Title/Author: *Charlotte’s Web* by E.B. White

Suggested Time: 4-5 Weeks (Recommendation: one session per day, at least 20 minutes per session)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3, RL.1.4, RL.1.9, RL.1.10; W.1.2, W.1.8; SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, SL.1.5, SL.1.6; L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.4, L.1.5, L.1.6

Teacher Instructions:

**Before the Lesson:**

1. Read the 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 *Charlotte’s Web*.

Key Understandings:

Wilbur himself realizes that “…friendship is one of the most satisfying things in the world.” This is the big understanding of this chapter book; as Wilbur realizes it, so do the students. And as we go on this journey with Wilbur, the students are also building knowledge about the world: farm life, spiders and their life cycle, the passing of seasons.

Synopsis:

Wilbur, a farm pig, is saved as a little runt by an adoring young girl, Fern. Fern takes great care of her beloved Wilbur, but as she grows up she spends less and less time with Wilbur. Wilbur grows lonely, until he meets a spider named Charlotte. Charlotte becomes Wilbur’s best friend in the world and ultimately saves his life.

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. *Note: 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 chapter’s questions and vocabulary work.*

*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.*

Chapter Guide – Questions, Activities, Vocabulary, and Tasks:

The majority of questions, activities, and tasks should be based on the writing, pictures and features unique to this book (text-specific). Questions that address text-to-self or text-to-world connections--what we like to call text-*inspired* questions or activities-- should be used sparingly during reading and should most often be held until after the children have really gotten to know the book.

*Note to teacher: Many of the questions and tasks for this text use new vocabulary words from the book. The words have been bolded in the questions for you. For these questions, part of the task is to support your students in unpacking the new word. Give students the chance to struggle with these words, then provide the definitions. Use your professional judgment. The question will give students practice in actually using the word.*

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| **Questions, Activities, Vocabulary, and Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| **CHAPTER 1: “Before Breakfast”**  What did Fern talk her father out of doing?  How did she *convince* him?  Now, turn to a partner and let’s act it out! Imagine that you are Fern and you are trying to convince your father to keep Wilbur. See if you can remember any of the lines that Fern used in the story. Be convincing! Then, we’ll switch and the other person will act it out. | Fern convinced her father not to kill Wilbur.  She went after her father and tried to remove the ax from his hands. She was very upset and cried. She told him that he was being unfair, and picking on Wilbur just because he was small. She asked would he have killed her if she had been born small (pgs. 2-4).  *Note: Before students answer the question, you will need to help them wrestle with the meaning of “convince.” Give them the definition after they have tried.* |
| **CHAPTER 2: “Wilbur”**  In what ways did Fern treat Wilbur as if he were her **infant**? Think of what you heard said in the text. Let’s list some examples together. I’ll write them on the chart paper. | * She loved to stroke him, to feed him, to put him to bed.  Every morning, as soon as she got up, she warmed his milk tied his bib on, and held the bottle for him” (pg. 8). * She fed him when she got home from school, at suppertime, and before bed (pg. 8). * She watched Wilbur sleep and felt relieved that “her baby would sleep covered up, and would stay warm” (pg. 9). * She would take Wilbur on walks in her doll carriage (pg. 10). |
| **CHAPTER 3: “Escape”**  Did Wilbur really want to **escape**?  How do you know? | * At first he was not sure.  “’I like it,’ said Wilbur.  ‘That is, I guess I like it.’  Actually, Wilbur felt queer to be outside his fence, with nothing between him and the big world” (pg. 17). * As he explored the yard he started to enjoy it.  He jumped, twirled, ran, looked around, sniffed, smelled, dug in the dirt.  “He felt very happy” (pg. 18). * When he was being chased he “was dazed and frightened by this hullabaloo. He didn’t like being the center of all this fuss” (pg. 22). * Finally, he felt relieved when he saw Mr. Zuckerman with the warm slops. When he finally was put back in his pen and ate, “he felt peaceful and happy and sleepy.” Wilbur did not really want to escape.  He said, “’I’m really too young to go out into the world alone’” (pg. 24). |
| **CHAPTER 4: “Loneliness”**  Throughout this chapter, we hear all about Wilbur’s **dreary** day. What makes Wilbur’s day so **dreary**? There are several different reasons, big and small. Let’s try to list some together and I’ll write them on the chart paper.  What is the main reason Wilbur is sad? How do we know it’s the main reason?  Draw a picture of Wilbur’s dreary day in the barn. Label your picture with words from our list. | Why is Wilbur’s day so *dreary*?   * It’s raining and all of the plans Wilbur made for the day are ruined! * **Wilbur is feeling lonely and friendless. When he asks the other animals to play, no one wants to play with him.** * Templeton eats his breakfast. * Lurvy notices that Wilbur seems down, thinks something is wrong with him, and makes him take medicine.   Students should be able to point to Wilbur’s loneliness and desire for friendship as the true source of his sadness.  *Note: Students will likely struggle with the second part of this question. You may need to reread a section of the text to get students to see how the author repeats Wilbur’s desire for friendship over and over in the chapter. You might also point out the title of the chapter, “Loneliness.”* |
| **CHAPTER 5: “Charlotte”**    Together, let’s reread the last two paragraphs of chapter 5. Wilbur and the narrator (the person telling the story) use many different words to describe Charlotte in this section. As we reread, raise your hand when you hear a word that describes Charlotte and I’ll write it down on our list.  Now that we’ve written these words down, what do you notice about them? Let’s sort these words into two different categories: qualities that Wilbur thinks will make Charlotte a good friend and qualities that Wilbur fears will make Charlotte a bad friend.  So what do these words tell us about Charlotte? Is she good, bad, or a little bit of both? | *Note: A huge part of this activity is clarifying the meanings of these words for all of your students. A chance to really zone in on vocabulary! As students raise their hands to add a word to the list, ask them about the meaning of the word. There is not a lot of context for these words, so you will need to give them many of the definitions.*  **pretty fierce**  **clever brutal**  **kind heart scheming**  **loyal bloodthirsty**  **true cruel**  **bold**  *Note: From looking at the list together, students should be able to see that Charlotte is a very complicated character. She seems scary and dangerous, but she also has these wonderful traits that the narrator suggests will make her a very true friend to Wilbur.* |
| **CHAPTER 6: “Summer Days”**  “Early summer days are a **jubilee** time for birds.” What joyful thing happens to the goose in this chapter?  What does Templeton ask for in this chapter? Does he get it? What does Charlotte warn us will happen if Templeton isn’t careful? | The goose gives birth to seven baby geese in this chapter!  *Note: This is a simple question, but gives the teacher the chance to dive in to the word “jubilee.” Before telling the students that it means “joyful,” let them struggle and try to figure it out. Read the sentences surrounding the word and see if they can figure it out in context.*  Templeton asks for the one egg that didn’t hatch a baby goose. He does get it. Charlotte warns everyone that if Templeton isn’t careful, he will break the egg and it will smell really bad!  *Note: This is also a straight-forward question to make sure that the students are keeping track of events. The students won’t understand that Charlotte’s warning is foreshadowing, but highlighting it here will help set them up for understanding when the egg is broken in Chapter 10.* |
| **CHAPTER 7: “Bad News”**  What “bad news” does Wilbur get from the old sheep?  Describe how he reacts. What are some words used in the text to describe how Wilbur reacted? I will read the last pages of the chapter again and you listen carefully to how Wilbur is acting. Raise your hands when you hear an action word that Wilbur is doing.  What promise does Charlotte make at the end of the chapter? | Wilbur learns that there is a plan to kill him at Christmastime so that the family can eat him. The sheep says, “There’s a regular conspiracy around here to kill you at Christmastime. Everybody is in the plot—Lurvy, Zuckerman, even John Arable” (pg. 49).  *Note:* This is agood chance for you to talk about the word **conspiracy** with your students!  Wilbur sobbed (pg. 49), he screamed (pg. 50), raced up and down (p. 50) and burst into tears (pg.51). Though children will all raise their hands together, still, the students who are noticing and leading will be teaching the other students about these strong verbs. If nobody notices, you can lean into the strong verbs with your voice as you reread.  At the end of the chapter, Charlotte promises that she will save Wilbur so that he is not killed (pg. 51). |
| **CHAPTER 8: “A Talk at Home”**  Why is Mrs. Arable **worried** about Fern? What is she going to do about it? | Mrs. Arable is worried about the way Fern talks about the barn animals, claiming that they talk to each other and she can understand them. She thinks it isn’t normal and plans to talk to Dr. Dorian about it. |
| **CHAPTER 9: “Wilbur’s Boast”**  To **boast** means to show off. This chapter is titled, “Wilbur’s Boast.” Now that we’ve read the whole chapter, what was Wilbur’s big boast? Was he able to do what he said he could do?  There are several times in this Chapter when Charlotte takes care of Wilbur. She shows just how much she is beginning to love him. Together, let’s list a few ways that Charlotte show she cares about Wilbur. I’ll write them on the chart paper.  At the end of the chapter, Charlotte goes off to think about how to save Wilbur. What does she tell Wilbur to do to help? | Wilbur’s big boast is that he claims he can spin a web like Charlotte. Wilbur tries two times, but of course, is unable to actually spin a web because he is a pig (pg. 56).   * She reassures him after he fails at spinning a web, telling him that he’s not supposed to be able to do that because he’s a pig (pgs. 59-60). * She defends him when the lamb calls Wilbur smelly (pg. 61). * She is planning a way to save him from being eaten at Christmastime (pg. 63). * She is patient with him when he can’t get to sleep; she puts him to bed (pg. 65).   Charlotte tells Wilbur to eat a lot, get lots of rest, and stop worrying. “Never hurry and never worry!” Charlotte says. She tells him to stay well and not lose his nerve (pg. 64). |
| **CHAPTER 10: “An Explosion”**  At the beginning of this chapter, Charlotte finally comes up with a plan to save Wilbur. She doesn’t tell us what the plan is, but she thinks her plan will work because people are very **gullible.** Does anyone remember what the word **“**gullible” means? Charlotte told us in the text.  Now that we remember what it means, let’s come up with a sentence that includes the word gullible. The sentence needs to make sense!  Templeton’s egg both saves the day and causes a big problem in the barn. How does it save the day? What problem does it cause? | In the text, Charlotte tells Wilbur that gullible means “easy to fool” (pg. 67). *Note: If no one remembers this from listening, then you may need to re-read that section of the text.*  *Note: The teacher may need to model a sentence first, and then have students come up with one in pairs or as a whole group.*  Avery falls on the edge of Wilbur’s trough and crushes the egg when he is trying to knock Charlotte into his box. The crushed egg smells so bad that Avery and Fern run right out of the barn. The egg saves the day because it keeps Avery from going after Charlotte. But the egg makes the barn smell so bad the animals can hardly bear it (pgs. 72-73)! |
| **CHAPTER 11: “The Miracle”**  Reread the fourth paragraph on page 80 in which Mr. Zuckerman describes “the miracle” to his wife (“’Well, I don’t really know yet…’”). Based on all we’ve heard here, what does the word ***miracle*** mean? Turn and talk with a partner. Then, let’s come up with a definition together as a group.  Several things change on the farm after Lurvy and the Zuckermans see Charlotte’s new web (pgs. 84-85). What are some of those changes? Let’s list some together and I’ll write them on chart paper. | Students should understand that a miracle is something surprising and hard to explain; it doesn’t make sense how it happened, but it did. Students should also know that a miracle is a good and welcome thing!  *Note: Remind students that the title of the chapter is “The Miracle.”*  Changes on the farm after Charlotte’s new web   * They treat Wilbur to 4 meals a day instead of 3; Mrs. Zuckerman prepares special meals for Wilbur (pg. 84). * Mr. Zuckerman starts dressing differently, wearing his good clothes (pg. 84). * Lurvy and the Zuckermans stop doing some of their usual farm jobs like making blackberry jam and hoeing the corn (pg. 84). * A lot of people start visiting the barn; it is less pleasant because there are so many people around (pg. 85). * Fern is happy because she thinks that Wilbur’s life will now be saved (pg. 85). |
| **CHAPTER 12: “A Meeting”**  What word does Charlotte pick to spin in her next web?  Charlotte asks if anyone can help her spell *terrific*. Remember, the gander has an idea of how you spell it, but it gets confusing because he always repeats his words. Let’s see if we can use our sounds and letters to spell the word *terrific*.  Now, let’s practice spinning the word into our own imaginary web by tracing the letters in the air.  At first, Templeton doesn’t want to help Charlotte save Wilbur. How does the old sheep help **convince** him (pg. 90)?  *Note: This question repeats a vocabulary word used in Chapter 1. Ask your students if they remember from the beginning of the book what “convince” means. If they don’t, remind them.* | She picks the word *terrific*.  *Note: Here is a small chance to incorporate some foundational skills into the read-aloud. Support your students in sounding out the word “terrific” as you write it on your chart paper or chalkboard. Students may not get the double r at first. Make this correction after the students have used their sound/letter knowledge to spell the word.*  The old sheep reminds Templeton that he depends on Wilbur for food. If Wilbur is dead, then no one will be filling his trough in the barn, meaning the Templeton will starve. Hearing this, Templeton changes his mind right away and decides to help! |
| **CHAPTER 13: “Good Progress”**  Point out to students that they spelled *terrific* correctly; Charlotte spelled it the same way! After spinning the word *terrific* into her second web, Charlotte has Templeton search for other words. What three words does Templeton come back with? Why do the first two not work? What makes Charlotte decide on the 3rd one? | The first word Templeton gives Charlotte is *crunchy;* this doesn’t work because Zuckerman might start thinking about bacon and ham (eating Wilbur!). The second word he gives her is *pre-shrunk*; this doesn’t work because she wants Zuckerman to think of Wilbur as nicely grown. The third clipping says “New Radiant Action.” Charlotte has Wilbur run and flip around. Charlotte is not sure that it is exactly “radiant action,” but Wilbur says he feels radiant. “’Well, you’re a good little pig now, and radiant you shall be. I’m in this thing pretty deep now—I might as well go the limit,’” she says (pg. 99-101).  *Note: In this scene, Charlotte and Wilbur are not exactly sure what “radiant” means. Talk with your students about the meaning of radiant after you’ve read the scene. Tell them that to be radiant means “to shine brightly,” in this case with love and happiness.* |
| **CHAPTER 14: “Dr. Dorian”**  Does Dr. Dorian think it’s a problem that Fern listens to the animals and says they talk to each other all the time? Why or why not? | Dr. Dorian doesn’t think it’s a problem that Fern thinks the animals talk to each other. He says that it’s possible that animals have talked to him but he couldn’t hear them because “children pay better attention than grownups.” He doesn’t think it’s a problem. He says that Fern should keep doing it as long as she wants to, but he also says that he thinks Fern will change eventually and start playing more with boys like Henry Fussy.  *Note: Students in grade 1 may not pick up on all of the nuances of Dr. Dorian’s speech. The important thing is that they understand that he doesn’t think anything is wrong with Fern, and that he predicts that even she will eventually change and grow up as kids do.* |
| **CHAPTER 15: “The Crickets”**  I’m going to write a couple of sentences on the board. Then, we’re going to break them apart and really figure out what they mean:  “Ever since the spider had **befriended** him, he had done his best to live up to his **reputation**” (pg. 114).  “Wilbur was **modest**; **fame** did not **spoil** him” (pg. 115).  “No pig had ever had **truer** friends, and he realized that friendship is one of the most **satisfying** things in the world” (pg. 115). | The focus in this chapter is on vocabulary and sentences; the idea is to help your students learn how to break apart these tough sentences. Tell your students they are going to learn a LOT of new words today and that it’s going to be really tough work, but you know they can handle it.  *Note: Depending on how much time you have, you may consider selecting one or two of these sentences. If you are in a time crunch, make sure to tackle the last sentence as it is most critical to the big understanding.*  Ask students what other word they can find in *befriended.* They will see the word *friend.* Tell them that befriended is another way of saying “made friends with.” To tackle the word *reputation*, go back into the text and reread the sentence, as well as the remainder of the paragraph. Context will help students, but you will need to help them understand that a reputation is “how someone is viewed by others.” In this case, Wilbur’s reputation (how he is viewed by others) depends on the words that Charlotte is spinning in her web. Finally, students may need some support with “live up to.” Tell your students that “living up to” something means to be as good as you thought or said it would be. Model for your students how to put a tough sentence in your own words. “Ever since Charlotte made friends with Wilbur, Wilbur has been trying his best to be as good as Charlotte said he was in her webs.”  Give students the definition for the word *modest:* “a bit shy, you don’t brag about yourself.” For *fame,* ask students if they’ve heard any other words that sound like *fame*, words that they might use to describe someone really well known, like a singer or actor (*famous)*. Tell them they are different forms of the same word. Students may be familiar with the word *spoil.* Ask the kids if their parents have ever *spoiled* them with toys and presents? Spoil is a word with multiple meanings; this is a good chance to introduce kids to the idea that words can mean more than one thing. Point out to your students that *spoil* can also mean “gone bad, ruined” like when your bananas *spoil.* Now, ask students to turn to a partner and say the whole sentence in their own words.  Read the first part of the sentence and unpack the word *truer.* Ask your kids what makes a *true* friend. Emphasize that in this case, a *true* friend means a “real friend that means a lot to you and you know will stick by your side.” From context, students should be able to tell that *satisfying* must describe a really good feeling, when you feel happy. Satisfying means to make happy. Now, ask students to turn to a partner and say the whole sentence in their own words. |
| **CHAPTER 16: “Off to the Fair”**  BEFORE READING CHAPTER 16:  Remember the last chapter we read? At the very end of the chapter, Charlotte said she wasn’t coming to the fair with Wilbur. Do you remember why?  AFTER READING CHAPTER 16:  Charlotte decides to go to the fair after all. She wants Templeton to come with her, but thinks he won’t agree to come. Once again, the old sheep helps convince Templeton to help Charlotte and Wilbur. Remember, this is the second time he has done this! How does the old sheep do it this time?  Now, time for a little acting. Turn to a partner. Pretend you are the old sheep trying to convince Templeton to come to the fair, telling him about all the good food. See if you can remember any lines from the text that he used! Then, switch partners.  What makes Wilbur faint at the end of this chapter? | Charlotte said she wasn’t going to the fair with Wilbur because she needed to lay eggs (pg. 117).  The old sheep tells Templeton that the fair is like paradise for a rat because of all the delicious food scraps around (pg. 123). Hearing about all the good food, Templeton definitely wants to go!  Mr. Arable starts talking about how much good bacon and ham Mr. Zuckerman was going to get from Wilbur when they kill him (pg. 126). This made Wilbur so upset that he fainted! |
| **CHAPTER 17: “Uncle”**  Who is Wilbur’s competition? What all do we know about him?  How do we know that Charlotte isn’t feeling well? What signs are there in the story? | Wilbur’s competition is a pig named “Uncle.” Uncle is a spring pig, but he’s much bigger than Wilbur. Charlotte thinks he has an “unattractive personality” and that he’s not as clear or pleasant as Wilbur (pgs. 134-135).  You made need to reread a few paragraphs of the text, starting at the very bottom of page 135 (starting with “’This afternoon, late, if I’m not too tired…’”). From this section of the text, students should be able to point to some of these reasons:   * Charlotte says, “The least thing tires me these days” (pg. 136). * Wilbur thinks Charlotte looks ***swollen*** and ***listless*** *(pg. 136)*. *Note: Give your students definitions for these words.* |
| **CHAPTER 18: “The Cool of the Evening”**  What final word does Templeton bring Charlotte to spin in her web? Is Charlotte **satisfied** with this word?  Charlotte doesn’t usually leave her web. Why does Charlotte leave her web at the end of the chapter? What is she doing? What questions are you left with about it?  At the end of the chapter, Fern says she had the best time she’s ever had in her life at the fair. What was she doing? Do you remember from the beginning of the chapter? | Templeton brings the word *humble* to Charlotte as her last word to spin in the web. Charlotte likes this word because it matches Wilbur well. *Note: After students answer the first part of the question, you may need to reread Charlotte’s definition of “humble” on page 140.* Humble means “not proud” and “low to the ground” and Wilbur is both of those things!  Charlotte leaves her web to make something that she calls her *masterpiece*. I’m left wondering: What exactly is Charlotte’s masterpiece? Does it have something to do with why she is so tired? *Note: Support will be needed with the last part of this question. You don’t need to give away the answers to your kids, but help support them in connecting the fact that Charlotte is so tired and that she is making her masterpiece.*  Fern was riding the Ferris wheel with Henry Fussy. |
| **CHAPTER 19: “The Egg Sac”**  *Note: This chapter is packed! You may need to take a couple of days with it.*  What is Charlotte’s **masterpiece** or **magnum opus**? How does this leave Charlotte feeling?  We learn a lot in this chapter about how spider’s lay eggs. Turn to your partner and tell them one thing you learned! Then, we’ll make a list together.  How does everyone react when they hear the announcement about Wilbur’s special prize? What kinds of things do they do? Tell me everything you remember. | Charlotte’s masterpiece is her egg sac, filled with 514 eggs. Charlotte is left feeling very, very tired. *Note:* *As an extension, you might ask kids if they remember the exact word the text used to describe how Charlotte was feeling: “languishing.” Reiterate that the word means that she is slowing up, getting older.*  Things we learn about how spiders lay eggs:   * An egg sac is like a sac or cocoon that contains many, many spider eggs (pg. 144). * An egg sac is really strong; it is made out of the toughest material that a spider produces (pg. 145). * An egg sac helps keep the eggs warm and dry (pg. 145). * The eggs have to stay in the sac for a while. For Charlotte, until next spring (pg. 146).   If students were listening *very closely*, they will say that there was first a pause, and that then the Arables and Zuckermans started cheering and yelling. They threw straw up into the air like confetti. They hugged each other and kissed each other. Lurvy shook everyone’s hands (pg. 152). |
| **CHAPTER 20: “The Hour of Triumph”**  Where is Fern during Wilbur’s great **triumph** (pg. 156)? Would Fern have done this at the beginning of the book? How has Fern changed? | Fern isn’t there to celebrate Wilbur’s prize. She runs off to go on the Ferris wheel with Henry Fussy. Fern probably wouldn’t have done this at the beginning of the book because she babied Wilbur and spent a lot more of her time with him. But Fern has changed. She has started spending more time with Henry Fussy and less time with Wilbur. She is growing up.  *Note: This will be a tricky question for kids. First, prompt your students to remember how Fern treated Wilbur like an infant at the beginning of the book. Once they remember this, they will be able to see how much Fern has changed. You might also remind them of what Dr. Dorian said might happen to Fern; he said she would grow up and she does.* |
| **CHAPTER 21: “Last Day”**  “Nobody, of the hundreds of people that had visited the Fair, knew that a grey spider had played the most important part of all. No one was with her when she died.”  The last two sentences of this chapter are very, very sad. No one ever knew that Charlotte was the one who wrote those messages in the webs, and she ends up dying all alone after Wilbur and Templeton leave in the crate.  But now, think back on everything that has happened in this chapter. Do you think Charlotte was happy or sad when she died? What happened in the story that makes you think so? | Students will have varied responses. Charlotte is happy that she has saved Wilbur, and that her babies will be safe and go on to live with Wilbur at the farm. Charlotte is sad that she won’t ever get to see her babies (said in a previous chapter), and that she won’t get to be with Wilbur.  *Note: Your students may stray away from the text on this question, wanting to talk more broadly about death and how it makes people feel. As much as you can, ask students to think about what happens in the text that makes them think Charlotte is happy or sad when she dies. Ask them to give you examples.*  You might want to make a T chart to keep track of the student responses:  Charlotte is happy Charlotte is sad  - She does not get to go back to the barn.  -She will never get to see her babies.  -She will miss Wilbur.  - She helped save Wilbur’s life.  -Her eggs will be safe with Wilbur in the barn.  -She has a best friend who loves her very much. |
| **CHAPTER 22: “A Warm Wind”**  Even though Charlotte has died, Wilbur is not without friends. Who are Wilbur’s three new friends? How do they help him stay close to Charlotte? | Wilbur’s new friends are Joy, Ananea, and Nellie. They are three of Charlotte’s daughters, who decide to stay around the barn instead of leaving so they can be close to Wilbur. Wilbur no longer has Charlotte, but he can stay connected to her through her children. He will always remember his best friend, Charlotte. |

Final Days with the Book - Culminating Task:

**Vocabulary and Writing Task:**

*Note: This final task will likely take two days of instruction. The first day, you will focus on learning the three vocabulary words students will need to know to answer the question. The second day, students will go back to their seats to write and draw a picture.*

**Day One:**

In the last chapter of Charlotte’s Web, it said, “Wilbur often thought of Charlotte. A few strands of her old web still hung in the doorway. Every day Wilbur would stand and look at the torn, empty web, and a lump would come to his throat. No one had ever had such a friend—so affectionate, so loyal, and so skillful.”

We’re going to talk today about those last three words used to describe how good of a friend Charlotte was to Wilbur. We’ll talk about each of those three big words and think together about some examples from the story.

1. Affectionate: Give students the definition. Affectionate means loving. Now let’s brainstorm some ways that Charlotte was a loving friend to Wilbur. I’ll write them on the chart paper.
2. Loyal: Loyal means that Charlotte stuck with Wilbur. She protected him and made sure that he would be safe. He was always her friend. Now, let’s think of some ways that Charlotte was a loyal friend to Wilbur. I’ll write them on the chart paper.
3. Skillful: Skillful means that Charlotte could do amazing work. When are some times that Charlotte did amazing work? When did she show her skills to us? Let’s think together and I’ll write them on the chart paper.

**Day Two:**

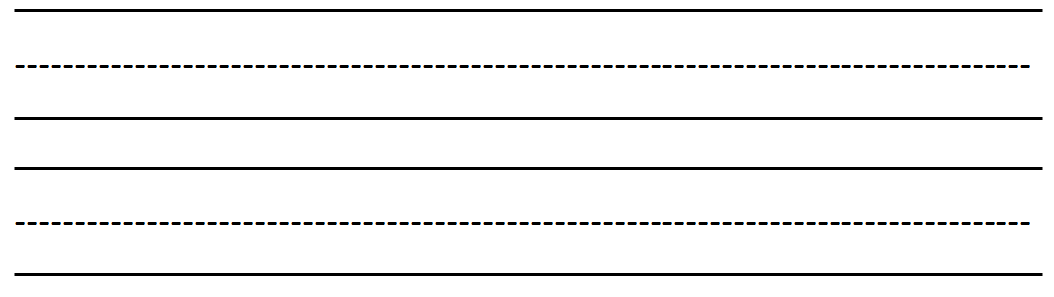
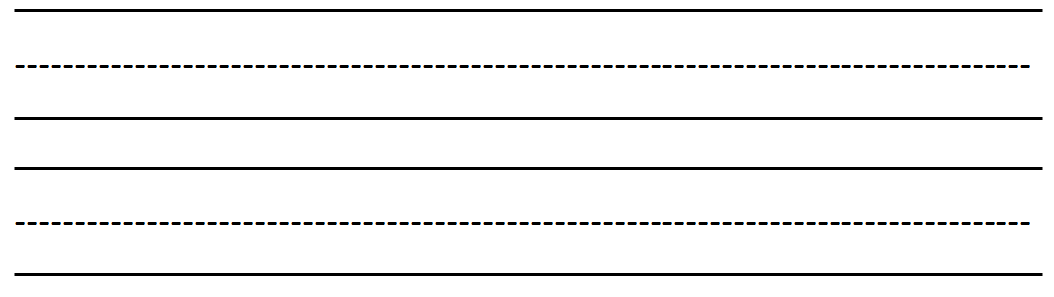
Start by reviewing the meaning of the three words from yesterday, as well as talking about some of the examples you came up with as a class. Then, ask students to pick one of the words. Once they have the word in their head, think about examples from the story of when Charlotte acted that way. Tell students they will return to their seats. They will get a piece of writing paper. On that paper, they will write the word they chose in the blank and then 2-3 sentences describing how Charlotte acted that way. Model the process for students before they return to their seats to write. After they have written, they can draw a picture. Have students present their writing to each other.

*Note: See attached student handout. You may want to create a bulletin board of all of your student responses to share them with the whole school.*

### Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Charlotte was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### friend to Wilbur.



Vocabulary Tracker

*Note: Below are a few rich vocabulary words pulled from each chapter. The vocabulary in this text is demanding; these are not all of the rich words that you will need to explain to your students while reading. Most of the words below were selected, however, as rich academic vocabulary words that 1) are essential to the student making meaning of each chapter and 2) are worthy of extra time and attention because they are likely to be repeated in future texts. Many of these words are addressed in the questions, activities and tasks in this lesson (noted next to the word in the table below).*

|  |
| --- |
| **Keep track of key vocabulary words examined in each chapter of the book.** |
| Chapter 1 – **sobbed** – Fern is sobbing when she learns her father plans to kill baby Wilbur (pg. 2).  Chapter 1 – **injustice** – Fern thinks it is an injustice that her father would kill baby Wilbur (pg. 3).  Chapter 1 – **miserable** – Avery calls Wilbur a “miserable little thing” (pg. 4). |
| Chapter 2 – **infant** – Fern treats Wilbur like an infant when she wheels him in a carriage (pg. 10); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 2 – **enchanted** – Fern is enchanted by Wilbur when he digs a tunnel to keep himself warm with straw (pg. 9).  Chapter 2 – **amused** – Wilbur amuses himself in the mud by the brook (pg. 10). |
| Chapter 3 – **trough** – Wilbur eats his food out of the trough (pg. 16).  Chapter 3 – **escape**—Wilbur escapes from the barn (pg. 19); title of chapter; addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 3 – **commotion** – The cocker spaniel hears the commotion outside of the barn and runs to join the chase (pg. 18).  Chapter 3 – **hullabaloo** – Wilbur was left “dazed and confused” by the hullabaloo caused by his escape (pg. 22). |
| Chapter 4 – **loneliness**—Title of the chapter (pg. 25).  Chapter 4 – **dreary** – Wilbur has a dreary, lonely, rainy day (pg. 30); addressed by chapter questions. |
| Chapter 5 – **mysterious** – Wilbur meets a mysterious new friend who he can’t see at first (pg. 34).  Chapter 5 – **salutations** – Charlotte greets Wilbur by saying, “Salutations!” (pg. 35).  Chapter 5 – **pretty**, **clever**, **kind** **heart**, **loyal**, **true**, **fierce**, **brutal**, **scheming**, **bloodthirsty**, **cruel**, **bold** — Words used to describe Charlotte in the last couple of paragraphs of the chapter (pg. 41); addressed by chapter questions. |
| Chapter 6 – **jubilee** – Early summer is a jubilee time for the birds (pg. 43); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 6 – **gratified** – Everyone is gratified to learn that the goslings have been born (pg. 44).  Chapter 6 – **unremitting** — After an unremitting effort, the goslings have been born (pg. 44).  Chapter 6 – **appalled** — Everyone is appalled that Templeton wants the rotten egg (pg. 47).  Chapter 6 – **untenable** – Charlotte warns that the barn will be untenable if the egg breaks (pg. 47). |
| Chapter 7 – **conspiracy** – Wilbur learns there is a conspiracy to kill him at Christmastime (pg. 49); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 7 – **hysterics** – Charlotte tells Wilbur to calm down because she cannot stand his hysterics (pg. 51). |
| Chapter 8 – **worried** – Mrs. Arable is worried about Fern (pg. 54); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 8 – **rambled** – Mrs. Arable is worried about the way Fern rambles on about the animals talking (pg. 54).  Chapter 8 – **queerly** – Mrs. Arable is going to talk to Dr. Dorian about how queerly Fern has been acting (pg. 54). |
| Chapter 9 – **boast** – Title of chapter (pg. 55); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 9 – **clever** – Wilbur says that Charlotte is cleverer than he is after he fails to spin a web (pg. 60).  Chapter 9 – **sedentary** – Charlotte says she is a sedentary spider (pg. 60).  Chapter 9 – **embarrassment** – Wilbur is embarrassed when the lamb tells him how much he smells (pg. 61). |
| Chapter 10 – **explosion** – Title of chapter (pg. 66).  Chapter 10 – **gullible** – Charlotte thinks her plan to save Wilbur will work because people are gullible (pg. 67); addressed by chapter question. |
| Chapter 11 – **miracle**—Title of chapter (pg. 77); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 11 – **solemnly** – After seeing Charlotte’s web, Mr. Zuckerman walks solemnly back into the house (pg. 79).  Chapter 11 – **admiring** – People from all over come to visit the barn, admiring Wilbur (pg. 84). |
| Chapter 12 – **idiosyncrasy** – The gander repeats everything he says; it’s his idiosyncrasy (pg. 86).  Chapter 12 – **sensational** – Charlotte thinks that Wilbur is sensational (pg. 91). |
| Chapter 13 – **progress** – Title of chapter (pg. 92).  Chapter 13 – **triumphantly** – Templeton returns triumphantly with a word for Charlotte’s web (pg. 99).  Chapter 13 – **radiant** – Word Charlotte weaves in her web (pg. 99). |
| Chapter 14 – **sternly**—Mrs. Arable sternly tells Fern to stop claiming that the animals are talking to each other (pg. 105).  Chapter 14 – **nervously** – Mrs. Arable shifts in her seat nervously when she talks to Dr. Dorian about Fern (pg. 108).  Chapter 14 – **relieved** – Mrs. Arable feels relieved when she leaves Dr. Dorian’s office (pg. 112). |
| Chapter 15 – **befriended**, **reputation** (pg. 114)—Addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 15 – **modest**, **fame**, **spoil** (pg. 115) – Addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 15 – **truer**, **satisfying** (pg. 115)—Addressed by chapter question. |
| Chapter 16 – **occasion**—Charlotte has her web looking good for the occasion, the fair (pg. 120).  Chapter 16 – **proudly** – Mr. Zuckerman speaks of Wilbur proudly (pg. 120).  Chapter 16 – **bewitched** – The old sheep tells Wilbur that if he goes into the crate without a struggle, Mr. Zuckerman will think he is bewitched (pg. 125). |
| Chapter 17 – **unattractive** – Charlotte says that Uncle has an unattractive personality (pg. 135).  Chapter 17 – **listless** – Charlotte looks swollen and listless at the end of the chapter (pg. 136); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 17 – **wearily** – Charlotte speaks wearily to Wilbur at the end of the chapter (pg. 136). |
| Chapter 18 – **humble** – The final word Charlotte weaves in her web (pg. 140).  Chapter 18 – **satisfied** — Templeton says he hopes Charlotte is satisfied with the word (pg. 140); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 18 – **masterpiece** — Charlotte says that she is working on her masterpiece at the end of the chapter (pg. 143). |
| Chapter 19 – **magnum opus** – Charlotte shows Wilbur her final masterpiece, her magnum opus (pg. 144); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 19 – **languishing** – Charlotte says that she feels like she is languishing after having completed her egg sac (pg. 146); addressed by chapter question. |
| Chapter 20 – **triumph** – Title of chapter (pg. 155); addressed by chapter question.  Chapter 20 – **scared to death** – Mr. Zuckerman is scared to death about the number of people staring at them when Wilbur is awarded his prize (pg. 156).  Chapter 20 – **appreciation**—The children in the crowd screamed in appreciation of Avery’s goofy, showy behavior (pg. 162). |
| Chapter 21 – **generous**, **sentiments** – Charlotte thanks Wilbur for his generous sentiments (pg. 165).  Chapter 21 – **desolation** – Wilbur grunts with desolation when he hears that Charlotte is dying (pg. 165).  Chapter 21 – **desperation** – Wilbur begs Templeton out of desperation to help him get the egg sac (pg. 167). |
| Chapter 22 – **affectionate**, **loyal**, and **skillful**—Words used to describe Charlotte as a friend (pg. 173).  Chapter 22 – **trembling with joy**—Wilbur is trembling with joy when Charlotte’s daughters decide to stay with him (pg. 182).  Chapter 22—**glory** – Wilbur celebrates the glory of everything at the end of the book (pg. 183). |

Extension learning activities for this book and other useful resources

**Mini-Debate**

*Note: This is a challenging activity that may be more appropriate for the end of first grade or beginning of second. This is particularly supportive of English Language Learners. Consider providing sentence frames to help them participate in the debate.*

Introduction: First, you will need to introduce your students to the whole idea of a *debate*. You might start by asking your students if they’ve ever had an argument. What happened in the argument? Students will share personal experiences, but rein them back in to the point that an argument is when two people don’t agree on something. One person thinks one way, the other person thinks another way. Tell them that a debate is like an argument, but there are rules. There are still two sides; one side thinks one way, the other side thinks another way. They each get time to say why they think what they think so that they can try to **convince** people that they are right.

Tell the students that you are going to have a short debate. You will ask a question about something in the book. Everyone will take a minute to think about the question. Then, all the kids who think one way will go to one side of the room. All the kids who think the other way will go to the other side of the room. Then, you will call on kids in each group to ask them why them think what they think. This is a very simple version of a debate.

Ok, here we go! Listen to the question carefully. After I say it, we will stay seated and think quietly about it before we move.

A **hero** is someone who acts very brave and helps save the day. Is Templeton a hero? What in the story makes you think so? Remind the kids that they should think about all that Templeton does in the story and why he does it.

Students will have varied answers. Templeton is a hero because he helps Charlotte save Wilbur by bringing her words and going to the fair, and then he helps Wilbur bring home Charlotte’s egg sac. Templeton does not act like a hero because he has to be convinced to do all of these things; he does not do them because he wants to help out, but because he gets something.

Note to Teacher

* The questions and tasks in this lesson are challenging! You may need to make adaptations to the materials depending on the needs of your students and the point in the year you decide to teach it.

**What Makes This Book 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 books will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the books 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

680 L

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.

The big understanding of this text is how rich and satisfying friendship can be. Students will be able to access this main idea, one within the realm of their experience at some level. The challenge is the depth of how this message is communicated. There are many, many layers of meaning in this text, which is why it is loved by kids and adults.

Straight-forward structure: chronological, separated into chapters by event.

Chapter titles help in keeping track of events; they clearly identify main event/mood of each chapter.

A few simple illustrations illuminate key events.

Significant vocabulary demands in this text. Some domain specific words that describe life on the farm (*trough)* and spiders (*spinnerets, egg sac)* but predominantly rich academic vocabulary that will repeat across many texts (*injustice, satisfying, progress, gratified).*

Some knowledge of farm life helps in understanding the setting, but is not essential to have prior to reading the book. The text itself helps you build knowledge about life on a farm, spiders, and the seasons.

**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 book? What supports can I provide?

*The text uses extremely challenging vocabulary. I will need to support my students by modeling how to use context to learn more about the hard words. I will also need to provide the meanings for many of the words.*

*There are many levels of meaning in this story. A rich sequence of questions that build on each other will help my students access the big understanding.*

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

*This text will help my students build knowledge about friendship, growing up, the seasons, spiders, farm animals and life on a farm.*

1. **Grade level:**

Suitable for 1st grade read-aloud.

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