



Reading Instruction for Middle School Students

**Lessons for Improving Comprehension
Through “Any Small Goodness”**

by Tony Johnston

Adapted from intervention materials developed by
the Texas Center for Learning Disabilities

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Overview

About These Lesson Plans

These lesson plans within this novel unit represent examples of instruction provided to struggling readers in middle school (grades 6–8) as part of the research of the Texas Center for Learning Disabilities (TCLD). Research staff members developed the lesson plans, which align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and certified teachers implemented them. For more information about this research, see the Project 3 page of the TCLD website at www.texasldcenter.org/research/project3.asp.

All of the activities in the lesson plans are research based, and references to this research can be found throughout. They are appropriate for use with struggling readers in middle school and focus on improving reading comprehension. This set of plans is to be used with the novel *Any Small Goodness* by Tony Johnston (available from Scholastic). *Any Small Goodness* is a work of fiction about an adolescent boy, Arturo, who moves to Los Angeles from Mexico with his family. The story describes the family adapting to their new neighborhood. Although life in the new neighborhood presents challenges, Arturo learns about acts of “small goodness” that come to define his experience.

During these lessons, students will do the following (corresponding English Language Arts and Reading TEKS for grades 6–8 are listed below each objective):

- **Learn important vocabulary**

Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to:

- determine the meaning of grade-level academic English words derived from Latin, Greek, or other linguistic roots and affixes (Texas Administrative Code [TAC] §110.18–110.20(b)(2)(A))
- use context (e.g., cause and effect or compare and contrast organizational text structures) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple meaning words (TAC §110.18(b)(2)(B))
- use context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or ambiguous words (TAC §110.19(b)(2)(B))
- use context (within a sentence and in larger sections of text) to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar or ambiguous words or words with novel meanings (TAC §110.20(b)(2)(B))

- **Make predictions prior to reading and verify predictions after reading**

Students use a flexible range of metacognitive reading skills in both assigned and independent reading to understand an author’s message. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts as they become self-directed, critical readers. The student is expected to:

- Grade 6: make inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding (19 TAC §110.17(b)(D))
- Grades 7–8: make complex inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding (19 TAC §110.17(b)(D))

- **Access background knowledge prior to reading**

Students use a flexible range of metacognitive reading skills in both assigned and independent reading to understand an author’s message. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts as they become self-directed, critical readers. The student is expected to:

- establish purposes for reading selected texts based upon own or others’ desired outcome to enhance comprehension (19 TAC §110.17(b)(A))

- **Read text through various formats (e.g., partner reading, choral reading) to learn and practice various reading comprehension strategies (e.g., main idea, summarization)**

See relevant TEKS for each comprehension skill below.

- **Learn how to “get the gist” of a passage and entire chapter**

Students use a flexible range of metacognitive reading skills in both assigned and independent reading to understand an author’s message. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts as they become self-directed, critical readers. The student is expected to:

- Grades 7–8: reflect on understanding to monitor comprehension (e.g., summarizing and synthesizing; making textual, personal, and world connections; creating sensory images; 19 TAC §110.17(b)(C))
- Grades 6–8: summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize texts in ways that maintain meaning and logical order within a text and across texts (19 TAC §110.17(b)(E))

- **Learn how to generate Level 1, Right There, and Level 2, Putting It Together, questions**

Students use a flexible range of metacognitive reading skills in both assigned and independent reading to understand an author’s message. Students will continue to apply earlier standards with greater depth in increasingly more complex texts as they become self-directed, critical readers. The student is expected to:

- Grades 6–8: ask literal, interpretive, evaluative, and universal questions of text (19 TAC §110.17(b)(B))
- Grade 6: monitor and adjust comprehension (e.g., using background knowledge; creating sensory images; rereading a portion aloud; generating questions; 19 TAC §110.17(b)(C))

Preparation

Each lesson is to be completed in one or two days of approximately 60 minutes of instruction each. Teacher guides note the intended time for each lesson. Materials include an overview of daily activities (organized by chapter), options for structuring text reading and reviewing vocabulary words, teacher guides, student logs, and supplemental materials for students. All of the materials are available for free download at www.texasldcenter.org.

It is important that teachers preread lesson plans and chapters prior to teaching. They will need to prepare student materials, develop instructional examples, and select reading formats and vocabulary word options before instruction begins.

Professional Development

Teachers can learn more about implementing the instructional practices and strategies described within lesson plans by accessing the Professional Development link on the side of the Lesson Plans webpage: www.texasldcenter.org/lessonplans.

We also encourage you to explore the other helpful resources on the TCLD website.

Questions

For questions related to lesson plans or other TCLD work, contact us at www.texasldcenter.org/contact.asp.