



Lesson 1: Celebrate Wheat

Grade Level: 2nd 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 the author's main purpose, how specific images contribute to and clarify the text, and how the author's reasons support specific points. 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 wheat-growing journey in this book. Second graders are expected to engage at a deeper analytical level — identifying the author's main purpose, explaining how images clarify text, describing how reasons support points, and demonstrating sophisticated collaborative discourse skills, including linking their comments to what others have said. 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 the author's main purpose, asking and answering who/what/where/when/why/how questions about key details, explaining how specific images contribute to and clarify a text, describing how reasons support the author's points, collaborative conversation with comment linking, recounting key ideas from a read-aloud, asking questions to deepen understanding, sequencing key events, and Kansas connections through wheat and food knowledge.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

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

RI.2.6 Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.

RI.2.7 Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

RI.2.8 Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.

SL.2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups to expand language comprehension.

SL.2.1.a Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

SL.2.1.b Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

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

SL.2.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

Objectives

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Ask and answer who, what, where, when, why, and how questions about key details in *Celebrate Wheat* during and after the read-aloud.
- Identify the main purpose of *Celebrate Wheat*, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
- Explain how specific images in the book contribute to and clarify the text.
- Describe how the reasons the author gives support the specific points he makes.
- Contribute to collaborative conversations, linking their own comments to what others have said.
- Recount key ideas and details from the read-aloud accurately and in sequence.
- Engage in questioning and discussion to better understand the topic.
- Relate prior learning about soil to the needs of a growing wheat plant.
- Connect personal experiences to 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 we are surrounded by both — 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:
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 & Author's Purpose

- a. Explain to students: *"Before we read, let's think about why an author writes a book. Every informational book has a main purpose — something the author wants to answer, explain, or describe. As we look at this book today, we are going to think about what Dan Yunk's purpose is."*
- b. Using the physical book, have students identify:
 - Front cover — *"What information does the cover give us about the topic?"*
 - 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
- c. Explain to students the concept of the Author's Main Purpose: *"Authors write informational books for a reason. They might want to answer a question, explain how something works, or describe a topic. Look at the cover and title. What do you think Dan Yunk wants to answer, explain, or describe in this book?"*
- d. Ask students:
 - *"Is the author trying to answer a question? Explain a process? Describe something? How do you know?"*
 - *"What is the main purpose of this book — in your own words?"*

- *“Just like Dan Yunk wrote *The Soil Neighborhood* to explain how soil works, what do you think he wants to explain in this book?”*

Record student predictions on chart paper. Return to these at the end of the lesson to confirm or revise.

4. Setting the Purpose for Listening

- Explain to students: *“Today is our first read. As you listen, think about the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the story. Who is in the book? What is happening? Where does it take place? When does the wheat journey happen? Why is wheat important? How does wheat become food? Those are the questions good readers ask.”*

- Prompt students to encourage thinking:

- *“What is Kailey curious about, and why does that question matter?”*
- *“How does wheat grow and change? Does anything connect to what we know about soil?”*
- *“As we read, think: how do the illustrations help explain what the words are describing?”*

5. First Read: Celebrate Wheat

- Read the book aloud or play the YouTube Author Read-Aloud.

Pause only strategically for best-practice comprehension moves. Stopping Point Suggestions (2–3 total, brief stops to maintain flow):

- Stop #1 — Who/What/Where + Image Contribution: (Recommended after wheat is introduced as green and grassy)

Ask students:

- *“Who is in this story, and what is Kailey trying to find out?”*
- *“What does this illustration show us about what wheat looks like?”*
- *“How does this image help clarify what the words are describing? What would be harder to understand without the picture?”*
- *What did wheat need from the soil neighborhood to grow from a seed into a tall wheat plant?*

- Stop #2 — Why/How + Author’s Reasons: (Recommended after Grandma explains the combine and grain elevator) Teacher Note: Students may confuse a grain elevator with a passenger elevator. Briefly explain that a grain elevator is a large building used to store grain before it is transported to a mill or other destination.

Ask students:

- *“Why does the author include all these steps about how wheat travels from the field to the mill?”*
- *“How does this part of the text support the author’s point that wheat is important?”*
- *“What specific reason is the author giving here, and how does it support his main point?”*

- Stop #3 — Deepening Understanding: (Recommended after Grandma explains that wheat helps feed people around the world)

Explain to students: *“Good readers don’t just ask questions when they are confused — they also ask questions to understand more deeply. What questions do you have that would help you understand this topic even better?”*

Keep stops short to maintain the flow of the story.

6. Collaborative Discussion

- a. Explain to students: *"Now we are going to have a discussion. In second grade, we are working on something important: when you share an idea, try to connect it to what someone else already said. This is called linking your comments. It makes our conversation stronger and shows we are really listening."*
 - b. Assign partners intentionally before the discussion begins to support language development.
 - c. Teacher models discussion rules explicitly:
 - *"Gain the floor respectfully — raise your hand or wait for a pause before speaking."*
 - *"Listen carefully while your partner or classmate speaks."*
 - *"When it is your turn, link what you say to what someone else said. You can use phrases like: 'I agree with ____ because...' or 'Adding on to what ____ said...' or 'That connects to...'"*
 - d. Display linking language on chart paper:
 - *"I agree with ____ because..."*
 - *"Adding on to what ____ said..."*
 - *"That connects to..."*
 - *"I want to build on that idea..."*
 - *"I have a question about what ____ said..."*
 - e. Prompt students: *"Tell your partner one key idea you learned about wheat. Then listen carefully and link your next comment to what your partner said."*
 - f. Example teacher follow-up (linking comments):
 - *"I heard you say wheat becomes flour. Can you link that to what your partner said about the combine?"* (Linking comments)
 - *"You connected wheat to the soil. Can you use our linking language to add to what your classmate just shared?"* (Modeling academic discourse)
7. Recounting Key Ideas
- a. Explain to students: *"Now we are going to recount the key ideas from our book. Recounting means retelling the most important ideas accurately, in the order they happened."*
 - b. Ask the whole group:
 - *"What happened first in our book?"*
 - *"What happened next?"*
 - *"What happened last?"*
 - c. Push for detail appropriate for 2nd grade:
 - *"Can you give more details about that step? Who was involved? Where did it happen?"*
 - *"Why did that happen? What caused it?"*
 - d. Record student ideas in a simple three-step chart on the board or chart paper.
- Possible 2nd-grade responses:
- **First:** *"Kailey asked Grandma where pizza crust comes from because she was curious about the wheat in the crust at her birthday party."*
 - **Next:** Grandma explained the journey of wheat—from being planted by farmers to growing from green to golden, to being harvested with a combine and taken by truck to a grain elevator and then a mill, where it is made into flour.
 - **Last:** *"The flour became pizza crust, and everyone at Kailey's party learned to celebrate wheat because it feeds people all over the world."*
8. How Images Contribute to and Clarify the Text

- a. Explain to students: *"In second grade, we don't just notice what pictures show — we explain how they help us understand the text better. We ask: How does this image contribute to what the author is saying? How does it clarify something that might be hard to understand from the words alone?"*
 - b. Display a selected page (recommended: the combine harvesting wheat or the grain truck).
 - c. Ask students:
 - *"What does this image show?"*
 - *"How does this image contribute to the author's explanation of how wheat travels from the field to the mill?"*
 - *"What would be harder to understand about this part of the text if we only had the words and no image?"*
 - *"How does this image clarify the author's point about the wheat harvest?"*
 - d. Guide students to articulate that images contribute by showing machines, places, and processes that are difficult to visualize from words alone, and that they clarify by making abstract or unfamiliar concepts concrete and visible.
9. How Reasons Support the Author's Points
- a. Explain to students: *"In second grade, we don't just find the author's reasons — we describe how those reasons support a specific point. A reason is evidence or an explanation that makes a point. Let's look at what points Dan Yunk makes and how he supports them."*
 - b. Ask students: *"What is one point the author makes about wheat? What reasons does he give to support that point? How do those reasons make the point stronger?"*

Students should be able to articulate something like:

 - *Point: Wheat is important for feeding people.*
 - *Reasons: It becomes flour; flour is used in bread, pasta, and pizza crust. Wheat grown in Kansas is used to make foods that are eaten by people across the United States and around the world.*
 - *How the reasons support the point: Each reason shows a specific way wheat becomes food, making the claim that it feeds people believable and concrete.*
 - c. Extend with a soil bridge: *"Dan Yunk also wrote The Soil Neighborhood. What point does he make in that book? How does Celebrate Wheat give us additional reasons to support a similar point about Kansas land?"*
 - d. Record responses on 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?"*
 - *"How do the reasons the author gives in the book support the idea that Kansas matters to people all over the world?"*
 - 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.”

11. Revisiting the Author’s Purpose

- a. Return to the predictions recorded in Step 3: *“At the beginning of our lesson, you predicted what the author’s main purpose might be. Now that we have read the whole book, let’s confirm or revise those ideas.”*
- b. Ask students:
 - *“What is the main purpose of Celebrate Wheat? Is the author trying to answer a question, explain a process, or describe something?”*
 - *“Were your predictions correct? What did you need to revise?”*
 - *“In one sentence, what is Dan Yunk trying to explain or describe in this book?”*

Record final responses on chart paper alongside the original predictions so students can see how their thinking developed.

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through ongoing formative and observational measures embedded throughout the lesson, including participation in collaborative discussions, identification of the author’s main purpose, use of who/what/where/when/why/how questioning to demonstrate understanding of key details, explanation of how specific images contribute to and clarify the text, description of how reasons support the author’s points, and accurate recounting of key ideas from the read-aloud. Special attention should be given to students who link their comments to what others have said during discussion (SL.2.1.b), as this indicates the development of academic discourse skills. Students who make unprompted connections between this text and *The Soil Neighborhood* demonstrate meaningful cross-unit learning transfer and should be noted.

Supplemental Activities: Have students write two to three sentences identifying the author’s main purpose in *Celebrate Wheat* and explaining how at least one reason in the book supports a specific point. Prompt: “What does Dan Yunk want to explain in this book? What reason does he give that makes you believe his point?” For an extended connection, invite students to compare the author’s purpose in *Celebrate Wheat* with the author’s purpose in *The Soil Neighborhood* — what does each book want to explain or describe, and how do the two books together give a fuller picture of Kansas agriculture?

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