



Lesson 1: Milk Comes From a Cow?

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Time: 40–45 minutes

Subject: ELA

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 1 of 5 in the *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit of the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on the book series by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Serving as the ELA anchor lesson for the unit, students are introduced to the returning characters, Kailey and Grandma, as they explore book features, vocabulary, illustrations, and key ideas through a first read of the text. As students engage in structured discussions, they strengthen foundational literacy skills while connecting their learning from *Celebrate Wheat* to the new concept of dairy farming and the journey of milk from the farm to their homes. This lesson establishes a shared understanding of the text and provides the foundation for deeper learning and cross-curricular connections in the lessons that follow.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across units; book orientation and features; comprehension during initial reading; vocabulary development; illustration and text connections; discussion norms and collaborative conversation; sequencing key events; asking and answering questions about key details; and Kansas connections through dairy farming 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 and answer questions to confirm understanding and sequence events.

SL.K.3 Ask and 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 author and 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 *Milk Comes From a Cow*.
- Explain the role of an author (who writes the words) and an illustrator (who creates the pictures).

- Ask and answer questions about key details in the story and seek clarification when something is confusing.
- Participate in structured partner discussions or turn-and-talks using agreed-upon discussion rules (listening and taking turns).
- Describe how illustrations show the journey of milk from the farm to the table.
- Identify the reasons the author gives for why dairy farming is important.
- Sequence three major events or ideas from the story (first–next–last).
- Connect ideas from what they learned about farming in *Celebrate Wheat* and new learning about dairy.
- Relate the story to personal experiences with milk, dairy foods, farming, and their community.

Materials Needed

- Book: *Milk Comes From a Cow?* by Dan Yunk, physical copy or author read-aloud on the unit landing page
- Smartboard or display screen
- Chart paper titled: “What Do We Know About Milk?”
- Markers
- *Celebrate Wheat* anchor chart or materials from the previous unit (for reference)

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know
 - a. Explain to students: “In our last unit, we read *Celebrate Wheat* and learned that Kansas farmers grow wheat that becomes the food we eat every day. We followed Kailey as she learned where pizza crust comes from. Remember how surprised she was to find out wheat becomes flour, and flour becomes pizza crust?”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “What is one thing you remember about wheat and Kansas farming from our last book?”
 - “Kailey loved the pizza at her birthday party. What was the crust made from?”
 - “What other foods did we learn about that come from Kansas farms?”
 - c. Explain: Bridge the connection to students: “In *Celebrate Wheat*, one of the pizza toppings was cheese. Do you remember where cheese comes from? Today, we are going to read a new book called *Milk Comes From a Cow?* Kailey is back, and this time she is going to learn about another important food that comes from Kansas farms. Just like wheat, this food has a surprising journey before it gets to our table.”
 - d. Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “In our last book, we learned that Kansas is a wheat state. But Kansas is also known for raising cattle. All around Kansas, on farms and ranches and in fields and pastures, there are cows. Most cattle in Kansas are beef cattle, but dairy farms are growing across the state and producing the milk and dairy products we enjoy every day. Whether you live in the country and have seen cows grazing in a pasture, or you live in town and buy a gallon of milk at the grocery store, dairy farming is part of your Kansas story too.”

2. Building Background Knowledge

- a. Explain to students: “Now, let’s think about what we already know about milk and where it comes from. In our last unit, we learned that food has a farm story behind it. Milk has a farm story too.”
- b. Ask students:
 - “Where do you think milk comes from before it gets to the grocery store?”
 - “What foods do you eat or drink that are made from milk? Think about cheese, yogurt, butter, or ice cream.”
 - “Have you ever seen cows on a farm or on a drive through Kansas?”
- c. Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “Milk starts on a dairy farm, and Kansas has dairy farms all across the state. If you live out in the country or your family has land, you might have seen dairy cows in a pasture or heard about a neighbor who milks cows. If you live in town, you might not have thought about where your cereal milk comes from before today. Both experiences are part of Kansas — and today we are going to learn how that milk gets from a cow all the way to your bowl.”
- d. Record student responses on chart paper under “What Do We Know About Milk?” to reference throughout the unit.

3. Book Orientation

- a. Explain to students: “Before we read, let’s look at our book like detectives. This is the same thing we did with *Celebrate Wheat*. We are going to look at the cover and title page before we start reading.”
- b. Using the physical book or video preview frame, have students identify:
 - Front cover — “What do you see? What do you think this book might be about?”
 - Back cover
 - Title page
 - Author, illustrator, and their roles
- c. Prompt students:
 - “The author writes the words. The illustrator creates the pictures.”
 - “This book is also by Dan Yunk, the same author who wrote *Celebrate Wheat*. What do you think he wants to teach us this time?”
 - “The title has a question mark. Why do you think the author chose to make the title a question?”

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 milk really comes from. As you listen, think about how this story reminds you of what Kailey learned in *Celebrate Wheat*.”
- b. Prompt students to encourage thinking:
 - “What is Kailey curious about?”
 - “Who teaches Kailey in this story?”
 - “How does milk get from a cow to our homes?”

5. First Read: Author Read-Aloud

- a. Play the YouTube Author Read-Aloud or read aloud from the physical copy.

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

- Stop #1 — Vocabulary & Key Details: Holstein / dairy cow / udder
Ask students:
 - “Farmer George showed Kailey black and white cows. What are they called?”
 - “What clues do the pictures give us about what a dairy cow does?”
 - “The book says the udder is a large bag between a cow’s rear legs. What do you think the udder is used for?”
 - Stop #2 — Sequence & Farm Connection: After the milking parlor is described.
Ask students:
 - “What happens to the milk after the machine pumps it out?”
 - “In Celebrate Wheat, wheat traveled from the field to the elevator to the mill. Where does milk travel after the farm?”
 - “So far, what happened first in our story, and what happened next?”
 - Stop #3 — Clarification & Fun Question: After Kailey asks if chocolate milk comes from brown cows.
Explain to students: “Kailey asked a great question! It is okay to wonder about things. What questions do YOU have about milk or dairy farms?”
6. Turn-and-Talk: Following Discussion Rules. Pair students with a partner before beginning the discussion.
- a. Explain to students while modeling rules: “Now we are going to talk with a partner about what we just heard. Remember our discussion rules: face your partner, listen quietly while your partner talks, and take turns.”
Prompt students:
 - “Tell your partner one thing you learned about where milk comes from. If you can, connect it to something we learned about farming in Celebrate Wheat.”
 - b. Example teacher follow-up:
 - “I heard you say milk comes from cows. Can you tell me more about what happens to the milk after the cow is milked?” (Extending the exchange)
 - “You mentioned trucks carry the milk. How is that like what happened to the wheat in our last book?” (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 kindergarten responses:
 - First: “Kailey wanted milk for cereal, but the carton was empty, so Grandma took her to a dairy farm.”
 - Next: “Farmer George showed Kailey his Holstein cows, how they eat and drink, and how a milking machine gets the milk out of the udder.”

- Last: “The milk traveled by truck to a processing plant and then to grocery stores. Kailey could not wait to tell her parents that milk comes from cows!”
8. Text–Illustration Connection: Display a selected page (recommended: the milking parlor or the Holstein cows).
 - a. Ask students:
 - “What does this picture show?”
 - “How does the picture help us understand what Farmer George is telling Kailey?”
 - “What is happening to the milk in this illustration?”
 - “In *Celebrate Wheat*, the illustrations showed us things we couldn’t see in real life, like a combine. How is the illustrator doing the same thing here?”
 - b. Guide students to see that illustrations show us places and processes we may not be able to visit, like a milking parlor, just as *Celebrate Wheat* showed us kernels being unloaded into trucks.
 9. Author’s Reasons:
 - a. Ask students: “Why does the author think it is important for kids to know where milk comes from? What reasons does he give?”

Students may respond:

 - “So we know it comes from cows, not just the store.”
 - “So we understand how hard farmers work.”
 - “So we know where our food really comes from.”
 - b. Extend with a cross-unit bridge: “Dan Yunk also wrote *Celebrate Wheat*. He writes books about where our food comes from. Why do you think he keeps writing books like this? What does he want kids to know about Kansas farms and farmers?”
 - c. Record responses on chart paper.
 10. Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “Kansas is not just a wheat state — it is also a cattle state. Dairy cows are raised on farms all across Kansas, and the milk they produce ends up in our homes, schools, and restaurants every single day.”
 - a. Ask students:
 - “Now that you know milk comes from cows on a dairy farm — what dairy foods do YOU love?”
 - “Why do YOU think dairy farming is important to people in Kansas?”
 - “Can you see a connection between what we learned in *Celebrate Wheat* and what we learned today?”
 - b. Explain to students: “No matter where you live in Kansas — on a farm or ranch, in a small town, or in a bigger city — dairy farming is part of your life. If your family has land or lives near farms, you might have seen dairy cows grazing in a pasture or heard about a neighbor who milks cows every morning. If you live in town, you might not have thought much about where your milk comes from — but now you do. The cereal milk, the cheese on your pizza, the butter on your toast — it all started with a cow on a Kansas farm. Kailey figured that out when her milk carton was empty, and now you know it too.”

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 dairy-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 knowing where milk comes from is important. Special attention should be given to moments where students make unprompted connections between this text and *Celebrate Wheat*, as these cross-unit connections indicate developing schema and meaningful learning transfer.

Supplemental Activities:

Have students draw their favorite dairy food and write or dictate one sentence about it (e.g., "My favorite dairy food is cheese," or "*Milk comes from a cow.*"). For an extended cross-unit connection, invite students to draw a simple two-part picture: a cow on one side of the page and the dairy product it becomes on the other, connected by an arrow. Display drawings alongside the "What Do We Know About Milk?" chart to build classroom community and reinforce the farm-to-table connection. These drawings can be compared with the wheat-to-food drawings from the *Celebrate Wheat* unit to show students how different Kansas farm products connect to the food on their tables.

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