

The Hero's Journey in *The Conference of the Birds* and *The Name Jar*

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Content Objectives

Have you ever answered the question, “How do you know?” with the answer “Because I just know,” and can give no further explicit information? For example, my toddler son’s cry, if heard in a neighborhood of similarly aged children, is unquestionably recognizable to his mother and myself. We could not expound on the pitch or other sound qualities that exactly convey the acoustical makeup, however we just know when we hear it.

This idea of “just knowing” runs counter to Western epistemology (the philosophical study of knowledge and how something is truly known). It is not enough to just know. We need to know the justification for knowing it. Otherwise, someone’s given knowledge can be treated as frivolous. When this happens, we can lose a lot of what a society, a people, and a culture can offer to the world.

Take for example an analysis of this topic by philosopher, Mark Roques, in which he describes Sudanese desert nomads who prized camels as a hinge point for daily life - their milk for sustenance; their hair for clothes, tents, and rugs; their dependable bodies for travel across the harsh desert landscapes. Given their value, young children were instructed in the ways of caring for camels. The instruction was mainly through story and what Western epistemologists would regard as implicit, opinion-based information, not actual facts. Despite this, young children, were incredibly knowledgeable in the nature and care of the animal. For example, when asked where one specific camel among the herd was located on a given day, children as young as six would spew detailed and accurate geographic locations of the one camel in question. In other instances when a camel fell ill, these children could nurse them to health, or also tenderly care for expecting mothers.

Roques continues this story by saying Sudanese government officials, once informed of the nomads’ non-Western ways and knowledge, took up the task of “educating” them simply because their knowledge could not be rationalized according to standard Western benchmarks. Slowly, this coveted knowledge peeled away from its people, and what took its place was an “enlightened,” but impersonal and meaningless curriculum.

In a similar, but likely less stark manner, my students also experience this sense of meaningless and impersonal education. All of my students are elementary-age English Learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (speakers of Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Albanian, etc.). This fact alone impedes their access to a meaningful

experience in school; add to that teachers who are ill-equipped with strategies to engage English Learners, along with the numerous standards and subjects to teach, administrative tasks to meet, and meaning gets pushed even further from these students. Generally speaking, they are marginalized and float along with the others who “play school” to survive and get by. Faced with this predicament, we turn to stories for a solution.

Storytelling Traditions of the Middle East and South Asia highlighted the universal meanings we can find in stories and emphasized the serious value stories have for society and its people. A big question posed was, “How do we convey to students that these stories belong to us?” Implied in this question of course is that stories - ancient, new and in between - indeed belong to us.

Consider what Joseph Campbell described and popularized as the monomyth or the Hero’s Journey, where the hero is called to adventure, then departs, experiences, and overcomes trials, and returns transformed. All human beings on various scales can relate to this pattern in life. It is an excellent teaching tool that allows us to see our self as the hero. It is a way to make these stories belong to us and to our students - in essence, to make them meaningful. Campbell (1988) says in his famous interview, *The Power of Myth*, “There has to be a training to help you open your ears so that you can begin to hear metaphorically instead of concretely... So when one hears the seer’s story, one responds, ‘Aha! This is my story. This is something that I had always wanted to say but wasn’t able to say’” (p. 71).

One particular story our class analyzed in *Storytelling Traditions of the Middle East and South Asia* included this trope of the Hero’s Journey. It is a twelfth century Persian Sufi poem called *Mantiq al-Tayr* translated as *The Conference of the Birds* and written by “one of the greatest figures in the history of Sufi poetry,” Farid al-Din Attar (Nasr, 2012, p. 1). The poem is more than 4000 verses and written in rhyming couplets. It is considered “a supreme masterpiece” of Sufi poetry and, since its composition, it has inspired many from scholars to artists to everyday people.

In 2012, Alexis York Lumbard, comparative religion scholar and children’s book author, produced her own version of *The Conference of the Birds* “to bring the wisdom and beauty of the world’s religions to the eager and gifted minds of young children” (back flap of book). Demi, an award-winning author and illustrator in her own right, created the illustrations “that possess a traditional character and depict a world which is spiritual in nature and which stands above the ordinary world that surrounds us, not below it.” The text uses rhyming couplets for the dialogue in the book, and naturally omits many of the original details of the voluminous original story, however the journey myth remains in tact. This is the text I will be using with my students.

York Lombard's version of the story begins with the wise Hoopoe bird (a feathered crown bird considered a messenger in the Quran) gathering a large flock of birds together. The birds are sorrowful and hopeless with no King to provide peace, order, and wisdom to their group and they have been this way for some unspecified period of time. The Hoopoe bird announces to them to not be despaired for he has found King Simourgh, the wise. He informs them they must make this long and difficult quest to find him. This is very welcome news and the birds are happy and eager to follow the Hoopoe bird to their King, however many things arise that begin to stand in their way. For example, the contented duck is comfortable staying home in their pond; once they begin the journey, the vainglorious parrot is weighed down by worldly goods in gold and jewelry; the tiny finch trembles in fear when a storm arises; the partridge grows impatient and complains about the many hardships endured; the proud hawk soars too fast ahead and gets lost in an attempt to see the King first. Each time these flaws and foibles surface, the wise Hoopoe challenges and counsels them to shed their "inner faults and outer flaws." When they finally reach their destination, the top of a sacred mountain on a remote island, the Hoopoe reveals there is no King at all, but "just a simple lake" where "one by one the birds ... stare down at their own reflection." Then, the Hoopoe bird makes a speech enlightening them to the fact that each bird has achieved the sublime by completing the journey and shedding their flaws. They are transformed at the end of the story.

The Conference of the Birds, as told by Alexis York Lumbard, is the archetypal Hero's Journey myth. The template is matched: the hero, in this case the birds, are called to adventure by the wise Hoopoe, they encounter trials along the way, and they emerge transformed at the end. Although nearly a millennia old, the myth remains relevant. My curriculum unit will focus on making this story belong to my students, making it meaningful.

In addition to this story, I want my students to see and recognize the Hero's Journey in a modern tale. *The Name Jar*, by Yangsook Choi, illustrates this journey trope. In addition, the school-based plot and other themes are resonant with my culturally diverse English Learners and therefore a welcome text to include in my unit.

The Name Jar is the story of a young girl, approximately eight or nine years old, who immigrates to the United States from her home country of Korea. Before departing, her loving grandmother gives her a going-away gift, a wooden stamp that contains her given Korean name, Unhei, in traditional Korean characters. Once in America while on the school bus for her first day, she is intimidated by her new and strange surroundings. While holding the wooden name stamp her grandmother gave her, the other students inquire about her name. When she tells them, they struggle to pronounce it and, finding it awkward, laugh flippantly at their attempts. Bruised and scared in a foreign place, Unhei clams up. When she enters her new classroom - note the children from the bus had gone to other rooms and she is relieved, but still embarrassed - the teacher and the

other students welcome her. Unhei is again asked her name, but this time, she balks and says, “Um, I haven’t picked one yet, but I’ll let you know by next week.” In the events that follow, Unhei is forced to reconcile with this new life. Should she assimilate by relinquishing her given Korean name and ultimately a part of who she is by selecting a new American name from the literal name jar (a well-intentioned gesture by her new class)? Or should she courageously embrace her given Korean name, Unhei, despite the challenges that may accompany it? Ultimately, she decides the latter. Along the way, Unhei is supported and guided on her journey by a new American friend, Joey; the amiable Korean-American proprietor of a nearby Korean market, Mr. Kim; and her grandmother’s distant presence in the form of a letter.

The Name Jar also aptly fits the template: the hero, Unhei, is called to a new adventure in America; new obstacles in the immigrant experience challenge her; and she emerges transformed as a courageous new Korean American girl. This story is recognizably resonant for English Learners and their own immigrant experiences (or those of their parents and families). For that reason, it is engaging, fun, and meaningful. I anticipate it to be welcome tale for English Learners and an excellent entry point for students to understand other stories that fit this mold. I hope they will also see a part of themselves in this narrative.

Both *The Conference of the Birds* and *The Name Jar* provide a platform for meeting district, state, and national reading standards for English Language Arts. Both the teacher and students will read and interact with the texts closely to determine the multiple levels of meaning, including the central messages and dynamic characters in each story (Key Ideas and Details). Students will also evaluate the illustrations of the stories to gain knowledge of characters, settings, and moods of the stories (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas). Students will also learn key vocabulary words to access the text’s meaning and acquire new words. Ultimately, this unit will convey the aspects of dynamic character and how that relates to the Hero’s Journey.

Reading List: *The Power of Myth* by Joseph Campbell; *Storytelling and Narrative Knowing: An Examination of the Epistemic Benefits of Well-Told Stories* by Sarah E. Worth; *Epistemology, Story-Telling and Pedagogy* by Marc Roques; *The Conference of the Birds* by Alexis York Lumbard; *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi

The essential question of this unit is: How can a very, very old story and a very, very new story have the same message? The answer is that humans, the heroes in the journey, have universal qualities and experiences that we can all relate to. That is the reason why so many stories deal with the same themes across space and time. The other essential question is: How do these stories belong to me? The answer to this question of course will depend, but the answer we want to see should have resonance with the themes of the book. For example, “I am guilty of wanting more attention and being too proud

like the hawk in *The Conference of the Birds*.” Or “I have felt like Unhei in *The Name Jar* and didn’t like my given name anymore.”

Other objectives of the unit include: Recount the key ideas and details in both *The Conference of the Birds* and *The Name Jar*. Determine the central message and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text in both *The Conference of the Birds* and *The Name Jar*. Determine the meanings of key words and phrases as they are used in the text. Describe characters in *The Conference of the Birds* and *The Name Jar* (e.g. their traits, motivations, feelings and explain how their actions contribute to the events of the story).

After careful consideration, I feel my students would benefit more from studying *The Name Jar* first followed by *The Conference of the Birds*. *The Name Jar* is more concrete and accessible, with the themes more explicit and readily apparent than *The Conference of the Birds*. I feel my students’ curiosities will be piqued if *The Name Jar* text begins our unit of study. This will prime them for the implicit comparative themes in *The Conference of the Birds*.

Teaching Strategies

A key strategy necessary to teaching all students, but especially helpful with English Learners is accessing prior knowledge and building background for the unit of study prior to embarking. One particular tool in this realm is the Anticipation Guide where students are given discussion questions that prime them for the learning at hand. This gets students thinking and talking while building language around the topic and developing curiosity for what comes next. For example, a question posed before reading *The Name Jar* would be: Imagine you move to new country with a new language, and kids make fun of your name because it sounds different. How would you feel? How would you feel about your name? Questions posed in anticipation of *The Conference of the Birds* would be: What things are you afraid of? Think of a time you faced your fears.

An excellent teaching tool for English Learners to elicit prior knowledge is called Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS. By and large it is a discussion facilitated by the teacher (note: like all things, the teacher improves their facilitation with practice). In VTS, the teacher selects an image that will prime students for upcoming learning. The teacher posts the image for all to see on a projected screen. Students are given a minute to silently think about what they see in the image. Students respond to the question: What do you see in the picture? And then, students respond to the question: What’s happening in this picture? Naturally with all discussion, things do not occur in such lock step so if a student responds to the latter of the two questions while the first is posed simply go with the flow. What is important to note is that when a student gives a qualitative or

inferential response, the teacher must ask for evidence by saying something like, “What makes you say that?” As students share, the teacher can ask for a consensus. For example, “Do you agree or disagree with x-student and why?” After the discussion has finished, the teacher should provide a summary of what the students said. Personally, I have found it important to either mark-up the image if you can by labeling it with students responses or write students’ responses on a separate piece of chart paper, board, etc. All students can benefit from seeing the words, but especially English Learners. Furthermore, you can refer to this work at a later time during a course of study.

Another tool teachers can use to elicit prior knowledge and prepare for future learning is a KWL chart. It is a three-column chart centered on a topic that allows students to think about what they already know (K), what they want to know (W), and after learning about the topic, students complete what they learned (L). Students will use this tool to prepare for a more meaningful and intentional learning experience.

To engage all students in thinking and to get all students talking about the topics in this course of study, we will also use Think-Pair-Share. This tool allows for ample discussion in different settings – with peers and with the teacher as a whole group. It is effective in creating more language around the topic.

An important component to this unit is acquiring the requisite vocabulary to access the material. In addition to direct instruction, I plan to also use Cloze Sentence activities. Students must supply a given vocabulary word in the context it is used. This allows student to ruminate and apply the vocabulary. Additionally, we will use Crossword Puzzles to develop vocabulary knowledge and story content.

Classroom Activities

Lesson 1 – Unit Launch

Objectives: Prepare to read *The Name Jar* with Visual Thinking Strategy; Build background knowledge around concept of The Hero’s Journey in relation to *The Name Jar* through Anticipation Guide (i.e. Students can empathize with experiencing challenge and finding courage in a personally difficult situation); Use Vocabulary Word Chart to introduce key vocabulary: journey, hero, challenge, courage, hero’s journey.

Session 1 – Visual Thinking Strategy (20 minutes)

Visual Thinking Strategy (use image on page 2 of *The Name Jar* that shows Unhei at the airport saying goodbye to her grandmother) - Gather students together and explain they will be discussing a picture to prepare for learning. Explain that they will look at the image for one minute and think about what they see in the picture. Then, they will

Think-Pair-Share with a partner. Post the question, “What do you see in this picture?” Supply a sentence frame “I see _____ in the picture.” When time is up, have students share with a partner, and then have others share with the group. Write down students’ answers so the class can see a record of what was noticed.

Repeat procedure with the question, “What do you think is happening in this image?” When students share out to the group, ask students for evidence. For example, if a student says, “It looks like they’re saying goodbye...” ask “What makes you say that?”

Provide a summary of the classes’ thoughts at the end of the discussion. For example, “So we think the little girl is leaving her home because she is at the airport with her family. We think she is saying goodbye to her grandmother because the woman in the picture looks older like a grandmother would be.”

If no one commented on the fact that the girl (Unhei) looks sad in the photo, ask,

“How do you think the girl feels in this picture?” and facilitate discussion around why she feels sad.

Explain to students that this story is a journey story. It can also be called a hero’s journey because the girl in the story is the hero and she goes on a journey. Explain to students that they too, and every human, experiences these types of journeys, where they encounter difficult, sad, and challenging times. Explain that we will be thinking about our own journeys while reading and learning about two stories – the one from the picture and another story from 800 years ago and all the way around the world.

Session 2 – In-depth Academic Vocabulary Development (25 minutes) (Note: Instruction adapted from Berkley Unified School District’s Academic Vocabulary Professional Development materials which draw’s from Robert Marzano’s vocabulary development routine)

Give students Vocabulary Word Chart (see appendix).

Tell students we are going to learn the key vocabulary words for the unit.

Use the following procedure to teach the vocabulary words.

Introduce Word

Pronunciation - Say the word. Have students repeat it a few times in fun and engaging ways. For example, whisper it. Sing it. Say it like a robot. Syllabication – Clap the word. Note: Focus on students learning how to say the word and hear its individual parts.

Spell it and write the word for students to see.

Perform a knowledge rating: Access students' prior knowledge of the word. All students respond by showing their level of knowledge of the word using a number of fingers. Hold up one finger if they have never heard the word before; two fingers, if they heard the word before, but don't know what it means; three fingers, if they heard the word before and have some idea about what it means; and four fingers if they know the word well and can explain it. Assess students' level of knowledge of individual words. If a student has four fingers raised call on them, and ask for a response.

Explain the word

Give student-friendly definition of the word – Have students either copy or paraphrase their own definition of the word. Encourage students to write the meaning in their own words if possible. If students know the word in their home language, they should write it in the appropriate space on the organizer. They can also draw a representative meaning of the word. Then have them try to use it in a sentence as best they can.

Use the above procedure to teach the following words and their student-friendly definitions:

Hero – a person we like and want to be like; someone who does great things even if they are hard, scare, or difficult

Journey – a trip; or to travel from one place to another place

Courage – something you have that helps you do things that are hard, scary, and difficult

Challenge – something that is difficult to do like moving to a new place or school

The Hero's Journey – a type of story that has the same type of pattern; the hero of the story has to go on a journey. Then, something or a lot of things challenges hero. The hero has to find courage and do difficult, hard, or scare things. At the end of the story, they have grown up and feel new and different from the beginning before their journey.

Lesson 2

Objectives – Read and recount key ideas and details in *The Name Jar* by asking and answering questions; describe the characters and their motivations and feelings in *The Name Jar*; determine the central message of the story as it relates to The Hero's Journey; Apply vocabulary word meanings using Cloze Sentences and Crossword Puzzle;

Session 1 (30 - 45 minutes) – Bring in realia if possible (large glass jar to simulate the physical name “name jar” with pieces of paper to show names; wooden stamp to demonstrate Unhei's name; examples of Korean writing/characters) Use KWL to access students prior knowledge and build curiosity for reading the story; read and

answer questions about the key ideas and details in *The Name Jar* describe the characters. Note: it would also be helpful to review prior lesson's vocabulary words with students before beginning the story.

Have students complete the K- and W-sections of the KWL organizer about *The Name Jar*. Possible responses could be: K-section I know there is a little girl who is leaving her grandmother. W-section I want to know where she is going and what she will do. I want to know if she'll be happy.

Read story with students. Guiding questions to ask and answer questions as whole group followed by suggested responses:

Page 1 – Where is she and what is happening? She is on the school bus on her first day to her new school.

How is she feeling? Nervous and excited

Pages 2-3 (important distinction because the story has a temporal change here – this often confuses students) – Why was she on the school bus a moment ago and now she's at the airport? Because she is remembering a time with grandmother.

What does her grandmother give to her? A wooden block with her name on it.

Pages 4-5 – What happens on the bus to her new school? Kids laugh at her name. Why? Because it is different.

Pages 6-7 – When she arrives at her class, the kids ask for her name. What does Unhei say? She hasn't picked a name yet, but will tell the class next week when she does. Why do you think Unhei doesn't tell the class her name? Because she is afraid the kids will tease her.

Pages 8-9 – When Unhei arrives home and talks with her mom, what does she say about her first day? School was fine, but she wants to change her name to an American name.

Why does she want an American name? Because she doesn't want to be different.

Important question that gives evidence of story's theme: What does her mom say about being different? That Unhei is different, but "that's a good thing!"

Pages 10-11 – When Unhei and her mother go to the market, she notices everything is different in America. How do you think that makes her feel? Lost, strange, different, nervous

What place does she find that makes her feel good – “It made Unhei smile,” - and why? Kim’s Market because she it reminds her of home

Pages 12-13 – How do you think Unhei feels after she meets Mr. Kim? Happy because Mr. Kim knows Unhei’s name and even knows what it means it Korean.

What effect might this have on Unhei’s desire or want to change her name? She grows more conflicted because she realizes that her name is still a beautiful name despite the fact that it is not typically American.

Pages 14-15 – The next morning, at school how does Unhei feel and how do you know? Happy – “A smile spread over Unhei’s face.”

Why is she happy? The other kids are kind to her (i.e. they are helping her pick her name with the name jar).

Pages 16-17 – Unhei continues to feel better in her new school and new life here. How do you know and why does she feel this way? The illustration shows Unhei smiling; she begins to open up, makes a new friend, and shows him her given name by sharing her name stamp.

Pages 20-21 – How do you think Unhei feels about her name after reading the letter from her grandmother and how do you know? Unhei takes her wooden name stamp and uses it to fill a whole piece of paper.

Do you think Unhei still wants to change to an American name like she did early in the story? Why? She does not want to change because her grandmother tells her “you’ll always be my Unhei,” in the letter. This makes her feel connected to her name and who she is a Korean girl with a Korean name.

Pages 24-25 – When Unhei says “I’m ready to introduce myself,” how do you think she feels and how do you know? Nervous because “she took a breath.”

Pages 26-27 – Unhei chooses her given name and not an American name. Was it scary for her to tell the class this? Yes

How can you describe Unhei’s actions at this part of the book (hint: vocabulary word)? She showed courage to do a scary, difficult, and challenging thing.

Do you think Unhei has grown from this experience?

Wrap-up Activity

When the story is finished, have student's complete the Learned-section of the KWL and then assign the Crossword Puzzle (see below) for partner or independent work. Review students' work and intervene with student's who show misunderstandings.

Session 2 (30 minutes) – The Hero's Journey and *The Name Jar* – Cloze Sentence Activity to apply vocabulary and deepen understanding of the Hero's Journey as it applies to *The Name Jar*.

Gather students together. Tell them they are going to use the vocabulary words from the previous day to learn more about The Hero's Journey and how The Hero's Journey is like Unhei's Journey in *The Name Jar*. Tell students they will complete the following Cloze Sentence Activity. Omit the answers in parentheses.

A (hero) is a person who does hard, challenging, scary and difficult things. A (journey) is a trip where a person or group of people travel from one place to another place. The (Hero's Journey) is a type of story where a person or character must go on a hard, difficult, and challenging journey. The (hero) in the Hero's Journey must find (courage) to do the things that are scary, difficult, and challenging. After they do these difficult things, the (hero) is different from the beginning of their journey.

The Name Jar is a (Hero's Journey) story. Unhei is the (hero) of the story. In the beginning of *The Name Jar*, or her journey, she must travel to America and leave behind her (grandmother). This is not easy. In fact, it is very hard, difficult, and (challenging). One of the challenges she faces is being different from the other kids at school. Her (name) is hard to pronounce for the other students. Unhei is faced with a challenge. Should she change her name to an American name? Or can she find the (courage) to be different and tell her class her real Korean name?

At the end of the story, Unhei has (courage) because she tells the class her real Korean name. She is a (Hero) because she has done something that is scary and difficult. Therefore, *The Name Jar* is a (Hero's Journey) story.

Review the answers with students and give feedback where necessary.

Lesson 3

Vocabulary; comprehension, hero's journey in story; address big question of unit. Prepare to read *The Conference of the Birds* with Visual Thinking Strategy; Build

background knowledge around concept of The Hero's Journey in relation to *The Name Jar* through Anticipation Guide (i.e. Students can empathize with experiencing challenge and finding courage in a personally difficult situation); Use Vocabulary Word Chart to introduce key vocabulary: journey, hero, challenge, courage, hero's journey.

Read and recount key ideas and details in *The Conference of the Birds* by asking and answering questions; describe the characters and their motivations and feelings in *The Conference of the Birds*; determine the central message of the story as it relates to The Hero's Journey; Apply vocabulary word meanings using Cloze Sentences and Crossword Puzzle;

Session 1 (30 minutes) –Prepare to read *The Conference of the Birds* with Visual Thinking Strategy; give brief historical background for story; discuss big question of unit: How can a very, very old story and a very, very new story have the same message or theme?

Gather students together. Remind them that last session they read *The Name Jar*, which is a Hero's Journey tale, and that now the class will look at another story that involves the Hero's Journey.

Visual Thinking Strategy - Explain they will use the Visual Thinking Strategy from before to begin thinking about what the story could be about.

Display pages 2-3 from *The Conference of the Birds*. Scene shows the Wise Hoopoe Bird gathering the thirty birds together to inform them they must journey to find the King.

Use above Visual Thinking Strategy procedure (i.e. students have sustained silent time to observe image; then respond with observations; if students give inferential response, teacher asks for evidence).

Facilitate discussion and write student's responses where everyone can see them. Then summarize students' observations and discussion.

Introduce Story with brief information:

Share this with students. *The Conference of the Birds* was written almost 1000 years ago in Persia. It is a story about a group of birds that are lost. They have no King to help to keep things peaceful and lead them. One day, the bird at the center of the image used in Visual Thinking Strategy gathers them together to tell them he has found their King, his name is King Simourgh, and they must make a journey to find him. *The Conference of the Birds* is all about their journey to find King Simourgh and what happens to the birds along the way.

Connect story to Big Question of the Unit and to the Hero's Journey

Tell students *The Conference of the Birds* and the story they just read, *The Name Jar*, have the same theme. They are both Hero's Journey stories. Pose the Big Question to students: How can a very, very old story, like *The Conference of the Birds*, and a very, very new story, like *The Name Jar*, have the same message?

Have students Think-Pair-Share their responses to the question. Write down student's responses and facilitate discussion.

Session 2 (25 minutes) – Build background knowledge and teach vocabulary for *The Conference of the Birds*.

Give students Vocabulary Organizer and follow vocabulary procedure below (same as used in prior lesson):

Introduce Word

Pronunciation - Say the word. Have students repeat it a few times in fun and engaging ways. For example, whisper it. Sing it. Say it like a robot. Syllabication – Clap the word. Note: Focus on students learning how to say the word and hear its individual parts.

Spell it and write the word for students to see.

Perform a knowledge rating: Assess students' prior knowledge of the word. All students respond by showing their level of knowledge of the word using a number of fingers. Hold up one finger if they have never heard the word before; two fingers, if they heard the word before, but don't know what it means; three fingers, if they heard the word before and have some idea about what it means; and four fingers if they know the word well and can explain it. Assess students' level of knowledge of individual words. If a student has four fingers raised call on them, and ask for a response.

Explain the word

Give student-friendly definition of the word – Have students either copy or paraphrase their own definition of the word. Encourage students to write the meaning in their own words if possible. If students know the word in their home language, they should write it in the appropriate space on the organizer. They can also draw a representative meaning of the word. Then have them try to use it in a sentence as best they can.

Use the above procedure to teach the following words and their student-friendly definitions:

Quest – a hard or difficult journey to find something

Flock – a group of birds

Throne – the place where a king is located

Commit – to do something without giving up

Hesitate – to stop and not do something

Chance- opportunity to do something

Advance – to go or continue (like advance to your King means to keep going to the King)

Doubt – to not believe something (like the tiny finch in the story doubts they can make it through the storm)

Pondered – to think about something (to think about what the Wise Hoopoe bird said)

Session 2 (40 minutes) – **Create purpose for reading with KWL as a whole group; read story with students; review vocabulary if possible**

KWL - Complete KWL as a whole group with the first two sections. For example, we know the story is about a group of birds that do not have a King. We know they are lost without a King. We want to know if they do find their King.

Read story with students: Guiding questions to ask and answer questions as whole group followed by suggested responses:

Page 1 – What is happening? A large flock of birds is gathered. They are sad because they do not have a king.

Pages 2-3 – What does the Hoopoe bird tell them? He has seen where King Simourgh is located. With the King, you will find a love that never dies. He can lead them there, but it will be long and hard.

How do the birds react? They are happy and joyous.

Pages 4-5 – As the birds are about to leave, the duck hesitates. Why? He wants to stay in his pond.

What does the Hoopoe say to convince him? The pond isn't that nice and you are just acting out of laziness.

Pages 6-7 – What does the duck say about the clouds? They advance with purpose through the sky.

What does he do? Decides he must go to the King.

Pages 8-9 – All the birds set off on their journey, but the parrot has a problem. What is it? She is weighed down by heavy jewels and jewelry, and she is tired.

Pages 10-11 – What does the Hoopoe bird say to the parrot? “Do not let rich attachments destroy this golden chance.”

What does the parrot do? Rips off the chains and keeps going on the journey.

Page 12-13 – What starts to happen that scares the tiny finch? A storm with thunder and lightning is ahead

Pages 16-17 – What does the Hoopoe tell the finch? “We all have the strength we need including little you!” and “Do not let your many doubts destroy this golden chance.”

Pages 18-19 – What does the finch do? What is the “explosion of”? The finch leads the flock into the storm with an “explosion of courage”.

Pages 20-21 – Where are they now? Long time into their journey; they are by the ocean and they can see far out into ocean

Where must they go? They must travel across the ocean to a lonely island.

What is on the island? A mountain

What is on the top of the mountain? King Simourgh is said to be there.

Pages 22-23 – What does the partridge do at this point? Complains, “Are we there yet?”

What does the Hoopoe say, “with every hardship, greater is the reward.”

Pages 29-30 – As they get close the island, what does the hawk do? Flies ahead into the mist; they cannot see him.

Pages 31-32 – What happens to the hawk? He gets lost in the clouds.

What does he say and what does he think? “Forgive me.” He feels bad and thinks he’s made a mistake. He thinks he is going to die.

Pages 33-34 – How does the hawk survive? The Hoopoe finds him

What does the Hoopoe bird say to him? “We all must learn to lose ourselves.”

Pages 37-38 – When they reach the top of the mountain, what do they see? There is no king, but only a lake with snow surrounding it. They see their reflection in the lake.

The Hoopoe gives a speech. What does the bird say? They have only made it to this place because they made the difficult quest. They got ride of all their “inner faults and outer flaws.”

Reflection questions to conclude the story and apply the Hero’s Journey:

Who is/are the hero(s) of this story? The birds

The challenges were different for each bird. Discuss the challenges for each of the following birds: the duck - lazy and didn’t want to leave; the hawk – wanted to be first; the tiny finch – scared of the storm; the parrot – wanted to hold on to its jewels; the patridge – complained and wanted to give up

What did each of the birds have to do to reach the King? Get over their challenges

How were the heroes different at the end of the story? They overcame their challenges

Complete L-section of KWL – Have students complete the Learned-section of the KWL graphic organizer. Summarize students’ response with class.

Session 3 (20 minutes) – Students connect the Hero’s Journey theme in both stories and answer the Big Question from the Unit

How can a very, very old story and a very, very new story have the same message – the Hero’s Journey?

Have students Think-Pair-Share responses. Convene group and share responses to the question.

Resources

Bibliography for Teachers

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Crossword Puzzle Generator. (n.d.). Retrieved June, 2019, from <https://www.education.com/worksheet-generator/reading/crossword-puzzle/> - Engagement tool to review vocabulary or other content.

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Robertson, K. (2006). Visual Thinking Strategies for Improved Comprehension. Retrieved May, 2019, from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/visual-thinking-strategies-improved-comprehension>

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Appendix

Standards met by this unit:

CC.1.3 Students read and respond to works of literature - with emphasis on comprehension, making connections among ideas and between texts with focus on textual evidence. *Students apply The Hero's Journey template to two texts by asking and answering questions, responding with partners and as a whole class. Students will be continually asked for evidence when giving responses.*

CC.1.3.3.G Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting). *Students will use Visual Thinking Strategies to evaluate and explain what is happening in the text. Students will also explain how a character's emotions are evident from illustrations.*

CC.1.3.3.A Determine the central message, lesson, or moral in literary text; explain how it is conveyed in text. *Students will use the Hero's Journey template to examine how characters change in the story and how that determines the central message of the text.*

CC.1.3.3.B Ask and answer questions about the text and make inferences from text; refer to text to support responses. *Students will use guiding questions to respond to text, including evidence for inferential responses.*

CC.1.2.3.J Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships. *Students will use new vocabulary during a variety of activities, including the Marzano's instructional procedure.*

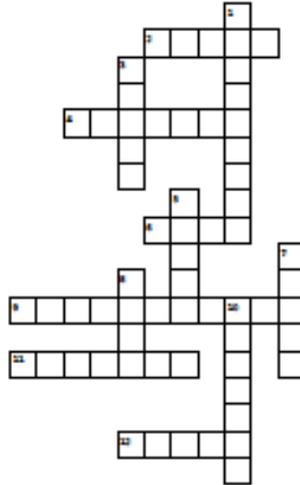
Use Academic Vocabulary Word Chart (see below) to learn new vocabulary. Website link above in bibliography.

"Identifying Words While Reading" (modified from the book, *The ELL Teacher's Toolbox*, by Ferlazzo & Hull Sypniewski)

Paragraph Number	Word	Definition In English Using My Own Words	Definition in Home Language and/or Picture	My Own Sentence

Use Crossword Puzzles to engage students in content and vocabulary. See puzzle below. Website can be found in bibliography.

"The Name Jar" Crossword Puzzle



Down:

1. the name Ralph puts in the name jar (Hint: It's the day of the week after Tuesday) jar, the kids in Unhei's class put names in this so she can pick a name
3. after the kids on the bus make fun of her name, Unhei feels herself _____ because she is embarrassed
5. the country Unhei came from
7. the friendly man Unhei meets at the market. He thinks Unhei is a beautiful name.
9. a person who does something even when they are scared of doing it. Unhei is this in The Name Jar.
10. (Hint: two words) Unhei receives this from her grandmother. It says, "You'll always be my Unhei."

Across:

2. the main character's name in The Name Jar
4. this means bravery. When someone has this, they do things they are scared of doing. For example, Unhei has _____ when she picks her name instead of an American name.
6. Unhei's new friend. He wanted her to keep her Korean name and not change it.
9. "Maybe she _____ in Korea and needs a new identity," a boy replies after Unhei says she hasn't picked a name yet. (Hint: three words)
11. how Unhei feels on her first day of school
12. what Unhei's name means.

Use KWL Chart to access student prior knowledge and engage students for future learning. Link available in bibliography.

Name: _____ Date: _____

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KWL Chart

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Select a topic you want to research. In the first column, write what you already know about the topic. In the second column, write what you want to know about the topic. After you have completed your research, write what you learned in the third column.

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned