

**A Close Reading Model Lesson with Student Supports:**  
*Because of Winn-Dixie*

## **Purpose**

The student supports in this document were developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education. They accompany the Close Reading Model Lesson for *Because of Winn-Dixie* developed by Achieve the Core.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the supports is to enable students with different learning needs to benefit from the opportunity for close analytic reading of this complex text. Reader and task considerations make this a more complex text for such students than it is for the typical range of their peers.<sup>2</sup> The supports provided here, however, do not take away students' responsibility for carefully reading the text. As Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel state: "Leveraging students' existing background knowledge, and building new knowledge, can be accomplished in a number of ways before and during a lesson or unit of study—without preempting the text, translating its contents for students, telling students what they are going to learn in advance of reading a particular text, or 'simplifying' the text itself." Therefore, even with these supports, students are expected to grapple with the text and do the work of close reading with as much independence as possible.

## **How to Use this Resource**

The left-hand column(s) is the original close reading lesson. The right-hand column of the Close Reading Model Lesson is titled **Student Supports**; it includes or references all student supports provided in the document. A set of additional text-dependent questions for scaffolding students' reading is included within this column. Other supports, because they were too lengthy to fit in the column, appear at the end of the document in a section titled Extended Student Supports (ESS). Annotations in the right-hand column of the Close Reading Lesson link to the supports in the ESS by page number.

The Extended Student Supports include:

- I. Overall Recommendations:
  - Create a Context for the Lesson
  - Teach and Practice Routines for Reading Closely
- II. Vocabulary Resources
- III. Activities
  - Preparing the Learner (one day preceding the close reading lesson)
  - Interacting with the Text (supports for students during the lesson)

<sup>1</sup> The entire model lesson can be found at [www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org); it includes three Appendices with additional instructional opportunities for mixed ability groups.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on how reader and task considerations impact text complexity, refer to Appendix A of the CCSS.

## ***Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo– Grade 3**

	<b>Student Supports</b>
<p><b>Standards Addressed:</b> RL.3.1-5; RF.3.3-4; W.3.2, 4-5; SL.3.1-2; L.3.1-5.</p> <p><b>Learning Objective:</b> The goal of this exemplar lesson is to give students the opportunity to use the reading and writing habits they’ve been practicing on a regular basis to absorb deep lessons from Kate DiCamillo’s story. By reading and rereading the passage closely and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will identify how and why the three main characters become friends.</p> <p><b>Reading Task:</b> Students will silently read the passage in question on a given day—first independently and then following along with the text as the teacher and/or skillful students read aloud. Depending on the difficulties of a given text and the teacher’s knowledge of the fluency abilities of students, the order of the student silent read and the teacher reading aloud with students following might be reversed. What is important is to allow all students to interact with challenging text on their own as frequently and independently as possible. Students will then reread specific passages in response to a set of concise, text-dependent questions that compel them to examine the meaning and structure of DiCamillo’s prose. Therefore, rereading is deliberately built into the instructional unit. This serves two purposes: helping less fluent readers access a more complex text than they could independently and modeling for all students the necessity and process of returning to the text in order to absorb all it has to offer.</p> <p><b>Vocabulary Task:</b> Most of the meanings of words in the exemplar text can be discovered by students from careful reading of the context in which they appear. Teachers can use discussions to model and reinforce how to learn vocabulary from contextual clues, and students must be held accountable for engaging in this practice. Where it is judged this is not possible, underlined words are defined briefly for students to the right of the text in a separate column whenever the original text is reproduced. At times, this is all the support these defined words need. At other times, particularly with abstract words, teachers will need to spend more time explaining and discussing them. There is a longer discussion of this in the “Vocabulary” section of the Introduction. In addition, in subsequent close readings of passages of the text, high value academic (“Tier Two”) words have been bolded to draw attention to them. Given how crucial vocabulary knowledge is for academic and career success, it is essential that these high value words be discussed and lingered over during the instructional sequence.</p>	<p>Overall recommendations for creating a context for close reading can be found in ESS p. 1: Create a Context for the Close Reading Lesson</p> <p>Allow for at least five days of instruction to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Preparing the Learners</li><li>Interacting with the Text</li></ul> <p>Additional time may be needed for pre-teaching vocabulary.</p> <p>See ESS p. 2: Vocabulary Resources</p>

**Discussion Task:** Students will discuss the exemplar text in depth with their teacher and their classmates, performing activities that result in a close reading of DiCamillo’s story. The goal is to foster student confidence when encountering complex text and to reinforce the skills they have acquired regarding how to build and extend their understanding of a text. A general principle is to always reread the passage that provides evidence for the question under discussion. This gives students another encounter with the text, helping them develop fluency and reinforcing their use of textual evidence.

**Writing Task:** Students will respond to a series of text-dependent questions and then write an informal explanatory essay. Teachers can give students the opportunity to revise their essays after participating in classroom discussion or even rewrite their explanations after receiving teacher feedback. This allows them to refashion both their understanding of the text and their expression of that understanding.

**Text Selection:** This exemplar text, taken from Kate DiCamillo’s award-winning novel of the same title introduces readers to some of the principal characters in the book and to the unique “talents “of the dog, Winn-Dixie.

**Outline of Lesson Plan:** This lesson can be delivered in two days of instruction and reflection on the part of students and their teacher, or spread over three days. Reasons for extending the discussion regarding *Because of Winn-Dixie* to three full periods of instruction include taking more time to unpack the rich array of ideas DiCamillo explores in this piece, taking more time to look closely at academic vocabulary, or even working at greater length with the writing prompt. If the assessment is given, an additional day will be needed.

**Outline of Lesson Plan:**

In order to provide this population of students with the necessary supports, this lesson requires at least five days of instruction. The Student Support Schedule (SSS) provides additional days for instruction. The content aligns with the general instruction, however the sequence of days will differ based on the additional time provided.

**Pre-teach Vocabulary:**

Prior to reading, select and teach words using Vocabulary Resources, ESS p. 2

**Preparing the Learners:**

SSS Day 1: Refer to the activities found in ESS. Additional time may be needed depending upon the needs of the students.

**Interacting with the Text:**

SSS Day 2: Close reading and Activity #3 *Acting out a Scene*

SSS Day 3: Close reading

SSS Day 4: Close reading

SSS Day 5: Close reading and writing assignment

## The Text: Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

Exemplar Text	Vocabulary	Student Supports
<p>I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library. The Herman W. Block Memorial Library sounds like it would be a big fancy place, but it's not. It's just a little old house full of books, and Miss Franny Block is in charge of them all. She is a very small, very old woman with short gray hair, and she was the first friend I made in Naomi.</p> <p>It all started with Winn-Dixie not liking it when I went into the library, because he couldn't go inside, too. But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me. But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didn't think he was a dog. She thought he was a bear.</p> <p>This is what happened: I was picking out my books and kind of humming to myself, and all of a sudden, there was a loud and scary scream. I went running up to the front of the library, and there was Miss Franny Block, sitting on the floor behind her desk.</p> <p>Miss Franny sat there <u>trembling</u> and shaking.</p> <p>"Come on," I said. "Let me help you up. It's okay." I stuck out my hand and Miss Franny took hold of it, and I pulled her up off the floor. She didn't weigh hardly anything at all. Once she was standing on her feet, she started acting all embarrassed, saying how I must think she was a silly old lady, mistaking a dog for a bear, but that she had a bad experience with a bear coming into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library a long time ago, and she never had quite gotten over it.</p> <p>"When did it happen?" I asked her.</p> <p>"Well," said Miss Franny, "it is a very long story."</p> <p>"That's okay," I told her. "I am like my mama in that I like to be told stories. But before you start telling it, can Winn-Dixie come in and listen, too? He gets lonely without me."</p> <p>"Well, I don't know," said Miss Franny. "Dogs are not allowed in the Herman W. Block</p>	<p>To shake because of fear or the cold without trying to shake; when you can't stop yourself</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SSS Day 1</b></p> <p><u>Preparing the Learner</u> Before beginning instruction with the text, prepare the students using the following activities found in the Extended Student Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity #1: <i>Closely Reading a Text to Know a Character Deeply</i>, ESS p. 5.</li> <li>• Activity #2: <i>Determining Vocabulary Meaning Using Context</i>, ESS p. 11</li> </ul>

Memorial Library.”

“He’ll be good,” I told her. “He’s a dog who goes to church.” And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a “huuummpff” and a sigh, right at Miss Franny’s feet.

She looked down at him and said, “He most certainly is a large dog.”

“Yes ma’am,” I told her. “He has a large heart, too.”

“Well,” Miss Franny said. She bent over and gave Winn-Dixie a pat on the head, and Winn-Dixie wagged his tail back and forth and snuffled his nose on her little old- lady feet. “Let me get a chair and sit down so I can tell this story properly.”

“Back when Florida was wild, when it consisted of nothing but palmetto trees and mosquitoes so big they could fly away with you,” Miss Franny Block started in, “and I was just a little girl no bigger than you, my father, Herman W. Block, told me that I could have anything I wanted for my birthday. Anything at all.”

Miss Franny looked around the library. She leaned in close to me. “I don’t want to appear prideful,” she said, “but my daddy was a very rich man. A very rich man.” She nodded and then leaned back and said, “And I was a little girl who loved to read. So I told him, I said, ‘Daddy, I would most certainly love to have a library for my birthday, a small little library would be wonderful.’”

“You asked for a whole library?”

“A small one,” Miss Franny nodded. “I wanted a little house full of nothing but books and I wanted to share them, too. And I got my wish. My father built me this house, the very one we are sitting in now. And at a very young age, I became a librarian. Yes ma’am.”

“What about the bear?” I said.

“Did I mention that Florida was wild in those days?” Miss Franny Block said.

“Uh-huh, you did.”

“It was wild. There were wild men and wild women and wild animals.”

“Like bears!”

“Yes ma’am. That’s right. Now, I have to tell you. I was a little-miss-know-it-all. I was a miss-smarty-pants with my library full of books. Oh, yes ma’am, I thought I knew the answers to everything. Well, one hot Thursday, I was sitting in my library with all the doors and window open and my nose stuck in a book, when a shadow crossed the

desk. And without looking up, yes ma'am, without even looking up, I said, 'Is there a book I can help you find?'

"Well, there was no answer. And I thought it might have been a wild man or a wild woman, scared of all these books and afraid to speak up. But then I became aware of a very peculiar smell, a very strong smell. I raised my eyes slowly. And standing right in front of me was a bear. Yes ma'am. A very large bear."

"How big?" I asked.

"Oh, well," said Miss Franny, "perhaps three times the size of your dog." "Then what happened?" I asked her.

"Well," said Miss Franny, "I looked at him and he looked at me. He put his big nose up in the air and sniffed and sniffed as if he was trying to decide if a little-miss-know-it-all librarian was what he was in the mood to eat. And I sat there. And then I thought, 'Well, if this bear intends to eat me, I am not going to let it happen without a fight. No ma'am.' So very slowly and carefully, I raised up the book I was reading."

"What book was that?" I asked.

"Why, it was War and Peace, a very large book. I raised it up slowly and then I aimed it carefully and I threw it right at that bear and screamed, 'Be gone!' And do you know what?"

"No ma'am," I said.

"He went. But this is what I will never forget. He took the book with him." "Nu-uh," I said.

"Yes ma'am," said Miss Franny. "He snatched it up and ran."

"Did he come back?" I asked.

"No, I never saw him again. Well, the men in town used to tease me about it.

They used to say, 'Miss Franny, we saw that bear of yours out in the woods today. He was reading that book and he said it sure was good and would it be all right if he kept it for just another week.' Yes ma'am. They did tease me about it." She said. "I imagine I'm the only one left from those days. I imagine I'm the only one that even recalls that bear. All my friends, everyone I knew when I was young, they are all dead and gone."

She sighed again. She looked sad and old and wrinkled. It was the same way I felt sometimes, being friendless in a new town and not having a mama to comfort me. I

To let out a long, deep breath because of tiredness, sadness, or another feeling

sighed, too.

Winn-Dixie raised his head off his paws and looked back and forth between me and Miss Franny. He sat up then and showed Miss Franny his teeth.

“Well now, look at that,” she said. “That dog is smiling at me.”

“It’s a talent of his,” I told her.

“It’s a fine talent,” Miss Franny said. A very fine talent.” And she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.

“We could be friends,” I said to Miss Franny. “I mean you and me and Winn- Dixie, we could all be friends.”

Miss Franny smiled even bigger. “Why, that would be grand,” she said, “just grand.”

And right at that minute, right when the three of us had decided to be friends, who should come marching into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library but old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson. She walked right up to Miss Franny’s desk and said, “I finished Johnny Tremain and I enjoyed it very much. I would like something even more difficult to read now, because I am an advanced reader.”

“Yes dear, I know,” said Miss Franny. She got up out of her chair.

Amanda pretended like I wasn’t there. She stared right past me. “Are dogs allowed in the library?” she asked Miss Franny as they walked away.

“Certain ones,” said Miss Franny, “a select few.” And then she turned around and winked at me. I smiled back. I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson.



**Day One: Instructional Exemplar for DiCamillo's *Because of Winn-Dixie***

**Summary of Activities**

1. Teacher introduces the day's passage with minimal commentary and students read it independently.
2. Teacher or a skillful reader then reads the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text. Teachers can reverse numbers 1 and 2 if they feel students need the support of hearing the text read aloud first.
3. Teacher asks the class to discuss the first set of text-dependent questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.

**Student Supports  
SSS Days 2-5**

**Summary of Activities**

**Interacting with the Text** (Close Reading)

Overall recommendations for establishing routines can be found in ESS p. 1. Teach and Practice Routines for Close Reading.

1. Teacher reads aloud the text (with no commentary) and students follow along with the text. (5 minutes)
2. Students independently read and mark up the text based on whatever system teacher uses in the classroom. (For example, underlining unknown words, questioning, and summarizing) (10 minutes)
3. Teacher places students in small groups for discussion of text-dependent questions. Groups may be formed according to their individual needs within the two categories below:
  - Minimal Support: groups facilitate their own discussion of questions
  - Maximum Scaffolding: teacher sits with group and facilitates conversation with limited commentary
4. Teacher provides the students with a copy of the questions for that day.
5. Teacher asks the groups of students to discuss the text-dependent questions. (40 minutes)
  - The teacher will use a combination of original text-dependent questions (Q1, Q2, etc.) and scaffolded text-dependent questions (SQ1, SQ2, etc) inserting the additional scaffolded questions when necessary to the specific groups of students. Teachers should be aware that many of the scaffolded questions would benefit all students in the classroom.
  - The teacher will begin by asking all groups one question at a time. Based on student needs and the complexity of the questions, the teacher may continue to facilitate the discussion by focusing on one question at a time, or by chunking small groups of questions. For example, one group receiving maximum scaffolding works on one question at a time, while another group receiving minimal support works on three questions at a time.

Text Passage Under Discussion	Instructional Commentary/Guiding Questions for Teachers/Proficient Responses		Student Supports
<p>I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library. The Herman W. Block Memorial Library sounds like it would be a big fancy place, but it's not. It's just a little old house full of books, and Miss Franny Block is in charge of them all. She is a very small, very old woman with short gray hair, and she was the first friend I made in Naomi.</p> <p>It all started with Winn-Dixie not liking it when I went into the library, because he couldn't go inside, too. But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me. But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didn't think he was a dog. She thought he was a bear.</p> <p>[read the intervening paragraphs]</p> <p>"Certain ones," said Miss Franny, "a select few." And then she turned around and winked at me. I smiled back. I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson.</p>		<p><b>1. Introduce the passage and students read independently.</b></p> <p>Other than giving the brief definitions offered to words students would likely not be able to define from context (underlined in the text), avoid giving any background context or instructional guidance at the outset of the lesson while students are reading the text silently. This close reading approach forces students to rely exclusively on the text instead of privileging background knowledge and levels the playing field for all students as they seek to comprehend DiCamillo's story. It is critical to cultivating independence and creating a culture of close reading that students initially grapple with rich texts like DiCamillo's without the aid of prefatory material, extensive notes, or even teacher explanations. That being said, two initial readings provide much support, but all coming from the text rather than outside of it.</p> <p><b>2. Read the passage out loud to the class as students follow along in the text.</b></p> <p>Asking students to listen to <i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i> exposes students a second time to the rhythms and meaning of her language before they begin their own close reading of the passage. Speaking clearly and carefully will allow students to follow DiCamillo's story, and reading out loud with students following along improves fluency while offering all students access to this complex text. Accurate and skillful modeling of the reading also provides students who may be dysfluent with accurate pronunciations and syntactic patterns of English.</p>	<p>1. See Summary of Activities in Student Supports (above)</p> <p>2. See Summary of Activities in Student Supports (above)</p>

Text Passage Under Discussion	Instructional Commentary/Guiding Questions for Teachers/Proficient Responses	Student Supports
	<p><b>3. Ask the class to answer a small set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks about the passage, with answers in the form of notes, annotations to the text, or more formal responses as appropriate.</b></p> <p>As students move through these questions and reread DiCamillo’s story, be sure to check for and reinforce their understanding of academic vocabulary in the corresponding text (which will be boldfaced the first time it appears in the text). At times, the questions themselves may focus on academic vocabulary.</p>	<p>3. To support groups of students as they answer a set of text-dependent guided questions and perform targeted tasks, teachers should scaffold questions according to the grouping of students.</p> <p><b>Scaffolded Questions:</b>  Begin by introducing the book, <i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i> to the students. Show the book or project a copy of the title page.  Have partners/small groups discuss:  <i>Judging by the cover illustration, what do you think the story will be about?</i>  <i>What do we learn from the title?</i>  <i>Do you think this book is fiction or nonfiction?</i>  <i>What makes you think that?</i></p> <p>If you have completed Activity #1: <i>Closely Reading a Text to Know a Character Deeply</i> from ESS p.5, you may skip this explanation of an excerpt:  <i>An excerpt is a short passage from a text usually focused on one event, person or idea. Excerpts can be difficult to read if we haven’t read what came before in the story. You’ll see that reading an excerpt closely and noticing details helps us to understand the text even when we haven’t read what came before.</i></p> <p>If reading only the excerpt, the teacher might want to introduce the text by saying:  <i><b>Opal recently moved with her father to a town named Naomi, located in Florida. Opal hasn’t really made any friends in town, except for a dog that she finds at a local grocery store and an older lady, named Miss Franny, who is the librarian in town. You’ll notice that Opal is the narrator in this story because she refers to herself as I and me and she talks about things that happened to her.</b></i></p>

<p>I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library. The Herman W. Block Memorial Library sounds like it would be a big fancy place, but it's not. It's just a little old house full of books, and Miss Franny Block is in charge of them all. She is a very small, very old woman with short gray hair, and she was the first friend I made in Naomi.</p> <p>It all started with Winn-Dixie not liking it when I went into the library, because he couldn't go inside, too. But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me. But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didn't think he was a dog. She thought he was a bear.</p> <p>This is what happened: I was picking out my books and kind of humming to myself, and all of a sudden, there was a loud and scary scream. I went running up to the front of the library, and there was Miss Franny Block, sitting on the floor behind her desk.</p> <p>Miss Franny sat there <u>trembling</u> and shaking.</p> <p>"Come on," I said. "Let me help you up. It's okay." I stuck out my hand and Miss Franny took hold of it, and I</p>	<p>To shake because of fear or the cold without trying to shake; when you can't stop yourself</p>	<p><b>(Q1) Why was Miss Franny so scared by Winn-Dixie? Why was she "acting all embarrassed?"</b></p> <p>Miss Franny thought Winn-Dixie was a bear. When she realized he was a dog, she was embarrassed because she thought Opal would think she was a "silly old lady, mistaking a dog for a bear."</p>	<p><b>(SQ1) What can we say about the narrator if we know she spent a lot of time at the library?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ2) Who is Miss Franny Block?</b> This discussion should point out the fact that she is the librarian and Opal's first friend. It should also get at the idea that Miss Franny is an older person. If students don't come up with all of those answers, ask <b>SQ2a</b>.</p> <p><b>(SQ2a) Why is it unusual that Miss Franny is Opal's first friend?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ3) What phrases does Opal use to let us know she is going to tell us about a certain event?</b></p> <p>To help students gain a deeper understanding of the scene when Miss Franny hides from Winn-Dixie because she thinks he is a bear, refer to: <i>ESS p. 12, Activity #3, Acting out a Scene.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SSS Day 3</b></p> <p><b>(SQ4) Why was Miss Franny so scared of Winn-Dixie?</b> (SQ4-SQ5 are meant to replace Q1) If students don't mention that he looked like he was on his hind legs looking in the window, which made him look like a bear to Miss Franny, ask: <b>(SQ4a) What was Winn-Dixie doing that would make Miss Franny think he looked like a bear?</b></p>
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<p>pulled her up off the floor. She didn't weigh hardly anything at all. Once she was standing on her feet, she started acting all embarrassed, saying how I must think she was a silly old lady, mistaking a dog for a bear, but that she had a bad experience with a bear coming into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library a long time ago, and she never had quite gotten over it.</p> <p>"When did that happen?" I asked her.</p> <p>"Well," said Miss Franny, "it is a very long story."</p> <p>"That's okay," I told her. "I am like my mama in that I like to be told stories. But before you start telling it, can Winn-Dixie come in and listen, too? He gets lonely without me."</p> <p>"Well, I don't know," said Miss Franny. "Dogs are not allowed in the Herman W. Block Memorial Library."</p> <p>"He'll be good," I told her. "He's a dog who goes to church." And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a "huummmppff" and a sigh, right at Miss Franny's feet.</p> <p>She looked down at him and said, "He most certainly is a large dog."</p> <p>"Yes ma'am," I told her. "He has a large heart, too."</p> <p>"Well," Miss Franny said. She bent over and gave Winn-Dixie a pat on the</p>			<p><b>(SQ5) Why was Miss Franny "acting all embarrassed?" What was she afraid Opal would think of her?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ6) Why did Miss Franny mistake Winn-Dixie for a bear?</b> Students should discuss how Miss Franny had a bad experience with a bear a long time ago, and Winn-Dixie reminded her of the bear.</p> <p><b>(SQ7) What does Miss Franny mean when she says she "never had quite gotten over it?"</b></p> <p><b>(SQ8) Why did Opal want Winn-Dixie to come in to the library and listen?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ9) How could saying that "he's a dog who goes to church" get Miss Franny to agree to let him into the library?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ10) Why did Miss Franny let Winn-Dixie stay in the library?</b></p> <p>Prior to asking the following two questions, the teacher may want to explain to students that authors use different structures when they write. <i>Kate DiCamillo wanted her readers to get to know Miss Franny better, so she decided to have Miss Franny tell her story, even though she is not the main narrator of the story. Let's call this structure of writing a "story within a story," because she's telling her little story in the middle of the big story. If we read the rest of Because of Winn-Dixie we will see a few more times when the author uses this structure. It's important that we pay attention to when an</i></p>
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<p>head, and Winn-Dixie wagged his tail back and forth and snuffled his nose on her little old-lady feet. "Let me get a chair and sit down so I can tell this story properly."</p>			<p><i>author does this so that we don't get confused.</i></p> <p><b>(SQ11) Which words tell us that Miss Franny is about to tell a story?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ12) What do you think Miss Franny means when she says that she wants to tell the story properly?</b></p>
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Text Passage Under Discussion	Instructional Commentary/Guiding Questions for Teachers/Proficient Responses		Student Supports
<p>“Back when Florida was wild, when it consisted of nothing but palmetto trees and mosquitoes so big they could fly away with you,” Miss Franny Block started in, “and I was just a little girl no bigger than you, my father, Herman W. Block, told me that I could have anything I wanted for my birthday. Anything at all.”</p> <p>Miss Franny looked around the library. She leaned in close to me. “I don’t want to appear prideful,” she said, “but my daddy was a very rich man. A very rich man.” She nodded and then leaned back and said, “And I was a little girl who loved to read. So I told him, I said, ‘Daddy, I would most certainly love to have a library for my birthday, a small little library would be wonderful.’”</p> <p>“You asked for a whole library?”</p> <p>“A small one,” Miss Franny nodded. “I wanted a little house full of nothing but books and I wanted to share them, too. And I got my wish. My father built me this house, the very one we are sitting in now. And at a very young age, I became a librarian. Yes ma’am.”</p> <p>“What about the bear?” I said.</p> <p>“Did I mention that Florida was wild in those days?” Miss Franny Block</p>		<p><b>(Q2) How did the Herman W. Block Memorial Library come to get its name?</b></p> <p>The library was a gift to Miss Franny from her wealthy father. When she was a little girl, “a very rich man” told her she could have “anything she wants” for her birthday. So, Miss Franny asked for a library. She wanted a “little house full of nothing but books”. Herman W. Block was Miss Franny’s father.</p> <p>Both events are fairly straightforward, but it is important for students to understand them, as they set the stage for what is to come.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SSS Day 4</b></p> <p><b>(SQ13) How does Miss Franny describe Florida when she was a little girl?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ14) Why do you think the library was named Herman W. Block Memorial Library? (meant to replace Q2)</b></p> <p><b>(SQ15) Why do you think Miss Franny leaned in and said “I don’t want to appear prideful” when she told Opal that her daddy was a rich man?</b> If students have difficulty with this question, ask the following question:</p> <p><b>(SQ15a) The word <i>prideful</i> means that you feel you are better than others. Why would Miss Franny lean in close to tell Opal that she doesn’t want to seem prideful?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ16) Why did Miss Franny want a library? What does this tell us about her character?</b></p>

<p>said.</p> <p>“Uh-huh, you did.”</p> <p>“It was wild. There were wild men and wild women and wild animals.”</p> <p>“Like bears!”</p> <p>“Yes ma’am. That’s right. Now, I have to tell you, I was a little-miss-know-it-all. I was a miss-smarty-pants with my library full of books. Oh, yes ma’am, I thought I knew the answers to everything. Well, one hot Thursday, I was sitting in my library with all the doors and windows open and my nose stuck in a book, when a shadow crossed the desk. And without looking up, yes ma’am, without even looking up, I said, ‘Is there a book I can help you find?’</p> <p>“Well, there was no answer. And I thought it might have been a wild man or a wild woman, scared of all these books and afraid to speak up. But then I became aware of a very peculiar smell, a very strong smell. I raised my eyes slowly. And standing right in front of me was a bear. Yes ma’am. A very large bear.”</p> <p>“How big?” I asked.</p> <p>“Oh, well,” said Miss Franny, “perhaps three times the size of your dog.”</p> <p>“Then what happened?” I asked her.</p> <p>“Well,” said Miss Franny, “I looked at</p>			<p><b>(SQ17) What does Miss Franny mean when she describes herself as having her nose stuck in a book?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ18) How could the bear have gotten into the library?</b></p>
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him and he looked at me. He put his big nose up in the air and sniffed and sniffed as if he was trying to decide if a little-miss-know-it-all librarian was what he was in the mood to eat. And I sat there. And then I thought, 'Well, if this bear intends to eat me, I am not going to let it happen without a fight. No ma'am.' So very slowly and carefully, I raised up the book I was reading."

"What book was that?" I asked.

"Why, it was *War and Peace*, a very large book. I raised it up slowly and then I aimed it carefully and I threw it right at that bear and screamed, 'Be gone!' And do you know what?"

"No ma'am," I said.

"He went. But this is what I will never forget. He took the book with him."

"Nu-uh," I said.

"Yes ma'am," said Miss Franny. "He snatched it up and ran."

"Did he come back?" I asked.

"No, I never saw him again. Well, the men in town used to tease me about it. They used to say, 'Miss Franny, we saw that bear of yours out in the woods today. He was reading that book and he said it sure was good and would it be all right if he kept it for just another week.' Yes ma'am. They

**(SQ19) Miss Franny said, "If this bear intends to eat me, I am not going to let it happen without a fight." What are some words you can use to describe Miss Franny as a girl based on how she acted with the bear?**

<p>did tease me about it.” She said. “I imagine I’m the only one left from those days. I imagine I’m the only one that even recalls that bear. All my friends, everyone I knew when I was young, they are all dead and gone.”</p> <p>She <u>sighed</u> again. She looked sad and old and wrinkled. It was the same way I felt sometimes, being friendless in a new town and not having a mama to comfort me. I sighed, too.</p> <p>Winn-Dixie raised his head off his paws and looked back and forth between me and Miss Franny. He sat up then and showed Miss Franny his teeth.</p> <p>“Well now, look at that,” she said. “That dog is smiling at me.”</p> <p>“It’s a talent of his,” I told her.</p> <p>“It’s a fine talent,” Miss Franny said. A very fine talent.” And she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.</p> <p>“We could be friends,” I said to Miss Franny. “I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends.”</p> <p>Miss Franny smiled even bigger. “Why, that would be grand,” she said, “just grand.”</p>	<p>To let out a long, deep breath because of tiredness, sadness, or another feeling</p>	<p>Questions 3-5 trace the sequence of events that led to the three characters becoming friends and prepare students for the writing prompt at the end of the lesson.</p> <p><b>(Q3) Opal says, “She looked sad and old and wrinkled.” What happened to cause Miss Franny to look this way?</b></p> <p>Students should realize that she was thinking about friends and people who are no longer alive, and that she does not have any friends now: “All my friends, everyone I knew when I was young, they are all dead and gone.”</p> <p><b>(Q4) What were Opal’s feelings when she realized how Miss Franny felt?</b></p> <p>Students should realize that Opal felt she and Miss Franny were both lonely: “It was the same way I felt . . . friendless . . .”</p> <p><b>(Q5) Earlier in the story, Opal says that Winn-Dixie “has a large heart, too.” What does Winn-Dixie do to show that he has a “large heart”?</b></p> <p>Students should see that Winn-Dixie was responding to Opal and Miss Franny feeling sad when he looked between them and showed Miss Franny his teeth: “Winn-Dixie raised his head off his paws and looked back and forth between me and Miss Franny. He sat up then and showed Miss Franny his teeth. ‘Well now, look at that,’ she said. ‘That dog is smiling at me.’”</p>	<p><b>(SQ20) Why did the men in town tease Miss Franny?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ21) What does Miss Franny mean when she says that she is “the only one left from those days”?</b></p> <p>Ask Q3</p> <p>Ask Q4</p> <p><b>(SQ22) Earlier in the story, Opal says that Winn-Dixie “has a large heart, too.” What does it mean to have a large heart?</b> (meant to replace Q5)</p> <p><b>(SQ23) What does Winn-Dixie do to show that he has a “large heart”?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ24) How do we know that Miss Franny is beginning to like Winn-Dixie?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ25) What is it about Miss Franny that makes Opal like her so much?</b></p>
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Text Passage Under Discussion	Instructional Commentary/Guiding Questions for Teachers/Proficient Responses		Student Supports
<p>And right at that minute, right when the three of us had decided to be friends, who should come marching into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library but old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson. She walked right up to Miss Franny’s desk and said, “I finished Johnny Tremain and I enjoyed it very much. I would like something even more difficult to read now, because I am an advanced reader.”</p> <p>“Yes dear, I know,” said Miss Franny. She got up out of her chair.</p> <p>Amanda pretended like I wasn’t there. She stared right past me. “Are dogs allowed in the library?” she asked Miss Franny as they walked away.</p> <p>“Certain ones,” said Miss Franny, “a select few.” And then she turned around and winked at me. I smiled back. I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson.</p>		<p><b>(Q6) Opal and Miss Franny have three very important things in common - What are these?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As noted in question 4, both characters are lonely.</li> <li>○ In the very first sentence of the passage, Opal says, “I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library.” Therefore, it is a reasonable inference that Opal likes books. Similarly, Miss Franny said, “When I was a little girl I loved to read.” And when told that she could have anything she wanted for her birthday, she replied, “. . . I would most certainly love to have a library.”</li> <li>○ Opal, of course, likes Winn-Dixie, and there is evidence that Miss Franny does as well: “Well now look at that . . . That dog is smiling at me.” Also, “. . . she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.”</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SSS Day 5</b></p> <p><b>(SQ26) Who comes into the library at the same time Opal, Winn-Dixie, and Miss Franny decide to be friends?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ27) How do Amanda and Opal feel about each other?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ28) When Amanda asks “are dogs allowed in the library?” What is Miss Franny’s answer?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ29) What does Miss Franny’s answer tell us about how she feels about Winn-Dixie?</b></p> <p><b>Ask Q6</b> If students have difficulty with this question, ask the following questions: <b>(SQ30) Why are Miss Franny and Opal sometimes sad and lonely?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ31) How do Miss Franny and Opal feel about reading books?</b></p> <p><b>(SQ32) How do Miss Franny and Opal feel about Winn-Dixie?</b></p>

## Directions for Teachers and Students / Guidance for Teachers

### Day Two: Explanatory Writing Assignment for DiCamillo's *Because of Winn-Dixie*

**The title of this selection is *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Using your answers from the questions above and class discussion, explain why this is an appropriate title for the selection. Be sure to clearly cite evidence from the text for each part of your answer.**

A proficient answer should have at least two parts:

- Students should explain - using evidence from the text - how Winn-Dixie looking into the library was the cause of Miss Franny falling, which in turn led to the story about the bear and Opal's realization that she and Miss Franny were both lonely.
- They should then relate how Winn-Dixie's response to Miss Franny ("That dog is smiling at me") endeared her to Winn-Dixie and led Opal to suggest that they could be friends.

The answer should show a clear understanding of how this progression of events led to the three characters becoming friends. An answer pulling on more from the text would include that Winn-Dixie's "talent" and "huge heart" were traits that made all this possible.

### Student Supports SSS Day 5 continues

Note for Teachers: If you are using the entire book, the prompt provided in the original close reading lesson (left column) would be appropriate to use. If you are using only the excerpt included in this lesson, a more appropriate question to ask students is:

**Think about your answers from the questions above and class discussion to answer the question: Why did Miss Franny and Opal become friends? Be sure to refer to the text to answer your question.**

# Extended Student Supports (ESS)

**Instructional Supports for Special Education Students and English Language Learners to Accompany the Exemplar of *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education.**

## Overall Recommendations

### ***Create a Context for the Close Reading Lesson***

This close reading lesson allows for students to build their understanding of friendship and the relationships that characters form. It will be helpful to both high need students and ELLs to have additional exposure with texts that have complex characters so that they may practice the process of reading a text closely to get to know the characters on a deeper level. This exposure will also benefit this population of students as they practice discussing and using a familiar body of language and vocabulary associated with the theme of friendship and characterization. The following ideas suggest how this broader context might be provided.

- Students could read the full text of *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Reading the full text provides gradual and repeated exposure to DiCamillo’s delicately told tale of friendship that includes additional descriptive scenes, ‘story within a story’ structure, rich vocabulary, and dialect that may be unfamiliar.
- Students would benefit from reading additional texts that center around strong main characters and how they interact and develop relationships, such as in *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. These exposures would enable students to practice paying attention to details to get to know a character in deep and meaningful ways. It is important that teachers pay special attention when choosing texts about friendship, because texts about simple friendships won’t prepare students for the complex relationships within *Because of Winn-Dixie*.

### ***Teach and Practice Routines for Reading Closely***

Routines (or protocols) are a fundamental support for close reading, especially for high needs students. Students need to learn and practice routines if they are going to approach complex text with any level of independence. Without these routines in place, they will be dependent on the teacher to either talk them through the text or to teach them what to do at each step in the close reading. The *Because of Winn-Dixie* Exemplar lays out an overall routine for teachers and students to follow, with first and second readings, text-dependent questioning, and a writing task. However, students need more specific guidance. For example, students need to know what to do when reading a complex text on their own for the first time (mark up, write notes, look for details about a character, for e.g.). They need to know how to search for details to answer a text-dependent question that they can’t immediately answer. The activities presented in the Extended Student Supports (ESS) assume that students will be applying such routines, and they support that approach. Teachers who have close reading routines established in their classrooms should continue to use those or adapt what is presented here.

## Vocabulary Resources

### ***Guidance for Selecting Tier 2 Vocabulary for Instruction***

This text contains a number of Tier 2, or general academic, words and phrases, as is typical of complex text. Tier 2 vocabulary words differ from the basic words of everyday conversation (Tier 1) in that they appear most often in written text and in mature spoken language, where they are used to express ideas in literate and sophisticated ways. Unlike Tier 3 words, which are the specialized words of a specific field of study, Tier 2 words appear everywhere in writing. Words such as “selecting,” “trembling,” “prideful,” and “properly,” all in this excerpt, are words of this type. Students need to know the meaning of these words in order to read with depth of comprehension. Yet these words are often unfamiliar to students, especially to those students who would typically encounter such words only when reading yet do not regularly grapple with reading complex text. Teachers must plan for teaching Tier 2 words to students as part of a close reading, including having ideas for giving additional support to some students. A process for selecting and planning instruction is presented below. Background information on the Tiers of vocabulary and the importance of Tier 2 words in students’ overall ability to read complex text can be found in the *Academic Vocabulary* module developed by the Rhode Island Department of Education at <http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Literacy/CommonCoreStateStandardsforELALiteracy.aspx>. This module includes “An Instructional Guide for General Academic Vocabulary,” which is useful for selecting Tier 2 words and for planning instruction. The Guide correlates to the process described below.

The steps for teachers to follow in selecting Tier 2 words and planning for instruction are:

- Identify the Tier 2 words in the text that will be unfamiliar to students  
Read the text with a focus on vocabulary words and their effect on meaning. Mark the Tier 2 words whose meaning in this text may be unknown to some or all students. This takes thought as some of these words will not be obviously unfamiliar to students. Tier 2 words often seem like words students would know when in fact students do not know the word, do not know the meaning as used in this text, or have only partial understanding of the meaning.
- Use a set of criteria to select 7-10 of these words for instruction  
Apply the following criteria when selecting which Tier 2 words to explicitly teach:
  - Word is central to understanding the text  
Consider words that are substantially related to the meaning of the text and will be most useful in helping students understand it.
  - Word choice and nuance are significant  
Consider words that have a nuance or shade of meaning that is important in the text, or that illustrate the power of an author’s word choice.
  - Students are likely to see this word frequently  
A word may be selected because it is common in other academic texts. It is worth taking the time to teach this word because students are likely to encounter it frequently in other settings.
  - Word is a more mature or precise label for concepts already known to students

Many Tier 2 words are a more exact or subtle way of expressing a general concept that is already familiar to students. Consider words of this type because they add precision and specificity to students' vocabulary while building on what students already know.

- Word lends itself to teaching a web of words and concepts around it

Consider words that can be worked with in a variety of ways so that students build rich representations of them and of their connection to other words and concepts.

For the greatest impact on instruction, some of the words selected should fit multiple criteria.

- Choose several of the selected words for pre-teaching

The typical practice for close reading is to have students discover the meaning of most words from careful reading of context, and when this is not possible to develop the meaning of words with students in the course of the close reading itself. This approach has benefits in that it requires students to grapple productively with text and supports students while learning words in context. It does not always work with ELL students and other students with needs, however, especially with texts as complex as this. Students' flow of comprehension is interrupted by having to deal with many unknown words at once (Beck, 2013). Moreover, students who are already struggling with the meaning of a text will have a hard time using context to decipher unfamiliar vocabulary. Pre-teaching some words may therefore be necessary to reduce the volume of words addressed in context. In addition, pre-teaching allows for systematic, structured instruction, which is helpful to some populations of learners. Depending upon the complexity of meaning, it is estimated that students can be taught up to seven words thoroughly in their weekly vocabulary routine.

- Use a structured approach to pre-teach the words

The classroom routine for pre-teaching words should match students' learning needs and use a structured approach. The following instructional sequence for pre-teaching new words to English Language Learners is one example of a structured approach to instruction. It is adapted from Kinsella (2005), who states that ELL students in particular benefit from "direct, recognizable, and accountable instruction of high utility vocabulary." The word *properly* is used to illustrate the sequence.

- **Provide a vocabulary note-taking sheet**
- **Show the word:** Provide students with a printed copy of the word, either on paper, cards or on the board.
- **Pronounce the word clearly/break it apart:** "The vocabulary word we are going to study is *properly*. Listen as I say it: prop er ly." Break it into parts on the board so students see/hear each syllable. Repeat the word several times.
- **Students repeat the word:** Ask students to repeat the word several times, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly.
- **Clarify part of speech:** "*Properly* is an adverb. An adverb describes a verb, so when we use the word *properly*, we are describing how something was done." "Here is an example of a sentence using the word: *My teacher looked at my homework to be sure it was done properly.*"
- **Provide student-friendly synonym, definition and explanation:** "Properly means something was done correctly or as it should be. It's a good thing if you do something *properly*. Some other words that mean the same as *properly* are right, appropriately, and well."

- **Provide or have students develop an illustrative sentence or visual, non-linguistic representation:** “Describe a time when you did something *properly*.” (Take responses) “Draw or describe something you think of when you hear the word *properly*.”
  - **Rephrase the explanation leaving a blank for students to complete.** “You should be proud of yourself when you work hard to do something \_\_\_\_\_.” (Students complete orally.) Students practice saying the word in context to develop an accurate auditory imprint.
  - **Assess students’ comprehension of the word**
- Choose 1-2 Tier 2 words to develop in depth in the course of reading  
Words that are central to the meaning and import of the text and have subtle or complex meanings that are best developed in context should be taught during the close reading lesson. Often exploration and discussion of these words come about through text-dependent questioning. Usually 1-2 words can be singled out for this attention.
  - Have a plan for supporting students with Tier 2 words that will not be directly taught  
In some instances it is appropriate to provide students with definitions of words in the margin or footnotes of the text. With abstract words, the teacher may take additional time to explain or discuss the word with students. In other cases, text-dependent questions and related discussions and routine writing can be designed to ensure that students will have these supports for understanding the text even in situations where they do not know all words with certainty. This will help students to begin to develop a context for understanding these words.

### Preparing the Learner

*Preparing the Learner* activities serve one or more of three purposes that are very important to enhancing the learning of high-need students:

1. Introduce concepts and vocabulary about characters, their motivations, and how they relate to one another in order to prepare students for when they read the target text.
2. Provide practice with close reading routines so that students will be more independent when reading and discussing the target text. Understanding the routine allows students to focus their thinking to develop a deeper understanding of the text.
3. Practice a process for using context to determine word meanings so that students can apply this with independence during reading of the target text.

The excerpt used from *Because of Winn-Dixie* does not require outside background knowledge in order to understand the story. This story focuses on the main character and her newly formed relationships. The concept of friendship on a literal level should be attainable for most students, but many high need and ELL students may have difficulty picking up on some of the ways that DiCamillo portrays the relationships.



If we want students to get to know the main characters in deep and meaningful ways so that they understand their struggles and motivations, we need to show them how good readers pay close attention to the specific words used about those characters through dialogue and actions. Additionally, students should have a process for deriving word meaning from context so that they will be able to apply it independently when engaged in close reading. The following activities are intended to be used before reading the target excerpt. Teachers may select from the activities below or substitute others that serve the same purposes. They may also develop additional activities to use before reading the target excerpt.

Note that the close reading routine followed in these activities is one possibility and is provided as an example; teachers may have a variation of this routine that they regularly use. They should also adapt their directions according to how adept students already are or are not with routines of close reading.

### ***Activity #1: Closely Reading a Text to Know a Character Deeply***

#### **SSS Day 1**

#### **Description and Purpose:**

This activity precedes the first close reading passage. Students closely read an excerpt from the picture book, *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco in order to practice closely reading a text to find important details that will allow them to get to know the main character in a meaningful way. If time is an issue, the teacher could read aloud the text first as students follow along with their copies. The purpose of this activity is for the students to practice aspects of the close reading routine: reading closely to find details about a character and using those details to understand the character's struggles and motivations.

Note that the text used for this activity is included below the Teacher Directions.

#### **Teacher Directions:**

Part 1: Begin by developing students' understanding of *Thank You, Mr. Falker* as an autobiographical story. Show the book. Project a copy of the title page.

- Have partners/small groups discuss: If this is an autobiography, **who** is this story going to be about? (Be sure that all students understand that an autobiography is a story told by the author about his/her life.) Judging by the cover illustration, **what** do you think the story will be about? (a girl who is frustrated with her work or with reading, a teacher who looks concerned)
- What do we learn from the title? (Patricia (Trisha) Polacco is thanking a man named Mr. Falker).

Part 2: Teacher tells students they will be reading an excerpt from a book called *Because of Winn-Dixie* in a few days. Teacher explains that an excerpt is a short passage from a text usually focused on one event, person or idea. Excerpts can be difficult to read if we haven't read what came before in the story. "You'll see that reading an excerpt closely and noticing details helps us to understand the text even when we

haven't read what came before. We are going to practice with an excerpt from *Thank You, Mr. Falker* because like *Because of Winn-Dixie*, it's a story that includes really great characters and we want to get to know these characters as if they were our actual friends."

- Teacher should chart/explain to students that motivation means what a person or character wants. It is the reason he or she acts a certain way. "All people have motivations, or reasons they do certain things. For example, maybe there was a time that the person really wanted to do something special, like go out for ice cream, and this motivated them to finish their chores quickly. The motivation in this example is to go out for ice cream."
- Students should think about a time when they really wanted something that motivated them to take action. They could fill out a sentence frame. The following sentence frame is suggested by *Expeditionary Learning*: "Once I \_\_\_\_\_ (action) because I wanted \_\_\_\_\_ (motivation)."
- Teacher should explain that it's helpful and important to think about character motivations, or the reasons characters have for doing something. It helps us to get to know them better.
- Students read (or have read to them) the excerpt from *Thank You, Mr. Falker* (below):
- Students read the second time, marking important ideas and details about the main character, Trisha. "Now this time when you read the excerpt I want you to mark (on the copy of the text or on a post-it) important ideas about our main character, Trisha. It could be words used to describe her, it could be her actions, or something she says. This will help us to know the kind of person she is." Students may work with a partner.
- The teacher poses text-dependent questions that can be answered with details in the text. The questions are provided on paper with students working in groups to answer. The organizer below shows the format, which the teacher may also chart on the board. The teacher models how to go back into the text to find the details that help answer the question. As the teacher models, s/he fills in Columns 2 and 3 for a few of the questions. Afterwards, the teacher reviews with students how much they were able to learn about the main character by paying careful attention to details.

Note: Depending upon the students' needs, the teacher may choose to change the order of columns 2 and 3.

1- Questions	2- Details from the text	3- Answer
What was school like for Trisha?	<p>"When she tried to read, she stumbled over words."</p> <p>"She was reading like a baby in the third grade"</p>	<p>It was very hard for her. She didn't know how to read and her classmates teased her. She wanted to move back to her grandparents' farm in Michigan.</p>

	<p>“She gave the wrong answer every time.”</p> <p>“‘Hey, dummy!’ A boy called out to her on the playground.”</p> <p>“Trisha could feel the tears burning in her eyes.”</p>	
<p>What is exciting and different about Mr. Falker?</p>	<p>“He was tall and elegant. Everybody loved his striped coat and slick gray pants- he wore the neatest clothes.”</p> <p>“But right from the start, it didn’t seem to matter to Mr. Falker which kids were the cutest. Or the smartest. Or the best at anything.”</p>	<p>He looked different from the other teachers and he didn’t pick favorites.</p>
<p>How did Mr. Falker treat Trisha?</p>	<p>“Mr. Falker would stand behind Trisha whenever she was drawing, and whisper, “This is brilliant...absolutely brilliant. Do you know how talented you are?”</p> <p>“Stop! Are all of you so perfect that you can look at another person and find fault with her?”</p> <p>“He patted her on the back whenever she got something right, and he looked hard and mean at any kid who teased her.”</p> <p>“He put on music and brought out little sandwiches as they worked and talked.”</p>	<p>He treated her with respect and protected her from the other kids who teased her. He proved to her that she was smart and talented and taught her how to read.</p>
<p>How did Mr. Falker act when he heard the kids laugh at her because she couldn’t read Charlotte’s Web?</p>	<p>“Stop! Are all of you so perfect that you can look at another person and find fault with her?”</p>	<p>He protected her by telling the students that the no one is perfect and no one should say unkind things about others.</p>
<p>Why did Trisha feel so alone at school?</p>	<p>“Trisha was afraid to turn any corner, for fear Eric would be there. She felt completely alone.”</p>	<p>She was afraid that wherever she went, kids would make fun of her. She didn’t feel like she had any friends.</p>

Why did Trisha begin to believe the bad things that the kids said about her?	“He got all the other kids to wait for her on the playground, or in the cafeteria, or even in the bathroom, and to jump out and call her “Stupid!” or “Ugly!”	Eric got all of the other kids to join him. Now all the kids thought she was stupid, so she started to think maybe they were right.
What did Trisha do to make Mr. Falker and everyone else think she knew how to read?	“She had learned to memorize what the kid next to her was reading. Or she would wait for Mr. Falker to help her with a sentence, then she’d say the same thing that he did.”	She figured out that she could memorize or repeat things so that no one knew.
How did Mr. Falker make Trisha feel special?	“Then one day, Mr. Falker asked her to stay after school and help wash the blackboards. He put on music and brought out little sandwiches.”	Mr. Falker took time to help her after school and didn’t give up on her.
Why does Mr. Falker think Trisha is smart and brave?	“But, little one, don’t you understand, you don’t see letters or numbers the way other people do. And you’ve gotten through school all this time, and fooled many, many good teachers!”	Mr. Falker thinks that Trisha is smart and brave because she’s in fifth grade and none of her teachers realized she couldn’t read. She got through all of those grades by being smart enough to fool them.
What motivated Trisha to learn to read?	“Now, almost every day after school, she met with Mr. Falker and Miss Plessy, a reading teacher.” “And that felt good.”	The fact that Mr. Falker believed in her. He made her feel smart and important and tried hard to help her to read.

**Excerpt from *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco**

But at the new school it was the same. When she tried to read, she stumbled over words: “the cah, cah...rrr, rrr..ran.” She was reading like a baby in the third grade!

And when her teacher read along with them, and called on Trisha for an answer, she gave the wrong answer every time.

“Hey, dummy!” a boy called out to her on the playground, “How come you are so dumb?” Other kids stood near him and they laughed.

Trisha could feel the tears burning in her eyes. How she longed to go back to her grandparents’ farm in Michigan.

Now Trisha wanted to go to school less and less. “I have a sore throat,” she’d say to her mother. Or, “I have a stomachache.” She dreamed more and more, and drew more and more, and she hated, hated, hated school.

Then when Trisha started fifth grade, the school was all abuzz. There was a new teacher. He was tall and elegant. Everybody loved his striped coat and slick gray pants-he wore the neatest clothes.

All the usual teacher’s pets gathered around him- Stevie Joe and Alice Marie, Davy and Michael Lee. But right from the start, it didn’t seem to matter to Mr. Falker which kids were the cutest. Or the smartest. Or the best at anything.

Mr. Falker would stand behind Trisha whenever she was drawing, and whisper, “This is brilliant...absolutely brilliant. Do you know how talented you are?”

When he said this, even the kids who teased her would turn around in their seats and look at her drawings. But they still laughed whenever she gave a wrong answer.

Then, one day, she had to stand up and read, which she hated. She was stumbling through a page in *Charlotte’s Web*, and the page was going all fuzzy, when the kids began to laugh out loud.

Mr. Falker, in his plaid jacket and his butterfly tie, said, “Stop! Are all of you so perfect that you can look at another person and find fault with her?”

That was the last day anyone laughed out loud. Or made fun of her. All except Eric. He had sat behind Trisha for two whole years, but he seemed almost to hate her. Trisha didn’t know why. He waited by the door of the classroom for her and pulled her hair. He waited for her on the playground, leaned in her face, and called her, “Toad!”

Trisha was afraid to turn any corner, for fear Eric would be there. She felt completely alone.

The only time she was really happy was when she was around Mr. Falker. He let her erase the blackboards- only the best students got to do that. He patted her on the back whenever she got something right, and he looked hard and mean at any kid who teased her.

But the nicer Mr. Falker was to Trisha, the worse Eric treated her. He got all the other kids to wait for her on the playground, or in the cafeteria, or even in the bathroom, and to jump out and call her “Stupid!” or “Ugly!”

And Trisha began to believe them.

She discovered that if she asked to go to the bathroom just before recess, she could hide under the inside stairwell during the free time, and not have to go outside at all. In that dark place she felt completely safe.

But one day at recess, Eric followed her to her secret hiding place. “Have you become a mole?” he laughed. And he pulled her out into the hall, danced around her. “Dumbbell, dumbbell, magotty old dumbbell!”

Trisha buried her head in her arms and curled up in a ball. Suddenly, she heard footsteps. It was Mr. Falker.

He marched Eric down to the office. When he came back, he found Trisha. “I don’t think you’ll have to worry about that boy again,” he said softly.

“What was he teasing you about, little one?”

“I don’t know.” Trisha shrugged.

Trisha was sure Mr. Falker believed that she could read. She had learned to memorize what the kid next to her was reading. Or she would wait for Mr. Falker to help her with a sentence, then she’d say the same thing that he did. “Good,” he would say.

Then one day, Mr. Falker asked her to stay after school and help wash the blackboards. He put on music and brought out little sandwiches as they worked and talked.

All at once he said, "Let's play a game! I'll shout out letters. You write them on the board with the wet sponge as quickly as you can."

"A," he shouted. She wiped a watery A.

"Eight," he shouted. She wiped a watery 8.

"Fourteen...Three...D...M...Q" he shouted out. He shouted out many, many letters and numbers. Then he walked up behind her, and together they looked at the board.

It was a watery mess. Trisha knew that none of the letters or numbers looked like they should. She threw the sponge down and tried to run.

But Mr. Falker caught her arm and sank to his knees in front of her. "You poor baby," he said. "You think you're dumb, don't you? How awful for you to be so lonely and afraid."

She sobbed.

"But, little one, don't you understand, you don't see letters or numbers the way other people do. And you've gotten through school all this time, and fooled many, many good teachers!" He smiled at her. "That took cunning, and smartness, and such, such bravery."

Then he stood up and finished washing the board. "We're going to change all that, girl. You're going to read- I promise you that."

Now almost every day after school, she met with Mr. Falker and Miss Plessy, a reading teacher. They did a lot of things she didn't even understand! At first she made circles in sand, and then big sponge circles on the blackboard, going from left to right, left to right.

Another day they flicked letters on a screen, and Trisha shouted them out loud. Still other days she worked with wooden blocks and built words. Letter, letters, letters. Words, words, words. Always sounding them out. And that felt good.

But, though she'd read words, she hadn't read a whole sentence. And deep down she still felt dumb.

And then one spring day- had it been three months or four months since they had started?- Mr. Falker put a book in front of her. She'd never seen it before. He picked a paragraph in the middle of a page and pointed at it.

Almost as if it were magic, or as if light poured into her brain, the words and sentences stared to take shape on the page as they never had before. "She...marched...them...off...to..." Slowly, she read a sentence. Then another, and another. And finally she'd read a paragraph. And she understood the whole thing.

She didn't notice that Mr. Falker and Miss Plessy had tears in their eyes.

### **Activity #2: Determining Vocabulary Meaning Using Context**

**SSS Day 1** (The teacher may also decide to teach this activity during a different instructional block of time, such as during language arts time).

#### **Description and Purpose:**

Students read a brief passage from *Because of Winn-Dixie*. As the teacher facilitates, students follow steps to determine the meaning of a challenging word (*intended*) by using context. The passage appears early in the text (Chapter 3), soon after Opal brought Winn-Dixie home.

The procedure modeled here is adapted from Isabel Beck, et. al. (2013) and shows students a process for deriving “word meaning information” from context. Beck and others developed this process based on their observation that most authentic texts do not provide students with obvious context clues, such as synonyms or embedded definitions, and therefore students need to learn to search context for a range of information. As part of the process, students need to learn to distinguish between contexts that provide enough information to determine a word’s meaning and those that do not provide sufficient information (pp. 125-132).

The purpose of this activity is to teach or review the process of determining word meaning from context so that students will be able to apply it independently when engaged in the close reading. Having students know a process of this type is extremely important because one expectation of close reading is that students will determine the meaning of most unknown words from careful searching of context.

Note: The word *intends* shows up in the target excerpt, so students will have an opportunity to work with the word again on their own, which will allow the teacher to assist if needed and informally assess students’ learning from the previous day.

Excerpt from *Because of Winn-Dixie*

“When I was done working on him, Winn-Dixie looked a whole lot better. He still had his bald spots, but the fur that he did have cleaned up nice. It was all shiny and soft. You could still see his ribs, but I **intended** to feed him good and that would take care of that.”

Teacher Directions for the instructional sequence:

(Note that the teacher would use this sequence flexibly depending on how the text is being read and what unknown word has been targeted. For further information and examples, see chapter 7 in Beck (2013).

1. Read the text

Students read the text to get a general idea of what it says. With this excerpt, the teacher will need to tell students that the passage is from the book, *Because of Winn-Dixie* (if they don’t already know). In this passage, the main character, Opal just finished bathing and grooming her new dog, named Winn-Dixie. If some students do not get the basics of what the passage says, the teacher can support them with the questions asked in the next step.

2. Establish the meaning of the context for the word

Before asking specifically about the unknown word, the teacher asks questions that get students to fully consider the information provided by the context. This keeps students from focusing on the unknown word in an isolated way. The teacher may begin with general questions: “What can you picture in your mind when you read this passage?” or “What kind of pet owner is Opal?” As needed, the teacher uses follow-up questions to lead students to uncover information that will be relevant to figuring out the unknown word. The teacher might ask: “What could Opal do so that Winn-Dixie’s ribs don’t show? “Which words help you to know this?”

3. Elicit an initial identification and rationale for the unfamiliar word.

The teacher asks students to say what they think the targeted word (*intended*) might mean and to explain how the context supports that sense of the word. Students might know or guess that it means *planned*, but given the context, some might say *wanted* or *hoped*. By asking students to provide a rationale for their answers, the teacher helps students uncover evidence in the text that points to the correct meaning. If through this process students arrive at a meaning of the word that is accurate (determined to do something), or as close to accurate as possible given the available context, the teacher moves to the last step of summarizing. If not, the teacher goes to the next step.

4. Consider further possibilities

If students' initial ideas do not lead to the right meaning or lead to an incomplete meaning, the teacher helps students examine more possibilities. For example, in this case students might have a sense that *intended* relates to a plan to get something done, but the teacher may want to push students to see how Opal is determined to have it done based on her words "and that would take care of that". The teacher may say, "Opal said 'and that would take care of that', what does that tell you?" Or, "Based on the level of care she took to clean and groom Winn-Dixie, how certain are you that she will feed him good so that he would gain weight and his ribs would no longer show?"

5. Summarize

The teacher helps students summarize the information they have generated about the word *intended* so they can draw a conclusion about the word's meaning. In this case, students will probably have concluded that *intended* means determined to do something. The teacher confirms their conclusion. In cases where the context information is not enough to determine the meaning of the word with certainty, the teacher helps students to realize that the context leaves the meaning of the word uncertain or partially revealed. The teacher confirms the correct meaning for students.

Further considerations:

In order for students to become adept at using the above process for determining word meaning from context, the teacher needs to review it often and have students practice it with words that appear in a range of contexts, from contexts that provide much information to those that provide little. In the case of this excerpt, for example, the teacher might choose to work with a word other than *intended*. The choice could be based on students' prior knowledge of the words or their readiness to handle more sophisticated aspects of the process.

Interacting with the Text

**Activity #3: Acting out a Scene**

**SSS Day 2**

**Description and purpose:** Lucy Calkins (2010) states "It is essential in reading imaginative literature, as fiction is called, that stories ignite a vital sort of imagination, one that allows readers to piece together and live inside the world of the story." Early on in the excerpt Opal describes what happens when she hears the librarian scream. It's a scene that students would really benefit from acting out. When students



are asked to read a passage such as this and use their own words to act as the characters they begin to internalize the characters' personalities and actions. This in turn allows them to better visualize when they are reading.

Below is the text that students would use to act out the scene:

It all started with Winn-Dixie not liking it when I went into the library, because he couldn't go inside, too. But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me. But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didn't think he was a dog. She thought he was a bear.

This is what happened: I was picking out my books and kind of humming to myself, and all of a sudden, there was a loud and scary scream. I went running up to the front of the library, and there was Miss Franny Block, sitting on the floor behind her desk.

Miss Franny sat there trembling and shaking.

"Come on," I said. "Let me help you up. It's okay." I stuck out my hand and Miss Franny took hold of it, and I pulled her up off the floor. She didn't weigh hardly anything at all. Once she was standing on her feet, she started acting all embarrassed, saying how I must think she was a silly old lady, mistaking a dog for a bear, but that she had a bad experience with a bear coming into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library a long time ago, and she never had quite gotten over it.

"When did it happen?" I asked her.

"Well," said Miss Franny, "it is a very long story."

"That's okay," I told her. "I am like my mama in that I like to be told stories. But before you start telling it, can Winn-Dixie come in and listen, too? He gets lonely without me."

"Well, I don't know," said Miss Franny. "Dogs are not allowed in the Herman W. Block Memorial Library."

"He'll be good," I told her. "He's a dog who goes to church." And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a "huummmppff" and a sigh, right at Miss Franny's feet.

She looked down at him and said, "He most certainly is a large dog."

"Yes ma'am," I told her. "He has a large heart, too."

"Well," Miss Franny said. She bent over and gave Winn-Dixie a pat on the head, and Winn-Dixie wagged his tail back and forth and snuffled his nose on her little old- lady feet. "Let me get a chair and sit down so I can tell this story properly."

Teacher Directions for the instructional sequence:

1. Students read the text to get a picture in their mind of what is happening and what it looks like to them. If students have trouble with this, or if they have had limited instruction in visualizing, the teacher should model the process by thinking aloud and beginning by saying something such as “I can picture Winn-Dixie whimpering as they approach the library because he knows he can’t go in. He might even hang his head low as he slowly walks to the building. Then Opal tries to lift him up so that he can balance his hind legs as his front paws hold on to the window ledge.”  
Students should visualize the rest of the scene and then turn and talk with someone about what they picture in their mind.
2. Teacher groups students in groups of 3. Students decide if they would like to be Opal, Miss Franny, or Winn-Dixie.
3. Students read the text and focus on their character, highlighting or marking the text when they notice their character’s actions or descriptive words.
4. In groups, students practice acting out what their character might say or do. The idea is that they stay true to the text and character’s actions, but improvise with their own words so that they begin to live inside their character, which will help them to immerse themselves into the story.
5. Depending upon time constraints, the teacher may ask for volunteers to act out the scene as a way for students to hear one another’s interpretations.

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