

Morris Goes to School

By B. Wiseman / ISBN: 0-06-444045-1

Lesson Author

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Standards and Benchmarks (see page 20)

Lesson Description

In this lesson, students learn about human capital and why it is important to improve their human capital. They first observe a skit about a boy who could not read and then listen to a story about a moose who could not read or count. They then learn how investing in human capital helps both the boy and the moose achieve their goals. After thinking about their own human capital, students identify human capital needed by various workers to do their jobs. Students survey adults about their skills and investment in human capital and how and why the adults invested in their human capital in the past year. On Day Two they analyze the results of their surveys. Students draw generalizations about the skills the adults have and how and why they improve their human capital. They compare their own knowledge and skills with those of the adults they interviewed. Finally, students answer the question “Why do we need to go to school?”

Grade Level

1-3

Concepts

Human capital
Investment in human capital

Objectives

- Students will be able to
- give examples of human capital,
 - list ways to improve human capital, and
 - explain the benefits of improving their human capital.

Essential Question

Why do we need to go to school?

Time Required

90 minutes, over 2 days

Materials

- *Morris Goes to School* (ISBN:0-06-444045-1) by B. Wiseman
 - Visuals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
 - Handout 1, three copies
 - Handout 2, enough copies cut apart so that each group of three has one card
 - Handout 3, one copy each student
 - 8½" × 11" paper, one sheet for each student
 - Markers
 - Sticky notes, one for each student
 - Tape
 - One gift bag
 - Addressed letter to be (pretend) mailed
 - Index card with the following name and address: Ms. Evans, 102 Church Street
 - One library book
 - One dollar bill (fake or real)
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Preparation

For procedure Step 5: Tape Visuals 1, 2, and 3 in the front of the room. Select two students to play the roles of Alonzo and Ms. Reed. Give each a copy of *Handout 1: Alonzo Has a Problem*. Have the students practice reading their parts. Tell these students you will be the narrator.

Procedure

Day One

1. Begin the class by asking the following:
 - Why do you come to school each day? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: Some students will say their parents make them or that's what children do. Others will say to learn things.*)
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- What do you learn at school? (*Answers will vary but may include reading, writing, and math.*)
 - Why do you need to learn to read, write, and do math? (*Answers will vary. Students may not immediately know the answer to this question.*)
2. Write the words **human capital** on the board. Define human capital as the knowledge and skills that people have that will make them better workers.
 3. Ask students for examples of things they know and skills they have, such as reading, spelling, playing soccer, or dancing. Make a list of their knowledge and skills on the board under the words human capital. Tell students these things are part of their human capital.
 4. Tell students they are going to learn about human capital and how they can improve their human capital so they can answer the question “Why do we need to go to school?”
 5. Tell students that you and two students are going to perform a skit about a young man named Alonzo who is asked to run errands for his neighbor, Ms. Reed. Ask the students to listen for Alonzo’s problem and think about how he might solve his problem.
 6. Perform the skit.
 7. Discuss the following:
 - Why did Alonzo want to run errands for Ms. Reed? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: He liked Ms. Reed and wanted to help her. He wanted to earn some income [money] to buy a soccer ball.*)
 - What was Alonzo’s problem? (*He didn’t know how to read.*)
 - How did not being able to read keep Alonzo from achieving his goal of buying a soccer ball? (*Because he couldn’t read, he didn’t mail the letter or deliver the gift, so Ms. Reed did not pay him for those errands.*)
 - How do you think Alonzo might solve his problem? (*Answers will vary but may include asking for help or going to school to learn to read.*)
 8. Tell students you are going to read a book, *Morris Goes to School*. Morris has a problem similar to Alonzo’s. Read the first page of the book (page 5). Show students the picture. Discuss the following:
 - What was Morris’s problem? (*He wants to buy candy but goes to the wrong store—the Fish Store. He can’t read.*)

9. Continue reading. Stop on page 9 after the storekeeper asks Morris “How much money do you have?” Show the students the picture. Discuss the following:
 - How much money does Morris have? (*Six coins*)
10. Finish reading page 9. Discuss the following:
 - What is Morris’s problem? (*He can’t count. He thinks he has four pennies.*)
11. Finish reading the book. Discuss the following:
 - What human capital did Morris have before he went to school? (*He could jump rope and throw a ball.*)
 - What was Morris’s problem? (*He couldn’t read, so he didn’t know what store to go to buy candy. He couldn’t count, so he didn’t know if he had enough pennies to buy candy.*)
 - How did Morris solve his problems of not being able to read or count? (*He went to school.*)
 - How did Morris invest or add to his human capital by going to school? (*He learned the alphabet and to read a few words, count, paint, and sing a song.*)
 - How did investing in his human capital help Morris solve his problem? (*Now he could read the store signs and know where to go to buy candy, and he could count his money and know if he had enough to buy candy.*)
12. Tell students that the knowledge Morris gained and the skills he learned—being able to read and count—are ways he improved his human capital.
13. Remind the students about Alonzo’s problem. Discuss the following:
 - What human capital did Alonzo have? (*He knew how to get to the library. He was a good soccer player.*)
 - What human capital—what knowledge and skills—did Alonzo need to solve his problem? (*He needed to learn how to read.*)
 - How would improving his human capital help Alonzo solve his problem? (*He would be able to read the street signs to know where to go to mail the letter and deliver the gift. He could run errands for Ms. Reed and others to earn income [money] and reach his goal.*)
 - How did improving his human capital help Morris the Moose? (*He was able to find the candy store and know how many gum drops he could buy.*)
14. Point out to the students that like Alonzo and Morris the Moose, if they improve their human capital, they will improve their knowledge and skills and be able to do their schoolwork and other things better.

15. Display *Visual 4: Veterinarian*. Discuss the following:
 - What kind of human capital does a veterinarian have and how does that human capital help him do his job? (*A veterinarian is good with animals, can read and write, knows what medicine to give, and is friendly to customers. Because of his human capital, he can identify what is wrong with animals and help them get well. He can also make the pet owners feel good about the treatment their pets receive. He can correctly read the labels on the medicine he gives and write prescriptions correctly.*)

16. Divide the students into groups of three. Distribute to each group a worker from *Handout 2: Workers*. Ask the groups to discuss and choose one example of their worker's human capital and be able to explain how this human capital helps the worker do his or her job.

17. Have each group share its picture as follows:
 - Identify the worker.
 - Give an example of the human capital the worker has.
 - Explain how this human capital helps the worker do his or her job.

18. Discuss the following:
 - What are some of your skills—some of the things you are good at doing? (*Answers will vary but may include reading, dancing, playing basketball, babysitting, running, playing an instrument, or playing games.*) Point out that these skills and abilities are the students' human capital.
 - How did you become good at doing these things? (*Answers will vary but may include that they went to school, practiced, their parents taught them, or they took lessons.*) Point out that these are ways they improved their human capital.
 - What are some knowledge and skills you learn at school that become part of your human capital? (*Answers will vary but may include reading, writing, spelling, math, science facts, social studies facts, working in groups, and following directions.*)
 - What are some things you can do at school to improve your human capital? (*Answers will vary but may include listening, completing assignments and homework, paying attention, or following the rules.*)
 - Why is it important to improve your human capital? (*When you improve your human capital, you are able to do more things and be a better worker or a better student.*)

19. Distribute a copy of *Handout 3: Human Capital Survey* to each student. Explain to the students that they are going to survey adults in their school, community, or home to

learn about those adults' human capital and ways they have improved or will improve their human capital.

20. Model for students how to conduct the survey. Then, have the students work in pairs and practice giving the survey to each other. Tell students not to write on the survey.

Day Two

21. After the students have surveyed adults, create a large chart like the one below on the board or poster paper. Ask students to place an "X" next to each skill or knowledge the adult they surveyed possessed in the column labeled "Skills and Knowledge Adults Have."

Skills and Knowledge	Skills and Knowledge Adults Have
Read	
Write	
Multiply and divide	
Make a foul shot	
Paint a picture	
Make an origami bird	
Use a computer	

22. To help the students draw generalizations from the data they have collected, discuss the following:
- Which skills and knowledge do most of the adults surveyed have? (*Answers will vary, but most likely they can read, write, multiply, and divide.*)
 - What skills or knowledge did the fewest adults have? (*Answers will vary.*)
 - Why do you think so few adults had this skill or possess this knowledge? (*Answers will vary but may include the following: They don't need to have it or they have no desire to gain that skill or have that knowledge.*)

23. Refer students to their completed surveys. Discuss the following:
- What new skill or knowledge did your adult learn or improve in the past year? (*Answers will vary.*)
 - Why did he or she learn this skill or knowledge? (*Answers will vary but may include to be a better worker or student.*)
 - What new skill or knowledge have you learned in the past year? (*Answers will vary.*)
24. Point out that adults improve their human capital to earn more income, be better at their work, or help their community.
25. Add a third column to the chart and label it “Skills and Knowledge Students Have.” Direct students to place an “X” next to each skill or knowledge they have. Discuss the following:
- How similar are your skills and knowledge to those the adults had? (*Most students will be able to read, write, paint a picture, and use a computer. Some may know how to multiply and divide or make a foul shot. Most will not know how to make an origami bird.*)
 - Which skills and knowledge on the list that you don’t have would you like to have as part of your human capital? (*Answers will vary.*)
 - How would you gain that human capital? (*Answers will vary but may include going to school, practice, or having someone teach them.*)
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Closure

26. Display a copy of *Visual 5: Human Capital* (on your word wall if you have one). Give each student a sticky note. Ask them to write an example of human capital on the sticky note and place it under the Human Capital sign. Read each sticky note and have the class decide whether the item noted is or is not an example of human capital.
27. Distribute the examples of human capital to pairs of students. Ask each pair to think of ways to improve their example of human capital. For example, if someone listed “reading” as an example of human capital, the pair of students might suggest practicing reading at school or at home with a parent as a way to improve reading skills. Allow time for students to complete the activity and then invite pairs to share.
28. Discuss the following:
- Why do we need to go to school? (*Answers will vary but may include to add to their human capital, gain new knowledge and learn new skills, improve their human capital, or make them better workers or students.*)
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Assessment

29. Distribute a sheet of 8½" × 11" white paper to each student. Ask them to fold the paper in half the short way (the hamburger way). Instruct the students to proceed as follows:

- On the left side, draw a picture of a job they would like to have as an adult.
- On the right side, write one example of human capital they would need to do this job and one example of how they are going to obtain this human capital.

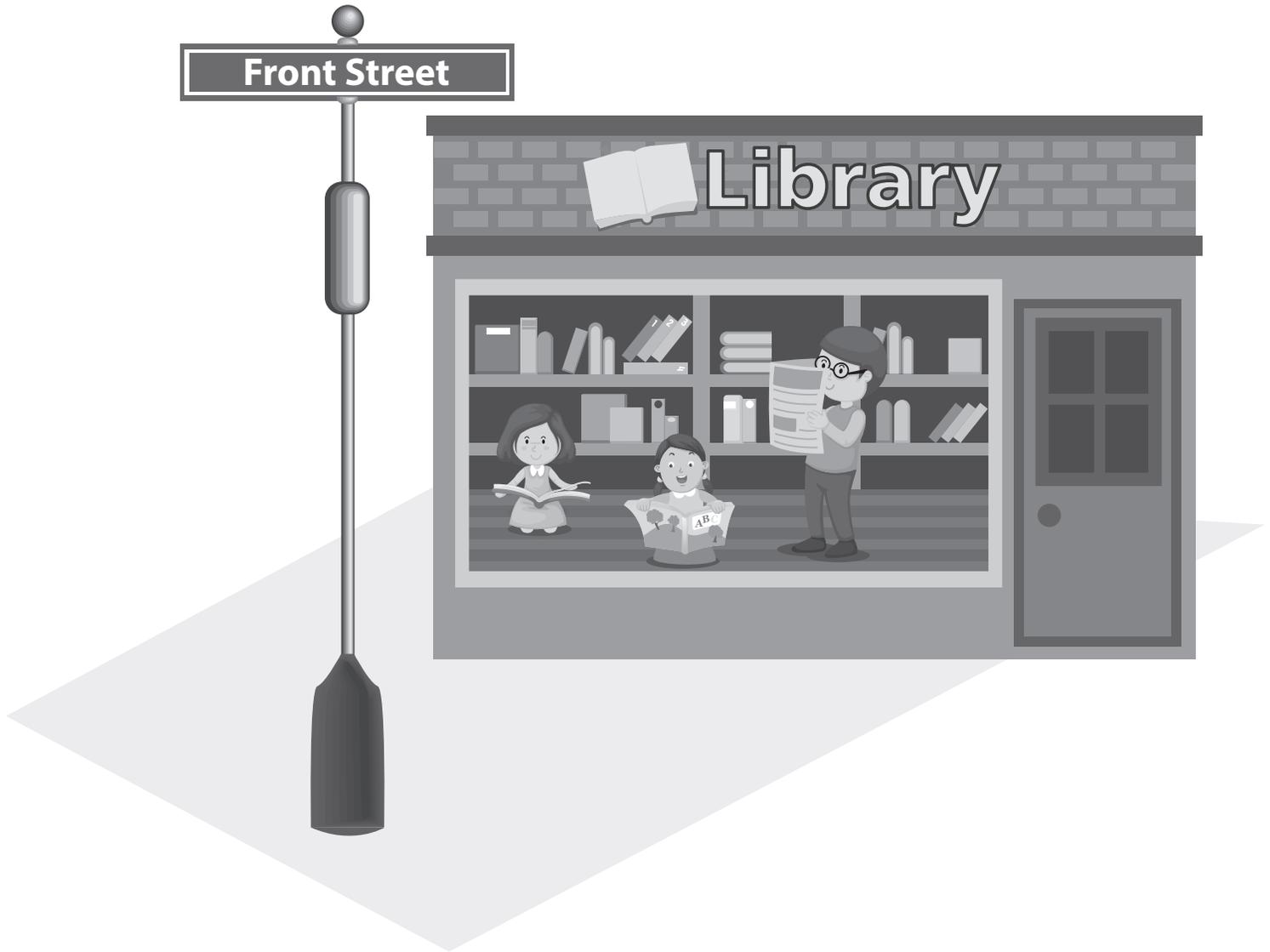
Visual 1: Post Office



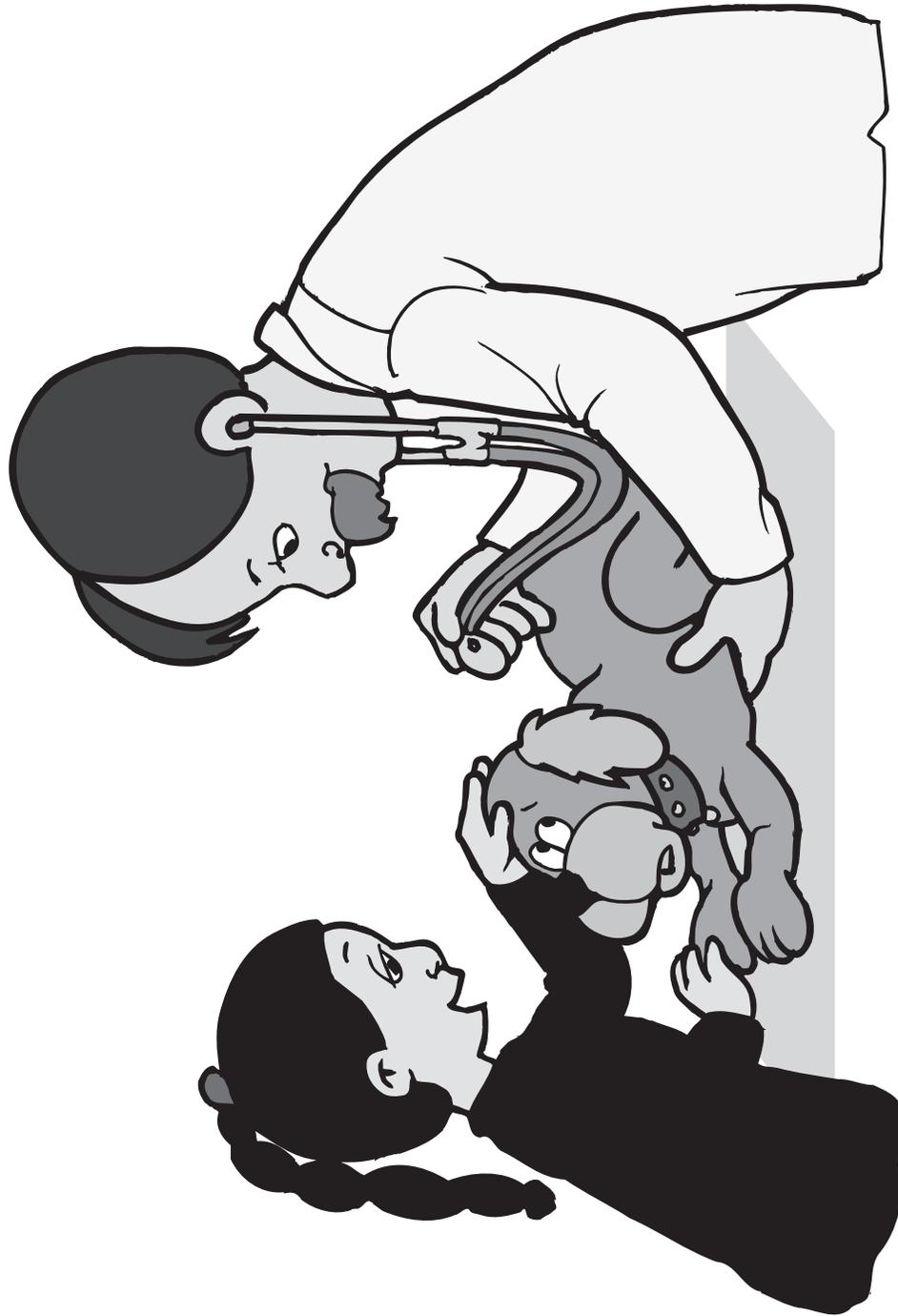
Visual 2: House



Visual 3: Library



Visual 4: Veterinarian



Visual 5: Human Capital

Human capital

Handout 1: Alonzo Has a Problem (page 1 of 2)

Narrator: Ms. Reed needs help doing her errands. She sees Alonzo outside and calls to him.

Ms. Reed: Alonzo, could I talk with you for a minute?

Alonzo: Sure, Ms. Reed.

Ms. Reed: Alonzo, I need someone to run errands for me. I will pay you for your help.

Alonzo: What would you like me to do?

Ms. Reed: I would like you to go to the post office on Main Street and mail this letter.

Narrator: Ms. Reed gives Alonzo a letter to mail.

Ms. Reed: I would like you to deliver a gift bag to Ms. Evans. She lives at 102 Church Street. I wrote the address on this card.

Narrator: Ms. Reed gives Alonzo a gift bag for Ms. Evans and the address card.

Ms. Reed: Please return this book to the library on Front Street.

Narrator: Ms. Reed gives Alonzo a library book.

Ms. Reed: I'll pay you \$1.00 for each errand.

Narrator: Alonzo is very excited about this opportunity to earn some income. He has been saving for a new soccer ball to practice with his friends on the soccer team. He needs only three more dollars to reach his goal. If he completes Ms. Reed's three errands, he will earn \$3.00.

Ms. Reed: Which errand are you going to do first?

Alonzo: I'll think I'll return the book to the library first.

Narrator: Alonzo goes to the library and returns Ms. Reed's book. Alonzo walks around town trying to find Main Street and Church Street. (Alonzo walks back and forth in front of the streets labeled Main Street and Church Street.) Finally, Alonzo gives up. He returns to Ms. Reed's house.

Handout 1: Alonzo Has a Problem (page 2 of 2)

Alonzo: I returned your book to the library, Ms. Reed.

Ms. Reed: Thank you.

Narrator: Alonzo gives the gift bag and letter to Ms. Reed.

Ms. Reed: Why didn't you mail the letter and deliver the gift bag?

Alonzo: I couldn't find Main Street or Church Street.

Ms. Reed: Why didn't you read the street signs?

Alonzo: I do not know how to read yet.

Ms. Reed: How did you find the library?

Alonzo: I go there with my parents.

Ms. Reed: Alonzo, I'll pay you \$1.00 for returning the library book.

Alonzo: Thank you.

Handout 2: Workers (page 1 of 2)



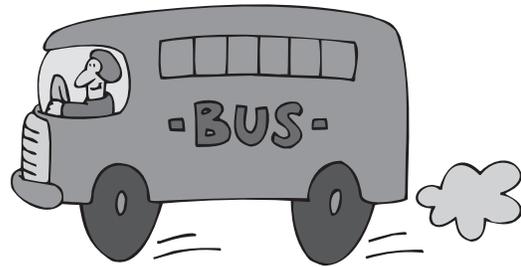
Ballet dancer



Firefighter



Mail carrier



Bus driver

Handout 2: Workers (page 2 of 2)



Teacher



Dentist



Baker



Carpenter

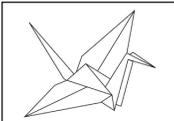
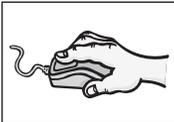
Handout 3: Human Capital Survey (page 1 of 2)

Student's name: _____

Name of adult surveyed: _____

Note to adult:

Students have been learning about human capital (knowledge and skills) they possess and ways to improve their human capital. Please allow the student to interview you and fill out the survey for you.

Skill	Yes	No
Can you read? 		
Can you write? 		
Can you multiply and divide? For example, $4 \times 8 = 32$ and $24/6 = 4$		
Can you make a foul shot? 		
Can you paint a picture? 		
Can you make an origami bird? 		
Do you know how to use a computer? 		

Handout 3: Human Capital Survey (page 2 of 2)

What is a skill or knowledge you learned or improved over the past year?

How did you learn or improve this skill or knowledge?

Why did you learn or improve this skill or knowledge?

Standards and Benchmarks

National Standards in Economics

Standard 1: Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.

- **Benchmark 10, Grade 4:** Human capital refers to the quality of labor resources, which can be improved through investments in education, training, and health.

Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts, Grades 1-3

Reading: Literature

- **Key Ideas and Details**

RL.1.1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL.2.1: Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL.2.3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

- **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

RL.1.7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, settings, or events.

RL.2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

RL.3.7: 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)

Speaking and Listening

- **Comprehension and Collaboration**

SL1.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 1 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.1.2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL.2.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 2 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.2.2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly

SL. 3.2: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Language

- **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

L.3.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., *After dinner that night, we went looking for them*).