

Grade 6 Playlists for Reading: Literature

Craft and Structure

This resource bundle aligns with the Craft and Structure standards of the Common Core State Standards for Grade 6 Reading: Literature. We have included five of our playlists—content-rich tools that use trusted textual, audio, visual, and multimedia resources to supplement high-quality instruction in specific elements of the Common Core—to guide students through each of the relevant standards for the literature reading strands of English Language Arts.

Each playlist is designed for 30–45 minutes of instructional time and is followed by a rigorous self-check for students. Alternatively you could assign individual student playlists as homework or remedial/extension activities.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts are not intended to be taught in sequential order, and neither are these playlists. Instead, you should feel free to dip in and out of these resources as your instructional needs dictate.

Standard Coverage Notes:

- Standard RL.6.4 is covered across three playlists: one focuses on how word choice shapes meaning and tone, one focuses on determining word meanings, and the other focuses on determining figurative meanings.

The accompanying Student Editions include additional passages on which students can practice their reading skills, including the ability to analyze craft and structure. Stepped-out examples and hyperlinks to videos, graphic organizers, and other activities further support instruction.

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Grade 6 Playlist: Determining Figurative Meanings

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4:

- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Welcome

Shawn has an e-mail friend who lives across the country. Even though they have never met in person, they have been writing to each other weekly for over two years. Shawn likes the fact that he can talk to his friend about personal matters that he is not comfortable discussing with his school friends, such as his feelings when he did not make the middle school academic team. “Hey, it’s all right,” his friend replied. “I applied to join the honor society last year, and I didn’t make it. Receiving that rejection letter cut like a knife. I was a walking rain cloud for a week. But it’s not going to stop me from applying again this year!” His friend’s response has Shawn scratching his head. What exactly did he mean when he said it *cut like a knife*? Or that he was a *walking rain cloud*? Shawn loves his friend’s creativity with words. But sometimes he has trouble figuring out what he is trying to say!

Objective

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- determine figurative meanings as they are used in a text.

Review

Key Terms

- Figurative language** is language that uses words and phrases in nonliteral ways. Instead of stating facts the way they are, figurative language exaggerates or alters the definitions of words.
 - Personification** is a type of figurative language that uses human characteristics to describe nonhuman objects, such as animals, plants, or nonliving things.
 - Simile** and **metaphor** are both types of figurative language that compare two things that are not alike in order to make the reader notice similarities he or she might not have seen. Similes use the words *like* or *as*, while metaphors do not.

Watch!

Watch these videos to learn more about different types of figurative language:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZHKsTN2lc4>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tr0-kMIWJgw>



Exploring the Standard

This playlist discusses ways to determine the meaning of figurative language as it is used in a text. Figurative language adds color and interest to a text by using words in ways that may be unfamiliar. By examining the text, a reader can determine what these words and phrases mean, even if their meanings are not clear right away.

Example

The selection below is from *Call of the Wild* by Jack London. This book tells the story of Buck, a sled dog who lives in Alaska during the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s. In this selection, figurative language is used to creatively describe the story's setting, the Alaskan wilderness. While reading, try to determine the meanings of the underlined words and phrases.

¹When Buck earned sixteen hundred dollars in five minutes for John Thornton, he made it possible for his master to pay off certain debts and to journey with his partners into the East after a fabled lost mine, the history of which was as old as the history of the country. Many men had sought it; few had found it; and more than a few there were who had never returned from the quest. This lost mine was steeped in tragedy and shrouded in mystery. No one knew of the first man. The oldest tradition stopped before it got back to him. From the beginning there had been an ancient and ramshackle cabin. Dying men had sworn to it, and to the mine the site of which it marked, clinching their testimony with nuggets that were unlike any known grade of gold in the Northland.

²But no living man had looted this treasure house, and the dead were dead; wherefore John Thornton and Pete and Hans, with Buck and half a dozen other dogs, faced into the East on an unknown trail to achieve where men and dogs as good as themselves had failed. They sledded seventy miles up the Yukon, swung to the left into the Stewart River, passed the Mayo and the McQuestion, and held on until the Stewart itself became a streamlet, threading the upstanding peaks which marked the backbone of the continent....

³The months came and went, and back and forth they twisted through the uncharted vastness, where no men were and yet where men had been if the Lost Cabin were true. They went across divides in summer blizzards, shivered under the midnight sun on naked mountains between the timber line and the eternal snows, dropped into summer valleys amid swarming gnats and flies, and in the shadows of glaciers picked strawberries and flowers as ripe and fair as any the Southland could boast. In the fall of the year they penetrated a weird lake country, sad and silent, where wild fowl had been, but where then there was no life nor sign of life—only the blowing of chill winds, the forming of ice in sheltered places, and the melancholy rippling of waves on lonely beaches.

These phrases include words that are used differently than in the definitions found in a dictionary. So, what do they mean?

- *a fabled lost mine*: What is a fable? It is a fictional story that provides readers with a lesson or a moral. Fables often include characters who are animals or who have supernatural powers. So, to describe something as "fabled" would suggest that many stories had been told about it.
- *steeped in tragedy and shrouded in mystery*: What does it mean for something to be steeped? Think about how a tea bag is steeped in hot water. In order to make a strong cup of tea, the bag has to sit in the water for a long time. The fabled lost mine has been the site of tragedy so great that the story has been shared many times over the years. In other words, the tragedy of the mine is well known.



Grade 6 Playlist: Analyze How the Parts of a Story Relate to Its Structure and Meaning

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5:

- Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

Welcome

Fictional texts are made up of many different parts that all work together to communicate a theme and tell a story. Each part of the text—a scene, a chapter, or even a sentence—contributes to the overall structure and meaning of the story. Understanding how each portion of a text fits within the overall structure can help a reader better understand the story.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- analyze how portions of a text fit within the overall structure of the text.
- think critically about how the structure of a text contributes to the development of theme, plot, or setting.

Review

Key Term

- The **structure** of a text is the way it is put together.

Exploring the Standard

Most fictional stories have the same overall structure. They typically begin by introducing characters and presenting the main conflict. During the middle portion of the story, the conflict develops until it reaches a climax. Once the climax is reached, the story moves toward a resolution and a conclusion. Although this structure acts as a general framework, individual writers make different choices about what events to describe, when to reveal certain information, and how to communicate the main theme of the story.

Watch!

For more information on the structure of fictional texts, watch this video:

- <https://youtu.be/H0WsD1DJCnw>

Practice!

Use this worksheet to practice analyzing the structure of a story:

- <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/the-breakaway.htm>



Example 1

In the book *Pollyanna* by Eleanor H. Porter, a young girl named Pollyanna goes to live with her aunt, Miss Polly. Much of the conflict in the story centers on a clash between Pollyanna's cheerful outlook on life and Miss Polly's stern, no-nonsense approach. Read the following excerpt from Chapter 28 of *Pollyanna*, in which Miss Polly talks to her maid, Nancy. Think about the structure of the passage. How does it help to develop the characters?

¹"And after that she said he made a regular game of it—findin' somethin' in everythin' ter be glad about. An' she said ye could do it, too, and that ye didn't seem ter mind not havin' the doll so much, 'cause ye was so glad ye DIDN'T need the crutches. An' they called it the 'jest bein' glad' game. That's the game, ma'am. She's played it ever since."

²"But, how—how—" Miss Polly came to a helpless pause.

³"An' you'd be surprised ter find how cute it works, ma'am, too," maintained Nancy, with almost the eagerness of Pollyanna herself...

⁴"But why hasn't—she told me—the game?" faltered Miss Polly. "Why has she made such a mystery of it, when I asked her?"

⁵Nancy hesitated.

⁶"Beggin' yer pardon, ma'am, you told her not ter speak of—her father; so she couldn't tell ye. 'Twas her father's game, ye see."

⁷Miss Polly bit her lip.

⁸"She wanted ter tell ye, first off," continued Nancy, a little unsteadily. "She wanted somebody ter play it with, ye know. That's why I begun it, so she could have some one."

Listen!

To listen to *Pollyanna*, visit this website:

- <https://librivox.org/pollyanna-by-eleanor-h-porter/>

In the excerpt above, larger portions of text are interrupted by very short sentences that stand alone: "Nancy hesitated" and "Miss Polly bit her lip." These short sentences slow the reader down and draw his or her attention to important pieces of information. The first sentence, "Nancy hesitated," shows that Nancy feels awkward and does not want to offend Miss Polly with her response. She most likely hesitates because she is thinking carefully about what to say. The second sentence, "Miss Polly bit her lip," shows that now Miss Polly feels awkward. She most likely feels guilty about her treatment of Pollyanna.



Teaching Notes: Analyze How the Parts of a Story Relate to Its Structure and Meaning

The goal of RL.6.5 is for students to analyze how portions of a text fit within the overall structure of the text and think critically about how the story's structure contributes to the development of theme, plot, and setting. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Choose a short poem and have students analyze its structure. Divide students into groups and assign each group a few lines or a stanza. Ask students to discuss how those lines fit into the overall poem and contribute to its theme. Then regroup as a class and have each group share their ideas. This activity would work well with the poem "Harlem" by Langston Hughes. Watch the following video for a possible analysis of the structure of "Harlem":
 - <https://www.opened.com/video/espark-learning-analyzing-text-structure-instructional-video/427320>
2. Choose a grade-appropriate short story and have students work in pairs to make a plot diagram showing the story's structure. Students can use the interactive diagram at the link below. Ask students to decide which paragraphs or events belong in each part of the diagram. Then discuss the story's structure together as a class.
 - <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/plot-diagram/>
3. For extra support, complete the Applying the Standard activity together as a class. Choose key sentences or paragraphs from "The Emperor's New Clothes" to analyze. Ask volunteers to explain how each portion of the text develops the theme, plot, or setting of the story. (For example, paragraph 2 helps develop the setting by describing the town. It also develops the plot by introducing the two dishonest weavers, who play a major role in the story.) Have students use symbols or color coding to indicate which story element(s) are developed in each paragraph.

Additional Resources

Consider using these resources related to standard RL.6.5:

- **Graphical Representation:** In this lesson plan, students create comic strips to analyze the structure of Eudora Welty's short story "A Worn Path":
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/eudora-weltys-worn-path-graphical-representation#sect-thelesson>
- **A Christmas Carol Chronology:** In this lesson plan, students analyze the author's manipulation of time in *A Christmas Carol*:
<http://www.oercommons.org/courses/christmas-carol-chronology/view>
- **Story Pyramid:** This graphic organizer is a print version of the plot diagram used in Activity 2:
<http://www.eradingworksheets.com/reading-worksheets/story-pyramid-graphic-organizer-2.pdf>

