

# Lesson Plan for Small-Group Text Talks

## Because of Winn-Dixie

by Kate DiCamillo

Reading Level: Grades 3–5

### Overview

This lesson plan is designed to help teachers organize independent reading groups and student-led text-based discussions. It focuses on building vocabulary and comprehension skills of students in grades 3–5.

### Materials

In addition to this lesson plan and a copy of the reading text for each student, teachers will need the following materials:

- Text Talks teacher flip book
- Text Talks Student Workbook for each student
- Bookmark for each student
- Checklist: Successful Collaborative Discussion rubric for each student

Download these materials at

[www.elitetexas.org/resources-el/text-talks-a-strategic-book-club-routine](http://www.elitetexas.org/resources-el/text-talks-a-strategic-book-club-routine)

### How to Use the Materials

The lesson plan aligns with the before-, during-, and after-reading steps of the Text Talks Cycle outlined in the Text Talks teacher flip book. Refer to this book for guidance throughout the Text Talks Cycle.

Provide each student with a copy of the text, a bookmark, and a Text Talks Student Workbook. Students will use the bookmark during both reading and discussion. It includes prompts for group discussions and sentence stems to support group interactions.

Students will use the Text Talks Student Workbook throughout the Text Talks Cycle. In preparation for Text Talks, students will record the target vocabulary and relevant anchor charts in their workbook, which they can refer to when they practice specific comprehension processes. During Text Talks, students will use the workbook to respond to the reading, write summaries, and record new words learned during reading. Students will also refer to reflections in their workbook during group discussions.

## Preparation

### Introduction

Form reading groups of four to five students based on reading and language proficiency levels.

Introduce the book (see Preparation page of the Text Talks flip book for ideas).

### Whole-Class Mini-Lesson

Provide a whole-class mini-lesson on one skill or strategy students can apply to comprehend the text and/or participate in group discussions. Focus on a word-learning strategy, a comprehension process, the characteristics of a good book discussion, or the characteristics of a strong reader's response.

Example focus areas include the following:

- Using academic language to express ideas during discussion
- Analyzing plot elements, including the rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution

Have students record anchor charts from the mini-lesson in their workbook on pages 2–3. Students will refer to their anchor charts throughout the Text Talk Cycle.

## Before Reading

### Preview and Activate Background Knowledge

Show and read the front and back covers of the text.

Activate students' knowledge by making connections between what they know and what they need to know to understand the text.

Ask students to predict what the text is about and briefly discuss related concepts.

### Introduce the Target Vocabulary Words

Choose four to six words that are essential to understanding the events and/or characters of the narrative. When possible, choose words that build background knowledge for events or topics explored in the story.

Explicitly teach the words using student-friendly definitions and nonlinguistic representations.

Give students a chance to discuss and practice the new words.

Have students record the target vocabulary words and meanings on page 2 of the workbook.

Example words and instruction for this text are shown below.

**preacher** (p. 26): A person who speaks to a group of people about religious topics at a Christian church

*Show a visual and provide an example from the book (e.g., In this story, the main character's father is a preacher in a small town.).*

*Provide a turn and talk prompt: Are school teachers the same as preachers? Why or why not?*

**trustworthy (p. 55):** When a person is reliable and you can trust them to treat you well and fairly

*Provide a general example or one from the story (e.g., My mother is very trustworthy. She took care of me my whole life, and she still is there for me and treats me well.).*

*Provide a turn and talk prompt: Do you think a best friend should be trustworthy? Why or why not?*

**lozenge (p. 111):** A small candy or a hard piece of medicine that you suck on

*Show a visual and provide an example (e.g., In the past, a lozenge was like a candy with unique flavors. Today, people take lozenges when they have a sore throat or cough.).*

*Provide a turn and talk prompt: If someone offered you a lozenge, would you take it? Why or why not?*

**melancholy (p. 126):** A sad mood or feeling

*Show a visual and provide an example (e.g., Sometimes, when it rains all day, it makes me feel melancholy).*

*Provide a turn and talk prompt: Think about the last birthday party you went to. Did you feel melancholy? Why or why not?*

**aching (p. 134):** Hurting in your body that keeps going and doesn't stop

*Provide a general example (e.g., After I raked all the leaves in my yard, my back was aching for three days straight.) or an example from the book (e.g., In the book, one of the characters says that she has an "aching heart.")*

*Provide a turn and talk prompt: What do you think it means if someone says "my heart is aching"?*

## Set a Purpose for Implicit Vocabulary Learning During Reading

Direct students to record the new words encountered in the book that they are curious about on the New Vocabulary page of their workbook.

If not provided already, create a mini-lesson on a word-learning strategy and have students record an anchor chart on page 3 of their student workbook. Remind them to use their word-learning strategies while reading. Focus on one or more of the following self-monitoring/fix-up strategies:

- Sound it out
- Is there a cognate?
- Look for affixes you already know
- Use context clues
- Replace with another word (what would make sense?)
- Use a dictionary

## During Reading

### Provide a Prompt

Provide a prompt for students to consider as they read their section of the text. This sets a purpose for reading, extends comprehension, and promotes higher-order thinking. Possible prompts include the following:

- Chapters 1–3: How did Opal get Winn-Dixie?
- Chapters 4–6: Why does Opal feel so lonely?
- Chapters 7–9: Who are some of the new people Opal is meeting? Which ones do you think will become her friends? Why?
- Chapters 10–12: How does the preacher feel about Winn-Dixie? What are some events in these chapters that show how he feels?
- Chapters 13–15: Do you think Gloria Dump is a good person? Why or why not?
- Chapters 16–18: What is the Littmus Lozenge?
- Chapters 19–21: Why are Opal’s feelings toward Amanda Wilkinson changing?
- Chapters 22–26: Why do you think this book is titled *Because of Winn-Dixie*? What happens because of him?

### Students Read Independently

Have students read a section of the text and check off target vocabulary words they encounter during reading. Students should use their workbook vocabulary organizers to record new words and use word-learning strategies.

### Students Respond to the Reading

Have students fill out the Reading page of their workbook:

- Summarize the reading.
- Choose an additional prompt from their bookmark and complete a readers’ response.
- Record any questions they have about the reading.

Next, have students complete the New Vocabulary page.

## After Reading

### Students Engage in Collaborative Discussion

Have students participate in authentic discussion about the sections of text they read, for the purpose of deepening comprehension. Have students use their bookmarks (discussion stems) for discussion. Remind them to use their workbook responses to support their ideas during discussion.

## Continue the Cycle

Students repeat the during-reading and after-reading activities until they have completed the entire text. Then, move on to the next section.

## Extend Language and Comprehension

### Periodic Self-Assessment

Model how to use the Checklist: Successful Collaborative Discussion rubric and then have students use it to rate the quality of their participation and evaluate progress toward their goals.

### Final Reflection

Model how to fill out the After Reading page of the student workbook and then have students fill it out on their own, reflecting on key events or connections from the book and deciding whether they would recommend it to someone else.

### Vocabulary Extension

Have students engage in deeper practice of the target vocabulary and new vocabulary concepts they recorded during their independent reading.

#### Example: Probable Passages

- Have students write a probable passage using and underlining all of the vocabulary words in the list in their workbook. (This activity can be done independently or as a group.)
- Have groups share their passages.

### Comprehension Extension

Have students engage in activities to deepen their comprehension of characters, events, themes, or language features of their text. Support students in making connections between the text and their lived experiences (see the Extensions page of the Text Talks teacher flip book for ideas).