Title/Author: *Dear Juno*, by Soyung Pak

Suggested Time to Spend: 6 Days

(Recommendation: 2-3 sessions per day, about 15 minutes per session; adjust as needed for class schedule and student stamina)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.K.1, RL.K.3, RL.K.4, RL.K.7; W.K.2; SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.5, SL.K.6; L.K.1, L.K.4

Lesson Objective:

Students will describe how Juno and his grandmother learn to communicate and what they learn about each other.

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

Across distance and differences in language, Juno and his grandmother find ways to communicate about their experiences

and, in doing so, discover many similarities in their lives.

Synopsis

Juno is a young boy who thinks often about his grandmother. They have never met because she lives far away in Korea. One day, a letter arrives for Juno from his grandmother. He recognizes his name on the envelope, but upon opening the letter, quickly realizes he cannot read the note because it is written in Korean script. However, Juno is able to determine the meaning of the letter through a picture and a dried flower included in the envelope. Although Juno and his Grandmother are unable to communicate with their words, they continue sending pictures and gifts to tell the stories of their lives.

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.*
3. Consider pairing this series of lessons on *Dear Juno* with a text set to increase student knowledge and familiarity with the topic. A custom text set can be found [here.](https://achievethecore.org/page/2549/dear-juno-with-companion-text-set) *Note: This is particularly supportive of ELL students.*

*Note to teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs): Read Aloud Project Lessons are designed for children who cannot read yet for themselves. They are highly interactive and have many scaffolds built into the brief daily lessons to support reading comprehension. Because of this, they are filled with scaffolds that are appropriate for English Language Learners who, by definition, are developing language and learning to read (English). This read aloud text includes complex features which offer many opportunities for learning, but at the same time includes supports and structures to make the text accessible to even the youngest students.*

*This lesson includes features that align to best practices for supporting English Language Learners. Some of the supports you may see built into this, and /or other Read Aloud Project lessons, assist non-native speakers in the following ways:*

* *These lessons include embedded vocabulary scaffolds that help students acquire new vocabulary in the context of reading. They feature multi-modal ways of learning new words, including prompts for where to use visual representations, the inclusion of student-friendly definitions, built-in opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary through discussion or activities, and featured academic vocabulary for deeper study.*
* *These lessons also include embedded scaffolds to help students make meaning of the text itself. It calls out opportunities for paired or small group discussion, includes recommendations for ways in which visuals, videos, and/or graphic organizers could aid in understanding, provides a mix of questions (both factual and inferential) to guide students gradually toward deeper understanding, and offers recommendations for supplementary texts to build background knowledge supporting the content in the anchor text.*
* *These lessons feature embedded supports to aid students in developing their overall language and communication skills by featuring scaffolds such as sentence frames for discussion and written work (more guidance available* [*here*](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion)*) as well as writing opportunities (and the inclusion of graphic organizers to scaffold the writing process). These supports help students develop and use newly acquired vocabulary and text-based content knowledge.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| FIRST READING *(1-2 sessions):*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 of this reading is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole. This will give them a sense of the book’s entire storyline and craft before they examine parts of the book more carefully. |
| SECOND READING *(3 sessions):*During the second reading of *Dear Juno*, students will explore the idea of the distance between Juno and his grandmother. Most questions and tasks relate to noticing and understanding the distance between the two. Conduct a picture walk of the book in which no words are read, but the pictures are shown. Ask students to hold up the picture(s) of Juno and his grandmother when that person is pictured. Show students the illustrations of on pages 1, 16, and 25. Ask, “What do you notice about how the setting changes on these pages? What details in the pictures give clues about the seasons?” Then show the illustrations of his grandmother’s garden on pages 12 and 28. Ask, “How does the garden change? What do those details show you about the seasons?”[P. 1] What does Juno know about the “red and white blinking lights?”“Do Juno and his grandmother live close together? How do the pictures and words tell you?”[P. 2] How did Juno know that the letter was for him and came from a “far away” place?[P. 8] What did Juno find in the letter? What did the writing look like? What does this tell the reader about the language his Grandmother speaks? [P. 10] What did Juno learn from the letter? How was Juno able to understand the letter? What does Juno mean when he says, “She wouldn’t send me a picture of a strange cat?”Why were Juno’s parents able to read the letter, but Juno can’t?[P. 13] Why did Juno’s mother say he “read” the letter? [P. 15] Why did Juno decide to write his grandmother back? [P. 17] Why did Juno pick a leaf from the swinging tree?[Pp. 18-19] Ask students to describe what Juno draws in his pictures. What did he want to communicate to his grandmother through the pictures?[P. 21] Why is what Juno made a “real letter?”[Pp. 22-23] What does Juno’s grandmother receive from him? What do you think she learns about Juno?[P. 24] Juno received his final letter from his grandmother. Inside, there was a toy airplane. What did Juno know the plane meant? How did he know this? Read the last page of text, and show the picture of Juno’s grandmother on the very last page. [P. 26] Ask students, “Do Juno and his grandmother live close together? How do the pictures and words tell you?”Have students draw and describe where Juno lives and where his grandmother lives. This illustration can be used to demonstrate understanding of the distance between the two.  | Juno and his grandmother are never in the same place. On several pages, one is shown holding a picture of the other one. Students could represent this by holding one picture behind the other, or curling the picture of the person pictured but not physically present in the story.In both locations the seasons change from spring/summer to fall/winter. The leaves of the swinging tree at Juno’s house change from green to brown at the edges, to completely brown and falling off the tree. The garden in Korea changes from blooming flowers with a green persimmon tree to brown, falling persimmon leaves and snow.He knows they are airplanes going from one place to another.No, they do not. Juno watches airplanes going to “faraway places” and wonders if any of them came from the town “where his grandmother lived.” Typically airplanes are used for long-distance travel and Juno associates planes with his grandmother who lives faraway in Korea. This is a good opportunity to introduce a hand movement, such as children moving their hands like airplanes or simply pointing someplace that is in the distance. Students may also cut out airplanes and place on popsicle sticks to enforce the idea of grandmother living very far from Juno. Juno’s name was printed on the front, so he knew the letter was for him. The “red and blue marks on the edges” of the envelope and the “special stamp…told Juno that the letter was from his grandmother.” From the previous page, we already know that Juno understands that his grandmother lives very far away. This is an opportunity to show students an airmail letter (or a photograph of one,) and compare it with a domestic letter. Juno saw “letters and words [writing] he couldn’t understand.” In the illustration we see that the letters are different from our alphabet. Maybe in that “far away” place that his grandmother lives, they speak a different language. He learned, “Grandma has a new cat… And she’s growing red and yellow flowers in her garden.” He looked at the photograph and dried flower his grandmother sent. Even though he couldn’t read the words, he knew his grandmother was showing him a picture of *her* new cat and a flower that grew in *her* garden.Juno can’t read the language his grandmother wrote in, but his parents could read Korean. Juno was able to understand the main points his grandmother wrote about in the letter because of the gifts she sent. He really liked receiving her letter and thought that she would like “getting letters just like I do.” On the previous page, he looks at the flower his grandmother sent and thinks his tree is similar to his grandmother’s flower garden, thinking, “He didn’t have a garden that grew flowers, but he had a swinging tree.” The swinging tree seems important to Juno; the illustrations show him next to the tree on pages including 1, 18, and 25, and he calls it “his tree” on page 18. Sending a leaf can tell his grandmother about the important tree.Juno draws “his mom and dad standing outside the house,” his dog “Sam playing underneath his big swinging tree,” and “himself standing under an airplane in a starry, nighttime sky.” He wants to tell his grandmother about his parents, house, Sam, and swinging tree, important parts of his life shown on many pages in the book. The picture of himself under the airplane resembles page 1, where he wondered about his grandmother – he might be showing his grandmother he thinks about her or about visiting each other.Juno is communicating with his Grandmother and telling a story about his life through his pictures. She receives the three pictures Juno drew and the leaf from his swinging tree. She might learn that he likes swinging on the tree, and that he cares about his parents and his pet dog Sam.Juno knew the toy airplane meant that his grandmother was coming to visit. He knows that she lives very far and is only able to reach where he lives by an airplane. Juno “dreamed about a faraway place” where his grandmother lived. The illustrations show him and his grandmother in two different places. Juno and his grandmother live in separate places, far away from each other. Juno lives in a house with a swinging tree outside, and his grandmother lives next to a flower garden with a persimmon tree. |
| THIRD READING *(1-2 sessions)*:During this reading, the class will show how Juno and his grandmother connect/communicate with one another through their letters. Students will need individual T-charts, about 8 small pieces of paper/tiles, glue, and pencils, crayons, or markers. (See Appendix for T-Chart and tile objects.) Before the reading, students place their pictures of Juno and his grandmother from the previous reading as labels on their individual T-chart. (As an alternative, students could each have two plastic bags labeled with the pictures of Juno and his grandmother, and move pictures of objects between the bags to allow future movement of the objects.) On each paper tile, students will draw a picture of an object as it is discussed below.Throughout the discussion, build shared class notes with large images of each object on a classroom T-chart. (Note: Using repositionable glue sticks or painter’s tape allows the images to be manipulated during later discussions.) As you begin the reading, ask students to hold up one of their small paper tiles when they see or hear something sent by Juno or his grandmother and then draw the object on the paper tile.As you see each object in the book, ask students, “Who gave this? Who received it?” (You might want to associate a simple motion with giving and one with receiving, to help students understand the words and their relationship.) Ask students to first hold their picture of the object next to the person who gave, or sent it, and then move the object to the person who received the object. Students can leave the object on that side of the T-chart (or inside that plastic bag.)Students glue down the illustrated paper tiles on their T-charts at the end of the discussion. | Students should identify and draw on each tile:* Photograph of Juno’s “grandmother holding a cat” (from grandmother to Juno)
* “Red and yellow flower” (from grandmother to Juno)
* Letter written with “letters and words he couldn’t understand” (from grandmother to Juno)
* “Leaf from the swinging tree” (from Juno to his grandmother)
* Pictures drawn by Juno of “his mom and dad standing outside the house… Sam playing underneath his big swinging tree [and] himself standing under an airplane in a starry, nighttime sky” (from Juno to his grandmother)
* “Box of colored pencils” (from grandmother to Juno)
* Photograph of grandmother “sitting with a cat and two kittens” (from grandmother to Juno)
* “small toy plane” (from grandmother to Juno)
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| FOURTH READING *(2 sessions):*In the fourth reading, students will discuss the meaning of objects Juno and his grandmother exchanged, and notice the similarities represented by the objects. Using the classroom T-chart from the third reading, help students discuss the message each of these objects carried. As each object is introduced in the text, ask, “What message did Juno send his grandmother with this (name the object)?” You might follow up with a question like, “Did his grandmother receive this message? From the text’s pictures and words, how do you know?”Jot a summary of students’ responses on small pieces of paper or sticky note, one per object. Manipulate the pieces of paper to show how a message moved from one person to the other. Stick each paper on the chart next to the corresponding image using a repositionable glue stick or painter’s tape.Ask students to look at the objects on the chart and what they mean. Ask, “Do you see things that show Juno and his grandmother have things *in common* [that are the same]? How do those things show similarities?” Temporarily move those objects off the chart (or rearrange them on the chart so they are next to each other) to emphasize their connection as you discuss similarities. |

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| Object | Meaning |
| Photograph of Juno’s “grandmother holding a cat” | “’Grandma has a new cat.’” |
| Dried flower | “’She’s growing red and yellow flowers in her garden.’” |
| Letter written with “letters and words he couldn’t understand” | “’I have a new cat…I named him Juno after you. … the rabbits no longer come to eat my flowers…’” |
| “Leaf from the swinging tree” | Juno swings on a tree in his backyard. |
| Pictures drawn by Juno | The pictures show parts of Juno’s life – “his mom and dad” and “house,” “Sam” and Juno’s “big swinging tree,” and Juno looking at an airplane in a “starry nighttime sky.”(You might prompt students to locate the illustrations showing related events.)  |
| “Box of colored pencils” | “…she wanted another letter.” |
| Photograph of grandmother “sitting with a cat and two kittens” | Although grandmother had thought the cat was a male and named it Juno (“a boy’s name”), the cat is a female because it gave birth to kittens. (You might not choose to go into this level of inference with students within this reading.) |
| “small toy plane” | “…his grandmother was coming to visit.” |

* Grandmother’s photograph of her “holding a cat” and the words in her letter, plus Juno’s drawing of Sam, show they both have pets.
* Grandmother’s “dried flowers” and Juno’s drawing of his “swinging tree” show they both care about plants. (Juno also knows his grandmother has a special persimmon tree.)
* Juno’s picture of an airplane and the toy plane his grandmother sends show they are both thinking of traveling between their faraway homes.
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| FIFTH READING *(2 sessions)*:In the fifth reading, students will examine how the author uses literary devices, including simile, imagery, and a symbolic title page, to support the text’s meaning. [P. 1] When the author writes that the blinking lights “soared across the night sky like shooting stars,” what picture comes to your mind? In that sentence, what is the author comparing? Why did the author choose to compare these two things? [P. 1] The author repeats the words “wondered” three times: “Juno *wondered* where they came from. He *wondered* where they were going. And he *wondered*…” What does the word “wonder” mean? What does this tell the reader about Juno? Does it seem like he knows much about his grandmother? How do you know? [P. 27] Read the description of the dream that Juno had about his grandmother, and then ask students to draw a picture of his grandmother and the setting. Ask students which words from the text helped them create that picture. Show students the text’s illustration of this scene. (Students can compare their own illustration with the one in the book.) Ask, “Does his grandmother really have a doughnut on her head? Why did the author compare it to that? What does this page tell you about how Juno thinks of his grandmother?” [P. 27] On this page, Juno is dreaming about details of his grandmother’s life. How did this change from the beginning of the book? (Reread first page if needed.)Look at the title page illustration. Ask, “What similarities does this illustration show? Which other pages show these things? Are Juno and his grandmother really sitting next to each other? Why do you think the illustrator included this picture?” | The planes are moving quickly and its lights blend in with the stars. The sentence compares the planes’ lights to shooting stars. The author might be comparing them because they are both lights you can see faraway in the sky. In general, the image is of things that seem very distant. “Wonder” means to question or be curious about something. Juno seems to be doing a lot of wondering on this page, so he appears to be a curious boy, especially when it relates to his grandmother. He probably cares about his grandmother since he is thinking about her. Juno knows that his grandmother lives in “a little town near Seoul” and “eats persimmons every evening.” This page does not reveal anything else Juno knows about his grandmother. “gray hair… on top of her head like a powdered doughnut”“sipping morning tea”“golden leaves which cover the persimmon garden”“crisp enough to crackle”She does not have a doughnut on her head, but her bun does look like one. The author tried to create a picture in the reader’s mind. This language shows that Juno can picture his grandmother in great detail.In the beginning, Juno was curious about his grandmother. Through their correspondence with letters and objects, Juno has learned much more about his grandmother, and finds things they have in common, such as each having pets and plants. In the end, he can clearly imagine his grandmother’s life. The picture shows that Juno and his grandmother both have special trees (persimmon and swinging oak tree,) spend time with a pet (Juno the cat and Sam the dog,) and read letters from each other. These important details of their lives are repeated in the words and illustrations on almost every page of the book. The illustrator might have included this title page picture to highlight the similarities between Juno and his grandmother and show the connection their letters create across distance. |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK - Culminating Task

* Ask students, “What differences made it hard for Juno and his grandmother to communicate?” Give students two sheets of paper. On one sheet, students draw and/or write about the distance and differences between Juno and his grandmother.
	+ *Answers may include: They speak and write in different languages; they live very far from one another.*
* On the other sheet, students draw and/or write how and what Juno and his grandmother communicate.
	+ *Answers may include: Juno and his grandmother exchanged letters, pictures, and objects including flowers, a leaf from Juno’s swinging tree, a toy plane and colored pencils. These messages show Juno and his grandmother both have pets and special plants, and that Juno’s grandmother will come visit him.*

Vocabulary

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| **These words merit less time and attention** (They are concrete and easy to explain briefly with words, motion, and/or photographs, 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 1 – blinking – shining with a light that seems to go off and onPage 1 – soared – flew in the air Page 1 – planes – short for airplane, an aircraft supported by wings and driven by a propellerPage 1 – shooting stars – meteors that look like brief streaks of light in the night skyPage 1 – persimmons – edible fruits of a persimmon treePage 1 – evening – part of the day between afternoon and nightPage 2 – printed – writtenPage 8 – gentle – soft, not roughPage 10 – garden – a place where people grow flowers or edible plants Page 10 – strange – weird, unusual; not familiarPage 13 – keep me company – spend time with me so I’m not alonePage 27 – crisp – thin, hard, and easily crumbled; pleasantly coolPage 27 – crackle – crush or crack with snapping noises | Page 1 – faraway – distantPage 1 – wondered – questioned; felt curiosity or doubtPage 1 – Seoul – capital city of South KoreaPage 2 – stamp – paper attached to something to show that a fee has been paid to send itPage 2 – envelope – a flat container, usually made of paperPage 2 – letter – a piece of written communication from one person to anotherPage 8 – letters – marks that are symbols for speech sounds in writing or print and that make up the alphabetPage 8 – photograph – a picture of a real object captured by a cameraConceptual words not found in text, but important for discussions of text’s meaning:distance – a separation in time or spacecommunicate – to transmit information, thought, or feeling so that it is received or understoodconnect – to join or bring together similar – having qualities that are the samein common – having qualities that are the samegive – to put into the possession of anotherreceive – to take something that is given |

Extension learning activities for this book and other useful resources

* Students may play out daily life of each character in a dramatic play center. The center should include artifacts from each setting and writing and art supplies for students to recreate objects from the story. With student help, the teacher can set up one side of the center as Juno’s home, and the other side as his grandmother’s, with an object or line representing the distance between the two places. By posting chart paper on the walls, students could decorate with setting details, such as Juno’s swinging tree and grandmother’s persimmon tree. Stuffed animals or crafted objects could represent Sam the dog and Juno the cat. In small groups, students can pretend to be characters in the story and write letters and pictures to communicate with each other.
* Locate South Korea and the United States on a globe and/or map. Discuss the geographic distance between the two places, and how it impacts Juno and his grandmother.
* Students correspond with “pen pals.” Their pen pals could be students in their class, other classes in the same school, a class at another school, or elsewhere. Explain the idea of pen pals to the class. Encourage students to think of important parts of their lives like Juno and his grandmother, and then represent those things in letters, drawn pictures, photographs, and/ or objects.
* Watch and discuss information about the Korean alphabet, *Hangul*, such as the YouTube videos:
	+ [How to Write ‘Hello’ in Korean](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uRNMIMkiOA&list=PLA84A8767BA8A1353&feature=share&index=15) (10:33, suggested after 1st reading): A 3rd grader born in Korea and adopted in America teaches his American classmates about Korea’s location and alphabet. At 7:24, classmates ask questions and compare different languages.
	+ [DPCS Korean Vowel Dance](http://youtu.be/UbfvzzzNeSc) (0:53, suggested after 2nd or 5th reading): After displaying the characters for each Korean vowel, two American students perform a catchy song and dance representing each vowel’s shape and sound.
	+ [Korean Lessons for Children: Animals](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADc2-bnLbgY&feature=share&list=PLA84A8767BA8A1353&index=13) (3:36, suggested after 2nd or 5th reading): This cartoon instructional video teaches the Korean words for “lion,” “monkey,” “gorilla,” “giraffe,” and “tiger.”
	+ [Fast Korean Alphabet: How To Learn Hangul Rapidly](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntdiHDORtAQ) (5:06, suggested after 2nd or 5th reading): This complex cartoon shows a stylized image of Seoul and discusses written structure of the Hangul language.

Note to Teacher

* Definitions in the “Vocabulary” section are adapted from Merriam-Webster’s [www.wordcentral.com](http://www.wordcentral.com). Each definition represents one meaning for the context of *Dear Juno*; many words offer multiple meanings to explore with students.

**Appendix: Student T-Chart (Third Read)**

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| **Juno** | **Juno’s Grandmother** |
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**Appendix: Small Paper Tiles for Students to Cut Out, Illustrate, and Glue on T-Chart (Third Read)**

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**What Makes this Text Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your text 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

390

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.

 Since Juno and his grandmother live far apart and speak different languages, they communicate about their lives with pictures and objects. As they exchange information, they discover similarities in their lives.

Chronology is mostly linear, and illustrations show changing seasons. The translation of Juno’s grandmother’s letter shifts the order of events, point of view, and narrative style. The illustrations shift between Korea and Juno’s home, and Juno’s drawings show a character’s recordings of story events. The recurring plane motif supports the story’s meaning.

Most vocabulary and syntax is easily accessible, with some potentially unfamiliar vocabulary. A few pages contain figurative language, i.e., the first and last pages of text.

Students need knowledge of geographic distance, the postal system and letter writing, differences in Korean and English spoken and written language, and seasonal changes. Students may miss the inference about the cat’s gender; however, this understanding is not essential to the text’s meaning.

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

 \*For more information on the qualitative dimensions of text complexity, visit <http://www.achievethecore.org/content/upload/Companion_to_Qualitative_Scale_Features_Explained.pdf>

**3. Reader and Task Considerations**

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

* + Students will need support to connect the text’s complex structure to its meaning. Ask targeted questions about specific complex elements including illustrations, meaning, and language, and provide opportunities for students to show understanding of the text’s meaning and structure visually and kinesthetically. To ensure students understand that Juno and his grandmother speak different languages, ask targeted questions about his grandmother’s written letter.

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

* + This story deepens children’s concept of communication by showing the meaning carried by written letters, photographs, drawings, and objects. By reading about family members living in different countries, students learn about geographic distance, language differences, and similarities and differences across cultures. Juno’s correspondence with his grandmother also provides knowledge of the postal system.
1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in?

* + Kindergarten and 1st grade

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