Acknowledgements

The Board of Trustees and staff of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc. would like to express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to those individuals and organizations that, since 1991, have given so generously of their time, talent and energy to make these guides possible.

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About The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc.

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc. is a year-long language arts program dedicated to strengthening the character development and literacy skills of students. Since the organization’s founding, the Courage Curriculum has positively impacted the academic performance of more than 150,000 students in the Boston Public Schools and surrounding communities. Our programs are taught locally in sixth and ninth grade classrooms, and our reach has expanded to include a national essay contest and an international program taught in Thailand, Cambodia, Mozambique, and beyond.

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum was founded in 1991 to honor the life of Max Warburg, a courageous young boy who maintained steadfast determination and heartfelt hope in the face of his battle with leukemia. After his death, Max’s parents, Stephanie and Jonathan Warburg, believed that Max’s story could be an example for other children. They worked with the Boston Public Schools and experienced educators to develop The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum.

The program’s sixth grade curriculum, *Courage in My Life*, features carefully selected novels whose main characters are courageous young people. As students become familiar with Max and the literary characters featured in each novel, they come to understand their own capacity for courage. Their personal stories are shared in the essays they write as the culmination of this year-long curriculum. Each spring, The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum honors students whose work, chosen from thousands of essays, is published in an anthology titled *The Courage of Boston’s Children*.

www.maxcourage.org
About The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Teachers provide suggestions for teachers on how to help students understand and appreciate literature, while engaging in meaningful classroom discussions and activities. Immersion in literature becomes a bridge for the development of students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Using these guides, teachers can help students acquire and refine the skills they need to be effective communicators and excellent readers and writers.

The Boston Public Schools English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have also been integrated into these Guides for Educators by incorporating the ELA educational principles of the frameworks, by embedding student products from the Student Requirements, and by helping students to explore the key concepts and questions in the Content Objectives. In addition the Guides for Educators employ a variety of pedagogical approaches for developing literacy and social skills.

**ELA Educational Principles**

The following education principles from the ELA Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have guided the development of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators.

**Reading**

Reading is an active, constructive and creative process that involves distinctive cognitive strategies before, during and after reading. Good readers access prior knowledge, establish purpose, preview the text, generate questions, make predictions, confirm and revise predictions, locate and clarify concepts that cause confusion, take mental or written notes, organize information into categories, and use text features such as illustrations and headings to acquire meaning from print.

**Writing**

Writing is a process involving planning (pre-writing), context (drafting), reading aloud and reflecting on the product, collaborating with others (peer editing), revising (rewriting) and sharing the final product with others (publishing). Good writing reflects and stimulates thinking and allows students to find their own voices and to express themselves in an articulate, coherent manner.
**Social skills and values**

While students develop their reading and writing skills, they can simultaneously develop their social skills and values. One important way for students to express themselves and become aware of other people’s points of view is by developing strong perspective-taking skills. The development of students’ perspective-taking skills contributes to the development of their conflict resolution skills. These social skills— together with learning to value trust, respect, love, peace, self-esteem, courage, perseverance and freedom— help students to develop healthy relationships while, at the same time, support the development of students’ literacy skills.

**ELA Student Requirements**

Students are expected to complete specific products for each grade level by the end of the school year. The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators may include one or more of the following student products: reading review, autobiography, letter, essay, perspective-taking exercise, and conflict resolution exercise. The completions of these products may be used to satisfy the BPS ELA Student Writing Product Requirements.

**ELA Content Objectives**

Key questions are challenging, thought-provoking, age-appropriate, and generally open-ended. They are designed to engage students’ interest before, during, and after reading. Key questions direct students’ exploration of the most important topics, themes, characters, events, values, perspectives, and literary conventions. The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum’s Guides for Educators explore key concepts and questions through whole class, small group, partner, and individual discussions and activities.
Dear Teachers,

This guide has been written according to current research and best practices in literacy instruction. There are many ideas and activities that will help you to explore the themes of the novel, deepening students’ comprehension, motivation and enjoyment. There are also activities designed to deal with specific instructional goals, such as writing skills and vocabulary development.

As part of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, this guide focuses significantly with the theme of courage. Students are encouraged to think about examples of courage in their own lives, and make connections between Max’s story and Bridge to Terabithia. This guide has been written to reflect the Boston Public Schools’ English Language Arts Standards and Requirement for sixth graders. Many of the questions, activities and projects are designed to help you meet these requirements. Throughout the guide, you will find activities which relate to the standard requirements in one of four ways:

• Activities that fulfill the sixth grade Language Arts Student Requirements (these can be found in the post-reading section);

• Writing assignments throughout the book which can become part of students’ writing portfolios;

• Research activities that require students to read other text genres, such as newspapers, which help to satisfy the requirement to read ten other genre pieces; and

• Activities and questions throughout the guide that directly relate to the focus themes and questions. The goal is to help prepare students on an ongoing basis for their final key questions essay(s).

In addition, you will find in this guide important updates pertaining to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, reflecting current shifts in text complexity, evidence-based analysis, and more. This guide has been revised to align with these Common Core State Standards (CCSS) shifts. The mini-lessons, long-term projects and extension activity labels highlight the CCSS anchor standards.

Best wishes for a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Marcia Harris
Dear Teachers,

Welcome! *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Max’s Story* offer opportunities for you and your students to discover the worlds of courage, inner strength and friendship. Max encountered great adversity and was faced with many obstacles. Not only did he rise above and overcome these obstacles, but in the process he found a way to send a message of inspiration and hope. *Bridge to Terabithia* offers another message of inspiration and hope— one that exemplifies the power that love, imagination and friendship have to bring about transformation in our lives.

In this guide we explore the powerful ideas behind these stories through a wide range of activities that reflect current research and best practices in literacy instruction. Some of the activities address specific instructional goals, such as vocabulary development, while others serve to enrich the reading experience, increase motivation and deepen comprehension.

As we wrote the curriculum guide for *Bridge to Terabithia* we were influenced by three guiding factors: 1. The story itself; 2. The themes of courage that relate to Max’s story; 3. The Boston Public Schools’ Citywide Learning Standards and Curriculum Framework. In order to make this guide a true partner to you, we have molded all three factors into a particular emphasis on helping students prepare for key questions. In the Post-Book Activities section of the guide, you will find five focus themes that reflect the three curriculum influences and many key questions that relate to each of these themes. You will be able to select the themes and key questions from those we provide, write your own key questions, or allow students to choose which key question(s) they would like to address.

Many of the activities and projects throughout the guide have been designed to help you and your students complete the key questions and Boston Public Schools Language Arts Students Requirements. As you look through the guide, you will see activities that relate to the requirements in one of four ways:

- Activities that fulfill the sixth-grade Language Arts Student Requirements (these can be found in the Post-Book Activities section)
- Writing assignments that can become part of students’ writing portfolios
- Research activities that require students to read other genres, such as newspapers, which help to satisfy the requirement to read ten other genre pieces
- Activities and questions that directly relate to the focus themes and key questions. The goal is to help prepare students on an ongoing basis for their final essay(s) based on key questions.

This guide is not meant to be followed as a strict prescription. Instead, it is a compilation of suggestions and ideas from which you can pick and choose. Ultimately, you will chart your own course through the literature, drawing from this guide, your past experiences and your own ideas. We have provided an abundance of activities so that you have many options. You should choose these activities based on your own teaching style and interest, your students’ interests and school-specific programs and curricula.

In the Guide Preview we introduce you to the main components of the curriculum. We wish you luck as you embark on your journey of learning with your students. Enjoy!

Jen Underhill
Author, Curriculum Guide

Teri West
Author, Curriculum Guide
Dear Teachers,

In these mini lessons, I have attempted to pull out the teaching points in the many activities that have been so thoughtfully planned in the original Courage Curriculum. The mini lessons are based on author’s craft, story structure and good reading habits. It is my hope that by pulling out the teaching point for these mini-lessons, teachers will be better able to use the curriculum within a workshop model.

I based these mini-lessons on the idea that teachers may teach the Courage Curriculum novels in any order. Occasionally some of the mini-lessons are repeated in multiple books. This repetition is deliberate in order to provide more practice with the skill. I envisioned the curriculum being used in a classroom which allows opportunities for students to do a majority of the thinking involved in reading a text. Many curriculums provide guiding or discussion questions for students. However, when students read for enjoyment they may not have a list of discussion questions to help them discuss the book with a friend or lead them to understand the bigger concepts.

Explicitly teaching students to create these questions on their own, to make connections, notice character traits, recognize authors craft, etc. will make reading a more enjoyable and efficient process for them. Allowing conversations within small groups around their own questions and ideas about the books will prove to be satisfying for all. As they share opinions, debate character motivations, discuss connections and ask questions of their peers they will become more and more authentically engaged with the text.

This type of independence and group work does not come naturally to all children. In order for this type of learning to work well there needs to be a lot of up front teaching around the expectations, routines and group dynamics before students are to be set free. I have found the Literature Circle model described by Harvey Daniels to be very helpful in establishing book clubs in the classroom.

As you already know, providing a variety of reading opportunities in the classroom is essential to effective reading instruction. At times you may read these or other books aloud to the class, have students read in pairs, or encourage students to read independently. You may also provide some students with a listening center, where they can listen to the book on tape. I have found that many of the books in this curriculum are available on tape or CD at local libraries.

As you use these mini lessons and the original curriculum to provide explicit reading instruction and establish a classroom of enthusiastic, critical, independent readers, I wish you many animated conversations focused around great literature and the compelling topic of courage.

Enjoy,
Kelly K. Smith
Author, Mini Lessons
Guide Preview

Chapter Summary
The summary provides an overview of the main events and ideas from the chapter.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
For each chapter, there will be a set of suggestion questions designed to develop comprehension of the story and stimulate discussion of the themes and the way in which they story relates to your students’ lives, particularly with respect to courage.

In addition, some of the questions and activities will also provide ideas for linking Bridge to Terabithia to the Boston Public Schools’ Key Questions and Close Reads with corresponding concepts from the Boston Public Schools Standards and Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). There will also be Key Questions in the “Post-Reading” section. As with all activities and questions, it is not necessary to answer or complete all questions. When you preview the guide, it may be helpful to make a preliminary list of those questions which you feel will most benefit your students. If you decide to use some of the Key Questions and Close Reads to stimulate group discussion, you may want to jot down some ideas or comments made by students on large chart paper. Students can refer to these at a later date if they are independently working on a Key Question, particularly one from the Post-Reading questions.

You may wish to vary the placement of questions using some before and others after reading. Although questions during a story can be an important means of assessing comprehension, you may find that you do not want to interrupt the flow of this dramatic book. Before reading you can ask the entire class to reflect upon what you read aloud or you may give different questions to pairs of students. After reading, give your students time to discuss the questions with their partners and then ask them to share their responses with the class. If two pairs of students reach dissimilar conclusions, elicit further information from on why they feel the way they do.

A Special Note about Journal Writing: Dialogue Journals
In addition to providing students with the opportunity to reflect and share their feelings with their classmates, you may also want to ask students to keep a daily journal of their reactions to the day’s reading. Allow students to choose between the optional writing prompts provided in this guide and writing their own unsolicited feelings or responses. In addition, encourage students to write about examples of courage found in the story and in their own lives. One means of focusing students on a particular chapter and assessing their comprehension of the plot is to ask them to create a title for each chapter as they begin their journal entry. Encourage students to reflect on their own comprehension. If they realize that they are unable to summarize the chapter or recognize its main points, they may wish to reread it on their own or ask you or a classmate for assistance.
Before beginning journal writing, assure students that their entries will not be graded and that unless they choose to share what they have written, their writing is private. One effective technique in journal writing is a **dialogue journal** in which students write and their teacher responds in the journal to the content (not to grammar or spelling) of the entry. In this way, dialogue journals can foster conversations between student and teacher. One strategy for making this project more manageable for a large class is to ask three students a day who would like a written response to volunteer to share their writing with you. Questions which may be particularly appropriate for a dialogue journal will be marked with `{Dialogue Journal}`.

You may also wish to provide time for students to share their writing with another student or with a small group of students. If you choose to pair students as “journal partners,” have students write only on the right hand pages of their journal, reserving the left hand pages for their journal partner’s response.

Sharing your own writing about the story with your class could be a way of enabling students to become more comfortable with this activity. Before asking students to share with one another, you may wish to discuss appropriate ways of listening and responding to others’ work. Remind students to begin their response by first offering a positive comment such as: *I like the way you ___________.* The responder can then state how he or she feels about something specific in the reader’s entry. Allow the reader to respond to the comment if he or she chooses to do so. Other students may also want to join in the conversation or read aloud parts of their journal that relate to the discussion.

After several sessions of modeling appropriate, positive responses to students’ sharing and providing opportunities for students to practice as a whole group, students will be able to share with a partner or small group. Sharing written responses to literature will not only encourage your students to continue writing, it will also enrich and deepen their understanding of this moving story.

**Vocabulary Development:**
**A Key to Current and Future Reading Comprehension (Lexile 810, Readability Average)**
Decades of research have demonstrated that strong vocabulary knowledge is necessary for reading comprehension (Lipson and Wixon). Though many debate the best methods for teaching vocabulary, it may be helpful to think about two goals for vocabulary instruction: 1. Teaching strategies to help students learn vocabulary words independently; and 2. Providing instruction about specific words or concepts necessary for students to understand this selection. Accordingly, the vocabulary section in each chapter will include activities which will address both these goals. At the beginning of each section, there will be a short list of tier 2 and 3 vocabulary words that you may wish to review with your students before beginning to read.

*Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online: Dictionary and Thesaurus*
**Mini Lesson**

At the end of each chapter, you will find a mini lesson based on author’s craft, story structure and good reading habits, supporting teachers using the Courage Curriculum within a workshop model. We envision the curriculum being used in a classroom which allows opportunities for students to do a majority of the thinking involved in reading a text. Many curriculums provide guiding or discussion questions for students. However, when students read for enjoyment they may not have a list of discussion questions to help them discuss the book with a friend or lead them to understand the bigger concepts.

Explicitly teaching students to create these questions on their own, to make connections, notice character traits, and recognize authors craft will make reading a more enjoyable and efficient process for them. Allowing conversations within small groups around their own questions and ideas about the books will prove to be satisfying for all. As they share opinions, debate character motivations, discuss connections and ask questions of their peers they will become more and more authentically engaged with the text.

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

A number of optional activities will be provided for each chapter as an additional means of extending comprehension and relating literature to students’ lives. Many build toward and prepare students for Boston Public Schools student requirements, key questions and writing portfolios. Many require students to take different perspectives or to make personal connections to the story. There are a range of activities which include traditional writing exercises as well as more interactive and engaging multi-modal, experiential and cross-curricular projects. Students will be challenged to comprehend at both a practice and analytical level. Some activities will also encourage students to apply their understanding and awareness to different situations.

A number of activities will be provided for each chapter. As with all materials presented by The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, these activities are optional, and are designed to be adapted as needed. Please select those which you feel will most benefit your students and allow them to deepen their understanding and enjoyment of Bridge to Terabithia. It may be helpful to preview the activities for all chapters and make a preliminary list of those you plan to use before beginning.

**The Max Connection**

At selected chapters there will be in-depth activities that relate the literature to Max’s experience. These activities will explore the themes of courage that are central to both stories: the courage to help others and the courage to do what is right in the face of adversity.

**Author’s Craft**

*Bridge to Terabithia* provides fertile ground for exploring the rich use of language. In select chapters, different literary devices such as metaphor, simile and onomatopoeia will be identified. You will find several activities in the book that tap into this rich vein and allow students to explore and play with these language devices.
Guide to Flagged Activities

Key Questions
Key Questions from the Boston Public Schools’ Curriculum Framework and Citywide Learning Standards

Close Reading
Build critical thinking via re-reading, and analysis of a passage. {Resource}

Author’s Craft
Discussion of a literary technique used by the author

Dialogue Journal
Signals a question or activity that lends itself to the dialogue journal method described in the Guide Preview

Resources
Refers you to our website [www.maxcourage.org], where you will find a list of suggested resources, by topic. These resources may be helpful in completing questions or activities, or in connecting your students with this novel and its themes.

Oral Reading, Silent Reading
Identifies questions or activities which ask students to read passages aloud our silently, either independently or with a partner
Katherine Paterson was born on October 31, 1932, in Qing Jiana, Jianqsu, China. She spent the first 12 years of her life in China until her parents, Southern Presbyterian ministers working as missionaries, were evacuated during World War II. When Katherine was 30 years old, she married John Barstow Paterson, a clergyman, and together they had four children. In addition to studying Japanese Language at the Naganuma School of the Japanese Language in Kobe, Japan, Katherine received her doctorate in Theology from the Union Theology Seminary in New York City. Before taking up a career as a full-time writer, Katherine held teaching positions in the United States and completed her missionary work in Japan. Katherine Paterson now lives with her husband in Barre, Vermont.

Katherine Paterson wrote *Bridge to Terabithia* both as a reaction to the sudden accidental death of her son’s best friend, Lisa, who was struck by lightning, and as a way to overcome the fear of her own death, which she has said has been with her since childhood. When she was 41 she successfully battled cancer, and just as her life was beginning to settle down, Lisa was killed. She began to write the story as, “a kind of therapy” to help her get over the death of her son’s friend. When it came time to write the chapter where Leslie dies, she found it difficult to face Leslie’s death and write the chapter until a friend helped her realize that it was her own death that she could not face. She immediately went to her typewriter and wrote the chapter in a fevered rush.

Bridges, both real and conceptual, have always fascinated Katherine Paterson. In her Newbery Award acceptance speech she remarked:

…it occurs to me that I have spent a good part of my life trying to construct bridges. Usually my bridges have turned out looking much like the bridge to Terabithia, a few planks over a nearly dry gully… There were so many chasms that I saw needed bridging—chasms of time and culture and disparate human nature— that I began sawing and hammering at the rough wood planks for my children and for any children who might read what I had written (*Children’s Literature Review*, V.7, p. 232).

Katherine Paterson has won numerous prestigious awards for her books. Among these are the Newbery Medal, the National Book Awards for Children’s Literature, the American Book Awards, the American Library Association’s Best Books for Young Adults, the New York Times Outstanding Books of the Year Awards, the School Library Journal Best Book Award, the Children’s Book Council’s Children’s Choice Award, and the Hans Christian Anderson Award for her life-time contribution to children’s literature.
Synopsis of *Bridge to Terabithia*

Set in a small, rural Virginia town, *Bridge to Terabithia* tells the story of Jess Aarons. Jess has risen at dawn throughout the summer to practice running because he wants to be the fastest runner in the fifth grade.

Leslie Burke moves into the farmhouse next door and on the first day of school, beats him in the running races. Although Jess is angry and embarrassed, he and Leslie quickly become best friends. Together they build a secret imaginary kingdom, Terabithia, where they can go to talk about life and school. More importantly, Terabithia is a place where Jess and Leslie can let their imaginations run wild. When it rains for several days, the creek rises and it becomes more difficult to swing across the rope to get to their secret kingdom. As the creek rises, so does Jess’s fear of crossing to Terabithia.

One morning, Miss Edmunds invites Jess to go with her to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. Jess is excited and has the perfect day with Miss Edmunds. When he returns home, his family tells him that Leslie has drowned in the creek. Jess is overcome with intense grief, combined with guilt for not having invited Leslie to Washington, D.C. Jess mourns Leslie’s death by going to Terabithia and offering a wreath in Leslie’s memory. After his sister, May Belle, almost falls in the creek, Jess builds a wooden plank bridge across it. In his newfound strength, compassion and wisdom, he introduces his sister to the magic of Terabithia.
Pre-Reading Activities

Research has shown that reading comprehension is greatly enhanced when students activate their prior knowledge before beginning to read.

The goals of pre-reading activities are to:

- Bridge the gap between student and literature
- Activate existing prior knowledge
- Evaluate what is already known about a topic
- Add pertinent background information
- Uncover and correct misperceptions
- Develop a personal point of entry into the text
- Create a “need” or desire to discover more
- Increase motivation

For all of these reasons, it is critical to invest time in pre-reading activities. The following activities are designed to meet these needs and to prepare students to reach a higher level of understanding and enjoyment of the literature.

**Teacher Suggestion:**
Although it may seem obvious to preview issues of death, to do so would be to give away the powerful ending of the book. For this reason, pre-reading activities on the topic of death have not been included. Be sure not to reveal the tragic event to your students before it happens.

**Gender Role Stereotype Chart**
Ask students to consider the differences between boys and girls, with a focus on roles, expectations and stereotypes and create a gender role stereotypes chart with students’ ideas. It may be helpful to chart these on flip-chart paper so that students can add to the list as they find and identify examples throughout the book. Use this chart to launch discussions about students’ thoughts, ideas and feeling about gender roles and stereotypes. As students to read the story, ask them to consider what Katherine Paterson might be saying about gender roles.

**A True Friend**
Have the class brainstorm the qualities of a true friend. If students need prompting, you can ask them what the difference is between a true friend and an acquaintance. After all ideas have been recorded, you may want to discuss and clarify some of the ideas that were raised. Keeping this list in mind, ask students to write a letter to a true friend explaining why they feel they value his or her friendship.

**Roving Reporter**
Over a two-day period, students should be alert for acts of courage in their home and at school. If students seem hesitant or unsure about the activity, you may want to lead a short discussion on everyday acts of courage. Based on their observations, students should write and present a two-minute news report on the act of courage they observed.
Mini Lesson: Active Reading

What you might say: Last night I was reading before I went to bed. I really enjoyed what I was reading and even stayed up a little late to finish a chapter. Today I was telling someone about the book and I couldn’t even remember what happened in the section I read last night. I was surprised; I think I am a pretty good reader. It made me think that some of you may feel that way when I assign something to read and then ask you questions about it. You may have done the reading, but you just can’t remember what you have read. Today I would like to teach you (and remind myself) about a good strategy readers use to help them understand and remember what they have read. Some people call it active reading. Active reading means that you are thinking, responding, questioning, etc. as you read. To help us do this we are going to write our thoughts on sticky notes and place them in the text as we read.

I will be able to see the many thoughts that run through your head while you read by looking at your sticky notes. This type of reading takes a great deal of practice, but with time you will be actively reading naturally and quickly.

Next steps:
• Model thinking aloud as you begin reading to the class. Pause to add sticky notes to your book (possibly using large “sticky notes” on the board so students can see).
• Have students try it. Depending on your class you may have them use the text, you may have them partner up, and you may read the text aloud while they add notes or you may use a different, shorter text to get started.

Note: Warn the students that this type of reading will take longer than regularly reading the text. Remind students that as you go through the book and or the year they will be learning about more and more aspects of literature, giving them more and more ideas to think and write about. Today is just a practice of reading and thinking at the same time.
Chapter 1:
Jess Oliver Aarons, Jr.

Summary
Pages 1-12*: Jess wakes up at dawn, as he has almost every morning this summer, to practice running. He returns to the kitchen to have breakfast with his mother and four sisters. When Jess goes out to milk Bessie, his younger sister, May Belle, tells him that a new family is moving in next door.

*Please note that the page numbers in this guide refer to the HarperTeen paperback edition, 2008

Questions to Stimulate Discussion and Promote Journal Writing
• Why does Jess want to be the best runner in the fifth grade? What does he hope to gain by this? {Dialogue Journal}
• What kind of relationship does Jess have with his older sisters? How do they treat him? How does he feel about them?
• How do Brenda and Ellie get out of doing their chores?
• Is the Aarons family wealthy? How do you know this? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.
• How does Katherine Paterson describe the Perkins’ place? What kind of a family do you think would move into an old farmhouse like that?
• What kind of relationship does Jess have with May Belle? How does he feel about her? How does she feel about him? {Key Question}
• Jess reflects that “Lark Elementary School was short on everything” (p. 4). What do you think he means? {Close Read}
• During recess the boys and girls play in different places. Where do they play and why?

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

- **Ratty** (p.2) short sharp sounds
- **Despised** (p.2) to have loathed, detested
- **Unhandy** (p.2) hard to handle
- **Crouched** (p.3) bended, bended down
- **Grit** (p.4) firmness of mind or spirit
- **Heat** (p.5) hot
- **Puny** (p.7) small
- **Scalding** (p.7) boiling hot
- **Peculiar** (p.12) different from the normal
- **Discarded** (p.12) to have gotten rid of
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using a Dictionary
Remind students that while they should always use context clues as an aid in understanding new words, there might be words who’s meaning they cannot discover out of context. In addition, they might want to gain a more precise meaning of the word whose general meaning they derived from the reading. In these cases, they should be encouraged to get in the habit of using a dictionary.

Toward that end, ask students to find the vocabulary words in the text and write down an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask students to find each word in the dictionary and write down the meaning most appropriate to its context in the story. You may wish to do the first one or two together to remind students of the following: locate words through alphabetical order, use the pronunciation key, use guide words, identify the correct entry for different word forms, and determine which of several definitions is correct. A family, as in quivering: quiver or tolerate: tolerable, tolerant, tolerance, etc.

CCSS: RL1, RL4, W4

Mini Lesson: Simile

What you might say: Today I want to teach you that authors use very specific language to help their reader visualize a situation. To do this an author may use a simile. A simile is a type of figurative language that uses like or as to compare two things. The author may want to compare one thing to something totally different or unrelated to give the reader a new image in their mind. For example an author may write, “Jesse would be as hot as popping grease”. The author does not mean that Jesse is really hot because it is really warm outside. Rather, the author is talking about how mad Jesse would be, however anger has nothing to do with hot grease. The author uses this simile to create a different, unique image in your mind. She plays with words to force you to relate anger and grease, which you may never have done before. As you read today and always I want you to be aware of similes and how they make you think; notice which are most powerful for you and why.

Next steps:
1. Give examples of similes using both like and as
2. Have students identify similes out of a given text to be sure they know what they are.
3. Be thinking aloud about similes and discussing them in the next few classes.

Journals/ Literature Circles:
Have students have a section in their journal to list “Fantastic Figurative Language” This section should include a simile page where students write down any similes they find truly powerful or descriptive as they read. They should record the book and page number where the simile was found.
Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Simile Circle
Sitting in a circle, start a simile such as, “as mad as popping grease.” Using the same adjective, ask the next student to create a new simile to describe how mad someone is. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a change. Then have a student start a new simile and go around the circle again. Students can take similes directly from the book, or create some of their own.

Family Portraits
Have students draw a family portrait of the Aarons Family. Aside their illustration, students should write about what each member of the family is doing and what each member of the family is thinking. Ideas can be written as idea bubbles for each character.

The Unwritten Rules
Many students adhere to certain unwritten codes of behavior at their school. Have students discuss the unspoken schoolyard rules for recess at their school.

Personal Goal, Personal Sacrifice
Jess rises every day at dawn for the entire summer to practice running. Jess is dedicated to his effort to become the fastest runner in the fifth grade. Ask students to consider what sacrifices Jess might be making to achieve this goal. Have students write about a goal they have, and the sacrifices they have made, or would be willing to make, to achieve it.
Chapter 2: Leslie Burke

Summary
Pages 13-27: After a long day of helping his mother with the chores, Jess slips away into his bedroom to draw and be alone. He thinks about his music teacher, Miss Edmunds. She is the only person to whom he feels comfortable showing his artwork. The next morning as Jess is running in the field, he meets Leslie, his new next-door neighbor.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• Why is Mrs. Aarons too tired to make supper for the children? What does Jess do about this?
• Who does Jess share a room with? How do you think he feels about this? Why do you think he feels this way?
• What kinds of pictures does Jess like to draw?
• How does Jess’s father respond to his drawings? Why does Jess feel he cannot share his drawings with his father? {Close Read}
• How do most of Jess’s teachers feel about his drawing?
• According to Jess, what is different about Miss Edmunds? How does Jess feel about Miss Edmunds? How does she respond to his drawings?
• Why do you think Jess has to hide his drawings from his family?
• How does Jess’s father greet him? How does he greet May Belle? How do you think this makes Jess feel?
• Why do you think Jess does not respond well to Leslie’s gesture of friendship? Why does he run away from her? {Key Question}
• Jess has conflicting feelings about his relationships with some of the members of his family. Have students consider their own families, and their roles within these units. Ask students to write freely about their families. They may want to consider how their family is similar to or different from the Aarons, the best relationship in their family, the relationship in their family they would most like to improve or their role in their family. {Dialogue Journal}

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Nauseatingly (p. 13) causing disgust
Fixes (p. 13) positions of difficulty
Discourage (p. 17) to deprive of courage
Racket (p. 19) clattering noise
Anticipation (p. 19) looking forward
Pandemonium (p. 19) wild uproar
Backwash (p. 19) undesirable condition
Allotted (p. 19) assigned as a share or potion
Snare (p. 19) deceptively attractive
Unjust (p. 20) characterized by injustice
Hypocritical (p. 20) pretending to be
Proverbial (p. 20) commonly spoken of
Dodged (p. 21) made a sudden movement
Dimmers (p. 21) low beams
Cagey (p. 21) marked by cleverness
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Analyzing Word Structure
Remind students that prefixes are a type of affix which is placed before the root of a word. Using the vocabulary word, *discourage*, and the word *encourage*, demonstrate that prefixes alter the meaning of the word to which it is affixed.

Help students to generate a list of common prefixes and use a dictionary to look up the meaning of each. At this point, you can discuss the concept of affixes and the types of words which do and do not contain them.

CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4

Mini Lesson: Conflict

What you might say: As you read today you may notice that there are some conflicts in this story. A conflict is a dramatic struggle between two forces in a story. This is more than simply a problem (ex: The boy could not get his backpack unstuck from the bus door.) Conflicts can occur between different elements of the story. For example a conflict can be:

Character vs. Character – One character having a struggle with another character (human or not) in the book. (Ex. Two characters who really don’t like each other for moral reasons)

Character vs. Nature – In this the character seems to be struggling with the elements of nature. (Weather, trees/plants, mountains, etc.)

Character vs. Society - The main character is in conflict with a larger group. A culture, society, community. (The character could be fighting against war, stereotypes, prejudice, etc.)

Character vs. Himself – Character is having some kind of inner conflict. (They may be trying to change themselves, they may have new realizations as they grow up, etc.)

Today in our reading we will begin to see conflict in this book. You may think that there is a conflict between Jess and Leslie as they race, but as we look deeper into the story there seems to be a bigger conflict, a character vs. society conflict. The boys seem to have an idea about what a “girl” should be able to do, and that does not include racing against them. However, Leslie is determined to prove them wrong and change their opinions.

Journals/ Literature Circles: Discuss or write about how you think the conflict may be resolved. How would you resolve it? How would your teacher, parent, friend resolve it? How would other characters from other books resolve it?
Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Dialogue Starter
Jess wishes his father were more affectionate and conversational with him. Have your students rewrite the evening conversation that Jess has with his father the way Jess would like it to be. What would Jess want his father to say and do? Ask for volunteers to act out the revised conversations.

Diary Entry: May Belle
Jess is sometimes mean to his little sister, May Belle. Ask your students to write a diary entry from May Belle’s perspective in which they express the reasons why May Belle looks up to and worships her brother so much.

Diary Entry: Mrs. Aarons
Have students pretend they are Mrs. Aarons and write a diary entry about her day. What is she thinking and feeling? What are some of the issues and problems that she has to deal with?

Gender Role Stereotype Chart
Ask students to revisit the chapter and find examples of gender stereotyping which they can add to their gender roles stereotype lists. They might want to consider the way Miss Edmunds is dressed and about father/son and father/daughter relationships.
Chapter 3:
The Fastest Kid in the Fifth Grade

Summary
Pages 28-42: It is the first day of school. Leslie comes to school wearing shorts and sneakers and is started at by many of the students. Jess is excited and ready to run in the races to show off how much he has improved. Leslie shows up wanting to run, and ends up winning the race. Although he is angry that he lost to a girl, he admires her skill and grace in running.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• How does Leslie come dressed to school on the first day? How does the class react to Leslie’s appearance? How do you think Leslie feels about the class’s reaction? {Key Question, Characterization}
• Think about a time when you were new to a school, class, team or group. Were you immediately accepted, or was it difficult to fit in, like Leslie? Describe the situation, your emotions and how you dealt with it. {Dialogue Journal}
• How does Mrs. Myers feel about having a new student in the class?
• Why do the students have to eat lunch at their desks?
• Who is the leader of the races?
• Do you think it takes courage for Jess to stand up to Gary Fulcher?
• Why do you think it is difficult for Jess to support Leslie’s running in the races? What would you have done in his situation?
• Do you think it takes courage for Leslie to run against the boys? Why? {Dialogue Journal}
• Why don’t the boys want Leslie to run?
• Why does Jess avoid Leslie on the school bus that afternoon?

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Retreating (p. 29) withdrawing
Roused (p.30) to have excited
Clabber (p. 34) sour milk
Repulsive (p. 34) to repel or reject
Quivered (p. 35) made a trembling motion
Drought (p. 35) period of dryness
Conspicuous (p. 35) noticeable
Obediently (p. 36) submissively

Eliminations (p. 36) removal from
Impatient (p. 36) restless
Declaration (p. 37) announcement
Conceited (p. 39) having a high opinion of self
Stunned (p. 40) to have felt groggy, dizzy
Grudgingly (p.41) reluctantly
Notion (p.42) an individual’s conception
Conscious (p.42) perceiving
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using Context Clues

Ask students to work in pairs to find the following words in the text:  
*Roused* (p. 30), *Conspicuous* (p. 35), *Conceited* (p. 39), *Notion* (p. 42)

Students can alternate reading aloud the paragraph in which the word is located. Using context clues, they can make an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask for volunteers to share their thought processes and definitions. Have students revise their own definitions to reflect what they have learned about the word meanings.

**CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4**

**Mini Lesson Topic: Climax**

**What you might say:** We have discussed the structure of a story plot. Today I want you to determine the climax of this book. Remember the climax is the turning point of the story, usually the most exciting, dramatic part of the story.

Remind students of the following key components of a story:

**Exposition:** The start of the story, the setting, before the action starts  
**Rising Action:** Series of events and conflicts that set the stage for the climax  
**Climax:** The turning point, the most intense moment  
**Falling Action:** All of the events that follow the climax  
**Resolution:** Conclusion, ending, tying together all of the pieces

Right now where do you think we are in the plot? *(Rising Action)* What can you anticipate about the book? *(Turn and talk)* Here you may be looking for students to understand that the author is only preparing them for the really good stuff, the best of the book is yet to come. Students may predict what the climax will be.

**Journals/ Literature Circles:** Have students create a plot diagram in their journals. Students should label each section with the chapters that match them as they read. For example, chapters 1-3 may go in the exposition, while chapter 4 will be added to the rising action. You may have students do this quickly as a group each time they meet in Literature Circles. Once you get close to the climax there can be great discussion and debate about what exactly fits into that category.

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**Gender Stereotyping**

There are several examples of gender stereotyping in this chapter. Ask students to revisit the chapter and find several examples. They might consider the different behaviors between boys
and girls in the classroom and in the schoolyard. Ask students if they agree with Jess when he says, “Lord, the girl had no notion of what you did and didn’t do” (p. 28).

**Diary Entry**
As the new student in school, Leslie finds 30 pairs of eyes staring at her. Not only is she the new girl in school, but she is different from everyone else. Many things happen to Leslie on this day. Have students put themselves in Leslie’s shoes and write a diary entry about the events that happened to her on the first day of school. Include how she may be feeling as well as what she did and who she met.

**Bus Ride**
Jess does not let Leslie sit next to him on the bus. Have students role play the conversation that might have occurred had Jess and Leslie sat together. Ask your students to think about what Jess might want to say to her and what she might want to say to Jess.

**Sports Writer**
The race at recess is a big event in the school. Have students write a sports article recounting the events of the race. Students should write a headline and include a picture.
Chapter 4:
Rulers of Terabithia

Summary
Pages 43-71: Leslie has won every race in the fourth and fifth grade and most of the boys have lost interest in the event. Jess and Leslie initiate their friendship by exchanging smiles during music class. After school, Leslie suggests to Jess that they create a secret place they can call their own. Despite Jess’s fear, he crosses the creek with Leslie and they build “Terabithia” in the woods. Jess and Leslie’s friendship grows stronger throughout the school year as they share ideas, explore their imaginations and support one another through the trials and tribulations of school.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• What events cause Jess’s feelings about Leslie to change? {Close Read}
• How was Miss Edmunds a bridge for Jess to Leslie? {Key Question}
• Jess reflects that, “He felt there in the teacher’s room that it was the beginning of a new season in his life and he chose deliberately to make it so” (p. 46). What does he mean by this? Have you ever felt this way? What was your experience like? {Key Question}
• What are Jess’s fears?
• How would you describe Leslie?
• Do you think Leslie’s parents made a good decision? Were they being selfish? {Key Question}
• What favorite hobby did Jess write about? Why? How did it make him feel?
• After the essay by Leslie, what do you know about her? What was Jess’s reaction to Leslie’s essay?
• Jess stands up to one of his fears. What does he do?
• Why do Jess and Leslie want Terabithia? {Key Question}
• What did you notice about the language they use in Terabithia? Try using some yourself.
• Why does Jess feel secure in Terabithia? {Key Question}
• Jess reflects, “She was his other, more exciting self- his way to Terabithia and all the worlds beyond” (p. 46). What does this mean? Is there a person in your life who is your other, more exciting self? Why do you feel this way about this person? {Dialogue Journal}
• How do others in the story feel about Jess and Leslie’s friendship?
Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

Consolation (p. 43) comfort
Impressed (p. 50) deeply affected by
Contempt (p. 52) act of despising
Ominously (p. 52) foreshadowing evil
Scowl (p. 52) expression of displeasure
Stationed (p. 53) assigned to
Suspiciously (p. 56) questionably
Gully (p. 58) a trench; a small valley
Intoxicated (p. 58) affected by; drunk
Enchanted (p. 59) to influence

Stronghold (p. 59) fortified place
Siege (p. 60) serious attack
Insufficiencies (p. 61) inadequacies
Tyrants (p. 62) rulers
Dictators (p. 62) individuals holding complete control
Humiliated (p. 66) feeling of being reduced to lower position
Fretting (p. 69) worrying
Solemn (p. 71) gloomy

Developing Vocabulary Knowledge: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

In each set of words below, circle the one that does not belong. Then write a sentence explaining why that word does not fit in with the others.

1. Comfort  Consolation  (Unite)  Relief
2. Tyrant  Harsh  Oppressive  (Sympathetic)
3. (Undignified) Thoughtful  Grave  Solemn

Write a sentence for each of the following words:

1. Contempt

2. Foes

3. Enchanted

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Connect Literature to Life

The Magic Kingdom
Ask students to imagine what Terabithia looks like and to draw their visualization of it. You can ask the art teacher to do this project in art class. Encourage students to use a variety of media.

Favorite Hobby
Jess chooses to write his composition on football, even though drawing is his favorite hobby. Imagine you are Jess, and write an essay about your real favorite hobby, drawing.
Dinner with the Burkes and the Aarons
The Burkes and the Aarons are two very different families. Divide the class into groups and have some of the groups think about, write and act out a dinner scene at the Burkes’ house and some of the groups to think about, write and act out a dinner scene at the Aarons’ house. Discuss the similarities and the differences after all the groups have presented their scenes.

Dear Abby
Jess’s parents are concerned about their son’s relationship with Leslie and his interest in drawing and painting. Ask your student to pretend they are Jess’s parents and have them write a “Dear Abby” letter which expresses their concern for their son and ask for advice on what to do. Have students consider their Gender Role Stereotype charts when writing the letter. Collect and redistribute the letter so that everyone can write a response as “Abby.”

Dear Fear
Ask students to think about something that frightens them. They do not have to share this with anyone else. Ask them to think about what they would say to their fear if they could talk to it. Then have students write a letter to their fear which begins, “Dear Fear.”

Fantasy Land
Leslie tells Jess that Terabithia will be just like Narnia, the imaginary world in C.S. Lewis’s The Chronicles of Narnia. Many students may not be familiar with this wonderful series of children’s books. Invite the librarian to give the class a book talk on The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis. Bring in a copy of the book and other books in The Chronicles of Narnia to show to the class.

Max Connection: The Life-Giver Collage
Discuss with students the ways in which Max gave life to others and the ways in which Leslie has begun to breathe new life into Jess. Have students create a life-giver collage drawing on the discussion and their ideas of other kinds of life-givers. Encourage your students to think about this concept in both physical and spiritual ways, i.e., doctors, inspirational leaders, religious figures, organ and blood donors and emergency medical technicians.
Chapter 5:
The Giant Killers

Summary
Pages 72-84: After May Belle is picked on by Janice Avery, the school bully, Jess and Leslie decide to get back at her. Leslie devises a plan to write Janice Avery a phony love note from the school heartthrob. Leslie composes the note, Jess writes it, and they leave it in Janice’s desk the next day.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• Why is May Belle angry at Janice Avery?
• How does Leslie help Jess save face in his conversation with May Belle?
• What is their revenge plan?
• Do you think the revenge plan is too mean?
• Does the revenge plan work? Describe what happens. [Key Question]
• How does Jess feel about the plan?
• Jess says to Leslie, “Maybe I got this thing for Janice like you got this thing for killer whales” (p. 83). What does he mean by this? [Close Read]
• How would you feel if you were Janice? [Dialogue Journal]

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Roam (p. 72) wander
Shrugged (p. 73) raised shoulders
Snickered (p. 74) laughed covertly
Distracted (p. 74) confused
Vigorously (p. 75) strongly
Expectantly (p. 75) with anticipation
Crouched (p. 76) lower body stance
Council (p. 76) meeting
Regicide (p. 79) killing of a king
Tortured (p. 79) feeling of pain or mental anguish
Pacing (p. 79) to walk back and forth
Parapets (p. 79) low protective wall
Prickled (p. 80) tingling sensation
Shuffling (p. 80) moving something from one place to another
Prideful (p. 82) arrogance; conceit
Crimson (p. 83) red
Stricken (p. 83) to cause an emotion to penetrate deeply

Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using Context Clues: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Ask students to work in pairs to find the following words in the text:
Roam (p. 72) Vigorously (p. 75) Regicide (p. 79) Stricken (p. 83)
Students can alternate reading aloud the paragraph in which the word is located. Using context clues, they can make an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask for volunteers to share their thought processes and definitions. Have students revise their own definitions to reflect what they have learned about the word meanings.

**CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4**

**Mini Lesson: Connection**

**What you might say:** Today as we read you will most likely be able to connect to Leslie and Jess. I don’t expect that you will have built a secret land in the woods. Authors can make up some pretty unrealistic actions in their book and still allow their audience to connect with the characters, to understand the way they are feeling or why they do something. In this chapter we will do just that. As you read about how Jess and Leslie want to “get back” at Janice Avery, I want you to connect to that feeling by thinking about a time that you may have wanted to get revenge. A good author gives enough detail that you should be able to put yourself in the situation, and if you have ever felt the need to get revenge before you should be able to understand how Jess and Leslie are feeling. Let’s see if Katherine Paterson allows us to feel that.

**Journals/ Literature Circles:**
Were you able to feel the need for revenge as you read? What did Katherine Patterson do to allow you to jump right into the story? (Or - What did she not do that kept you from being able to jump in?)

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Learning to Life**

**Diary Entry**
Janice Avery was the victim of Jess and Leslie’s joke. Ask your class to imagine what she might be feeling by the end of this day and to write a diary entry from Janice’s perspective about what happened to her and how she is feeling about it.

**Gender Stereotyping**
Ask students to revisit Chapters 4 and 5 to find examples of gender stereotyping. For example, Mrs. Myers says that Leslie has, “an unusual hobby- for a girl” (p.33). Leslie is also described as almost always looking like a boy.

**Conflict Resolution**
At the end of Chapter 4, Jess and Leslie promise May Belle that they will seek revenge on Janice Avery. Have students imagine they are Jess or Leslie giving May Belle advice on dealing with the school bully. What are some alternative ways the situation can be resolved?
Chapter 6:  
The Coming of Prince Terrien

Summary
Pages 85-96: It is getting close to Christmas and Jess wants to buy Leslie a perfect gift. He worries for weeks about what he can get her with such a small amount of money. On his way home from school one day, he sees a sign advertising free puppies. He gets a puppy and presents him to Leslie on Christmas Eve. Leslie adores the puppy, names him Prince Terrien, and declares him the guardian of Terabithia.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• Jess wants to give Leslie a gift he can be proud of. Why is this so important to him?
• What did Jess give to Leslie? Why was it a perfect gift? {Dialogue Journal}
• What did Leslie give to Jess? Why was it a perfect gift?
• What was Mr. Aarons’s gift to Jess? Why did he give that gift? Why was this not a good present?
• How is Jess a good brother?
• What is Katherine Paterson saying about the meaning of a gift? {Close Read} {Key Question}
• On Christmas Day, when Jess leaves his family to go to the barn and he sees Leslie, he says, “It felt like Christmas again” (p. 96). Why does this mean? {Close Read}

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

Consolidated (p. 85) united into one  
Speculation (p. 85) theory  
Surplus (p. 85) excess  
Sauce (p. 86) impudent language  
Foundling (p. 86) abandoned child  
Pitch (p. 86) sticky substance  
Scrawling (p. 87) write or draw carelessly  
Desperate (p. 87) nearly hopeless  
Paralyzed (p. 88) powerless  
Sneer (p. 89) scornful smile  
Lolling (p. 92) hanging or drooping  
Court jester (p. 93) fool; clown  
Wretched (p. 93) poor in quality  
Vain (p. 94) unsuccessful attempt  
Slithering (p. 94) to slide  
Promptness (p. 96) punctual; on time

Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using a Dictionary
Remind students that while they should always use context clues as an aid in understanding new words, there might be words whose meaning they cannot discover out of context. In addition, they might want to gain a more precise meaning of the word whose general meaning they derived from the reading. In these cases, they should be encouraged to get in the habit of using a dictionary.
Toward that end, ask students to find the vocabulary words in the text and write down an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask students to find each word in the dictionary and write down the meaning most appropriate to its context in the story. You may wish to do the first one or two together to remind students of the following: locate words through alphabetical order, use the pronunciation key, use guide words, identify the correct entry for different word forms, and determine which of several definitions is correct.

CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4, SL1C

Mini Lesson: Prediction

What you might say: Good readers actively think while they are reading. They may be noticing figurative language, making connections or focusing on the plot or structure of a story as they read. We have practiced all of these and are starting to do them naturally as we read.

Another thing good readers do as they read is predict, or guess what is going to happen next. Readers really act as detectives as they do this. They use their own experiences to help them predict. They may use knowledge they have learned from books, TV, peers, school, etc. to help them predict. They use clues from the author to help them predict. In this chapter we learn that Jess wants to buy the perfect Christmas gift for Leslie, but doesn’t have much money. Let’s try to predict what Jess might do.

First, think of a time you may have wanted to buy a gift for someone, but didn’t have much money. What did you do? Do you think Jess may do the same? Why or why not? Secondly, think of a time you read about a similar situation in another book, or saw a TV show about a similar situation. Maybe you had a friend tell you about a time they ran into this problem. What gift was given in these situations? Would that work for Jess? Why or why not? Thirdly, we will look to the author to find out what Jess might do. Based on what we know about Jess so far what do you think he might get Leslie?

Journals/ Literature Circles:
As the chapter is being read, have students highlight, put a sticky note next to, or record in their journals, clues the author gives related to the gift Jess might choose. Continue to make predictions along the way and discuss why those predictions might change as you learn more information.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Court Artist
Ask students to draw the portraits of the King and Queen of Terabithia at their castle. Encourage students to think about and represent the way that Jess and Leslie imagine themselves and Terabithia, rather than the way they and Terabithia might actually look.
**Diary Entry: Mr. Aarons**
Jess senses his dad’s frustration and unhappiness with the gift he gave to Jess. Have students write a diary entry from Mr. Aarons’s perspective about the gift he gave to Jess.

**Diary Entry: The Perfect Gift**
Jess is very proud of the gift he gave to Leslie. Have students write a diary entry from Jess’s perspective in which he expresses his pride in the gift he gave to Leslie as well as why it was such a special gift.

**Self-Appreciation Portrait/Collage**
Ask your students to think about what they value and like about themselves. It could be anything they are good at, a characteristic or a favorite hobby. In the middle of a piece of paper, have students paste a photograph of themselves or write their name. Have students then search through magazines to find words and pictures that represent those things they value in themselves. Students can then arrange and paste these around the center image of themselves. They can also draw pictures and decorate their collages.
Chapter 7: The Golden Room

Summary
Pages 97-116: Leslie begins to spend a lot of time helping her dad fix up their new home. Jess feels excluded until Leslie confronts him and tells him that he could come and help. While helping the Burkes, he feels the warmth and love in their home as they discuss poetry and intellectual ideas. The next day in school, Leslie discovers Janice Avery crying in the bathroom and befriends her. Although Jess is a little hurt by Leslie’s attention to Janice, he is comforted in his knowledge that he and Leslie are such good friends.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing

• What kind of relationship does Leslie have with her father?
• Why does Jess feel he cannot go to Terabithia alone?
• One page 100, Jess thinks to himself, “Parents were what they were; it wasn’t up to you to try to puzzle them out.” Why does he say this and what do you think he means by it? {Close Read}
• How does Jess feel about Leslie’s father? Why do you think he feels this way? How does Leslie help Jess overcome these feelings about her father?
• Jess realized that he knows things that Bill Burke doesn’t and that he can help him. What are these things and how does Jess help out?
• Why is Janice Avery crying in the girls’ room?
• Jess and Leslie react differently to Janice Avery’s crying. How do they react?
• What does Jess say to Leslie to make her change her mind about Janice?
• Do you think it took courage for Leslie to approach Janice in the bathroom? Why or why not?
• Why do you think Janice Avery has been such a bully to the younger kids?
• What advice does Leslie give to Janice? Do you think this is good advice? Why or why not? {Close Read}
• How does Jess feel about Leslie’s new friendship with Janice Avery? {Dialogue Journal}
• What has Jess taught Leslie in this chapter? {Key Question}

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

Inclined (p. 97) motivated to do something
Reluctant (p. 99) not eager
Exiled (p. 99) forced to leave
Prospectors (p. 103) someone looking for minerals
Tidings (p. 105) well wishes
Foe (p. 106) enemy
Prey (p. 106) one hunted by others
Dim (p. 107) producing little light
Grant (p. 107) to allow something
Encounter (p. 107) to meet unexpectedly
Predator (p. 109) one who plunders or destroys
Obliged (p. 109) required
Deserting (p. 110) deprived
Vile (p. 113) disgusting
Betrayed (p. 113) to have gone against someone or something
Shrill (p. 115) high-pitched sound

Developing Vocabulary Knowledge: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Remind students that synonyms are words that have the same or similar meanings. After defining this chapter’s vocabulary words, have students identify a synonym for each one.

**CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4, SL1D**

**Mini Lesson: “Show not Tell” and Emotions**

**What you might say:** Throughout the book we have watched the friendship between Jess and Leslie grow. We saw how it took some time for Jess to warm up to Leslie and how they have grown to become best friends. Throughout this chapter the author reminds us that no friendship is perfect and that there are always many emotions and feelings involved in any relationship. Of course a great author will not simply say, “Joey is mad”, but will show the reader the actions and the reader will infer, “Oh, Joey must be really mad if he stormed off after screaming on the top of his lungs.” Let’s think of some emotions that a person may feel at different points throughout a friendship. (This should be a vocabulary boosting lesson, so be sure to explain the meaning of these and other words that describe feelings.)

*Negative Feelings:* Jealousy, Exclusion, Betrayed, Guilty, Frustrated
*Positive Feelings:* Love, Belonging, Trusted, Respected, Worthy

Have students Think/Pair/Share about how an author may show that a character is feeling one of the ways listed above as opposed to stating it.

As you read this chapter ask students to be aware of the emotions Jess is going through. What clues does the author give the reader to help them understand Jess’s feelings?

**Journals/ Literature Circles:**
Have students discuss the emotions they noticed in the chapter. They may continue the conversation by talking about times they have felt that way, how they showed their family/friends that they felt that way. How did they eventually feel better?

**Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life**

**O Sole Mio**
Jess has a strong reaction to hearing the sound of the Italian language. If anyone in school can speak Italian, invite him or her to read an Italian poem. Another suggestion is to play a segment of an Italian opera for students. Have students listen carefully to the rhythm and cadence of the
language. Ask them to write down some of the thoughts they have while listening. Have students share their reactions.

**Write a Picture Book**
Divide the class into groups of four or five. Each group will create a picture book of the events that happen in Terabithia. Half of the groups will create the book using language that imitates the royal English spoken by Leslie when they are in Terabithia. The other half will create the picture book using language they hear in their own neighborhood. To help your students recognize and imitate these language forms, you may want to pull some of these out of the book and write them on the board. Call on volunteers to discuss the different characteristics of the language Leslie has invented.

**Fatherhood**
Jess’s father is very different from Leslie’s father. Facilitate a class brainstorm about the qualities of fathers or father figures. You can record students’ responses using a graphic web. Ask students to think of their favorite fathers from other novels or their favorite television shows. What do they like about them and why? How do Mr. Burke and Mr. Aaron compare as fathers?
Chapter 8: Easter

Chapter Summary
Pages 117-128: Easter arrives and Leslie asks Jess if she can go with him and his family to church. She has never been to church and wants to experience it. Although Jess’s mother is reluctant, she agrees. After the service, Jess, Leslie and May Belle begin to talk about the Bible. Leslie says she does not believe the Bible. May Belle, who is shocked by Leslie’s response, says that God will damn her to hell if she does not believe.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• Why do the Aarons attend church only on Easter?
• What news does Mr. Aarons bring home that makes it difficult for the children to get new clothes for Easter? How do Ellie and Brenda react to this news?
• What do you think about Ellie’s and Brenda’s reaction? How might you respond to them?

{Close Read}
• Why do you think Leslie wants to go to church?
• Why do you think the Aarons go to church?
• What are Mrs. Aarons’s initial reasons for not wanting Leslie to go to church with the family?
• What is Leslie’s reaction to the experience at church? {Dialogue Journal}
• What is the difference between Jess’s and Leslie’s beliefs and feelings on the Bible? What are their opinions based on? Why do they think differently?
• What is May Belle’s response to Leslie’s beliefs?

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Complacent (p. 119) unconcerned
Cease (p. 121) stop
Garbled (p. 121) jumble meaning of something
Obliged (p. 122) forced somebody to do something
Rooting (p. 122) rummage; looking for something

Dread (p. 123) reluctant
Congregation (p. 125) gathering, community
Drowsily (p. 125) almost asleep
Gunnysack (p. 128) made from course hemp
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using Context Clues: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

Ask students to follow the same procedure in which they worked with a partner to read aloud the paragraphs or pages on which the vocabulary words can be found. Using context clues, they can make an educated guess about each word’s meaning. After all students have written down their definitions, ask for volunteers to share their thought processes and definitions. Students can then revise their own definitions.

CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4, SL1C

Mini Lesson: Points of View

What you might say: Today we will find that the author brings up a controversial topic, religion. Author’s do this to make a point or force their readers to see something from a different point of view. Leslie and May Belle have two very different opinions about church. As we read I want you to think about the reason the two girls have such different opinions. Is one more correct than the other? What are their opinions based on? Can you blame one or the other for having that opinion? This part of the book can really make you begin to think about the people in your life who have different opinions than you. Why might they think differently? What is their background? Katherine Patterson has instilled a lifelong lesson in her book at this point. (After reading, have students attempt to create a phrase that encompasses that lesson. Students should think in pairs or groups and share with the class. You may have them agree on a class moral and post it in the room.) The moral might have something to do with getting to know someone in order to understand their views or actions.

Journals/ Literature Circles: Have students think about something a friend of theirs may have said or done that completely baffles them. Why would they do/say that? Have them think deeply about the underlying reasons. This may be a journal entry you read to yourself rather than have students share.
Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Worlds Apart
In Chapters 7 and 8, two different worlds are clearly portrayed: the world of the Burkes and the world of the Aarons. Draw two large circles on the board or on charter paper. Each circle will represent one family. Ask students to consider some of the differences between these two families, especially with regard to values, religion, education, language and clothing. Record students’ responses in the appropriate family circle. After each family circle is filled in, write the names of Jess and Leslie in the space between the circles and ask your students to consider what has allowed them to come together as good friends. You may want to draw a visual bridge between the two circles.

Celebrate!
In this Chapter, the Aarons are celebrating Easter, a Christian holiday celebrated at the beginning of spring. Facilitate a class brainstorm on Easter. Encourage Students to list secular and religious aspects of the holiday. Ask students to discuss what religious holidays they observe in the spring. Have students talk about what the holiday means and what their family does to observe it. Encourage students to bring in religious objects or texts that are integral to the holiday.

Author’s Craft
Katherine Paterson uses onomatopoeia frequently throughout the story. On page 120, the words plink, plink, plink are used to represent the sounds of the milk hitting the bucket. Have students write words that represent actions and sounds they hear in school.
Chapter 9
The Evil Spell

Summary
Pages 129-140: Just after Easter, the rain begins to fall. Each day it rains makes crossing the creek a little more difficult. Jess’ fear begins to rise and he worries about how he will tell Leslie that he does not want to cross the creek. He wakes up in the middle of the night realizing that it is still raining. He knows he must tell Leslie he is afraid to cross the creek to Terabithia.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• What is different about the creek when Jess and Leslie approach it?
• Jess is afraid to cross the creek, but he does so anyway. Do you think he is being cowardly or courageous? Explain. {Dialogue Journal} {Key Question}
• If you were Jess, would you cross the creek?
• Jess and Leslie have very different reactions and feelings about crossing the creek and entering the pine forest. Describe this difference. {Close Read}
• Why does Jess wake up in the middle of the night? What is he afraid of?
• Why can’t Jess fall back to sleep?

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

- **Conspiring** (p. 129) working together
- **Confine** (p. 133) keep within limits
- **Sodden** (p. 133) thoroughly wet
- **Dignity** (p. 135) self-respect; seriousness in behavior
- **Sporadically** (p. 135) occurring at intervals
- **Vanquished** (p. 136) defeated

Developing Vocabulary Knowledge: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
After students define each word using a dictionary, ask them to write a sentence using each word. Remind them to create a sentence with enough context clues that a reader would be able to determine the meaning of the word without using a dictionary.
CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4

Mini Lesson: Characterization

What you might say: Yesterday we talked about point of view. We discussed the idea of having to get to know somebody in order to understand where they are coming from. As we have read this book we have really gotten to know our characters, their thoughts, feelings, rationales, etc. However the characters we met in the beginning of the story are not the same as the characters we know now. In a well written novel the author will allow us to see the characters change and grow. How have these characters changed and grown? How is this important to the resolution of the conflict?

Together choose one character to focus on. Come up with a word or two that describes that character now. Discuss what the author told you to help you know that character. Consider adjectives used to describe the character, the character’s actions, what the character has said, and the internal thoughts of the character.

Journals/ Literature Circles: Have students create a chart with these categories in their literature circle groups to analyze another character.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Actor’s Choice
Mrs. Burke asks Leslie and Jess, “What are you kids doing?” (p. 130). Jess reflects that his mother would say the same thing in a much different way. Call on student volunteers to say these words as Mrs. Burke might say them and as Mrs. Aarons might say them. Ask students what the difference is between the tone, mood and message of each mother’s words.

I’m Afraid
Jess worries about telling Leslie of his fear of crossing the stream and tries to think of what and how he will tell her. Have two students role play this conversation between Jess and Leslie. What will Jess say? How will Leslie respond?

Crossing the Creek
The scene where Jess and Leslie cross the stream is dramatic. Have students make an illustration of Jess and Leslie crossing the stream in this chapter. Ask them to consider how they might visually represent the rushing water, the danger and the difference between Jess and Leslie’s approaches.

Author’s Craft
The narrator of the story tells us that, “For Jess the fear of crossing rose with the height of the creek.” Have students revisit Chapter 9 to find and reread the many different ways Katherine Paterson describes Jess’s fear.
Chapters 10 & 11
The Perfect Day and No!

Teacher’s Notes
Chapter 10 ends with the dramatic news of Leslie’s death. Students will want to know immediately what happened. We suggest that you treat these two chapters together and pursue activities for both chapters at the conclusion of Chapter 11. The Activity Menu incorporates issues and events from both Chapter 10 and 11.

You may want to ask discussion questions as you read through the chapter so that you will be able to explore the events of Chapter 10 before they become overshadowed by the powerful event at the end of the chapter.

Some of your students may experience difficulty with the issue of death. You should alert the school counselor to the fact that you will be discussing death and the accompanying sense of loss for family and friends. You can also inform students that a counselor is available to them if they should need to talk to anyone.

Summary

Chapter 10
Pages 141-154: The next day, rain is still falling. Jess receives a phone call from Miss Edmunds inviting him to go to Washington, D.C., to visit the Smithsonian Museum. He has an absolutely perfect day, but when he arrives home, he senses that something is strange. He learns that Leslie has had a terrible accident that day and has died.

Chapter 11
Pages 155-165: Jess reacts to the news by running out of the house. His father goes after him and brings him back. Jess has a restless night’s sleep and wakes in the morning to a still house. His family is careful and quiet around him, and Jess is only dimly aware of what is going on around him as he struggles to make sense of the news.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
- Should Jess have invited Leslie? Why or why not?
- Was Jess being selfish? Explain. {Key Question}
- Miss Edmunds says to Jess, “My life has been worthwhile after all,” (p 148). What do you think she means by this? {Close Read}
- What sights does Jess see on his trip to Washington, D.C.?
- Why is this the perfect day for Jess?
- When Jess returns home, what is unusual?
• What happens when he returns home?
• How could someone in the Aarons family have broken the news in a more supportive way?
• Why do you think Katherine Paterson ended the chapter in this way? {Dialogue Journal}
• On his way home from Washington, D.C., Jess reflects, “This one perfect day of his life was worth anything he had to pay.” (p.152). Now that you know what has happened, how does this statement make you feel? {Close Read}
• How does Jess first feel when he hears the news? What does he do? How does he feel later that night?
• What are the words Jess imagines saying to Leslie?
• As a reader, how do you feel about Leslie’s death? {Dialogue Journal}
• Does Leslie’s death seem real to you? Why or why not?
• How does Jess’s family try to support and comfort him? Do they succeed?
• What happens at breakfast?

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Chapter 10:
Scrawny (p. 142) exceptionally thin
Idly (p. 143) lazily
Anxiety (p. 143) uneasiness of mind
Transplant (p. 144) to transfer from one place to another
Suppress (p. 148) to prevent something
Intently (p. 148) state of mind
Landmarks (p. 149) boundary marker

Vaulted (p. 149) arched ceiling
Sacred (p. 149) worthy of respect
Liberated (p. 150) released
Protest (P. 150) to complain or object
Stampeding (p. 151) rushing headlong
Butcher (p. 151) slaughter animals for meat
Kinship (p. 151) relatedness of things

Chapter 11:
Relentlessly (p. 155) ceaseless and intense
Numbness (p. 158) with no feeling; emotionless
Consciousness (p. 158) awareness of surroundings
Dreadful (p. 159) unpleasant
Hurtling (p. 160) to move or travel at very high speed

Developing Vocabulary Knowledge: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Have students work independently or in teams to organize the vocabulary words into groups based on categories that relate to the story. It may be helpful to have students write the vocabulary words on Post-it Notes, so that categories can be easily changed through discussion or debate. Encourage students to avoid making categories unrelated to the story or word meanings, such as number of letters, etc.
CCSS: RL5, RL1, W4, SL1D

Mini Lesson: Surprise Ending

What you might say: Nothing, read first. You may start the class by saying that there will be no mini-lesson today as you know many of the students are anxious to hear the end of the book. Read this chapter aloud and stop, asking for student responses to the events that take place. After hearing their reactions you may say...The author has chosen to use a surprise ending that is quite dramatic. Usually we see movies or read books with happy endings. Why do you think the author chose to end this way? How has it made you feel about the book? Do you think that this dramatic ending was a good idea?

Journals/ Literature Circles: Have students do a free write around their reaction to the ending. In a free write, students have the option of writing in a stream of consciousness format. Have them start by writing about the ending of the book, but allow them to go where ever their mind takes them after that. To get them to really start writing this should be a minimum of 10 minutes.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Virtual Museum
Using the internet, take your students on a virtual museum trip to the Smithsonian. Working in pairs, students can then explore exhibits at the Smithsonian based on their interests. Have students write about what they liked most and why they liked it.

Dialogue Starter
Jess’s father does not know what to say to Jess. Ask students to write or say the words Mr. Aarons could have used to comfort his son.

Stages of Grief
Invite a counselor into your class to talk about the stages of grief. Using this information, ask students to revisit Chapter 11 and to begin to identify and chart some of the stages Jess is going through. The counselor can also facilitate a class discussion in which students talk about and share personal experiences with death. {Resources}

Author’s Craft
On page 156, Katherine Paterson describes Jess’s state of shock by using a simile: “The words exploded in his head like corn against the sides of the popper.” Ask your students to say the words that street through his head (Leslie- dead- girl friend- rope- broke- fell- you- you- you God- dead- you- Leslie- dead- you) as they are described in the simile. Students can also play with the words using different similes. For example: The words floated through his head like bubbles in the air; the words ran wild through his mind like a runaway rail car. Encourage students to write their own similes.
Chapter 12: Stranded

Summary
Pages 166-175: Jess and his parents walk over to the Burke house to pay their respects. Jess experiences many feelings, with anger being the strongest. When he learns that Leslie’s body will be cremated, his anger builds and he runs out of the house. He meets his sister May Belle and hits her in the face after she asks him a question about Leslie’s body. He then runs to the creek with the paints and paper Leslie gave him for Christmas and tosses them into the water. His father sits down beside him and for the first time in years, holds Jess and comforts him in his arms.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
• Describe the scene at the Burkes’ house. How does Jess feel while he is there? What is he thinking about this gathering and the others who are there?
• Bill begins to tell Jess, “She told me once that if it weren’t for you…” (p. 169). Complete this sentence for Bill.
• Why does Jess feel stranded?
• Jess realizes, “She had made him leave his old self behind and come into her world, and then before he was really at home in it but too late to go back, she had left him stranded there- like an astronaut wandering about on the moon. Alone.” (p. 171) What do you think he means?
{Close Read}
• How is Leslie a bridge for Jess?
• When does Leslie’s death become real for Jess? When did it become real for you?
• After the funeral, Jess behaves oddly. What does he do and why?
• Why does Jess say he hates Leslie?
• In this chapter, Jess finally got two things in life he really wanted. What are they, and do they still matter to him? {Dialogue Journal} {Key Question}

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)
Stranded (p. 166) left helpless
Leapt (p. 166) to spring free from
Cremated (p. 170) reduced to ashes by burning
Current (p. 172) fluid body moving continuously in a certain direction
Mini Lesson: Putting it All Together

What you might say: We have learned many strategies to help us be active, thoughtful readers during this book. We have talked about noticing conflicts, predicting, characterization, making connections and the use of language, such as similes, to really show emotions. Today we are going to try to put them all together as we read. This is a very difficult skill that requires quite a bit of practice and may be slow going at first. As we read I want you to be marking areas where you see all of these things. (You may choose to give them different colored sticky notes for each element you would like students to focus on, you may have them create a chart in their notebook to jot down page numbers and the first few words of the sentence) You will not have to stop and write about your thoughts and feelings around each of these areas. I want you only to notice the elements as you read.

Teacher should model how to do this while they read the first section of chapter 10, thinking aloud as they go. Have students who can, read independently. Others can either read with you or listen to a book on tape. It is best if they have control over the pace of the reading so they can stop and add notes when they would like to. You may continue this for the rest of the book to help students make this part of their reading habits.

Journals/ Literature Circles: Students can star one of the elements they noticed that they do not think they would have noticed before. Have students write a few notes about how noticing that element either helped them to understand the story better, enjoy the story more, gave them more insight into the character or would help them in their own writing. Students can share their thoughts in their groups.

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Stages of Grief
Jess experiences the classic stages of grief. First he disbelieves, next he runs away, and then he feels anger. Have the class continue to identify and chart Jess’s grief. {Resources}

A New World
Jess realizes that Leslie, “had made him leave his old self behind and come into her world.” Ask students to create a collage of either Jess’s old world or of the new world that Leslie has shared with him. Encourage students to use words and pictures to communicate these worlds. You can display these around the classroom.

Honoring the Queen
Asking students to imagine how Jess might create and organize the funeral memorial for Leslie’s death. What would he do? Have students write and present their ideas. Students can then select which memorial they think is best suited for Leslie. Encourage students to be original and creative in their ideas.
Chapter 13: Building the Bridge

Summary
Pages 118-128: Saturday brings new hope for Jess. He crosses the bridge to Terabithia and makes a funeral wreath to commemorate the late queen. He is interrupted by the cries of May Belle, who has gotten herself stuck crossing the creek. Jess is loving and supportive of his sister as he rescues her from her ordeal. Jess begins to grow from his pain: He realizes the wonderful gift Leslie has given him and decides to share this gift with the world. He builds a sturdy bridge from wooden planks, introduces May Belle to the secret world of Terabithia, and crowns her the new queen.

Questions to Promote Discussion and Stimulate Journal Writing
- Why does Jess go to Terabithia?
- How will Jess honor Leslie?
- What happens to interrupt him? What does he do?
- What does Jess tell May Belle about courage? {Close Read}
- Jess thinks, “Sometimes like the Barbie doll you need to give people something that’s for them, not just something that makes you feel good giving it.” (p. 187) What is Jess talking about here? Do you agree? Why or Why not? {Dialogue Journal}
- What does Jess realize he has learned from Leslie?
- Jess decides, “It was up to him to pay back to the world in beauty and caring what Leslie had loaned him in vision and strength” (p. 188). What was the vision and strength that he gained from Leslie? How could he pay back to the world what Leslie had given him?
- Why did Jess build a bridge? {Key Question}
- Why did he make May Belle the queen?
- How is he different from before he met Leslie?
- Do you think any of the changes in the Aarons’ family will last?
- What do you think the title of the book means?

Vocabulary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

Possessed (p. 177) influenced
Constricting (p. 178) to make narrow
Wreath (p. 178) intertwined in a circular shape
Bank (p. 178) rising ground bordering a river
Procession (p. 179) a group moving a long in a ceremonial way

Traitorous (p. 185) disloyal
Leaden (p. 185) lacking spirit or animation
Sympathy (p. 186) a showing of sorrow for another’s loss
Mourning (p. 186) to feel or show grief
Fragile (p. 188) easily broken or destroyed
Predators (p. 188) one that preys, destroys or devours
Fostering Independent Vocabulary Learning: Using a Dictionary: (CCSS: L4A, RL4)

Remind students that while they should always use context clues as an aid in understanding new words, there might be words whose meaning they cannot discover out of context. In addition, they might want to gain a more precise meaning of the word whose general meaning they derived from the reading. In these cases, they should be encouraged to get in the habit of using a dictionary.

Toward that end, ask students to find the vocabulary words in the text and write down an educated guess about each word’s meaning. Then ask students to find each word in the dictionary and write down the meaning most appropriate to its context in the story. You may wish to do the first one or two together to remind students of the following: locate words through alphabetical order, use the pronunciation key, use guide words, identify the correct entry for different word forms, and determine which of several definitions is correct.

CCSS: RL1, RL3, RL4, W4, SL1C

Mini Lesson: Author’s Purpose
What you might say: Wow, after that climax the story has really slowed down. We are learning how Jess deals with this horrible situation and the author shares with us the many ways he has changed. We know that authors write for many reasons. Three reasons they write are: to inform or give us information, to entertain us, and to teach a lesson. Why do you think Katherine Patterson wrote this book? What was her purpose? Have a class discussion around this topic. Once the class has come to a consensus talk about whether Patterson was effective in her purpose. Did her book do what she wanted it to do? How do we know? It is hard to know why an author wrote a book if you have not had an opportunity to discuss this with them personally; however it is important as readers to think about this, develop an opinion and support your opinion with examples from the book.

Journals/ Literature Circles: Has this book changed you? Write about briefly and then discuss this question. Why do we read; for enjoyment, to learn, to have a better understanding of the world, etc.? What did this book do for you?

Activities to Extend Comprehension and Relate Literature to Life

Special Words
Ask students to write and deliver a eulogy for the Queen of Terabithia.
Dear ________:
Assign students to write on the following four letters. Encourage students to share some of their letters with the rest of the class.

1. A letter from Jess to Leslie saying goodbye to her.
2. A letter from Leslie to Jess saying goodbye to him.
3. A letter from Jess to Bill and Judy Burke explaining what Leslie means to him.
4. A letter from Jess to Mrs. Meyers written ten years in the future, when he is a young man.

Diary Entry
Jess learned many things from Leslie. Ask your students to write a diary entry from Jess’s point of view about what he learned from Leslie.

Reflections
Jess and Miss Edmunds do not meet in the book again after Leslie’s death, yet they both must be thinking and feelings many things. Have students write or act out a scene where Jess and Miss Edmunds meet to share some of their thoughts and feelings about Leslie’s death and the events of that tragic day.

Max Connection
Max’s parents, Stephanie and Jonathan Warburg created this Courage Curriculum to memorialize their son. Discuss the following question with your students: If Jess were given the opportunity to design a curriculum to memorialize Leslie, what qualities or topics would he choose to focus on? Have students make a list of these and choose one for which they will design an activity. You may want to have students facilitate and lead some of the activities they have planned for the class.

Author’s Perspective
“In talking with children who have read Bridge to Terabithia I have met several who do not like the ending... How could I allow Jess to build a bridge for the unworthy, they ask me. Their sense of what is fitting and right and just is offended. I hear my young critics out and do not try to argue with them, for I know as well as they do that May Belle is not Leslie, nor will she ever be. But perhaps someday they will understand Jess’s bridge as an act of grace which he built, not because of who May Belle was but because of who he himself had become crossing the gully into Terabithia. I allowed him to build a bridge because I dare to believe... that the very valley where evil and despair defeat us can become a gate of hope- if there is a bridge.”
Post-Reading

Music Slide Show
The music slide show is an activity that integrates music, literature and visual images into a thematic whole. Divide the class into groups of four or five and invite them to explore a theme of either friendship or courage. Have groups gather songs which reflect and express their chosen theme. Students should read through the song lyrics, line by line, and discuss images that they feel reflect and express the words and ideas. Students should select images the express the words and ideas in their song or group of songs, and create a slide show to present to the class.

Presentation
Have students give a 3-5 minute presentation on one of the following issues related to Bridge to Terabithia: a.) peer pressure, b.) conformity, c.) friendship. Encourage to explore how these themes are presented and developed throughout the novel.

Conflict Resolution Exercise
Using the conflict between Jess and Leslie on one side and Janice Avery on the other, have students use compromise to resolve the conflict about Janice stealing the Twinkies from May Belle. Have your students work in small groups to resolve this conflict in a more mature way.

Perspective-Taking Exercise
Working in pairs, have students share a personal story about one of the following topics from the story: being bullied, bullying someone else, giving a gift or receiving a gift. Their story must include at least them and one other person. Students first tell the story to the class from their own perspective. Then, adopting the point of view of the other person, have them tell about the same event from the other person’s perspective.
Themes and Key Questions

Theme: Courage

Key Questions
• On page 126, Jess offers what might be considered his definition of courage when he says, “You just have to stand up to your fear and not let it squeeze you white.” What do you think he means by this?

• How were both Jess and Max courageous?

• What fears and obstacles did Jess and Max overcome?

• Based on your reading of these stories, and on your own experience, what do you think courage is?

Courage Monument
Have students design and build a monument to courage for the school. The monument should reflect the following aspects of courage:
• Being true to yourself and not giving in for the sake of conformity;
• Overcoming fears’
• Exhibiting everyday acts of courage

Overcoming Fear
Have students write a personal plan for how they can overcome one of their fears. Encourage them to think about the specific steps they will take and how they will determine when they have gained some control over their fear. You may want to point out to students that some fears cannot be conquered, but people can devise strategies to help address and control their fears.

Theme: Be True to Yourself

Key Questions
• What do you think it means to be true to yourself? Is it important to be true to yourself? Why or why not?

• How were characters in the book true to themselves or not? How was Max Warburg true to himself or not?

• Based on what you know from Jess’s experiences, what can you do when being true to yourself means being excluded from your friends and family?
Pledge to Myself
Ask students to write a pledge to themselves beginning with the words, “I always pledge to be true to myself.” Using whatever language style they wish, ask students to write a list of at least ten commitments stating what they will and will not do in order to be true to themselves. You may want to create a model of this for students.

The Pieces of Me
Have students make a puzzle of themselves in which each piece of the puzzle represents an aspect of their character or personality. Puzzles can be made on pieces of cardboard that have been cut into different shapes and sizes. Students should think about the overall shape and design of the puzzle as well as the shape, size and color of each individual piece. Students can design the puzzle with words, drawings and pictures.

Theme: Friendship

Key Questions
• What do you think characterizes a true friend?

• How has Jess’s life changed as a result of Leslie’s friendship? (See page 126: “It was up to him to pay back to the world in beauty and caring what Leslie had loaned him in vision and strength.”)

• How has Max Warburg been a friend to the thousands of people whom he has never met or known?

• What is the meaning of friendship? Use characters in Bridge to Terabithia, your own experiences and Max Warburg as examples to support your ideas.

A Tribute to My Best Friend
Students can make a handmade book as a tribute to a friend. Students should write vignettes or short paragraphs about the friend which include the following topics: why this person is their friend; the things that they do and share together; how they met and became friends; why this person is so special; what this friend has given and taught them; special phrases, secrets or jokes that they may share. Students can illustrate these vignettes with photographs and drawing and either present them to their friend or share them in a class book display.

A Photo Mural
Ask students to collect photographs of friends together. These can be photos of students with their friends. They can also ask members of their family to loan them photos of themselves with the friends they have had throughout their lives. These pictures can be displayed as a wall mural in the classroom. Students can add to this mural on a daily basis. Encourage students to write captions and phrases that express the qualities of friendship.
Theme: Bridges

Key Questions
• Many characters in the book act as symbolic bridges for each other. What does a bridge symbolize?

• How are different characters in the book bridges for one another?

• In what ways did Max Warburg become a symbolic bridge for others?

Building a Bridge
Ask your students to think about two things that they would like to connect. These two things can be of the same category (person to person) or they can be links across categories (idea to place). Once students have identified the two sides they want to connect, have them design and construct a bridge that would link the two sides. Students should think about how they will represent each side as well as the bridge that links the two sides. Encourage students to be creative in the conceptualization and construction of their bridges.

Poetry
Several people acted as bridges for Jess to another world or to a new awareness of himself. Ask students to think about someone who has served as a bridge in their own lives. Remind them that a bridge links one thing to another and allows for a person to enter into a new place or have a new awareness. Have students create a brainstorm web on a person who has been a bridge for them. Using this web, have them write a poem or vignette about this person. The poem or vignette should include what new awareness, knowledge or world they were exposed to as a result of knowing this special person.
Boston Public Schools ELA Key Questions

Topic
• What is this book or chapter about?

Theme
• What lessons is the author trying to teach?
• Do you agree or disagree with the author’s point of view?

Plot
• What are the most memorable or significant events? Why these?
• What role did they play in developing the theme?
• What’s going to happen next? Did it?

Characterization
• Who are the most important characters? What makes them so important?
• How do they help develop the theme?
• What are their key characteristics?

Conflict
• What challenges are the key characters wrestling with?
• How are they responding to them?
• How should they respond? How would you respond?

Setting
• How do location, time, and culture affect the characters and plot?
• What role do they play in developing the theme?
• Would the story be different in another location, time, or culture?

Language
• How does the author’s use of language enhance the story?

Connections
• What comparisons can you make between the characters and events in the book/chapter, yourself, and contemporary characters/events you’re familiar with?

Significance
• Why is this book important?
• Is there anything unique about this book? Is there anything difficult or challenging?
• Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

General
• What are the most interesting things you learned?
• What surprised or amazed you?
• How would you change any part of this book/chapter? How would this affect the story?