



Introduction: “The Story of an Hour” (Grade 8)



This introduction provides background information for a unit of lessons based on “The Story of an Hour,” a short story written by Kate Chopin in 1894. The unit was created for use with eighth-grade English language learners, and has been aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

It features scaffolded activities designed to support students’ language development.

The introduction includes the following sections:

- Project overview
- Research base
- Objectives
- Key standards
- Lesson components
- Ideas for differentiation
- Tips for teacher planning
- References
- Acknowledgements

Related materials, classroom videos, and teacher videos are available on Colorín Colorado:

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/common-core/classroom/lessons/grade8/>





Project Overview

This unit was created by a group of teachers from Albuquerque, New Mexico, working in collaboration with the Albuquerque Teachers Federation and Dr. Diane August. Additional support for the project was provided by two consultants to the project. Erin Haynes helped develop the lessons and David Pook assisted with the preparation of the text-dependent questions and writing prompts. Their work was part of a project funded by the American Federation of Teachers Innovation Fund to create grade-appropriate lesson plan exemplars in grades 1, 4, and 8 aligned to the Common Core State Standards and targeting English language learners' (ELLs) literacy and language needs. The Colorín Colorado team then filmed teachers delivering the lessons in their classrooms.

Opportunities and Challenges

ELLs face a unique set of opportunities and challenges in meeting the Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia and require all students to develop literacy in the content areas (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). For example, the Common Core State Standards offer ELLs the opportunity to access grade-level content alongside their peers. ELLs also bring other types of assets to their learning that constitute important resources for their success in the classroom, such as first-language knowledge and skills (Fránquiz & Reyes, 1998). These assets can play a part in the success of their peers as well, who, to be college- and career-ready, need to learn to understand other perspective and cultures.

Yet the Common Core State Standards also present ELLs and their educators with unique challenges; ELLs often lag behind their English-speaking peers in vocabulary development, a key component of literacy (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2011). In addition, if they have had limited or interrupted formal education, ELLs may lack important academic skills and learning strategies, which are important to high achievement (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005). Given these challenges, this unit focuses on the literacy and language development of ELLs with targeted activities and strategies.



Objectives

This unit capitalizes on ELLs' first language knowledge and skills, while providing essential scaffolding to help students overcome the challenges of meeting grade-level content and literacy standards in their second language. At the same time, it maintains the complexity of the text, so that ELLs get the full benefit of reading grade-level text.

This unit is designed to:

- Build students' comprehension of vocabulary, syntax, and more extended discourse
- Develop writing skills
- Enhance relevant background knowledge, with the ultimate goal of engaging students in a mainstream lesson on the text.

A brief description of each lesson's components is included after the key standards.

Key Standards

The following Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts are included in this unit. Standards are listed by domain: Reading, Speaking and Listening, Language, and Writing. They are numbered as they are in the official [Common Core Language Arts document](#), with the grade level preceding the standard number (e.g., 8.1 is Grade 8, Standard #1).

Reading Standards for Literature

- RL 8.1** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL 8.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL 8.3** Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.



RL 8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL 8.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Speaking & Listening Standards

SL 8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

(a) Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

SL 8.5 Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

SL 8.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language Standards

L 8.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

L 8.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

(a) Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

L 8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

(a) Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.



L 8.6 Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Writing Standards

- W 8.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- (a) Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
 - (b) Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
 - (c) Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - (d) Establish and maintain a formal style.
 - (e) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- W 8.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W 8.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

Lesson Components

The lesson plan is organized into five lessons, along with optional extension activities. It includes the following components:

1. **Common Core State Standards** – The Common Core State Standards in Language Arts are listed at the beginning of each lesson in the Teacher Guide.



The entire lesson is geared towards helping students meet grade-level standards. However, it is important to note that some students will need additional support through enrichment activities that develop knowledge and skills required in earlier grades. This enrichment may be especially crucial for students who have had limited or interrupted formal education.

2. **Objectives** – Students review and discuss the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. Involving students in the goals of a lesson increases their engagement and gives them benchmarks to gauge their own progress.
3. **Background Knowledge** – ELLs who were not born in the United States are not expected to know the history of the U.S. women’s rights movement. However, this information is important to understanding the context of the text. Information about the author, Kate Chopin, is also provided.
4. **Interactive Shared Readings** – This lesson is built around two interactive shared readings of the text. In an interactive shared reading, the teacher and students work together to read the text and answer questions about it. In the first interactive reading, which focuses on key comprehension questions, the teacher displays the text on an overhead screen. For ELLs that are less proficient, the teacher might read the text. If there are sufficient ELLs that can read English text, the students might work in pairs or individually to read the text. In both cases, students work in pairs or individually to answer supplementary questions about the text they have read and the teacher reviews their response as a class. The questions are then discussed as a whole class. Key words are glossed and paraphrased. Students with lower levels of proficiency might be provided with answer frames. As students become more proficient, the frames should be reduced or removed.

In the second interactive shared reading, the focus is on grade-level analysis of the text, with students and teacher following the same routine as described above for the first interactive reading.

5. **Vocabulary Instruction** – Students have multiple opportunities for vocabulary acquisition as part of this lesson. Two types of vocabulary words are included in



the lesson. These target vocabulary words have been chosen for instruction because they are frequent in grade-level text and are important to understanding the story.

- a. **Level 1:** These are words that are less abstract but that may be unfamiliar to ELLs. The teacher provides quick assistance to help students understand the meaning of these words before or during the Interactive Reading, using embedded vocabulary instruction techniques such as providing synonyms, using gestures, pointing to the pictures, or asking students to draw on background knowledge.
- b. **Level 2:** These words tend to be more abstract. As part of extended instruction, students are shown word slides, which provide the word's definition in English, its translation in Spanish, and one to two child-friendly visuals representing the words. Partner Talk activities require students to discuss questions in pairs that draw on their own background knowledge and experiences. An average of two vocabulary words is instructed each day using these extended techniques.

Glossary: Throughout the lesson, students add challenging vocabulary to the glossary included in Student Chart 3C for their own reference. The glossary can be used at the end of lessons either as a reinforcement activity or homework, depending on lesson timing and the needs of the students.

6. **Graphic Organizers** – Graphic organizers can be an important tool to aid comprehension and allow students to organize their thoughts. In this lesson, there are two graphic organizers used during the interactive reading that help students describe the primary characters and chart the relationships among the characters.
7. **Literacy Concepts** – As part of meeting grade-level standards, students learn about analogy and irony. These are areas of knowledge that are important to understanding the literary complexities of the text and that are skill objectives for grade 8.



8. **Formative Assessment** – One way for a teacher to determine students’ comprehension of the text is to have them summarize it. However, ELLs may first need instruction in the skill of summarizing text. Therefore, they are provided instruction in summarizing based on a children’s book called *I Want My Hat Back*. This story was chosen for its very simple language, engaging visuals, and smart storyline that will appeal to older students. Furthermore, it lends itself easily to the “Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then” framework that students use to summarize a story. Through this framework, they identify a story’s protagonist, motivation, conflict, rising action, and conclusion, which form the basis for a good summary.

After learning how to summarize, students use the same framework to summarize “*The Story of an Hour*”, which serves as a formative assessment of their comprehension of the text. Another method to assess students is to have them answer some of the mainstream lesson questions independently.

(Note: Due to copyright restrictions, only the beginning text and illustrations are included in the Lesson #4 materials. Other ideas for supplementing the beginning of the book are included in the Teacher’s Guide.)

9. **Writing Assignment** – Students state a position and support their position in a writing assignment that meets the CCS Writing Standard 8.1. The writing lesson is scaffolded with a graphic organizer to help students with lower levels of English proficiency organize their thoughts before they begin writing. Students at these levels of proficiency are also provided with a paragraph frame to help them meet the content standards.
10. **Extension Activities** – As noted above, some students can benefit from engaging in enrichment activities that meet the standards of earlier grades. For students who have not had the benefit of building earlier grade-level skills in their former educational contexts, these activities help them build needed skills. For students who have already had the opportunity to build these skills, these activities serve as a review. In the first extension activity included in this lesson, students draw on CCS Writing Standard 7.9, comparing and contrasting characters in the anchor text and in either a short story or a movie.



Students with lower levels of English proficiency use a graphic organizer to organize their thoughts and then complete a writing activity that is scaffolded through a paragraph frame.

In Extension B, students are instructed in a critical word learning strategy to enhance their own abilities to ascertain the meanings of words without direct instruction. In this lesson, the word learning strategy is using context to arrive at meanings for unknown words. The final two extensions are add-ons for the summary and irony lessons that students complete as part of the regular lesson.

Note on English Language Proficiency Standards

English-as-a-second-language educators are encouraged to embed their state English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards into the lesson. New Mexico, where these lessons were created and filmed, is a member of the [World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment](#) (WIDA) Consortia.

Differentiation

As described above in the section on interactive reading, the teacher can provide more support to emergent and low-intermediate level ELLs while students at more advanced proficiency levels work in pairs or individually. The whole class can then come back together to debrief questions and other partner work.

In this lesson, student charts for the interactive reading match the PowerPoint slides, which are designed for emergent ELLs. To differentiate the interactive reading, provide just as much of an answer frame as is necessary and make sure to reduce the framing as students become more proficient. The level of framing will also be contingent on the complexity of the text students are reading, with more framing needed for more complex text.

For the written summaries, the student charts are designed for emergent or beginning intermediate ELLs, with scaffolding in the form of semi-structured sentence and paragraph frames. For emergent ELLs, we suggest also providing word banks as necessary.



As with interactive reading, reduce the framing as students become more proficient. For more advanced ELLs, teachers might consider providing a word bank (but not sentence frames) if students are struggling.

Teacher Planning

Overview: Daily Activities

The lesson components described above are organized into five 45-60 minute lessons. The following table summarizes the activities by lesson. Detailed instructions for each lesson’s activities are available in the [Teacher’s Guide](#).

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Objectives Role of Women in the 19th-century First Interactive Reading Character Sketch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Objectives Who Was Kate Chopin? First Interactive Reading (cont.) Character Sketch Mini-Lesson: Irony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Objectives Mini-Lesson: Analogy Glossary Second Interactive Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Objectives Summary Lesson Formative Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Objectives Writing an Argument
Extension Activities				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character Comparison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word Learning Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irony 	

In preparation for each lesson, teachers are advised to take the following steps:

- Read through the Common Core State Standards included in the lesson. Think about the students in your class and the support they will need to meet these standards.
- Review the detailed lesson plan in the Teacher’s Guide to ensure that all materials (PowerPoints, [Student Charts](#), and other resources) have been secured and prepared.



- Read through each portion of the lesson and familiarize yourself with the corresponding materials. Again, think about your students and plan how you will group them for collaborative work.
- Group students for partner/small group work, taking reading and English language proficiency levels into consideration. Ideally in each pair or group, at least one student will be able to read Grade 8 level text.



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