

Lesson 1: Celebrate Wheat

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Time: 40–45 minutes

Subject: ELA

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 1 of 5 in the *Celebrate Wheat* unit within the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on a series of books written by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Lesson 1 serves as an ELA-only anchor lesson focused on a first read of the text through an interactive read-aloud. Students build comprehension by exploring text features, vocabulary, illustrations, and key ideas while engaging in structured discussions. This lesson intentionally bridges knowledge from the previous unit, *The Soil Neighborhood*, connecting what students already know about soil, plants, and Kansas land to the journey of wheat. First graders are expected to engage more deeply with text features, distinguish between information in illustrations versus words, and build on each other's responses in collaborative conversations. This lesson establishes a shared understanding of the text and supports deeper learning and cross-curricular connections in subsequent lessons.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across units, identifying and using text features, distinguishing between illustration and text information, comprehension during initial reading, vocabulary development, asking and answering questions about key details, collaborative conversation and discussion norms, sequencing key events, and Kansas connections through wheat and food knowledge.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

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

RI.1.5 Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.

RI.1.6 Distinguish between information provided by illustrations or other graphics and information provided by the words in a text.

RI.1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

RI.1.8 Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.

SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about topics and texts with peers and adults in small and large groups to expand language comprehension.

SL.1.1.a Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

SL.1.1.b Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

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

SL.1.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says to gather additional information or clarify what is not understood.

Objectives

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Ask and answer questions about key details in *Celebrate Wheat* during and after the read-aloud.
- Navigate text features to locate information in the book.
- Differentiate between what the illustrations show and what the words tell us.
- Interpret illustrations and text details to explain key ideas in the story.
- Explain the reasons the author gives for why wheat is important.
- Participate in collaborative conversations using agreed-upon discussion rules, listening carefully, and building on others' responses.
- Ask and answer questions to clarify understanding during discussion.
- Sequence three major events or ideas from the story (first, next, last).
- Connect the concepts learned about soil in *The Soil Neighborhood* to the growth of wheat.
- Describe their own experiences with wheat, food, farming, and community.

Materials Needed

- Book: *Celebrate Wheat* by Dan Yunk (YouTube Author Read-Aloud — coming soon; physical copy for teacher use)
- Smartboard or display screen
- Chart paper titled: "What Do We Know About Wheat?"
- Markers
- *The Soil Neighborhood* anchor chart or "What Lives in the Soil?" chart from the previous unit (for reference)

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know
 - a. Explain to students: *"Before we start our new book today, let's think back to our last book, The Soil Neighborhood. We learned so much about the soil and the helpers that live underground. Do you remember Sandy, Rocky, and Clay?"*
 - b. Ask students:
 - *"What do you remember about the soil neighborhood? Who lived there? What did the soil helpers do?"*
 - *"We learned that plants need healthy soil to grow. What did soil give plants to help them grow?"*
 - *"Do you think wheat grows in the soil? What would it need from the soil neighborhood to grow big and strong?"*
 - c. Bridge the connection: *"Today, we are going to read a new book called Celebrate Wheat. Wheat is a plant, and just like we learned in The Soil Neighborhood, it starts in the ground and needs healthy soil, water, and sunshine to grow. By the end of this unit, you will see how everything is connected — from the soil neighborhood all the way to the food on your plate."*
 - d. Kansas Connection:
Kansas Connection — Teacher Script: *"In Kansas, wheat and soil go hand in hand, and both surround us — whether we realize it or not. Some of you might have seen a farmer getting fields ready for planting, or maybe you've noticed the soil on your land change color or texture at different times of year. Others of you*

might not have been out on a farm, but you've probably walked past a garden, seen dirt in a flower bed, or watched a plant grow in a pot at home. That's the same soil neighborhood we learned about, working quietly to help things grow. Today, we are going to find out what grows from that Kansas soil that eventually ends up on all of our tables."

2. Building Background Knowledge

- a. Explain to students: *"Now that we've remembered what we know about soil, let's think about what we already know about wheat and where our food comes from. Wheat is one of the most important crops grown right here in Kansas — and it starts right in that soil neighborhood we studied."*
- b. Ask students:
 - *"Have you ever seen tall, grassy fields on a drive through Kansas? Those might be wheat fields growing in the soil!"*
 - *"What foods do you eat that might be made from wheat? Think about bread, pizza, cereal, or crackers."*
 - *"Where do you think wheat comes from before it ends up in a store or on your dinner table?"*
- c. Kansas Connection:
Teacher Script: *"Kansas grows more wheat than almost anywhere else in the United States. If you've ever driven through the state, you've probably seen those wide, golden fields stretching all the way to the horizon — that's wheat! And if you haven't driven past a wheat field, that's okay, because you have almost certainly eaten Kansas wheat. The bread on your sandwich, the crust on your pizza, the cereal in your bowl — there is a very good chance that it started right here, in Kansas soil. Whether your family grows wheat, buys it at the store, or both, wheat is part of your Kansas story."*
- d. Record student responses on chart paper under "What Do We Know About Wheat?" to reference throughout the unit.

3. Book Orientation & Text Features

- a. Explain to students: *"Before we read, let's look at our book like detectives. Authors and illustrators give us clues in the text features — special parts of the book that help us find information and understand what we are reading."*
- b. Using the physical book, have students identify:
 - Front cover — *"What information does the cover give us?"*
 - Title page — *"What do we find here that we didn't see on the cover?"*
 - Author and illustrator — *"What is the author's job? The illustrator's job?"*
 - Any additional text features present (back cover, dedication page, etc.)
- c. Explain to students: *"Text features are the special parts of a book that help us as readers. The cover, title page, and any headings or labels are all text features. They help us know what the book is about and where to find information before we even start reading."*
- d. Ask students:
 - *"What do you notice on the front cover? What do you think this book might be about?"*
 - *"Just like Dan Yunk wrote The Soil Neighborhood to teach us about soil, he wrote this book to teach us about wheat. What do you think he wants us to learn?"*
 - *"What text feature would you look at first if you wanted to find out what this book is about?"*

4. Setting the Purpose for Listening

- a. Explain to students: *"Today is our first read. Our job is to listen carefully and think about key details — the important facts and ideas the author wants us to know. We will follow Kailey as she learns where pizza crust comes from. As you listen, think about what the words tell us and what the pictures show us. Later this week, we will reread the book to discover even more."*
- b. Prompt students to encourage thinking:
 - *"What is Kailey curious about?"*
 - *"How does wheat grow and change? Does anything sound familiar from our soil unit?"*
 - *"As we read, notice: is the picture showing you something the words don't say? Or are the words telling you something the picture doesn't show?"*

5. First Read: Celebrate Wheat

- a. Read the book aloud or play the YouTube Author Read-Aloud.
Pause strategically for best-practice comprehension moves. Stopping Point Suggestions (2–3 total, brief stops to maintain flow):
- b. Stop #1 — Vocabulary & Key Details: Wheat / Harvest / Kernel

Ask students:

- *"What clues do the pictures give us about what 'harvest' means? Is that information in the words, the picture, or both?"*
 - *"Have you ever heard the word 'kernel' before? What do you think it means? What in the text helps you figure it out?"*
 - *"The book says wheat starts green and grassy. What key detail did the author just share about wheat?"*
- c. Stop #2 — Illustrations vs. Text: (Recommendation after Grandma explains the combine.)
Ask students:
 - *"What does the illustration show on this page?"*
 - *"What do the words tell us that the picture does not show?"*
 - *"So far, what are the key details we have learned about wheat?"*
 - d. Stop #3 — Clarification & Questions: (Recommendation after Grandma talks about the wheat reaching the grain elevator and mill.)
Explain to students: *"If something is confusing, it's okay to ask. Good readers ask questions when they don't understand. What questions do you have about what we just heard?"*

Keep stops short to maintain the flow of the story.

6. Collaborative Discussion — Turn-and-Talk

- a. Explain to students: *"Now we are going to talk with a partner. When we have discussions, we follow rules that help everyone learn. We listen carefully, speak one at a time, and build on what our partner says."*
- b. Pair students with a partner before modeling the rules. Assign pairs intentionally to support language development and ensure all students have a partner ready before the discussion begins.
- c. Teacher models discussion rules explicitly:
 - *"Face your partner and give them your attention."*
 - *"Listen carefully while your partner speaks."*
 - *"When it is your turn, you can add to what your partner said or share a new idea."*

- d. Prompt students: *"Tell your partner one key detail you learned about wheat. Then listen to your partner and try to add to what they said."*
- e. Example teacher follow-up (building on others' talk):
 - *"I heard you say combines cut the wheat. Your partner said wheat becomes flour. How do those two ideas connect?"* (Building on others' talk)
 - *"You mentioned the soil helps wheat grow. Can you add to what your partner said about that?"* (Cross-unit connection)
7. Checking Comprehension & Sequencing Key Ideas
 - a. Ask the whole group:
 - *"What happened first in our book?"*
 - *"What happened next?"*
 - *"What happened last?"*
 - b. Record student ideas in a simple three-step chart on the board or chart paper.
Possible 1st grade responses:
 - First: *"Kailey wanted to know where pizza crust comes from. Grandma said wheat starts as a seed in the soil."*
 - Next: *"The wheat grew, was harvested with a combine, and traveled to a grain elevator and mill to become flour."*
 - Last: *"The flour became pizza crust, and everyone at Kailey's party celebrated wheat!"*
8. Text–Illustration Connection
 - a. Explicit instruction: *"Authors and illustrators each give us information, but sometimes in different ways. The words tell us facts and details. The pictures show us things the words might not describe. Good readers use both."*
 - b. Display a selected page (recommended: combine or grain truck illustration).
 - c. Ask students:
 - *"What does this illustration show us?"*
 - *"What information does the picture give us that the words do not say?"*
 - *"What do the words tell us that we cannot see in the picture?"*
 - *"How do the illustrations and the words work together to help us understand this part of the book?"*
 - d. Guide students to articulate that illustrations show us things we may not be able to see in real life — a combine, a grain truck — while the words explain the process and give us the vocabulary.
9. Author's Reasons
 - a. Explain to students: *"Authors of informational books give us reasons to support their ideas. Dan Yunk wants us to understand why wheat matters. Let's find the reasons he gives."*
 - b. Ask students: *"Why does the author think wheat is important? What reasons does he give?"*
Students may respond:
 - *"It tastes good."*
 - *"It is good for you."*
 - *"It helps feed the world."*
 - *"Farmers work hard to grow it."*
 - c. Extend with a soil bridge: *"Dan Yunk also wrote The Soil Neighborhood. Why do you think he writes books about things that grow from the land? What reasons does he give across both books for why the land matters?"*

- d. Record responses on the chart paper.
10. Kansas Connection
- a. Explain to students: *“Kansas is one of the biggest wheat-growing states in the whole country. Wheat grown right here in Kansas ends up in foods that people all over the world eat every day.”*
- b. Ask students:
- *“Now that you know wheat becomes pizza crust, bread, and cereal — what wheat foods do YOU love?”*
 - *“Why do YOU think wheat is important to people in Kansas?”*
 - *“Can you see the connection? Healthy soil → growing wheat → food on our table. What key detail from the book best supports that idea?”*
- c. Kansas Connection:
Kansas Connection — Teacher Script: *“No matter where you live in Kansas — on a farm or ranch, in a small town, or in a bigger city — wheat is part of your life. If your family farms, you know what it feels like when the harvest is good, and the whole community breathes a little easier. If you live in town, you might not think about wheat very often, but it shows up every single day — in the toast you had for breakfast, the sandwich at lunch, the pasta at dinner. Kansas wheat feeds families right here at home and families around the world. Kailey figured that out at her birthday party, and now you know it too. That is something worth celebrating.”*

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through ongoing formative and observational measures embedded throughout the lesson, including participation in collaborative discussions, use of text features to locate information, identification of key details in the text, differentiation between illustration and text information, sequencing of key events, and verbal responses that demonstrate comprehension of the author’s reasons for why wheat is important. Special attention should be given to students who build on others’ responses during discussion, as this indicates developing communication and collaboration skills. Students who make unprompted connections between this text and *The Soil Neighborhood* demonstrate meaningful cross-unit learning transfer and should be noted. Additionally, students’ personal connections to wheat, soil, food, farming, and community experiences provide valuable evidence of comprehension and engagement.

Supplemental Activities: Have students draw their favorite wheat food and write one sentence about it, identifying where that food comes from (e.g., “Pizza crust comes from wheat that farmers grow in Kansas.”). For an extended text-feature connection, invite students to create a simple two-part drawing labeled with feature titles: “The Soil Neighborhood” on the bottom half, showing underground soil helpers, and “Celebrate Wheat” on the top half, showing wheat growing from that soil. This activity reinforces RI.1.5 (text features) and RI.1.7 (using illustrations to describe key ideas) while connecting both units.

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