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BY THE GREAT HORN SPOON!

LITTLE, BROWN

By the Great Horn Spoon! by Sid Fleischman
Common Core Connections—Sixth Grade Focus

FOCUS ON SIXTH GRADE CC STATE STANDARDS

Every book can meet most if not all CC State Standards. However, we have found that some books speak directly to a few Standards with strength. These applications seek to make the connections between a particular text and the Common Core Standards as written for sixth graders—leaning on this text’s literary strengths.

6.RL.2

The fifth reading literature standard requires students to analyze how chapters fit together to build the overall structure of the book, which details the journey from Boston to San Francisco in the heat of the gold rush. Sid Fleischman’s historical fiction text is neatly organized by chapters, which serve almost as individual short stories. Each chapter wraps up neatly but also contributes to the forward movement of the overall structure of the book. Students could choose a block of four to five chapters (from the beginning, middle, or end of the book) to analyze closely, documenting how one chapter builds upon the last. (In groups, the class could have a final discussion of the progression across the entire text. Imagine some map making work that follows the text’s structure.) In this work, sixth graders would also incorporate 6.RL.1, where they are asked to cite textual evidence for explicit information and to also draw conclusions based on the evidence they pull from the text.

6.RL.2

With work exploring across chapters, readers could be set up for this second standard which asks students to synthesize their understanding of the central theme(s) and/or idea(s) of the book. Students may use Post-its to mark places in the text where they discover clues about themes and central ideas. Like the work for 6.RL.5, students can grow thoughts about the theme and/or central ideas across a chapter, using constructs such as “I’m thinking that _____ could be a possible central idea because _____”

Post-its could also be utilized to record *inferences* made about the text. A graphic organizer with three column construction encourages readers to record what the text tells them, what they know from prior experiences, and what inference they take away from the text, especially where they build to help students define themes and central ideas. A teacher may utilize this text as a read aloud to model such comprehension strategies as inferences and predictions, which add to synthesis. (Regardless of whether students’ predictions are accurate or not, the reader takes away that ability to confirm predictions which requires deep thinking).

6.RL.3

Students are asked to describe how a character or characters respond or change across the plot. This text is rich in character *change*; Praiseworthy progresses from butler to digger and Jack is transformed from wealthy young lad to sailor to gold miner. Humorous scenes and situations throughout the book enhance various characters, particularly the ship’s captain, Captain Swain, when he is alerted to the stowaways, and Cut-Eye Higgins, the map thief when he is almost hanged. (As a means of differentiation, according to students’ interests and abilities, they could first address characters’



actions and responses. Since grasping character change is more complicated, students might need scaffolding in small groups to identify the stages of character growth and evolution.)

6.RL.9

In this standard, students are asked to compare and contrast texts across genres. *By the Great Horn Spoon!* is set in the 1849 Gold Rush and there are plentiful resources—informational texts, websites, and textbook chapters that could be incorporated into the study as a means of discovering the facts and the fiction of this text. This work connects well to earlier literacy standards that require students to ask questions about their reading.

Similarly, students can be pushed to ask questions like, “What is the delivery of content in these two various genres: nonfiction and historical fiction?” “What is the author’s purpose in both?” “How does the author introduce content and facts?” This exploration of two well-known genres within historical fiction incorporates Reading: Informational Text standards such as 6.RIT.1 (citing textual evidence), 6.RIT.2 (determining themes/central ideas), 6.RIT.9 (comparing and contrasting across genres), and 6.RIT.10 (reading a variety of genres).

6.W.1

Students are asked to write an argument and support that argument with details from the text, which builds on their developing ability to use textual references as well as growing on the speaking and listening ideas of interpreting (6.SL.2) and presenting main ideas in sequence (6.SL.4). This text has an obvious development of multiple characters, particularly the relationship between the former butler and Jack; readers may form their own opinions and challenge those of others. Students may first share their ideas verbally and then move to writing them down as the ideas become more organized and well thought out.

6.W.3

Teachers can invite students to create their own narratives based on students’ journeys, whether simply within their community or (real or imagined) around the world. This standard is broken into sub-skills for teachers to consider; for this work, we suggest the focal points of: dialogue, pacing of the story, events or happenings, and building characters to catch readers’ attention (6.W.3b).

6.W.7

Encourages the writing of short research projects, asking students to write informative pieces based on research on a factual topic. This book inspires many questions about what really happened in the life of ‘49ers. Students’ research of the Gold Rush through informational texts and/or other historical fiction resources would support this writing as well.

3.RFS.4 Reading with fluency-

Page Number	Start	Purpose
7	Bottom of page	Scooping & reading smoothly descriptive text
28	2nd paragraph	Dialogue with consideration to voice
40	Whole page	Dialogue and using the rules of dialogue
80	Start near top	Practice with longer words, deeper sentiment
83	Top of page	Punctuation and scooping

Two online resources to get researchers up and running:

http://www.nps.gov/safr/forteachers/upload/Sailor_intercept.pdf

http://www.nps.gov/safr/forteachers/upload/Goldminer_intercept.pdf