numbers have been removed. This may require you to make some adjustments/add page numbers to some of the questions.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)