

Beliefs About Minilessons

- Minilessons should be designed with a vision of helping students gain the necessary skills, strategies, and behaviors to become independent readers.
- Minilessons should be scaffolded across time to deepen and enrich understanding of concepts. They are not activities delivered in isolation.
- Minilessons should be part of a larger conversation that we as a community have about our reading lives and that these conversations build over time.
- Minilessons should be interactive. Students should be the ones doing the thinking, not the teacher.
- Minilessons should be planned with the needs of current students in mind. They can't be canned, scripted or duplicated year after year.
- Minilessons should be the right length to match your teaching point. There is no magic number of minutes for an effective minilesson.
- Minilessons should be organized in a way that makes the most sense to the teacher, school or district. There is no one right way to organize minilessons.
- Minilessons should be based on what we know about teaching and learning. Regardless of the mandates and pressures of state testing, there is no reason to compromise best teaching practice.
- Minilessons should be designed to teach the reader, not the book.
- Minilessons should be designed by the teachers who are doing the teaching, not by corporations.

(From *The Joy of Planning* by Franki Sibberson, published by Choice Literacy, 2012)

Main Idea Vs. Interesting Facts Lesson Cycle

How do the interesting facts fit together to teach us something bigger?	Book	Lesson Topic
Day 1	<i>Timeless Thomas: How Thomas Edison Changed Our Lives</i> by Gene Baretta	Organization of an informational text helps us understand big ideas.
Day 2	<i>Water is Water: A Book About the Water Cycle</i> by Miranda Paul	The title often helps us understand the big idea.
Day 3	<i>Feathers: Not Just for Flying</i> by Melissa Stewart	Authors give us information beyond the initial facts.
Day 4	<i>How Did that Get in my Lunchbox: The Story of Food</i> by Chris Butterworth	Looking for patterns across information helps us understand the big idea.
Day 5	<i>Over and Under the Snow</i> by Kate Messner	Language in an informational text helps us understand big ideas.

From *Still Learning to Read: Teaching Students in Grades 3-6, Second Edition* by Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak, Forthcoming July 2016 from Stenhouse Publishers

Questions That We Ask Our Students to Think, Talk, and Write About Throughout the Year

Knowing yourself as a reader

- What did you learn about yourself as a reader?
- How have you changed as a reader?
- How will this affect your independent reading?

Reading difficult text

- Where did you get stuck? What did you do to help yourself?
- What made that part/text difficult to understand?
- What are you wondering?

Using evidence from the text to support your thinking

- What in the text makes you think that?
- How does this evidence help you understand the text more deeply?

Changing your thinking while reading

- Where did you notice that your thinking had changed?
- Why do you think that your thinking changed?
- What in the book led to your change in thinking?

Rereading (reading again, reading differently)

- When you reread, how did you read differently?
- What did you notice when you reread that you didn't notice the first time?
- How did rereading help you understand the text better?

The power of writing and talk

- Did anything in your conversation today help you understand something about the text more deeply?
- Did writing cause you to think about something you hadn't thought of before?

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Planning Minilessons

A Booklist

Wordless Picture Books

The Flower Man by Mark Ludy
South by Patrick McDonnell
A Circle of Friends by Giora Carmi
The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney

Titles and Metaphors—Clues to Authors Message

Walk On! by Marla Frazee
How to Heal a Broken Wing by Bob Graham
Learning to Fly by Sebastian Meschenmoser
Lost and Found: Three Dog Stories by Jim La Marche

When Storylines Come Together

Artie and Julie by Chin-Yuan Chen
Panda and Polar Bear by Matthew Baek

Teaching About Universal Themes

Wanda's Roses by Pat Brisson
The Curious Garden by Peter Brown
The Enormous Turnip by Alexei Tolstoy

Themes of Friendship

Help! A Story of Friendship by Holly Keller
Bella and Bean by Rebecca Kai Dotlich
The Robot and the Bluebird by David Lucas

Books with More Sophisticated Themes

Voices in the Park by Anthony Browne
The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson
The House by J. Patrick Lewis
The Goblin and the Empty Chair by Mem Fox

The more we know about a character, the better we can predict and understand their actions.

Max and Ruby by Rosemary Wells
The Pigeon by Mo Willems
Llama, Llama by Anna Dewdney
Scaredy Squirrel by Melanie.
The One and Only Marigold by Florence Parry Heide.

We learn about characters from other characters in the book

Who is Melvin Bubble? By Nick Bruel

We learn about characters from their relationships with others?

Bella and Bean by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox

The *Elephant and Piggie* series by Mo Willems

We learn about a character by his/her voice in a story?

There's a Wolf at the Door: Five Classic Tales by Zoe B. Alley

Wild Boars Cook and *Meet Wild Boars* by Meg Rosoff

Characters often change over time.

The Summer My Father Was Ten by Pat Brisson,

Emma's Rug by Allen Say

How does a particular character see the world? What motivates this character?

Voices in the Park by Anthony

Willow by Denise Brennan-Nelson

Taken from *The Joy of Planning* by Franki Sibberson

Reading Across Texts

Things we can think about when we study **several books about one character:**

Otis by Loren Long
Little Elliot by Mike Curato
Flora by Molly Idle

Things we can think about when we study **several books about a real-life issue:**

(Friendship)
Beekle by Dan Santat
To the Sea by Cale Atkinson
The Farmer and the Clown by Marla Frazee
Be a Friend by Salina Yoon
Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Mantchev

(Loss)
City Dog, Country Frog by Mo Willems
Ida Always by Caron Levis
South By Patrick McDonnell
Yeti and the Bird by Nadia Shireen

Things we can think about when we study **several books about a topic or idea.**

(Gardens/Gardening)
The Night Gardener by Terry Fan and Eric Fan
The Little Gardener by Emily Hughes
Wanda's Roses by Pat Brisson
The Curious Garden by Peter Brown
The Summer My Father Was Ten by Pat Brisson

Things we can think about when we study **several books by one author.**

(Bill Thompson-wordless books)
Chalk by Bill Thompson
Fossil by Bill Thompson
The Typewriter by Bill Thompson

Things we can think about when we study **several books in a series.**

Olive and the Embarrassing Gift by Tor Freeman

Olive and the Big Secret by Tor Freeman
Olive and the Bad Mood by Tor Freeman

Things we can think about when we study **several books with a similar message.**

(Perseverance)
The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires
Trombone Shorty by Troy Andrews

(Leaving Home/Returning Home/Journey)
The Bear and the Piano by David Litchfield
Nightsong by Loren Long
Mr. Tiger Goes Wild by Peter Brown

Things we can think about when we study **different versions of the same story.**

Rumplestiltskin by Paul Zelinski
Rumplestiltskin by Parragon Books
Rumplestiltskin by Paul Galdone
Rump: The True Story of Rumplestiltskin by Liesl Shurtliff