

Spider®

THEME

Summer brings many experiences for us. Characters learn to be brave while going through a big move, they have fun while visiting family and find a bicycle. Use the mini-lessons and activities in this teacher's guide to reinforce language arts skills and engage students in a variety of learning activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What makes summer special?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a poem.
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Students will use knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize key elements and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write arguments to support claims.
- Students will recognize the genre and elements of historical fiction.
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Schools Out! Summer's In!**

Poem

- **Odin's Firefly Goodbye**

Realistic Fiction, 610L

- **The Last Bicycle**

Historical Fiction, 670L

Spider® Teacher Guide: July/August 2025

School's Out! Summer's In!

p. 9, Poem

Use this poem about summer to have students use their imaginations and senses to write their own topic poems.



RESOURCES

- My Topic Poem

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a poem.
- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text.
- Students will use knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **live-long** (p. 9) phrase meaning entire, whole
- **cookout** (p. 9) an outing where a meal is cooked and eaten outside

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes summer special?

Write the five senses on the board. Remind children that we have five senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Ask children to identify the body parts connected to the senses. Then, ask them to name words they can use to describe how something smells, looks, feels, tastes, and sounds. List these words. Tell children that they will make connections with their senses to write their own poems.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display vocabulary and read aloud the words and definitions. Ask children to share their experiences with summer, whole days, and cookouts. Discuss responses. Then remind students to look and listen for these words in the poem.

READ & DISCUSS

After reading, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What is this poem about?
2. What is the message the poet is trying to convey?
3. Who is the speaker in the poem?
4. Do you have a connection to the poem? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Writing a Topic Poem

INSTRUCT: Explain that a topic poem involves steps to help you express your ideas about a chosen topic. Ask children to choose a subject/topic they are interested in (an object, feeling, memory, idea.) Distribute the *Topic Poem* worksheets. Have children write the topic in the middle circle of the word web. Instruct them to brainstorm other words related to their topic and write them in the outer circles. Remind them to use verbs, adjectives, and synonyms. More than one word can be written in the outer circles.

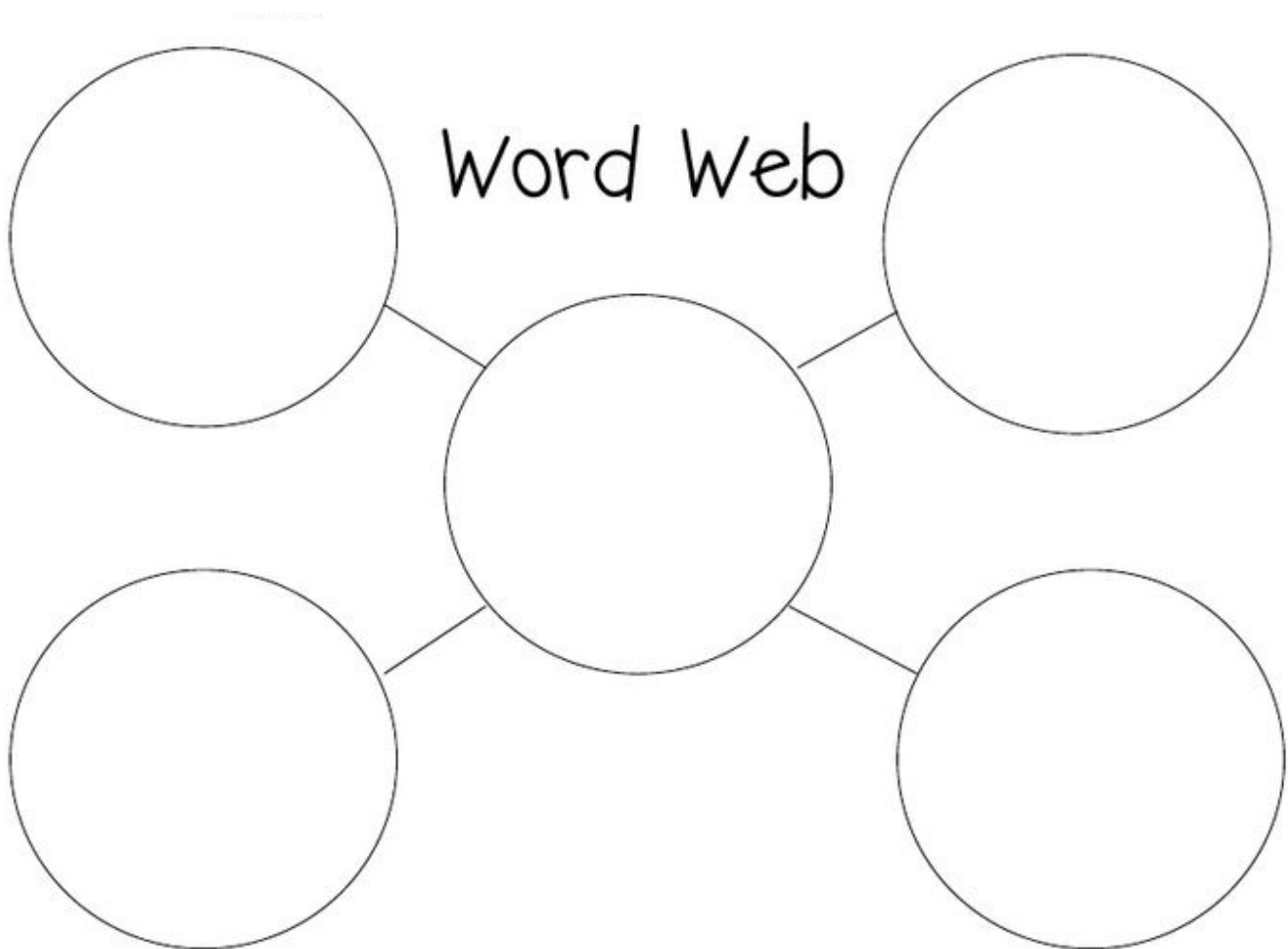
ASSESS: Have children use their word maps to complete their *My Topic Poem* worksheet. Observe and assist if needed. Have children share their poems once completed.

EXTEND

Art: Tell children they will illustrate their poems by creating an image or images related to their topic. Encourage them to use their imaginations and be creative! Hang their poems and illustrations where others can view them.

Name _____

Word Web: Choose a topic for your poem. Write it in the middle circle. Think of words related to the topic. Add these to the outer circles.



Name _____

My Topic Poem

Topic (one word)

Two adjectives or adverbs

Three verbs

Four descriptive words or observation

Synonym

Example:

Sunflowers

Tall, bright

Bending, swaying, smiling

Beautiful sunlight in summer

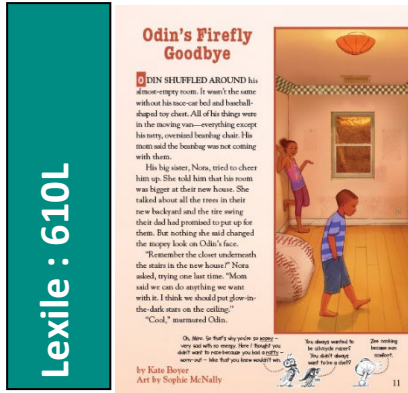
Flowers

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Odin's Firefly Goodbye

pp. 11-16, Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a boy who must move from his home to help students analyze realistic fiction.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize key elements and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write arguments to support claims.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **abandoning** (p. 12) to give up with the intent of never wanting again
- **smudge** (p. 12) a spot of something
- **predator** (p. 14) an organism that gets its food by killing and eating other organisms
- **luminous** (p. 15) emitting glowing light

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes summer special?

Explain that moving to a new home, city, or state can be difficult. At times like these, it's important to be courageous and brave. Share a time when you had to move, then invite children to share their stories. Explain that this story is about a boy that is moving to a new home, but he isn't very happy about it.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Finally, invite children to make up sentences using these words.

READ & DISCUSS

After the children read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Why was Odin sad?
2. Which room on the house excited Odin the most and why?
3. What did Odin catch when he opened the window?
4. Was Odin worried about getting into trouble?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Realistic Fiction

INSTRUCT: Explain that this story is an example of realistic fiction. Display these elements of realistic fiction:

- Characters: The characters behave like real people you know.
- Plot: Events could happen in real life.
- Setting: The story takes place in the present time and in the real world.
- Conflict: The characters face real-life problems.

ASSESS: Have children work to identify and highlight examples of the realistic elements in "Odin's Firefly Goodbye." Have them share their ideas. Then, discuss whether any details in the story seemed natural or realistic.

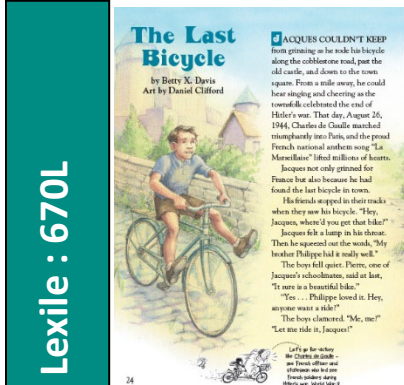
EXTEND

Write: Have children write a realistic story about an experience from their lives. Encourage them to use details and dialogue to make their story seem realistic.

The Last Bicycle

pp. 24-30, Historical Fiction

Teach students to recognize the elements of historical fiction using this story set in France at the end of WWII.



RESOURCES

- Analyze Historical Fiction Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize the genre and elements of historical fiction.
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events.

KEY VOCABULARY

- clamor** (p. 24) a loud demand for something by many people
- torched** (p. 25) set fire to something
- liberate** (p. 28) to free someone or something from being controlled by another person, group, etc.
- claim** (p. 29) to take something that belongs to you or that you deserve

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes summer special?

Tell children that making choices—small or important ones—can be difficult. Offer these examples and have them identify them as small or important choices: choosing the right snack to eat, deciding what to do when a friend asks you to do something wrong. Invite children to share choices they have made. Then discuss why the choices seem small or important. Finally, tell them to think about the choice that Jacques makes in this story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Finally, invite children to make up sentences using these words.

READ & DISCUSS

Have children read along silently as you read the story aloud. Then have them reread the story independently. Use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Why is the bicycle important to Jacques?
- Why did Jacques choose to give his bike to the soldier?
- What influenced Jacques's choice?
- What would you have done if you were Jacques?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Historical Fiction

INSTRUCT: Explain that historical fiction contains a mix of facts and made-up details that allow readers to imagine what it was like to live during a time in the past. Authors of historical fiction combine facts about time, place, and real people with made-up characters, events, problems, and dialogue. Reread the first page of the story and ask the children to explain where and when this story takes place. Then, have them identify facts and made-up details that helped them imagine the setting. Finally, ask what they notice about the effect the war had on Jacques and the other characters.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Analyze Historical Fiction* worksheet. Have the children work independently to complete the activities.

EXTEND

Social Studies: Have children use the library and the internet to learn more about the time period described in this story. Tell them to use at least two different sources and to create a short presentation to share what they learned.

Name _____

Historical Fiction Worksheet

Facts and Real Information	Made-Up Details

What effect did the war have on people and families living in France at that time?
