

A Guide for Educators

By Van G. Garrett and Amanda Jo Ponder

Lesson 1: Predictions and Introductions:

To encourage excitement about reading, students analyze the cover of the book to make predictions about the story, characters, conflict, and (possible) ending. Some things for students to consider are:

- What animals are present? What are they doing?
- How is the title written? What word(s) are emphasized? What do you think that means about the story?
- What other details stand out?
- Who is/are the main character(s)? How do you know?
- What might this story be about based on the images, colors, and words?

Next, have students examine the back cover and read details about the story and author. As they analyze the back cover, students should consider:

- What words stick out? Why? Do they change your thoughts about the story?
- What can you expect about the story based on what is written on the back?
- Did you learn any new information about the animals you saw on the front cover?

The purpose of this activity is to have students begin the analysis process of the story before reading by using artistic and other visual clues as well as reading a brief synopsis of the story to make associations with possible outcomes of the story.

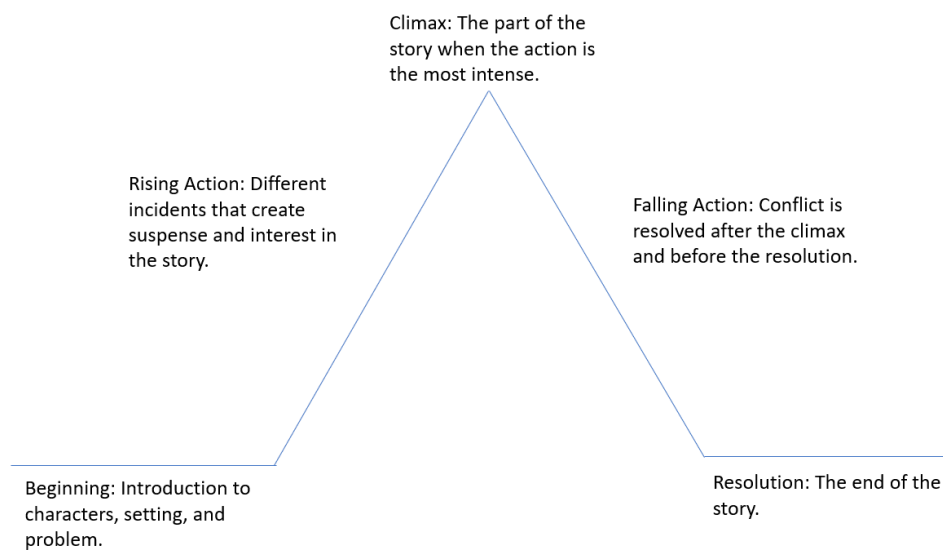
Writing Focus: As students identify and explain the cover details, have them begin to plan a story that has animals as the characters. As the students list their animal ideas, encourage them to consider possible actions for each animal and how the actions will contribute to the story.

TEKS Reading/Comprehension Skills: 110.2.5A-D, 5F-H, 8A-D.ii; 110.3-110.3.6A-D, 6F-H, 9A-D.ii; 110.22-110.24 5A-D, 5F-H, 8A-D.ii

Lesson 2: Mapping the Story

Plot is what happens in a story. Besides just the beginning, middle, and end, the plot also shows how conflict develops and resolves, how the character(s) change because of the conflict, and the final result or conclusion to the story. Many times, we map the plot to make sure we understand how all the parts of the story work together.

Let's examine a plot map. A *plot map* shows how the action of the story happens and how it is settled at the end.



Think about the action and incidents in *Love Big*. Now, make a plot map like the one above that shows how the action develops throughout the story.

TEKS Reading/Comprehension Skills: 110.2.6B-C, 7C-D, 8D.iii; 110.3-110.7B-C, 6.8C-D, 9D.iii; 110.22-110.24.6B-C, 6G-H, 7C-D, 8D.iii

Lesson 3: Conflict & Resolution (+ Theme/Controlling Idea/Purpose)

Part of the plot that we discussed last time focuses on conflict. *Conflict* is the struggle(s) that the main character(s) experience during the story, so *conflict resolution* is how the struggles come to an end in the story.

To discuss conflict, we have to consider who or what the character is struggling against; is it another character, is it the character, is it with nature, or is it with society?

Think about the story and the plot map you completed yesterday to make a list of the different examples of conflict in the story. Use the following chart to track your thinking. The first one is done for you.

Character	Conflict Summary	Type of Conflict	Resolved?
<i>Rhino</i>	<i>Rhino was going to bully a beetle but tripped and fell down.</i>	<i>Character vs. self</i>	<i>Beetle treated Rhino with kindness, so Rhino learned to be kind to others.</i>

TEKS Reading/Comprehension Skills: 110.2.6A, D, 7A, 8D.i; 110.3-110.6.7A, D, 8A, 9D.i; 110.5-7.7G; 110.22-110.24.6A, D, G, 7A, 8D.i

Lesson 4: The Wisdom of Talking Animals

One of the key characteristics of a fable is that animals and inanimate objects talk, move, and behave just like humans. This is called *anthropomorphism* - making non-human objects as human as possible. Authors usually do this to make the characters more visually appealing and interesting. Sometimes, allowing the character to be an animal allows the reader to better understand the character's motivation and behavior by prescribing certain creature behaviors to the character. Nowhere is this more evident than in Disney's *Zootopia*.



As students read, have them think about how each animal's action and behavior in the story can be tied to the type of animal they are. To track their thinking, have students use the following chart:

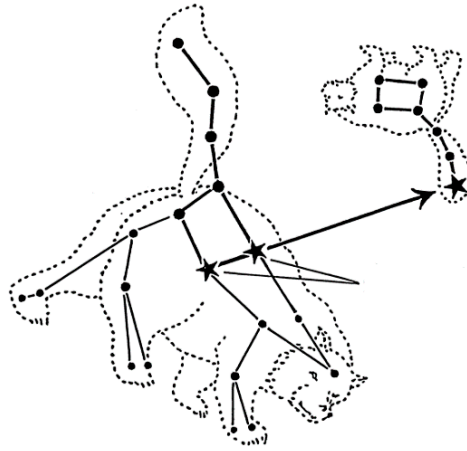
Character/Animal	Expected Behavior	What the animal says <i>text evidence</i>	How the animal acts <i>text evidence</i>

Writing Focus: Students need to add details to their fable to make their characters as human-like as possible. Consider having the animals stand a certain way, use specific language, or even do human actions.

TEKS Reading/Comprehension Skills: 110.2.7B, 9A, 9D, 9E; 110.3-7.8B, 9E, 10A, 10D; 110.22-24.7B, 8E, 9A, 9D

Lesson 5: A Story in the Stars

A collection of stars that form a pattern is known as a *constellation*. Many of the constellations people are familiar with present a life lesson story based on the (mis)adventures of the gods, goddesses, and animals that people were familiar with. For instance, the Big Dipper is part of Ursa Major, or Big Bear (depicted below). In this story, a beautiful young woman laid down to rest in the forest after hunting when the Roman god Jupiter saw her. Jupiter's wife, Juno, became very jealous of the young woman's beauty and turned her into a bear. To keep her safe from hunters, Jupiter threw the bear into the sky so she could live safely among the stars.



As students read *Love Big*, have them consider the life lessons the stars present to the animals in the story as well as why that specific lesson is appropriately connected to each animal.

Writing Focus: As students continue to develop their own fable, have them create a backstory for the main character to help the audience better understand character motivation.

TEKS Reading/Comprehension Skills: 110.2.5F, 6F, 7B, 9A, 9D, 9E; 110.3-7.6F, 7F, 8B, 9E, 10A, 10D; 110.22-24.6F, 7B, 8E, 9A, 9D

Lesson 6: Your Class Motto(s)

A *motto* is a short phrase that reflects the beliefs and ideals that are important to a person or group of people. Love Big is full of mottos about how we should behave towards one another. Now, as a class, it is time to write out your class motto(s). Organize students into small groups or pairs for brainstorming, and then have them make a list of possible mottos based on the following prompts:

- Expectations for behavior
 - How should your classmates treat one another?
 - How should you treat the teacher and other adults?
 - How should your teacher and other adults treat students?
- What image can be associated with each expectation above?

As a whole group, have students share their ideas to formulate the class motto(s), possibly 2-5. Allow students/small groups to create posters for each class motto.

TEKS Reading/Comprehension Skills: 110.2.5E; 110.3-110.6.6E; 110.22-110.24.5E

Bios



Born and raised in Sugar Land, Texas, **Amanda Jo Ponder** graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Literature. In 2015, she received a Masters of Education in Educational Policy from the University of Texas – Arlington. She currently works for Houston ISD as the Advanced Placement English Coordinator where she supports the AP and Pre-AP English teachers and students of the district through curriculum development and instruction, mentoring and coaching, and managing teacher training opportunities for the district.



Van G. Garrett is the winner of the 2017 Best Book of African American Poetry for his book, *49: Wings and Prayers*, as announced by the Texas Association of Authors. Garrett is the author of *Songs in Blue Negritude* (poetry), *The Iron Legs in the Trees* (fiction), *49: Wings & Prayers* (poetry), *LENNOX IN TWELVE* (poetry), *HOG* (poetry), *ZURI: Love Songs* (poetry), and *Water Bodies* (fall 2019). His updates and appearances can be found at www.vanggarrettpoet.com.

