Lesson 2: Farm Mechanic Shop

Grade Level: First Grade

Time: 60–70 minutes

Subjects: ELA

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 2 of 5 in the *Jobs Farmers Do* unit within the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on a series of books written by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Building on Lesson 1, where students learned from Grandpa that farmers must be good mechanics, students step into that role. By reading a decodable text with a clear purpose, students strengthen their decoding skills and show they understand what they read. In a hands-on Farm Mechanic Shop, students work together to find a problem with a piece of farm equipment, repair it, and test whether their fix worked. They experience firsthand the problem-solving that farmers use every day to keep their equipment running. Students then turn that experience into informative writing. They learn that clear writing names a topic, gives facts, and ends with a closing, while building confidence with end punctuation and spelling new words by sound.

Skillset: Activating prior knowledge across lessons, reading a decodable text with purpose and understanding, recalling information from a hands-on investigation to answer questions, writing an informative piece with a topic, a fact, and a closing, choosing end punctuation for sentences, and spelling untaught words phonetically by finger stretching.

Kansas Academic Standards
Kansas ELA Standards
RF.1.4.a Read text with purpose and understanding.
W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
W.1.11.b Use end punctuation for sentences.
W.1.11.e Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions.

Objectives
English Language Arts Objectives
Students will be able to:

- Read a decodable text with a purpose and answer questions to show they understood it.
- Recall what happened during their repair to answer questions about what broke, how they fixed it, and what it can do now.
- Write an informative piece that names a topic, tells a fact, and ends with a closing.
- End each sentence with a period or an exclamation point.
- Spell untaught words phonetically by finger stretching and writing a letter for each sound they hear.

Materials Needed

Whole Class:

- Decodable text, companion document
- 1 teacher demonstration tractor prepared with a loose wheel, plus 1 brad
- 1 teacher sample recording sheet, enlarged or displayed (chart paper, document camera, or poster-sized copy), used to model the whole sheet from start to finish and left posted during independent writing
- Word Bank, companion document
- Markers

Farm Mechanic Shop Investigation (per small group of 3–4 students):

- 1 of 4 simple cardboard tractor templates, each prepared with a different problem (a loose wheel, a tractor that has come unhooked from its wagon, a cab that tips, or a missing pin)
- Cardboard circles for wheels
- Brass paper fasteners/brads (a small metal fastener with a round, flat head and two thin prongs that push through a hole and bend apart to hold two pieces together; useful here for attaching a wheel so it can still spin)
- Craft sticks
- Drinking straws
- Tape
- String or yarn
- Paper clips
- Small pieces of cardboard
- Small tray of repair parts
- Optional child-safe toy wrench or screwdriver for pretend mechanic play

(Note: See the separate Teacher Preparation instructions below for preparing a cardboard tractor or wagon with one problem for each group before the lesson begins.)

Writing:

- Farm Mechanic Shop recording sheet, companion document (one per student)
- Pencils and crayons

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know
    a. Before the lesson, place one prepared broken tractor or wagon and one repair tray at each group table. Cover each tray or set it out of reach until section 4. Display the decodable text, the Word Bank, and the sample recording sheet near the carpet, and set the demonstration tractor and one brad beside you.
    b. Gather students on the carpet where they can all see you.
    c. Explain to students: "In our last lesson, Grandpa told Kailey and her cousins about all the jobs farmers do. One of those jobs was being a good mechanic, so farmers can keep their equipment running."
    d. Ask students the questions below. Call on two or three students for each one.
        - "Who remembers what a mechanic is?" (someone who fixes machines)
        - "Why does a farmer need to be a good mechanic?" (to keep tractors and equipment running)
        - "Have you ever seen something get fixed, like a toy, a bike, or a car? What happened?"

e. Explain to students: "Today you are going to become farm mechanics yourselves! First, let's read about a farmer who has a problem with his rig."

2. Reading Our Decodable Text
    a. Point to the displayed decodable text.
    b. Explain to students: "Good readers always read with a purpose. Our purpose today is to find out what was wrong with Dad's rig and how he fixed it. A rig is another name for a big farm machine, like a tractor."
    c. Explain to students: "Let's sound out a few words together before we read. Make a fist and put up one finger for each sound, just like me."
    d. For each word below, point to the word in the text, then put up one finger for each sound as you say it. Have students put up their fingers with you.
    e. Model decoding:
        - "Rig. /r/ (first finger), /i/ (second finger), /g/ (third finger). Blend it: rig."
        - "Fell. /f/ (first finger), /e/ (second finger), /l/ (third finger). The two l's at the end make one sound. Blend it: fell."
        - "Sets. /s/ (first finger), /e/ (second finger), /t/ (third finger), /s/ (fourth finger). Blend it: sets."
    f. Ask students to try one on their own: "Now you try. Find pin in our text. Count the sounds on your fingers, then blend them." Wait for students to try, then say it together. (/p/ /i/ /n/, pin)
    g. Read the whole text aloud. Point under each word as you read so students can follow along.
    h. Explain to students: "Now let's read it together." Read the text again chorally as a class, pointing under each word.
    i. Ask students the questions below. If a student is not sure, point to the sentence that holds the answer, reread it together, and ask again.
        - "What was wrong with Dad's rig?" (it would not run; the pin fell out)
        - "What did Dad do to fix it?" (he got a pin and set it in)
        - "How do we know the rig got fixed?" (it can run)
    j. Point to the mark at the end of each sentence, one at a time.
    k. Ask students: "Look at the end of each sentence. What marks do you see?" (periods and exclamation points)
    l. Explain to students: "A period ends a telling sentence. An exclamation point ends a sentence that shows strong feeling. The pin fell out! is a surprise. It can run! is exciting. You will use these marks in your own writing today."

3. Modeling the Mechanic's Job
    a. Stay with students on the carpet. Hold up the demonstration tractor so all students can see it.
    b. Explain to students: "Before you get your own equipment, watch how a mechanic works. A mechanic looks closely, figures out the problem, makes a fix, and then tests it."
    c. Set the tractor on the floor and gently roll it so the loose wheel wobbles or falls off.
    d. Pick the tractor up and look closely at the wheel.
    e. Think aloud: "Hmm. My tractor does not roll the right way. Let me look closely. The wheel is loose. It is not attached tightly. That is my problem."
    f. Hold up the brad.
    g. Think aloud: "What repair part might help? This is a brad. A brad can hold a wheel on and still let it spin. I will try a brad."

h. Push the brad through the center of the wheel and through the tractor. Turn the tractor over, bend the two prongs apart, and press them flat so the wheel stays on.
i. Think aloud: "Now I test it. A real mechanic always tests a repair." (Roll the tractor on the floor.) "It rolls! My repair worked."
j. Explain to students: "If my repair had not worked, I would look again and try a different part. That is what good mechanics do."
k. Ask students:
    - "What was the problem with my tractor?" (the wheel was loose)
    - "What did I use to fix it?" (a brad)
    - "How did I know my repair worked?" (you tested it, and it rolled)

4. Farm Mechanic Shop Investigation
    a. Explain to students: "Now it is your turn to be farm mechanics. Remember the steps. Look closely, figure out the problem, make a fix, and test it."
    b. Divide students into groups of 3–4 and send each group to a table with a prepared tractor or wagon.
    c. Uncover or hand out one repair tray to each group.
    d. Explain to students: "First, look at your equipment. Do not fix anything yet. Just look and talk with your group about what is wrong."
    e. Give groups about two minutes to inspect. Walk from table to table.
    f. Ask each group:
        - "What is wrong?"
        - "What part needs to be fixed?"
        - "Which repair piece might help?"
    g. Explain to students: "Now choose a repair part from your tray and make your fix."
    h. Once groups finish a repair, tell them how to test it. If the problem involves the wheel, students roll the tractor. If the problem involves the wagon, students gently pull to check that it stays hooked on. If the problem involves the cab, students check that it stays up and does not tip. If the problem involves the pin, students gently shake or pull to make sure it holds.
    i. Explain to any group whose repair does not work: "Good mechanics try again. Look closely one more time and choose a different part."
    j. When every group has a working repair, have each group hold up its equipment and tell the class what broke, what they used to fix it, and how they knew the repair worked.
    k. To give students another turn, have each group leave its equipment and tray on its table and move to the next table. Repeat steps d through j with the new equipment.
    l. Explain to students: "Leave your equipment on the table and come back to the carpet. Think about one repair your group made. You will write about it next."
5. Shared Writing: Writing About My Repair
    a. Gather students on the carpet where they can all see the sample recording sheet and the Word Bank.
    b. Explain to students: "Real mechanics write down their repairs so other people know what was wrong and how it got fixed. Today you will write about one repair your group made. Your writing will have three parts."
        - "First, you tell what you are writing about."
        - "Next, you tell a fact."
        - "Last, you write an ending."

c. Explain to students: "I am going to fill out my sheet first. Watch closely, because you will do the same thing next."
d. Point to the name line and write your name on it.
e. Point to question 1 and read it aloud while pointing to each word: "What broke?"
f. Think aloud: "What broke on mine? When I rolled my tractor, the wheel wobbled and fell off. My tractor broke."
g. Point to the first sentence frame and read it aloud while pointing to each word: "Our _____ did not work."
h. Think aloud: "My tractor did not work, so tractor goes in the blank. Is tractor in the Word Bank? Let me look." (Point to the tractor picture in the Word Bank.) "Yes, here it is. I copy the word letter by letter onto the blank." (Write tractor on the blank.) "Now I read my whole sentence. Our tractor did not work. This sentence tells something, so it ends with a period. The frame does not give me the period, so I put it there myself." (Add a period after work.)
i. Point to question 2 and read it aloud while pointing to each word: "How did you fix it?"
j. Think aloud: "How did I fix it? I looked in my repair tray and picked a brad. I pushed the brad through the wheel to hold it on. I fixed it with a brad."
k. Point to the second sentence frame and read it aloud while pointing to each word: "We fixed it with _____."
l. Think aloud: "I fixed it with a brad, so a brad goes in the blank. Is brad in the Word Bank? Let me look." (Point to the brad picture in the Word Bank.) "Yes, here it is. I copy the word letter by letter onto the blank." (Write a brad on the blank.) "Now I read my whole sentence. We fixed it with a brad. This sentence tells something, so it ends with a period." (Add a period after brad.)
m. Point to question 3 and read it aloud while pointing to each word: "What can it do now?"
n. Think aloud: "What can my tractor do now? I tested my repair. I rolled my tractor, and the wheel could spin. Now it can spin."
o. Point to the third sentence frame and read it aloud while pointing to each word: "Now it can _____."
p. Think aloud: "This is my ending. My wheel can spin, so spin goes in the blank. Is spin in the Word Bank? Let me look." (Look across the Word Bank.) "No, spin is not here. So I finger stretch it. I make a fist."
    - "I say the word slowly. Spin."
    - "I put up one finger for each sound I hear."
    - "/s/" (Put up first finger.)
    - "/p/" (Put up second finger.)
    - "/i/" (Put up third finger.)
    - "/n/" (Put up fourth finger.)
q. Think aloud: "Four fingers mean four sounds, so I write four letters. I point to each finger and write the letter for that sound."
    - "/s/ is s." (Point to your first finger and write s on the blank.)
    - "/p/ is p." (Point to your second finger and write p.)
    - "/i/ is i." (Point to your third finger and write i.)
    - "/n/ is n." (Point to your fourth finger and write n.)
r. Think aloud: "Now I read my whole sentence. Now it can spin! I was excited my repair worked, so this sentence ends with an exclamation point." (Add an exclamation point after spin.)

s. Point to the drawing box and draw a simple tractor with one wheel attached by a brad while students watch.
t. Read all three sentences aloud, pointing to each word as you read: "Our tractor did not work. We fixed it with a brad. Now it can spin!"
u. Point to the checklist. Read each line aloud and check each box on the sample sheet as you answer:
    - "I named what did not work. Yes, my tractor." (Check the box.)
    - "I told how we fixed it. Yes, with a brad." (Check the box.)
    - "I wrote an ending. Yes, now it can spin!" (Check the box.)
    - "I put a period or an exclamation point at the end of each sentence. Period, period, exclamation point. Yes." (Check the box.)

6. Independent Writing
    a. Leave the sample recording sheet and the Word Bank posted where all students can see them.
    b. Explain to students: "Now it is your turn. Here is what you will do."
        - "Write your name at the top."
        - "Think about one repair your group made."
        - "Answer question 1, question 2, and question 3 by finishing each sentence."
        - "Use the Word Bank pictures to find the names of your machine and your repair parts. Finger stretch the rest."
        - "Put a period or an exclamation point at the end of each sentence."
        - "Draw your repair in the box."
        - "Check your work with the checklist at the bottom."
    c. Send students to their seats. Hand each student a recording sheet and a pencil.
    d. Circulate and support:
        - Prompt for recall: "Read question 1 with me. What broke on yours? Now read question 2. How did you fix it?"
        - Prompt for the ending: "What happened when you tested your repair? That is your ending."
        - Prompt for end punctuation: "Is that sentence finished? Is it a telling sentence, or does it show strong feeling? What mark does it need?"
        - Prompt for the Word Bank: "Which part did you use? Find its picture in the Word Bank and copy the word carefully."
        - Prompt for spelling: "That word is not in the Word Bank, so let's finger stretch it. Make a fist. Say the word slowly. Put up a finger for each sound. Now write one letter for each finger."
    e. When students finish, have them read their writing aloud to a neighbor or to you. (Note: Accept phonetic spellings for words not in the Word Bank, such as tap for tape. Writing a letter for each sound is exactly what W.1.11.e asks for. For students who need more support, let them hold the equipment they repaired and say each sentence aloud before writing, or cover all but one frame with a sticky note, so they finish one sentence at a time. For students ready for more, challenge them to add a sentence that tells how they tested their repair.)

7. Closing Discussion and Kansas Connection
    a. Have students bring their completed recording sheets to the carpet.
    b. Invite three or four students to read their sentences aloud, one at a time.
    c. After each student reads, ask:
        - "What broke on your equipment, and how did you fix it?"

- "Read us your ending again. Did you use a period or an exclamation point? Why?"

d. Kansas Connection. Explain to students: "Just like you did today, Kansas farmers and ranchers fix their own tractors, wagons, and other machines all the time. When something breaks during planting or harvest, they cannot wait. They look closely, figure out the problem, make a fix, and test it. You can think like a mechanic too, whether you live in the country, a small town, a suburb, or a city."
e. Ask students:
    - "Whether farms are just down the road from you or something you have only seen in pictures, what is one machine or tool you use that sometimes needs fixing?"
    - "What is one thing you could tell your family tonight about how a mechanic solves a problem?"
f. Collect the recording sheets.

Assessment: Teacher observation during the decodable text reading, the investigation, and shared writing provides ongoing evidence of student understanding. Watch for whether students read the decodable text with purpose and answer questions about what was wrong with Dad's rig and how he fixed it. During the investigation, note whether students can tell what broke, what they used, and how they knew the repair worked. The completed recording sheet is the primary artifact. It shows whether students recalled their repair to answer each question, named a topic, told a fact, and wrote an ending. It also shows whether they ended each sentence with a period or an exclamation point and spelled untaught words phonetically.

Supplemental Activities: Display the repaired tractors and wagons alongside the completed recording sheets under a title such as "Farm Mechanics at Work!" For students ready for an additional creative challenge, set up a tractor-building center using the same craft materials (cardboard, brads, straws, string) where students design and build their own tractor or wagon from scratch. Invite students to write a sentence about their new design, ending it with a period or an exclamation point.

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Teacher Preparation Instructions

Materials (for one tractor and wagon)



- Small cardboard box (tractor body)
- Small paper cup or smaller box (cab)
- Shallow small cardboard box or folded tray (wagon)
- Cardboard circles (wheels)
- Brass paper fasteners (brads)
- Craft sticks
- Drinking straws
- Tape
- Tape
- Scissors
- Hole punch or pencil
- String or yarn

How to Make the Tractor



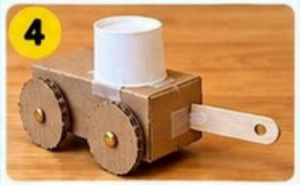
1 Cut or use a small cardboard box for the tractor body.



2 Tape a small paper cup or smaller box on top/back for the cab.



3 Cut four cardboard circles for wheels, punch center holes, and attach them to the sides with brass brads so the wheels can turn.



4 Tape a craft stick to the back as a hitch and punch a hole near the end.

How to Make the Wagon



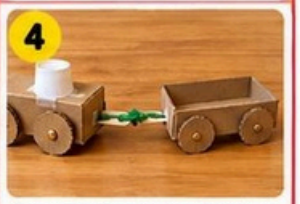
1 Use a shallow small cardboard box or folded cardboard tray for the wagon.



2 Cut two cardboard circles for wheels and attach them with brass brads so they turn.

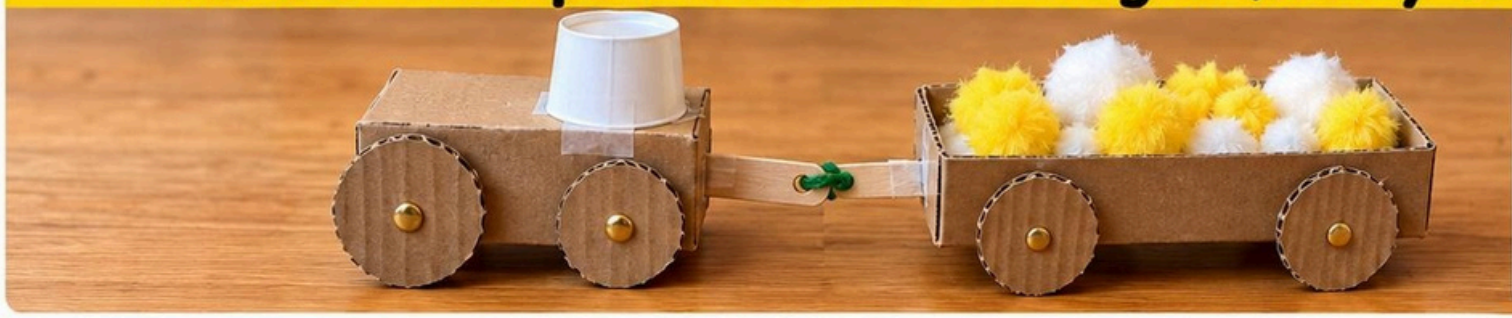


3 Tape a craft stick or sturdy cardboard strip to the front as a hitch.



4 Connect the wagon hitch to the tractor hitch with a short piece of yarn or string through the holes.

Finished Example: Tractor and Wagon (Ready to Use)

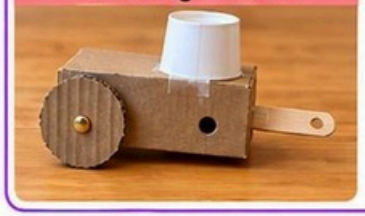


A Simple Version That Works Great!

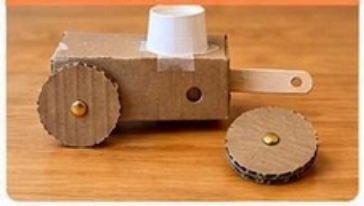
- Easy to make
- Inexpensive
- Easy for kindergarten students to repair
- Works well for simple mechanic play

Examples of "Broken" Tractors and Wagons for the Repair Activity

Missing Wheel



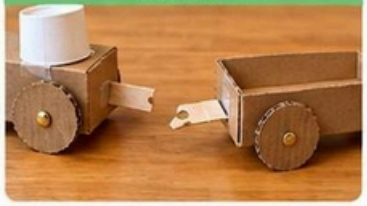
Loose Wheel



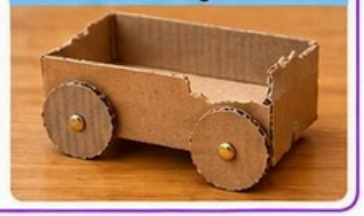
Wheel Will Not Turn



Broken Hitch



Broken Wagon Side



Name:_____

Farm Mechanic Recording Sheet

Word Bank		
 tractor	 wagon	 wheel
 brad	 string	 paper clip
 craft stick	 straw	 cardboard

1. What broke?

Our did not work

2. How did you fix it?

We fixed it with

Name:_____

Farm Mechanic Recording Sheet

2. What can it do now?

Now it can

3. Draw your repair below.

- ☐ I named what did not work.
- ☐ I told how we fixed it.
- ☐ I wrote an ending.
- ☐ I put a period or an exclamation point at the end of each sentence.

Word Bank

 tractor	 wagon	 wheel
 brad	 string	 paper clip
 craft stick	 straw	 cardboard

Dad and the Rig

Dad has a big red rig.

The rig will not run.

The pin fell out.

Dad gets a pin.

He sets the pin in.

Dad gets in the rig.

It can run!