

## Classroom Lesson Plan 8

# Life's Not Fair

**Teacher:** Barry Hoonan, The Odyssey School, Bainbridge Island, Washington

**Grade Level:** Fifth and sixth

**Topic:** Life's Not Fair

## Materials Needed:

- Selected books in themed sets
- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli for class read aloud book
- Writer's notebooks
- Sticky notes
- Handmade bookmarks (use the Teacher Tool "Literature Circle Bookmarks")
- Art materials
- Computer access for background research
- Student Activity Sheet:
  - Literature Circle Discussions (this is formatted so that it may be reproduced as an overhead or as a handout to give to students)
- Teacher Tools:
  - Using Personal Writing To Extend Literary Envisionments
  - Quick Writes
  - Popcorn Reading
  - Using Overheads in Discussion
  - Save the Last Word for the Artist
  - Assessment and Evaluation: Some Useful Principles

## Background Information:

Mr. Hoonan's students are invited to read two books chosen from the dozen thematically linked sets available. Using their writer's notebooks and sticky notes, they record their questions and responses in preparation for discussion. Meeting with others reading the same book, students select a discussion group facilitator, share the questions they have prepared, and determine where to begin their conversation.

As the conversation unfolds, the facilitator ensures everyone has the opportunity to contribute, while encouraging group members to develop their thoughts fully. At the end of the discussion, the group lists questions with which to begin their next meeting. They also decide if they need additional background for their reading. If so, they frame research topics to explore prior to their next conversation.

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Mr. Hoonan wants students to connect issues that emerge from their reading with their own experiences and world understandings. Literature discussion groups, he believes, allow for the easy exchange of ideas that encourage such connections.

To enrich the thematic background, Mr. Hoonan chooses a related book (*Stargirl*) to read aloud. During these readings, he may pause and invite students to interpret a passage or a scene dramatically.

### **Lesson Objectives:**

Students will:

- read and enjoy literature.
- learn ways to value the particulars in the texts they read and use them to support interpretive readings.
- use their writer's notebooks to record their personal responses to their reading.
- make connections with their own lives through the literature.
- observe and appreciate the craft of written language.
- prepare for discussions by noting key ideas and questions with sticky notes.
- use language to develop as a classroom community of thinkers and learners, respectful of views other than their own.

### **Expected Products From Lesson:**

- Regular written responses in writer's notebooks: see the Teacher Tool "Using Personal Writing To Extend Literary Envisionments" for suggested ways to help students respond to their reading
- Regular use of sticky notes for comments, questions, and identification of specific passages
- Literature group discussions
- Dramatic interpretations of literary moments
- Visual and/or written response to oral readings and/or literature group selections which take various forms, including diary entries, poetry, dramatic presentation of a scene, creating a collage, artistic representation, writing, and/or the creation of artifacts representing symbolic representations of the book

### **Instructional Strategies Implemented:**

- Teacher demonstrations of sticky notes and dramatic presentations during oral reading use
- Writing as a tool for making meaning: for comments on ways to use writing to extend class discussions, see the Teacher Tool "Quick Writes"
- Popcorn sharing of written responses: for a discussion of this strategy, see the Teacher Tool "Popcorn Reading"
- Literature group discussions
- Student sharing of insights from literature group discussions using overhead transparency: for a discussion of this strategy, see the Teacher Tool "Using Overheads in Discussion"
- Discussion group self-assessment

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### **Collaborative Structure of Class:**

Students divide into discussion groups determined by the books they are reading. If a large number of students is reading the same book, they might form two discussion groups. A discussion group might have as few as four members or as many as seven. Desks are clustered to form a convenient meeting area for as many students as are in a group.

### **Lesson Procedures/Activities:**

- Reading independently
- Presenting dramatic interpretations of passages or scenes
- Responding to literature in writer's notebooks
- Preparing for group discussions by marking passages and writing questions using sticky notes
- Participating in group discussions of the literature
- Creating visual projects based on the literature

### **Follow-Up or Culminating Activities:**

Artistic response to literature discussion book(s) and Save the Last Word for the Artist sharing strategy (see the Teacher Tool "Save the Last Word for the Artist").

### **Assessment:**

Students may be assessed on a daily basis through:

- preparation and participation,
- writer's notebook entries, and
- dramatic responses to literature.

The following activities might receive holistic or scaled evaluation (see the Teacher Tool "Assessment and Evaluation: Some Useful Principles" for a detailed explanation of holistic and scaled evaluation).

- Quality and quantity of writer's notebook entries
- Written and visual responses to literature
- Culminating project