Unit 1, Week1

Title: Cliffhanger

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.7; RF.3.3, RF.3.4; W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.10; SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.6; L.3.1-5

Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

**Before Teaching**

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

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

“People take dangerous risks to help those they love.”

Synopsis

In this story, Dag and his son Axel are at their climbing school in the Teton Mountains when the family dog, Grits, is stranded on Cathedral Wall as a violent storm approaches. Both characters must confront their fears and rely on their climbing experience and each other to safely rescue their pet.

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

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently without interruption.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and return to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (e.g., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| **Where are Axel and Dag when the story begins? What are they doing there? (pgs. 21 - 24)** | They are at the Teton Mountains Climbing School. Dag runs the mountain climbing school, and we can assume Axel is doing a lot of mountain climbing because he says he “was glad he wasn’t rock climbing now.” |
| **What language does the author use to describe the weather? (pgs. 21- 24)** | “storm cloud darkened,” “lightening flashed,” “lightening exploded,” “Kaboom, drummed the thunder” |
| **Re-read pgs. 24 -25. How did Dag know that he and Axel had time to get Grits?** | He counted the time between the lightning strike and the thunder and got to 40. Knowing it took 5 seconds for each mile, he figured the storm was eight miles away and that would give them time to safely reach Grits. |
| **What does the word trekked mean? Why didn’t the author say they “walked” to Cathedral Wall? (pg. 26)** | Dag and Axel had to go through wooded trails (probably not a very smooth path), climb over rock avalanches (probably not small), and “finally” arrive at the Cathedral Wall (finally implies after some effort). Trek is a stronger word for the kind of walking or hiking they had to do. |
| **How can we tell that Dag and Axel have experience climbing in this area? (pg. 28)** | They know the trail to take to get to the wall. Axel knows Monkey Ledge, the place Grits is stranded. Dag and Axel both know about an alternate route – “back to the trail split and up the ridge” – that Axel says will take too long. Dag says to “think of your moves.” They also know how to communicate that they are working together “on belay” and “climbing.” |
| **As Axel is climbing, why did the author say, “He relaxed”? (pg. 31)** | At this point, Axel was able to place a climber’s nut into a crack and put a carabiner through it. When he put his rope through the carabiner, he would not plunge “to his death” if he fell now. |
| **Re-read page 32. In your own words, describe how Axel finishes the climb to reach Grits.** | Axel is careful and concentrates even though the storm is only a quarter mile away. He moves slowly and places his hands firmly on the ledge before standing up. He also secured himself and the dog by placing another nut and carabiner and roping them both to it. |
| **How does the author describe being *in* the storm? How does the illustration help tell the story? (pg. 34)** | The author says, “The cloud opened and rain poured down.” This time there is “no count” for the storm’s approach. “Electricity lifted the hair straight up on Axel’s head and arms. The air hummed. Sparks snapped…” The illustration shows stars sparkling around the pair and rain pouring down. |
| **How does the author show how Axel is managing his descent (his climb down)? (pgs. 36-37)** | Axel is being careful and slow as he descends. He puts a harness on Grits and “eases” him down slowly. He calls to Dag – “Dog on belay!” – and he shows Dag he has a plan for getting to a good ledge. The author repeats the phrases, “he jumped out, dropped, caught himself” to show he is coming down slowly. |
| **What does it mean when Dag “foresaw a disaster”? (pg. 38)** | The word foresee means to “see” or predict something will happen **before** it actually happens. Dag thinks about the strong possibility of Axel falling and getting hurt. |
| **Describe the two different ways Dag and Axel want to solve the problem of Axel’s not finding a handhold near the planned route. (pg. 40)** | Dag wants to go get help, but Axel says it will be too dark. Axel is determined and swings back and forth until he can get a secure handhold and get balanced so he can drop the rope and finish the descent by free climbing. |
| **What does Dag do once the rescue is over? How does he feel and how do you know? (pg. 42)** | He counts the seconds between the lightning and thunder again, makes soup for all of them, and suggests they all wait since the storm is at the hut. He is relieved: “That was so close, I can’t talk about it”; he is feeling “beat”. |
| **Axel, Dag, and Grits were all afraid. Of what was each one scared and how do you know? (pg. 42)** | Grits was afraid of the storm. Axel had to tell him to stay so he wouldn’t jump to him. Axel also had to comfort Grits through the storm. Dag was afraid of Axel’s getting hurt, and Axel was scared of losing Grits: “I thought I had lost my friend forever.” |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING**  Words addressed with a question or task | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING**  General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | Page 28 - Belay  Page 31 - Carabiner  Page 37 - Rappel  Page 40 - Concentration |  |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | Pg. 26 – Trekked, avalanches,  Descent/descend  Pg. 31 - Plunging  Pg. 38 – Foresaw | Pg. 28-bracing  Page 31 - Securely |

Possible Culminating Tasks

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write

1. *Why didn’t Dag stop Axel from climbing to rescue Grits? How does “the old pro” help him as he climbs?*

Answer: Dag knows that Axel is a good climber and that he must save Grits. He has been climbing with him this summer and reminds him, “Remember your moves.” He also knows the area and takes precautions, i.e. wearing his helmet, carrying what he needs, concentrating and planning his moves. Dag belays for Axel, is quiet so he can concentrate, and helps him plan good routes.

1. *Axel takes risks in the story to save Grits, but at the same time he is careful. Give examples from the text that show how he is careful as he rescues his pet.*

Answer: Axel wears his helmet and packs the gear he will need for the rescue – ropes, carabiners, nuts, and the dog’s harness. He moves slowly, plans his routes, and makes sure he is balanced before completing moves. He secures himself and tells his dad what he is doing. He also concentrates and takes his time descending.

1. *Describe how the author shows time passing in the story.*

Answer: Time is measured by the storm’s approach, hit, and passing. Dag and Axel keep track of the storm by counting the seconds between the lightning strikes and the claps of thunder. At the beginning of the story, the storm is 8 miles away and then a half-mile away as they reach Cathedral Wall. It is only a quarter mile away as Axel gets to Monkey Ledge, and it hits as he secures him and Grits. The storm retreats as they begin the descent and is at the hut when they are back on the ground.

Additional Tasks

* *Simile – Find examples of where the author uses similes in the story. Why does he describe Axel’s movements this way?*

Answer: The author says that Axel was “moving like a ballet dancer” and “bent like a hairpin.” He also “ran like a track star back and forth across the vertical wall.” The author uses these similes to give the reader an understanding of Axel’s rock climbing. It helps the reader to visualize the moves.

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**“Cliffhanger”**

1. Where are Axel and Dag when the story begins? What are they doing there? (pgs. 21-24)
2. What language does the author use to describe the weather? (pgs. 21-24)
3. Re-read pgs. 24 -25. How did Dag know that he and Axel had time to get Grits? (pgs. 24-25)
4. What does the word trekked mean? Why didn’t the author say they “walked” to Cathedral Wall? (pg. 26)
5. How can we tell that Dag and Axel have experience climbing in this area? (pg. 28)
6. As Axel is climbing, why did the author say, “He relaxed”? (pg. 31)
7. Re-read page 32. In your own words, describe how Axel finishes the climb to reach Grits. (pg. 32)
8. How does the author describe being in the storm? How does the illustration help tell the story? (pg. 34)
9. How does the author show how Axel is managing his descent (his climb down)? (pgs. 36-37)
10. What does it mean when Dag “foresaw a disaster”? (pg. 38)
11. Describe the two different ways Dag and Axel want to solve the problem of Axel’s not finding a handhold near the planned route. (pg. 40)
12. What does Dag do once the rescue is over? How does he feel and how do you know? (pg. 42)
13. Axel, Dag, and Grits were all afraid. Of what was each one scared and how do you know? (pg. 42)

Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs)

to use with Basal Alignment Project Lessons

When teaching any lesson, it is important to make sure you are including supports to help all students. We have prepared some examples of different types of supports that you can use in conjunction with our Basal Alignment Project Lessons to help support your ELLs. They are grouped by when they would best fit in a lesson. While these supports reflect research in how to support ELLs, these activities can help ALL students engage more deeply with these lessons. Note that some strategies should be used at multiple points within a lesson; we’ll point these out. It is also important to understand that these scaffolds represent options for teachers to select based on students’ needs; it is not the intention that teachers should do *all* of these things at every lesson.

**Before the reading:**

* Read passages, sing songs, watch videos, view photographs, discuss topics (e.g., using the [four corners strategy](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/four-corners)), or research topics that help provide context for what your students will be reading. This is especially true if the setting (e.g., 18th Century England) or topic (e.g., boats) is one that is unfamiliar to the students.
* Provide instruction, using multiple modalities, on selected vocabulary words that are *central to understanding the text*. When looking at the lesson plan, you should note the Tier 2 words, particularly those words with high conceptual complexity (i.e., they are difficult to visualize, learn from context clues, or are abstract), and consider introducing them ahead of reading. For more information on selecting such words, go [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3167/selecting-and-using-academic-vocabulary-in-instruction). **You should plan to continue to reinforce these words, and additional vocabulary, in the context of reading and working with the text. (See additional activities in the During Reading and After Reading sections.)**

**Examples of Activities:**

* Provide students with the definition of the words and then have students work together to create [Frayer models](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/frayer-model) or other kinds of word maps for the words.
* When a word contains a prefix or suffix that has been introduced before, highlight how the word part can be used to help determine word meaning.
* Keep a word wall or word bank where these new words can be added and that students can access later.
* Have students create visual glossaries for whenever they encounter new words. Then have your students add these words to their visual glossaries.
* Create pictures using the word. These can even be added to your word wall!
* Create lists of synonyms and antonyms for the word.
* Have students practice using the words in conversation. For newcomers, consider providing them with [sentence frames](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion) to ensure they can participate in the conversation.
  + Practice spelling the words using different spelling practice strategies and decoding strategies. Students could take turns spelling with a partner.
* Use graphic organizers to help introduce content.

**Examples of Activities:**

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

**During reading:**

* Read the text aloud first so that ELLs can hear the passage read by a fluent reader before working with the text themselves.
* Allow ELLs to collaborate in their home languages to process content before participating in whole class discussions in English. Consider giving them the discussion questions to look over in advance (perhaps during the first read) and having them work with a partner to prepare.
* Encourage students to create sketch-notes or to storyboard the passage when they are reading it individually or with a partner. This will help show if they understand what they are reading as they are reading it.
* Ask questions related to the who, what, when, why, and how of the passage. For students that may need a little more help, provide them with [sentence stems](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion).
* Continue to draw attention to and discuss the words that you introduced before the reading.

**Examples of Activities:**

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

**Examples of Activities:**

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

**After reading:**

* Present directions for any post-reading assignments orally and visually; repeat often; and ask English Language Learners to rephrase.
* Allow ELLs to use English language that is still under development. Students should not be scored lower because of incorrect spelling or grammar (unless the goal of the assignment is to assess spelling or grammar skills specifically). When grading, be sure to focus on scoring your students only for the objective(s) that were shared with students.
* Scaffold questions for discussions so that questioning sequences include a mix of factual and inferential questions and a mix of shorter and more extended responses. Questions should build on each other and toward inferential and higher-order-thinking questions. There are not many factual questions already listed in the lesson instructions, so you will need to build some in as you see fit. More information on this strategy can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/aligned/creating-sequencing-text-dependent-questions-support-english-language-learners/).
* Reinforce new vocabulary using multiple modalities

**Examples of activities:**

* Using the words that you had students work with before reading, have students write sentences in reference to the passage that you just finished reading.
* Require students to include the words introduced before reading in the culminating writing task.
* For newcomers, print out pictures that represent the words that you focused on and have students match the words to the pictures.
* Based on different features of the words, have the students sort them into different categories and explain their choices. For example, the students could sort the words by prefixes, suffixes, connotation, etc.
* After reading the passage, continue to examine important sentences (1–2) in the text that contribute to the overall meaning of the text. Guide students to break apart these sentences, analyze different elements, and determine meaning. More information on how to do this, including models of sentence deconstruction, can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3160/juicy-sentence-protocol).
* Provide differentiated scaffolds for writing assignments based on students’ English language proficiency levels.

**Examples of Activities:**

* For all students, go over the prompt in detail, making sure to break down what the prompt means before having the students get to work. Then have the students explain the directions back to you.
* Have students create an evidence tracking chart during reading, then direct them to look back over their evidence chart and work with a group to see if their evidence matches what the rest of the class wrote down. If some of the chart does not match, students should have a discussion about why.
* For students who need more support, model the proper writing format for your students and provide them with a properly formatted example for reference.
* For newcomers, you may consider creating sentence or paragraph frames to help them to write out their ideas.
* To further discussion about the passage, have students create their own who, what, when, where, why, and how questions related to the passage to ask each other and have students pair up and practice asking each other the questions. If available, pair students of the same home language to support the use of language still under development.