

Protagonist Study

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Subject: Social Studies and English Language Arts

CT Concept: Pattern Recognition

STANDARDS

Social Science 5.26

Gather, assess, and use information from multiple primary and secondary sources (such as print, electronic, interviews, speeches, images) to examine an event, issue, or problem through inquiry and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9

Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

LESSON DESCRIPTION

Introduction:

I will review the elements of a story (character, setting, plot), focusing on characteristics of the protagonist. We will make predictions about what we will see in the protagonists of the “everybody” books (picture books), when we are looking at race, gender and ability. We will also note the publishing date of each book, curious about the trends we may see over time.

Body:

Students will explore picture books in the Dorr Family Library at Helman Elementary (“Everybody Books”). We will be identifying publishing date, gender, ethnicity (if human), species (if animal) and ability of the protagonist in each book, and taking an inventory of these characteristics on a shared excel spreadsheet. (This feels a bit like decomposition to me.)

Once data is gathered, we will look at the numbers we are seeing and look for patterns and outliers. Students will use their world experience and knowledge of books to determine these traits, and if they have a question within their group, and they don’t feel like they can make a decision together, they will consult the teacher, librarian or other adult in the room.

This activity will take place during our usual math block. Students will be broken into small groups (2-4) and assigned a shelf and a Team number. This activity will be repeated in the second math block, with teams picking up where the previous team left off. Team 2 will be able to look at the work of the previous team in the shared spreadsheet.

Questions we will consider as we look at the data:

- What patterns do you see?

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- What statements/observations can you make from the patterns you see? You may want to use comparison words in these statements (example: there are **more** mammals than non-mammal protagonists in every team, or there are **fewer** female protagonists in every team's count)
- What outliers do you notice?

Conclusion:

Class discussion: How could we use this data? What does it make you think or wonder?

Assessment:

Formative: Students will make statements about the data. Are they understanding how to compare the data? Are they making accurate statements? What level of depth do they go to in their statements? What do they think/wonder about after gathering this data?