

Unit 6/Week 3

Title: Leah's Pony

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.7;
W.3.1, W.3.4, W.3.7; SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.6; L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.4, L.3.5

Teacher Instructions

Refer to the Introduction for further details.

Before Teaching

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

A selfless act can help a family get through struggles and change people's perspectives.
Nature can affect the economy of a community and therefore affect the world globally.

Synopsis

This story, Leah's Pony, takes place in the 1930s in the Great Plains region of the United States where devastation was occurring due to a drought. Leah was given a pony by her father when times were good and crops were growing. She loved her pony and rode it through town. Due to the drought in the plains, neighbors moved to Oregon because they could not keep their farms working. Leah's family struggled as well, and her father borrowed money from the bank for seeds. The seeds dried up and blew away. The bank had an auction to get back the money that was owed to Leah's father. Leah sold her pony to Mr. B and used the money to buy her father's tractor at the auction. The other people were bidding low amounts and they gave the items back to Leah's family. Things were better at the farm, but Leah still missed the pony. At the end of the story, Mr. B gave the pony back to Leah.

2. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
3. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

During Teaching

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

Text-dependent Questions	Evidence-based Answers
<p>On page 216, the text says, “The year the corn grew tall and straight, Leah’s papa bought her a pony.” What is the author stating about the time that Leah received her pony?</p> <p>Why would the author include this detail?</p>	<p>It means that Leah’s father bought her a pony because the crop was growing a lot. It would also mean that her father had more money from selling the corn to buy a pony for Leah.</p> <p>The author includes this because it explains why Leah has a pony. Her father had more money from the corn.</p>
<p>Reread page 217. How does Leah feel about the pony?</p>	<p>The whole summer, Leah and her pony rode to the pasture. Leah knew the special spot under the tree and also brushed him until his coat glistened. Leah took her pony into town. These details show that Leah loves her pony very much.</p>

<p>On page 218, the author writes, “The year the corn grew no taller than a man’s thumb.” In your own words, what does this mean? Why did the author choose to use these words to describe the corn?</p> <p>Teacher Tip: It may be helpful to refer back to the quote in question 1 and discuss how the language is similar and different.</p>	<p>It means that during this year the corn did not grow at all. A thumb is being used to compare the height of the corn to only 2 inches. This helps one infer that the corn was not tall enough to make any corn.</p> <p>The author chose these words because she wanted to understand that the crops were not growing. This comparison is also easy for the reader to understand because they can look at their thumb and see what it looks like.</p>
<p>The author explains that the petunias were <i>drooping</i>. What clues in the sentence help the reader to understand what <i>drooping</i> means? (Pg. 218)</p>	<p>“Mama threw dishwater on them to keep them from drooping.” This sentence helps me to understand that the petunias were drooping because they were not growing and they must have not been watered. Drooping must mean bending down. The petunias were probably drooping (not standing up straight) because they needed water.</p>
<p>Why did the mother use dishwater to water the drooping petunias instead of using water from the hose or a pond? (Pg. 218)</p>	<p>She threw dishwater on them instead of water from the hose or the pond. That could mean there was no water in the hose or pond so she had to use the old dishwater.</p>
<p>What does it mean that the “grasshoppers turned the day into night.” (Pg. 219)</p>	<p>The grasshoppers did not actually turn the day into night, there were so many grasshoppers the sun was blocked out by them flying and it made the day dark like night.</p>
<p>What was the effect of the grasshoppers coming? (Pg. 219)</p>	<p>The text states, “They ate the trees bare and the grass behind”, which then caused the neighbors to leave. They left because there was nothing left and they were looking for better things in Oregon.</p>
<p>Reread the first two sentences on page 221. What words and phrases does the author use to let the reader know Leah’s father is going to share bad news?</p>	<p>“The hot, dry, dusty days kept coming.” “. . . you could almost taste the earth in the air.” “. . . I want you to be brave.”</p>

<p>Leah’s father says, “there are hard times.” Find at least two pieces of evidence from the text explains the causes for these “hard times.” (Pgs. 218, 221)</p>	<p>“The corn grew no taller than a man’s thumb.” “Some days the wind blew so hard it turned dust.” (page 218) “Soon Papa sold the pigs and even some cattle.” “One hot, dry, dusty day grasshoppers turned black. They ate the trees bare and left only twigs behind. Neighbors moved to Oregon and said, “It must be there.” (page 219) Papa told Leah, “I borrowed money from the bank for the seeds, but the seeds dried up and blew away. Now I don’t have any corn to sell. Now I can’t pay the bank.” (page 221) He also said, “They’re going to have an auction. They’re going to sell the cattle and chickens and the land.” (page 221) Then he said, “Worst of all, they’re going to sell the tractor. I’ll never be able to plant corn when she’s gone. Without a tractor, we might even have to leave the farm. These are hard times.” (page 221)</p>
<p>Reread page 222. How does Leah describe the auction? Based on her description, create a one sentence definition of an auction.</p>	<p>“She knew eager faces with strange voices were all over the farm.” “They would stand outside and offer money for the owner of the house’s things.” “A man in a big hat hammered a sign into the ground in front of her house.” An auction is an event at someone’s house where people offer money for the owner of the house’s things.</p>
<p>What was Leah’s reaction to the man hammering a sign into the ground in front of her house? What did she decide to do about it? (Pgs. 222-223)</p>	<p>In the text it stated that “Leah wanted to run her pony past empty fields lined with dry grass. She ran past a house with rags stuffed in broken windows. The pony sped right past Mr. B sweeping the steps outside. Her reaction was that she ran away because she was upset that the auction was going to occur. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, she decided to talk to Mr. B.</p>

<p>What reason did Leah give Mr. B for selling the pony? What was her actual reason for selling him? (Pg. 223)</p>	<p>Leah said, "I've grown a lot this summer. I'm not selling him."</p> <p>Her actual reason was to get money and buy a tractor at the auction.</p>
<p>On the middle of page 224, how does the author describe the way Leah was holding her money? In your own words, explain what this means. How does the illustration on page 225 help you define the word, "clutch"?</p>	<p>The text states, "Leah clutched her money in her hands."</p> <p>The illustration on page shows that she is holding the money tightly with both hands. That word <i>clutching</i> means to hold onto something tightly.</p>
<p>Reread pages 227 and 228. How did the auction change after Leah buys the tractor (for \$1)? Why did this occur?</p>	<p>After Leah's bid everyone also started to give items. The chickens were sold for ten cents, twenty-five cents. A penny for a chicken, or a quarter for a plow.</p> <p>This occurred because the people at the auction saw what Leah was trying to do and they wanted to be a good example for the people. She bought the tractor for only one dollar and that could save the other people also wanted to help save the farm. When bidding was over, Leah's father got many of the livestock back.</p>
<p>Reread the last two paragraphs on page 228 and explain how Leah was feeling. Cite evidence from the text and explain.</p>	<p>"The farm was quiet. Too quiet. No familiar sounds. Leah when she entered the barn." The farm reminded Leah that her pony was not there.</p> <p>"Leah swallowed hard and straightened her back, trying not to cry and she stood straight up at the barn.</p> <p>"Only Leah lay awake, listening to the clock tick even ten times. Leah's heart seemed to copy the clock's beat." Leah could not sleep because she was worried about her pony.</p>
<p>What were Mr. B's reasons for giving back the pony in the letter? What was his actual reason for giving it back? (Pg. 231)</p>	<p>Mr. B wrote, "But he's a little bit small for me. He fits my grandson. He fits you much better."</p> <p>He actually gave the pony back to Leah because she was a good pony. She sacrificed a lot so that her family could have the farm and Mr. B did not want to keep her pony.</p>

<p>At the end of the text, the author writes, "And they didn't." What does the author mean by this? (Pg. 231)</p>	<p>The author was talking about the hard times changed. When this story occurred hard times for Leah and her family. The author wrote to the reader that the hard times did not continue better.</p>
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Vocabulary

	KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING	WORDS WORTH KNOWING General teaching suggestions are provided
<p>TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION not enough contextual clues provided in the text</p>	<p>Page 216- swift Page 222 - eager Page 224 - bid</p>	<p>Page 216 - girth Page 217 - pasture Page 223 - gullies Page 224 - fertilize, cultivate</p>

<p>STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING sufficient context clues are provided in the text</p>	<p>Page 216 - snip Page 218 - drooping Page 221, 222 - auction Page 226 - auctioneer</p>	<p>Page 219 - wobbled Page 227 - cheap Page 228 - coop</p>
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Culminating Task

- Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write
- *Leah was selfless by choosing to sell her pony to Mr. B. What was gained from her action? List at least two examples from the text of things gained from Leah’s actions. Using your two examples, explain how Leah and her family gained from these actions.*

Answer:

She bought the tractor back for her father for one dollar (page 226). Now Leah’s father can plant and harvest the corn.

A farmer who lived down the road bought a flock of chickens for ten cents (page 227) and then gave the chickens to Leah’s mother (page 228). Then the family had chickens to eat or had eggs that they got from the chickens.

A neighbor from town bought the pickup truck for twenty-five cents and then gave the keys to Leah’s father (page 228). Now Leah’s family can haul heavy things like equipment or crops.

“Leah watched as friends and neighbors bid a penny for a chicken or a nickel for a cow or a quarter for a plow. One by one, they gave everything back to Mama and Papa.” (page 228) They could eat the chicken or the cow. They could also get eggs and milk from these animals. The plow was used when getting the soil ready for planting so then

they could plant crops.

“That night in Leah’s hushed house, no sad voices whispered in the kitchen.” (page 228)

Her parents gained their happiness.

Mr. B gave Leah back her pony (page 231). Leah gained her happiness.

Leah saved her family’s farm (page 231). The family did not have to move. They got all their stuff back from Leah’s sacrifice.

Additional Tasks

- *Research information about the Dust Bowl from the social studies book or other resources. Have the students write a letter to a local or national magazine from the perspective of one of the following: a farmer who hires migrant workers, a police chief from a small California border town, an unemployed worker in a rural community or a business owner in a small town in the farm region of California. In their letters, students should include some background on the problem, the concerns of the person writing the letter, and suggest ways for everyone to find common ground and acceptance.*

Answers many vary.

Name _____

Date _____

“Leah’s Pony”

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9. Leah’s father says, “there are hard times.” Find at least two pieces of evidence from the text explains the causes for these “hard times.” (Pgs. 218, 221)

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