

Focus Question:

Whose experience with the sunflowers was most valuable, Mike's or Aster's? Why?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic

Mike needs to earn twenty-five dollars, and he thinks he has the perfect plan: to grow sunflowers and sell the seeds. Mike is not the most experienced gardener, however, and hits a few bumps along the way. Fortunately, his little sister, Aster, is there to help with her knowledge and curiosity. *Seeds and Sunflowers* is the charming story of how this brother-sister duo reaches a different kind of success than they had imagined. The book can also be used to teach students how to make inferences and draw conclusions and to identify complex sentences.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Make inferences and draw conclusions
- ☐ Describe information provided by illustrations
- ☐ Recognize and use complex sentences
- ☐ Identify and use compound words

Materials

- ☐ Book: *Seeds and Sunflowers* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Make inferences / draw conclusions, complex sentences, compound words worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *accrue* (v.), *chronicled* (v.), *consumer* (n.), *investment* (n.), *organic* (adj.), *venture* (n.)

Enrichment: *license* (n.), *retail* (adj.), *speculatively* (adv.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *amount* (n.), *another* (adj.), *couple* (n.), *curiosity* (n.), *exactly* (adv.), *same* (adj.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

Write the word *consumer* on the board and read it aloud to students. Explain that a consumer is a person who buys goods or services and uses them. Organize students into small groups and provide each group with a piece of chart paper. Invite each group to consider and discuss ways that they could work together to earn money. Have them consider who their consumers would be, what product or service they would sell, and what steps they would need to take to get their business up and running. Have students use the chart paper to create an advertisement for their business and present it to the class.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Seeds and Sunflowers*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

Explain to students that engaged readers *summarize*, or create a brief overview, as they read. Explain to students that when readers summarize what they read, it helps them better understand the story. Point out that a summary often answers the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Create a chart on the board with the headings *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Read aloud a summary from the back of a familiar book. Ask students what information is included in the summary and what information is omitted. Fill in the chart on the board with this information. Remind students that a summary includes only the most important details.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Make inferences / draw conclusions

- Explain to students that authors may give information to readers without explicitly writing it in the story. Point out that they provide readers with clues and readers use those clues along with what they already know to *make inferences* or *draw conclusions* about what is happening in the story.
- Read page 3 aloud to students and have them locate the following sentence on the page: *"Another idea for making money?" asked Mrs. McCarthy.* Point out that, on the basis of this information, we can conclude that Mike is interested in making money and in the past has come up with several ideas of how to do so. Share with students that the author does not tell us this directly but we can draw this conclusion on the basis of the information in the text.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Mike's and Aster's experiences with growing sunflowers. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *Why does Mike want to sell sunflower seeds to make money?* (level 1) page 4
- *What can you tell about Mike on the basis of how he feels about the consumer?* (level 1) page 5
- *What problems face Mike when growing his sunflowers?* (level 1) pages 6–8, 12, 14

- *How can you tell that Mike and Aster care about one another?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *How are Mike's feelings toward Aster different at the end of the story?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *What did Mike learn from Aster about growing sunflowers?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *What did Aster learn and gain through Mike's experience of growing sunflowers?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Illustrations

Explain that illustrations provide readers with detailed images of the characters and setting of the story. Point out that they also help explain the plot to readers. Have students work with a partner to review the illustration on page 9. Ask students: *How does this illustration show that Mike's attitude toward growing sunflowers is starting to change? What other information is shown in this illustration that is not written in the story?* Have students review other illustrations in the book and discuss in groups how they aid the reader in understanding the story and in making inferences and drawing conclusions about what's happening in the story.

Skill Review

- Remind students that a summary of a story describes the most important events and characters. Have students work in groups to describe the characters in the story and to identify the most important events. Direct them back to the chart on the board and review that a summary often includes *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Invite students to share details with the rest of the class and record this information on the board.
- Have students work in groups to create a summary of what they are reading, referring to the information on the board. Call on groups to share their summary with the rest of the class.
- Model making inferences and drawing conclusions. **Think-aloud:** *In the story, I notice that Aster is constantly involved with Mike's project of growing sunflowers even though he has not asked for her help. I know that Aster will not be making money from the seeds that Mike sells but continues to help anyway. I know that when I help people who have not asked for assistance, I do it because I love and care about them. I can infer that Aster cares for her brother and wants him to be successful. The author has not explicitly stated that this is how Aster feels, but rather has given clues that allow the reader to make inferences and draw conclusions.*
- Model how to complete the [make-inferences / draw-conclusions worksheet](#). Have students identify details from the story and prior knowledge they have about those details. Then, have students make inferences on the basis of that information. Have students discuss the inferences with a partner.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer:

Make inferences / draw conclusions

Review the make-inferences / draw-conclusions worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to discuss their inferences as a class and share why and how they made those inferences.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary but sample responses may include the following: *Aster's experience with the sunflowers was more valuable because she was able to pursue her curiosity and learn about the plants. For example, she noticed how their faces always followed the sun and took pictures over time to document their growth.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Complex sentences

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Water the plants often _____ it is hot.* Have students read the sentence and suggest words that could fill in the blank to complete the sentence (*because, since, as*).
- Review or explain that a *subordinating conjunction* is a word that joins together an independent clause and a dependent clause. Point to the examples that students suggested to complete the sentence on the board. Explain that these subordinating conjunctions join parts of sentences together to form a complex sentence. List examples of subordinating conjunctions on the board, such as *after, although, as, as if, because, before, for, it, once, since, so, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while*.

- Reread the sentence on the board, including the subordinating conjunction in the sentence. (*Water the plant often because it is hot.*) Underline *Water the plants often*. Explain that this part of the sentence is called the *independent clause*. Circle *because it is hot*. Explain that this part of the sentence is called the *dependent clause*. Point out that even though both sentence parts contain a subject and a verb, the dependent clause does not express a complete thought and is not a sentence that can stand alone.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students highlight the following sentence on page 10: *When they bloomed, Aster snapped another photo*. Have students underline the independent clause (*Aster snapped another photo*) and circle the dependent clause (*When they bloomed*). Ask students to identify the conjunction (*when*). Point out that this is an example of a dependent clause preceding an independent clause.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **complex sentences worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Compound words

- Write the word *bedroom* on the board and read it aloud with students. Ask students which two words were joined together to make the word *bedroom*. Ask a volunteer to explain how the meanings of these two words help define the word *bedroom*. Explain that two words joined together to create one word is called a *compound word*.
- Read page 14 aloud as students follow along. Have students identify each compound word. Then, invite them to turn to a partner to identify the two words that make up each compound word.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work independently to reread pages 3 and 4 and circle each of the compound words. Review students' findings as a class. Invite volunteers to identify the two words that make up each compound word.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **compound words worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.