

Lesson 1: Celebrate Wheat

Grade Level: Kindergarten

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 book 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. 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, book orientation and features, comprehension during initial reading, vocabulary development, illustrations/text connections, discussion norms and collaborative conversation, sequencing key events, and Kansas connections through wheat and food knowledge.

Kansas Academic Standards:

Kansas ELA Standards

SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults.

SL.K.1.a Follow discussion rules (listening, taking turns).

SL.K.1.b Extend conversations through multiple exchanges.

SL.K.2 Ask/answer questions to confirm understanding and sequence events.

SL.K.3 Ask/answer questions to seek help, get information, or clarify.

RI.K.13 Engage in group reading with purpose and understanding.

RI.K.5 Identify front cover, back cover, and title page.

RI.K.6 Name the author/illustrator and define their roles.

RI.K.7 Describe how illustrations relate to the text.

RI.K.8 Identify reasons an author gives to support ideas.

Objectives:

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the front cover, back cover, title page, author, and illustrator of *Celebrate Wheat*.
- Describe the role of an author (writes the words) and illustrator (creates the pictures).
- Ask and answer questions about key details in the book and request clarification when confused.
- Participate in structured turn-and-talks using agreed-upon rules (listening and taking turns).
- Retell the journey of wheat described in the book using evidence from the illustrations.

- Identify the reasons the author gives for why wheat is important.
- Sequence three major events or ideas from the story (first, next, last).
- Connect what they learned about soil and how wheat grows.
- Share their personal experiences that connect with wheat, food, farming, and community.

Materials Needed

- Book: *Celebrate Wheat* by Dan Yunk
- Smartboard/projector
- 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. Explain/bridge the connection to students: *"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. Explain to students: *"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. Explain to students: *“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 they 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
- a. Using the physical book or the video preview frame, have students identify:
- Front cover
 - Back cover
 - Title page
 - Author/Illustrator and roles
- b. Prompt students:
- *“The author writes the words. The illustrator creates the pictures.”*
 - *“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?”*
4. Setting the Purpose for Listening
- a. Explain to Students: *“Today is our first read. Our job is to listen and understand what is happening in the story. We will follow Kailey as she learns where pizza crust comes from. As you listen, see if you can spot any connections to what we already know about soil and plants from The Soil Neighborhood. 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?”*
 - *“How does wheat get from a field to our food?”*
5. First Read: *Celebrate Wheat*
- a. Read the book or have the author read aloud.
Pause only strategically for best-practice comprehension moves. Stopping Point Suggestions (2-3 total, brief stops to maintain flow):
- Stop #1 Vocabulary: Wheat / Harvest / Kernel
Ask students:
“What clues do the pictures give us about what ‘harvest’ means?”
“Have you ever heard the word ‘kernel’ before? What do you think it means?”

"The book says wheat starts green and grassy. Remember how we learned plants need soil, water, and sun? What does the wheat need to grow?"

- Stop #2 Sequence & Farm Connection: After Grandma explains the combine.

Ask students:

"What does a combine do? What does Grandma say it is used for?"

"So far, what has happened to the wheat? Let's think: first it was a seed in the soil, then... what happened next?"

- Stop #3 Clarification: After the wheat reaches the grain elevator and mill.

Explain to students: *"If something is confusing, it's okay to ask. What questions do you have about what we just heard?"*

(Keep stops short to maintain the flow of the story.)

6. Turn-and-Talk: Following Discussion Rules

- a. Teacher pairs up students and explains while modeling rules:

- *"Face your partner."*
- *"Listen quietly while your partner talks."*
- *"Take turns."*

- b. Prompt students: *"Tell your partner one thing you learned about wheat or how it becomes food. If you can, see if you can connect it to something we learned about soil!"*

- c. Example teacher follow-up:

- *"I heard you say combines cut the wheat. Can you tell me more?"*
(Extending the exchange)
- *"You mentioned soil helps wheat grow. How is that the same as what we learned in The Soil Neighborhood?"*

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. Possible kindergarten responses:

- First: *"Kailey wanted to know where pizza crust comes from. The wheat started as a seed in the soil."*
- Next: *"Grandma told us how wheat grows and is harvested with a combine."*
- Last: *"The wheat became flour and then pizza crust, and everyone celebrated wheat!"*

8. Text-Illustration Connection

- a. Display a selected page from the book (recommended: hands full of wheat kernels or combine).

- b. Ask students:

- *"What does this picture show?"*
- *"How does the picture help us understand the words the author wrote?"*
- *"Have you ever seen something like this where you live?"*

- c. Guide students to see that illustrations reveal parts of the wheat's journey we may not see every day: planting equipment, combines used for harvesting, and

grain trucks. Just as *The Soil Neighborhood* showed us what was happening underground, *Celebrate Wheat* is showing us what happens behind the scenes of wheat.

9. Author's Reasons

- a. Ask students: *"Why does the author think wheat is important?"*

Students may respond:

- *"It tastes good."*
- *"It is good for you."*
- *"It helps feed the world."*
- *"Farmers work hard to grow it."*

- b. Extend with a soil bridge: *"Dan Yunk also wrote The Soil Neighborhood. Why do you think he writes books about the things that grow from the ground? What do you think he wants kids to know about Kansas land and farming?"*

- c. 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 part of that journey is most interesting to you?"*

Encourage ranch/garden/farm stories; these deepen comprehension by attaching new information to familiar contexts.

- c. Explain to students: *"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, identification of book features (front cover, title page, author, and illustrator), use of wheat-related vocabulary, sequencing of key events from the text, and verbal responses that demonstrate comprehension of the text, illustrations, and the author's reasons for why wheat is important. Special attention should be given to moments where students make unprompted connections between this text and *The Soil Neighborhood*, as these cross-unit connections indicate developing schema and meaningful learning transfer. Observations of student connections to their own experiences with wheat, soil, food, and farming also serve as meaningful formative data.

Supplemental Activities:

Have students draw their favorite wheat food and write or dictate one sentence about it (e.g., “My favorite wheat food is pizza crust.”). For an extended cross-unit connection, invite students to draw a simple two-part picture: the soil neighborhood on the bottom half of the page and a wheat plant growing up from it on the top half. Display drawings alongside the “What Do We Know About Wheat?” chart to build classroom community and reinforce the soil-to-table connection.

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