

Lesson 1: Growing Up Strong

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Time: 45–50 minutes

Subject: ELA

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 1 of 5 in the *Growing Up Strong* unit within the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on a series of books by Kansas author Dan Yunk. This ELA anchor lesson introduces *Growing Up Strong* through an author read-aloud. Students revisit the anchor character, Kailey, while learning about healthy eating, exercise, and ways people grow strong and healthy. The lesson also connects students' previous learning about farmers and ranchers producing safe, nutritious food to the food choices that support healthy growth.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across units, identifying book features, naming the author and understanding the author's role, engaging with informational text with purpose and understanding, asking and answering questions about key details and unknown words with prompting and support, participating in collaborative discussion following agreed-upon rules, asking questions to seek help or clarify understanding, and Kansas connections between agriculture and healthy food.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

- RI.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RI.K.4 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
- RI.K.5 Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.
- RI.K.6 Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.
- RI.K.13 Actively engage in individual or group readings of informational text with purpose and understanding.
- SL.K.1.a Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
- SL.K.3 Ask and answer questions to seek help, get information, or clarify what is not understood.

Objectives

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of *Growing Up Strong*.
- Name the author and illustrator and explain their roles in creating the book.
- Ask and answer questions about key details in the text with prompting and support.
- Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in the text with prompting and support.

- Listen to an informational text with a specific purpose and recall information learned from the read-aloud.
- Participate in collaborative discussions by listening to others and taking turns speaking.
- Ask questions to seek help, gather information, or clarify understanding.
- Identify ways people can grow strong and healthy, including eating nutritious foods and being physically active.
- Connect what they learned about farmers and ranchers producing safe, nutritious food to what they are learning about healthy eating.

Materials Needed

- Book: *Growing Up Strong* by Dan Yunk (physical copy for teacher use or read aloud on unit landing page)
- Chart paper titled: “How Do We Grow Up Strong?”
- Markers
- *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* Anchor chart or unit materials from the previous unit (for reference)

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know
 - a. Explain to students: “In our last unit, we learned that farmers and ranchers care for their animals every single day — giving them shelter, food, water, and medical care. Who remembers why farmers and ranchers work so hard to take good care of their animals?”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “Why did we learn that farmers and ranchers care for their animals so carefully?”
 - “What happens to the food we eat because farmers and ranchers take such good care of their land and animals?”
 - c. Explain to students: “Today we are going to read a brand new book. Guess who is in it — Kailey is back! This time, Kailey is talking to Grandma on the phone about something her mom taught her class — all about eating healthy food and growing up strong. We are going to find out how the food farmers and ranchers grow connect to us staying healthy.”
 - d. Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “Kansas farmers and ranchers grow crops and raise animals that provide many of the foods we eat that help all of us grow up healthy and strong — fruits, vegetables, grains, milk, and meat. Whether you live on a farm, in a small town, or in a city, the food that helps your body grow started with a Kansas farmer or rancher. Today we are going to learn how that food helps us stay healthy.”
2. Book Orientation
 - a. Hold up the physical copy of *Growing Up Strong*.
 - b. Explain to students: “Before we read, let’s look at the parts of our book. Every book has important features that give us information before we even begin reading.”
 - c. Hold up the front cover and explain: “This is the front cover. The front cover shows us the title of the book and gives us a picture that tells us what the book

might be about. The title of this book is Growing Up Strong. What do you see on the cover? What do you think this book will be about?"

- d. Hold up the back cover and explain: "This is the back cover. The back cover is at the very end of the book. Sometimes it gives us more information about the book or who wrote it."
 - e. Open to the title page and explain: "This is the title page. It is one of the first pages inside the book. It tells us the title of the book again and gives us the name of the person who wrote it."
 - f. Ask students:
 - "Which part of the book do we look at first — the front cover or the back cover?"
 - "What information do we find on the title page?"
 - "If you wanted to find out who wrote this book, where would you look?"
 - g. Explain to students: "Every book has an author. The author is the person who writes the words. The words in this book were written by Dan Yunk. Dan Yunk is a Kansas author who writes books that help children understand where their food comes from and how to live healthy lives. Without the author, there would be no words in the book — no story, no information, nothing to read."
 - h. Ask students:
 - "What is the name of the author of this book?"
 - "What does the author do?"
 - i. Explain to students: "This book also has an illustrator. The illustrator is the person who creates the pictures. Michelle Johnson created the illustrations in this book — the same illustrator who created the pictures in Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals! Without the illustrator, we would have no pictures to help us understand what the words are describing. The author and the illustrator work together — one gives us the words, and the other gives us the pictures."
 - j. Ask students:
 - "What is the name of the illustrator of this book?"
 - "What does the illustrator do?"
 - "How do Michelle Johnson's pictures help us understand what Dan Yunk's words are telling us?"
3. Setting the Purpose for Listening
- a. Explain to students: "When we read an informational book — a book that teaches us true information — we always read it with a purpose. Our purpose today is to find out: How do we grow up strong and healthy? As I read, listen for things Kailey learns about growing up strong and healthy. After we read, we will make a list of what we learned."
 - b. Prompt students to think ahead:
 - "What do you already do to stay healthy? Guess before we read."
 - "Kailey is talking to her Grandma on the phone in this book. What do you think Kailey is going to tell her?"

(RI.K.13 — actively engaging with purpose means students have a listening goal before the read-aloud begins. Recording pre-reading predictions honors student thinking and creates a reason to listen carefully.)
4. First Read: Author Read-Aloud

- a. Read *Growing Up Strong* aloud from the physical copy. Read expressively and hold the book so students can see the illustrations. Stopping Point Suggestions (3 total, brief stops to maintain flow):
 - Stop #1 — Unknown Words: Page 3 — after Kailey mentions the guest speaker and the word pediatrician. Ask students:
 - “Kailey used a big word — pediatrician. That is a word we might not know. A pediatrician is a doctor for children. Who remembers what kind of doctor a veterinarian is, from our last unit?”
 - “A veterinarian takes care of animals, and a pediatrician takes care of children. How are those two doctors alike? How are they different?”
 - “Why do you think a children’s doctor came to talk to Kailey’s class about food?”
 - “Who is talking on the phone in this book? Who is listening?”
 - Stop #2 — Key Details: Pages 7–9 — after the food groups and rainbow of foods. Ask students:
 - “The book talks about eating a variety of foods — grains, milk, vegetables, meat, and fruits. What does Kailey’s mom say our plate should look like?”
 - “Why do you think eating many different colors of food is a good idea?”
 - “Do you have any questions so far about what you have heard?”
 - Stop #3 — Key Details & Questions: Pages 10–12 — after exercise and growing up strong
Ask students:
 - “Do you have any questions so far about what you have heard?”
 - “The book says we need to eat healthy food and exercise regularly. What does Kailey’s mom do to exercise?”
 - “Kailey’s mom talked about her new baby brother and sister growing up strong. Why do you think even babies need good nutrition?”
 - “Is there anything you want to know more about?”

Keep stops short to maintain the flow of the story. Encourage students to ask their own questions during Stop #2 and Stop #3 to build SL.K.3.
5. Discussion Rules. Explain to students: “Before we talk about our book, let’s remember our discussion rules. When we talk together as a class, there are two very important rules: we listen to each other with care, and we take turns speaking. Let’s practice both right now.”
 - a. Model listening with care: “Listening with care means: your eyes are on the person speaking, your hands are still, and you are thinking about what they are saying — not about what you want to say next. Watch me show you.”
(Model attentive listening with a student.)
 - b. Model taking turns: “Taking turns means: you wait until the other person is finished before you speak. If you have something to say, you can raise your hand or wait for a pause. We do not talk over each other.”
 - c. Practice with a low-stakes question:

- “Let’s practice our rules. I am going to ask: What is one healthy food you saw in our book today? When I call on you, say your answer. Everyone else — listen with care and wait your turn.”
(SL.K.1.a — discussion rules are most effective when explicitly modeled and practiced before the substantive discussion begins, not just named).
6. Comprehension Discussion & Chart Building. Display the chart paper: “How Do We Grow Up Strong?” (Consider making two columns: Eat well and Move our bodies.)
- a. Explain to students: “Now we are going to use our discussion rules as we talk about what we learned. I am going to ask you questions about the book, and we are going to build a chart together with what Kailey’s mom taught her class.”
 - b. Ask students: (Record each idea on the chart as students share. Read each one back together after writing it.)
 - “What was one thing the book said we should do to grow up strong?” (Eat a variety of healthy foods.)
 - “What else did the book say?” (Make smart decisions about how much and when we eat.)
 - “What else?” (Exercise regularly.)
 - “What about babies? What did the book say about them?” (Even babies need nutritious food from birth to grow up healthy.)
 - c. Encourage student questions:
 - “Does anyone have a question about one of the ideas on our chart? Is there something you want to understand better?”
 - “Does anyone want to add something we missed?”
 - d. Cross-unit connection. Ask students:
 - “Kailey’s mom said farmers and ranchers care for their land and animals because they want to produce safe, nutritious food for all of us. How does that connect to what we learned in Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!?”
 - Dan Yunk also wrote other books we have read. Why do you think he keeps writing books about farming, ranching, and now healthy eating?”
7. Closing Discussion & Kailey’s Conversation. Return to the closing pages and reread the end of Kailey and Grandma’s phone conversation.
- a. Ask students:
 - “At the end of the book, Kailey says she has to go play outside with Addie because they need their exercise too. Why do you think Kailey wanted to be active right after talking about healthy habits?”
 - “Grandma says if Kailey’s mom keeps up the good work, she might become an honorary farmer. Why do you think doctors and farmers both care about healthy food?”
 - “Kailey learned a lot from her mom today. What is one thing YOU learned from this book?”
 - Optional Pair Share: “Tell your partner one thing you can do to help your body grow strong and healthy” (This activity provides an easy formative assessment).
 - b. Kansas Connection. Explain to students: “Just like Kailey learned from her mom, we are learning that eating healthy food and staying active help our bodies grow strong. And just like we learned in our last unit, healthy food starts with Kansas farmers and ranchers who work hard every day to grow and raise safe, nutritious

food for all of us — no matter where we live. In our next lessons, we are going to learn even more about how food and exercise help us grow up strong.”

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through ongoing formative and observational measures embedded throughout the lesson, including participation in the book orientation discussion, ability to identify the front cover, back cover, and title page, ability to name the author and explain the author’s role, engagement during the read-aloud at each stopping point, participation in the comprehension discussion following agreed-upon rules, willingness to ask questions to seek help or clarify understanding, ability to answer questions about key details and unknown words with prompting and support, and contributions to the chart of ideas about growing up strong. The teacher should note whether students can articulate at least one way to grow up strong and healthy, and whether they make unprompted connections between this book and *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* from the previous unit, as these cross-unit connections indicate developing schema and meaningful learning transfer.

Supplemental Activities: Display the completed “How Do We Grow Up Strong?” chart alongside the “Why Do Farmers and Ranchers Care for Their Animals?” chart from the previous unit. Guide students to notice that the food that helps them grow up strong is the same food that farmers and ranchers work so hard to produce safely. Invite students to draw a picture of one healthy food or activity that helps them grow up strong and share it during morning meetings. Display these drawings alongside the chart as a visual representation of student thinking, and use them as a reference throughout the unit.

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