be real

- Has characters, plot, and setting
- Shows life like it was
- Tells about problems people had in the past

CHAPTER 15

Learning About Fiction Genres Through Minilessons and Group Share

We want our students to make a lifelong commitment to reading and writing. And so we begin by painstakingly caring about the literacy landscape, and then we proceed to do the best literacy teaching imaginable."

—SHELLEY HARWAYNE

The previous chapter describes how students' deep understanding of the characteristics of each genre can grow out of interactive read-aloud. This chapter (which focuses on fiction genres) and the next (which focuses on nonfiction genres) describe how you can work toward very specific genre understandings through short, explicit whole-group lessons at the beginning of readers' workshop, followed by a group share at the end of the workshop.

The talk, noticings, and comparisons of carefully selected texts that take place during interactive read-aloud are the foundation for the enhanced knowledge of specific elements of genre that students develop in a structured readers' workshop. (See Figure 15.1.) The texts you and your students have shared during interactive read-aloud become mentor texts for the explicit minilessons presented in readers' and writers' workshop. These minilessons follow your inquiry-based study, so that students can achieve even deeper levels of understanding.

If students do not know much about the characteristics of a genre, it's best to begin by establishing some broad understandings—for example, the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Most younger students can already categorize texts as fiction or non-fiction, but many have only vague understandings.
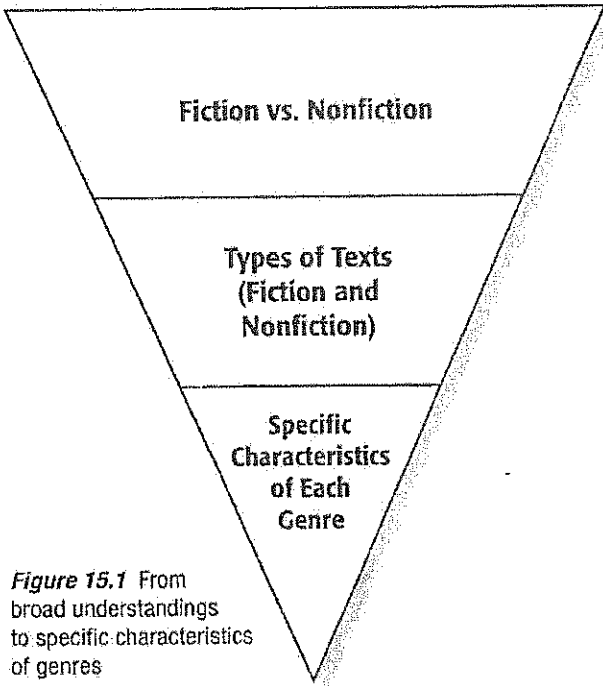
Figure 15.1 From broad understandings to specific characteristics of genres

Some common misconceptions that persist even in older age groups are:

- Any text that *could* be true (for example, realistic fiction) is nonfiction. Some students may believe that just about anything printed is true.

- Any text that contains facts is nonfiction even if it includes fictional characters (the Magic School Bus series, for example, which is a hybrid text).

- Books about real people are always nonfiction.

It's important to check on the specific understandings your students have about genre. Can they differentiate between fiction and nonfiction even when the lines are blurred? This time is not wasted. It only takes a few minutes for students to generate a simple chart like the one in Figure 15.2 after reading, discussing, and labeling five or six good examples of fiction and nonfiction.

Once students have built some important global understandings, they can begin to build a network of understandings about more specific types of fiction and nonfiction. While still sorting texts into fiction or nonfiction for example, they can begin to distinguish characteristics of biographical and other nonfiction texts. Further, within biographical texts, they can begin to distinguish between biography, autobiography, and memoir. Within fiction, they can distinguish between realistic texts and fantasy, itself divided into traditional literature and modern fantasy, including science fiction. All of this learning requires many experiences

CHARACTERISTICS OF FICTION AND NONFICTION	
Fiction	**Nonfiction**
▫ Not real	▫ Tells about something real or true
▫ Tells a story	▫ Gives factual information
▫ Has a beginning and an ending	▫ Can tell a story with facts
▫ Has characters and a problem	▫ Can tell a story of someone's life (biography)
▫ Sometimes describes people and places that could really exist (realistic fiction)	▫ Can describe how to do something or how something works
▫ Sometimes describes people and places that could have existed in the past (historical fiction)	▫ Can be written to persuade the reader
	▫ Can be written by people telling about their own lives
▫ Sometimes describes people and places that could not really exist (fantasy)	▫ Can include a variety of text features to communicate information

Figure 15.2 Characteristics of fiction and nonfiction

with texts over a long period of time, so it is a good idea to articulate the curriculum for learning about genre over several years. As students grow more knowledgeable, they can appreciate the fine differences that exist in the literature—for example, how to distinguish authentic biographies, fictionalized biographies, and biographical fiction. Also, they learn to analyze and write hybrid texts that contain more than one genre.

The Structure of Genre Study

In Chapter 2 we outlined steps in a genre study: (1) collecting a text set for a particular genre or subgenre; (2) immersing students in the texts through interactive read-aloud (and providing more texts in book clubs, guided reading, and independent reading); (3) creating a list of characteristics of the group of texts; (4) co-constructing a working definition of the genre; and (5) reading and revising the lists and definition.

Learning about genre takes a long time, so you repeat this process over and over across the grades as you share more complex understandings. Generally, teachers in kindergarten and first grade select realistic fiction, animal fantasy, different forms of traditional literature, and simple nonfiction texts on topics that children have the background knowledge to understand for specific studies. This doesn't mean they would not also be exposed to a greater variety of texts. Young students may respond to stories about children in times past but do not usually understand the complexities of historical settings. As children move beyond the first two years of school, their ability to understand a wide range of genres and attend to more complex themes and concepts expands rapidly. Be sure to evaluate the age group's ability to comprehend complex genres such as high fantasy and science fiction. Historical fiction and biography also make particular demands in that some understanding of the social conditions and perspectives of the period of history are necessary for deep understanding.

Most students will not automatically categorize texts and internalize the features of genre; they require instruction. Once the characteristics of genre are deeply known, however, they are an important advantage to the reader.

Keep your students in mind while collecting interesting and engaging text sets—their ages and experience and also their interests (but you can create new interests with high-quality, interesting texts). If a genre is relatively new or the students have not previously studied this genre, they need clear, easy-to-understand examples.

As you immerse students in the genre through the talk structures of interactive read-aloud and literature discussion, engage in intentional teaching. After your students hear and discuss some clear examples (there's no set number, but four or five is about right) and list features they notice, keep a clear understanding of the elements of the genre in your own mind so you can help them create a simple working definition of the genre.

You may return to the genre during the year, using further examples. The teachers in your school may decide to study a given genre every year or every other year so that students have the opportunity to think analytically about increasingly complex texts appropriate to their age level. In Figure 15.3 you will see an example of how you might begin to think about genre study across the grades, Kindergarten through Grade 8. As you develop a plan across grades, consult your district and state standards and think about the particular needs and strengths of your students and school. Remember the plan is not rigid like stone, but more like clay that guides your broad thinking.

The Structure of Readers' Workshop

After you are confident students have a working definition of the genre, teach specific minilessons in readers' workshop. You can address the noticings individually or cluster them to study the various elements. There's no need to reread the mentor texts during the minilesson, because they will be very familiar, but they're on hand for students to remember and revisit as needed.

The simple organizational outline of readers' workshop in Figure 15.4 works for writers' workshop as well. Since we have written extensive descriptions of readers' and writers' workshop elsewhere (see Fountas and Pinnell 2001, 2006), we will only summarize here.

Connection

Begin the workshop by making a connection to previous minilessons. In this way you help students link previous principles to the new one that you teach. For example, you might say (statements of the principle are in italics):

- "We have been thinking about, talking about, and reading realistic fiction. Michael, can you read the definition for us?" [Michael reads.] "Last week we learned that [reading from chart] *realistic fiction is a story that is not true though it could really happen. It has characters, a problem, and a solution.*"

- "One thing you noticed was that in realistic fiction the writer usually tells about the setting. What is setting?" [Students respond] *"Readers think about the setting, or when and where the story takes place, to help them understand the story."*

"Let's look back at a few books we read together to think about how the setting helps readers understand the story."

Often you construct the minilesson principle with your students, after looking at several examples. Sometimes you might begin with the principle on the chart and talk about how it applies to your shared examples. In either case, be sure to help your students understand how the new principle they are learning relates to the big ideas that define the genre.

POTENTIAL GENRE STUDIES ALONG THE K–8 CONTINUUM			
Grades	**Kindergarten**	**First Grade**	**Second Grade**
Potential Genre Studies in Each Grade *Note: Within these genres, students might be reading many different forms of text (e.g., plays, series, chapter books, graphic texts, picture books, etc.) as well as different types of fiction (e.g., mysteries, adventure stories, horror, humor, etc.) and nonfiction (e.g., reports, literary essays, feature articles, interviews, etc.)*	• Fiction vs. Nonfiction • Folktales • Poetry	• Fiction v. Nonfiction • Realistic Fiction • Folktales • Simple Expository Texts (e.g. informational books) • Procedural Texts • Poetry	• Fiction vs. Nonfiction • Realistic fiction • Animal Fantasy • Folktales • Fairy Tales • Fables • Expository Texts (e.g. informational texts) • Procedural Texts • Poetry (add in specific types of poetry)
Other genres that students might be exposed to through read-aloud or independent reading, but not studied through inquiry	• Realistic Fiction • Animal Fantasy • Fairy Tales • Narrative Nonfiction • Simple Expository Texts (e.g. informational books) • Procedural Texts	• Animal Fantasy • Fairy Tales • Narrative Nonfiction	• Myths • Persuasive Texts • Narrative Nonfiction • Simple Biographies • Memoirs

Figure 15.3 Potential genre studies along the K–8 continuum

| **Potential Genre Studies in Each Grade** Note: *Within these genres, students might be reading many different forms of text (e.g., plays, series, chapter books, graphic texts, picture books, etc.) as well as different types of fiction (e.g., mysteries, adventure stories, horror, humor, etc.) and nonfiction (e.g., reports, literary essays, feature articles, interviews, etc.)* | • Realistic Fiction
• Folktales
• Fairy Tales
• Fables
• Myths
• Expository Texts (e.g. informational texts, interviews)
• Biographies
• Memoirs
• Poetry (add in specific types of poetry)
• Tests

Special types of fiction read across genres:
• Mysteries
• Adventure Stories
• Animal Stories
• Family, Friends, and School Stories
• Graphic Texts | • Realistic Fiction
• Historical Fiction
• Folktales
• Fairy Tales
• Fables
• Myths
• Fantasy
• Expository Texts (e.g., informational texts, feature articles, interviews, research reports)
• Biographies
• Autobiographies
• Memoirs
• Narrative Nonfiction
• Poetry (add in specific types of poetry)
• Tests

Special types of fiction read across genres:
• Mysteries
• Adventure Stories
• Animal Stories
• Family, Friends and School Stories
• Graphic Texts | • Realistic Fiction
• Historical Fiction
• Folktales
• Legends, Epics, Ballads
• Myths
• Fantasy
• Expository Texts (e.g., informational texts, feature articles, interviews, research reports, literary essays)
• Persuasive Texts
• Biographies
• Autobiographies
• Memoirs
• Narrative Nonfiction
• Poetry (add in specific types of poetry)
• Tests

Special types and forms of fiction read across genres:
• Mysteries
• Adventure Stories
• Animal Stories
• Family, Friends and School Stories
• Graphic Texts |
| Other genres that students might be exposed to through read-aloud or independent reading, but not studied | • Narrative Nonfiction
• Autobiographies
• Fantasy
• Historical Fiction
• Persuasive Texts | • Legends, Epics, Ballads
• Fantasy
• Science Fiction
• Persuasive Texts | • Science Fiction
• Hybrid Texts |

Figure 15.3 Potential genre studies along the K–8 continuum *(cont.)*

Potential Genre Studies in Each Grade Note: Within these genres, students might be reading many different forms of text (e.g., plays, series, chapter books, graphic texts, picture books, etc.) as well as different types of fiction (e.g., mysteries, adventure stories, horror, humor, etc.) and nonfiction (e.g., reports, literary essays, feature articles, interviews, etc.)			
	• Realistic Fiction • Historical Fiction • Legends, Epics, Ballads • Myths • Fantasy • Science Fiction • Expository Texts (e.g. informational texts, feature articles, interviews, research reports, literary essays, speeches) • Biographies • Autobiographies • Memoirs • Narrative Nonfiction • Persuasive Texts • Hybrid Texts • Poetry (add in specific types of poetry) • Tests Special types and forms of fiction read across genres: • Adventure Stories • Mysteries • Satire/Parodies • Graphic Texts	• Realistic Fiction • Historical Fiction • Legends, Epics, Ballads • Myths • Fantasy • Science Fiction • Expository Texts (e.g. informational texts, feature articles, interviews, research reports, literary essays, speeches) • Biographies • Autobiographies • Memoirs • Narrative Nonfiction • Persuasive Texts • Hybrid Texts • Poetry (add in specific types of poetry) • Tests Special types and forms of fiction read across genres: • Adventure Stories • Mysteries • Satire/Parodies • Graphic Texts	• Realistic Fiction • Historical Fiction • Legends, Epics, Ballads • Myths • Fantasy • Science Fiction • Expository Texts (e.g. informational texts, feature articles, interviews,research reports, literary essays, speeches) • Biographies • Autobiographies • Memoirs • Narrative Nonfiction • Persuasive Texts • Hybrid Texts • Poetry (add in specific types of poetry) • Tests Special types and forms of fiction read across genres: • Adventure Stories • Mysteries • Satire/Parodies • Graphic Texts
Other genres that students might be exposed to through read-aloud or independent reading, but not studied	• Students should be reading independently across all genres.	• Students should be reading independently across all genres.	• Students should be reading independently across all genres.

Figure 15.3 Potential genre studies along the K–8 continuum (cont.)

STRUCTURE OF READERS' OR WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Connection	**Establish Context**	• Teacher helps students link previous minilesson principles to the new one that will be taught. • Students understand how the learning relates to the big ideas.
Minilesson	**State the Principle**	• As an inquiry approach, students think and talk about the examples and co-construct the principle. • Principle stated in clear, explicit, and concise language. • Principle tells what readers or writers do and why.
	Refer to Examples (Mentor Texts, Charts, Student or Teacher Writing)	• Teacher demonstrates and models with high-quality text examples to help students understand the principle. • Discussion fosters a shared language. • Students suggest examples and share noticings. • Students know how the examples are helping them as readers/writers.
	Have a Try (When Applicable)	• Students quickly try out the principle in the whole-group setting, often with a partner or in threes. • Students actively process the new information with support. • Directly related to what readers and writers need to be able to think about independently during the workshop.
Application	**Apply New Learning on Own** **Confer with Teacher**	• Students apply what they have learned in the minilesson to their own reading or writing if applicable. • Teacher holds brief individual conferences to support the students' reading and writing and make a teaching point. • Teacher may reinforce minilesson principle with individuals. • Teacher may assess the reading or writing of individuals. • Teacher may link principle to guided reading or book club discussions (or guided writing lessons).
Group Share	**Extend Learning**	• Students share new learning with the whole group. • Students extend learning through sharing more examples and insights. • Teacher expands learning through building on student examples. • Teacher gains feedback on student learning. • The group evaluates how today's workshop went.

Figure 15.4 Structure of readers' or writers' workshop

Minilesson

The minilesson includes the statement of a principle, some examples, and sometimes "having a try." Involve students in the inquiry process so they construct their knowledge, or you may sometimes include teacher-led demonstrations and modeling. Your approach may depend on the particular principle.

Take an inquiry stance in your language and how you approach the principle. According to Ray, an inquiry stance "repositions the curriculum as an outcome of instruction rather than the starting point" (2006). Together, you and your students derive the principle based on the previous study of clear examples of genre or craft. The inquiry stance is active and exciting. You learn as much as your students as you think alongside them, and the students get inside the understandings because they construct them for themselves.

As an alternative, you might tell the students the principle in clear terms and then invite them to offer examples to help them understand it. This approach is most effective if you have previously immersed the students in the genre and they have clear examples as a reference. The goals of the minilesson are listed in Figure 15.5.

When you teach minilessons, think about what you want your students to learn how to do as readers—the systems of strategic actions you want them to be able to use. Think about how they will use what they learn on their own. To select and plan minilessons, draw on your assessment and observation of student behaviors, and consult district and/or state standards and guidelines. What do students already know? What do they need to know? What examples will they need to access? How much demonstration will be needed? The characteristics of effective minilessons are listed in Figure 15.6.

Stating the Principle

State the principle in explicit language. A minilesson in readers' workshop may focus on an important principle related to processing texts or thinking beyond and about texts. The twelve systems of strategic actions described in Chapter 5 are the foundation for minilessons throughout grades K–8. *The Continuum of Literacy Learning* includes specific descriptions of

curriculum goals for minilessons based on your assessment of student needs.

Minilessons in a genre study generally require students to think beyond and about the texts they are hearing read or are reading independently. Specifically, they prompt students to think and talk about examples in a way that helps them notice and analyze the characteristics related to the genre.

Begin with an introductory lesson that builds on the definition the students have helped create. You might prepare for the lesson by asking all your students to select a book in the genre for their independent reading. Although students should not choose books by level, a good variety of texts at a range of difficulty levels needs to be available in the classroom library. Display the books face front in labeled tubs or baskets to help students quickly find books they like in a variety of genres.

Referring to Known Examples

In a genre study, the same mentor texts can be used for both reading minilessons and writing minilessons. Mentor texts not only make your teaching efficient but also provide the coherence that makes instruction more meaningful for students. You can return to mentor texts that students know well many times to help them understand the characteristics of texts in a particular genre. The texts need not be reread. Students will remember a text because they have had the opportunity to discuss it and list features they noticed. Revisit parts of the text as needed.

MINILESSON GOALS
▪ Teach readers how to think in a new way about texts.
▪ Help students use mentor texts they know well so that they can learn from and refer to the examples.
▪ Make new understandings explicit and accessible so readers can retrieve them when needed.

Figure 15.5 Minilesson goals

Have a clear purpose.

Use clear language that gets young readers (K–2) to think about an important idea as they start reading (e.g., *Think about the problem in the story* or *Think about why the author is telling about this topic*).

Use clear language that refers to what readers do and why (grades 3–8). (e.g., *Readers _____ so that _____.* or *Readers _____ in order to _____.)*

Include a statement of the principle and examples from shared texts.

Help students understand what they are learning how to do and how it helps them as readers (and writers).

Use high-quality mentor texts, teacher or student writing, graphic organizers, and charts everyone can see.

Are grouped and sequenced according to concepts so that students build one understanding on the next.

Develop related understandings over several days so that students make connections and develop deep understandings and gain the bigger ideas.

Are relevant to the needs of readers. (What will be helpful to most readers and also meet the demands of the curriculum?)

Are brief, concise, and to the point (about five to ten minutes).

Are well-paced to engage and hold students' interest.

Engage readers' thinking from beginning to end.

Stay focused on a single idea (no digressions that waste time, divert attention, or confuse).

Foster community through the development of a shared language.

Help students become better readers and writers.

Figure 15.6 The characteristics of effective minilessons

Carry genre study over into writers' workshop using the same examples. If students are writing memoir, for example, the authors of the examples they revisit will become professional mentors. The same is true of biography, autobiography, expository texts, and short fiction.

Having a Try

Learning is helped along if students have a chance to apply the principle during the minilesson or immediately after it, whether as a whole group, in a small group, or with a partner. This activity is directly related to what readers and writers need to be able to do independently in the workshop. Having a try might involve:

> *Reading.* Students and teacher talk about the characteristics in one or two mentor texts. Then the students turn and discuss with a partner the characteristics in another example or in their independent reading.

> *Writing.* After noticing a genre characteristic with the teacher, students select a writer's notebook entry, give it a try, and explain to a partner what they did.

The time spent having a try is brief. The teacher observes in order to gather information on how well students understand the minilesson principle and reinforces it.

Application

Immediately following the minilesson, students apply what they have learned to their own reading or writing, if that is appropriate. They are accountable for trying out new thinking because they know they will be expected to discuss the principle again during the sharing session. The charge can be anything: "Think about the setting and why it is important." "Choose a character and be prepared to share how the writer helped you

know what that character was like." "Think about an important decision the subject of your biography made and be prepared to talk about it." At the end of the minilesson, for example, you might say:

- *Reading.* "While you are reading today, notice what the writing is like so you can identify the genre [nonfiction book, biography, fantasy, realistic fiction, other]. Be prepared to share what you noticed during group share."

- *Writing.* "While you are writing today, you may want to use the examples of [biography, memoir, short fiction] to help you think about what to write or how to write it. Share your thinking with us in group share."

The examples above are just suggestions. There are many ways to foster student thinking based on the particular genre being studied.

Students then begin reading or writing independently. Typically, the room is completely silent except for the low-voiced conferences you have with individual students or the small-group work you do in guided reading or writing or literature discussion. Independent work includes:

- *Reading.* Students silently read a book of their own choosing. Students do not choose books by level but according to their interests. They may be asked to choose a book in a particular genre following the study and are expected to read a specific number of books in a variety of genres during the year. They might also write about their reading once a week in a reader's notebook. (The routines of readers' workshop, as well as how to get started in the first twenty days of the school year, are described in Fountas and Pinnell 2001.)

- *Writing.* Students work on their own pieces. The writing may involve any aspect of the writing process, including writing in the writer's notebook (planting seeds), getting thoughts down on paper (writing a discovery draft), revising, editing, and producing a final draft that may be published in some way. (The routines of writers' workshop are described in Fountas and Pinnell 2001, 2006.)

While students are working independently in readers' workshop, you might:

1. Confer with individual students regarding their reading or their writing about reading.

2. Bring small groups of students together for guided reading. (Guided reading as it contributes to genre study is described in Chapter 19.)

3. Bring small groups of students together for literature discussion, often called *book clubs*. (The role of book clubs in genre study is described in Chapter 14.)

In the earliest grades (K–1) you might have students rotate to literacy centers for work with words, listening to a book, responding to books with art, or other engaging, meaningful independent activities.

Group Share

For a brief period at the end of the workshop, students have the opportunity to share their learning with the entire group. During this time they expand and deepen their understanding of the minilesson principle. This sharing period is more than students' coming prepared to say something; you actively teach, connecting their examples to the minilesson principle. Sharing approaches vary. For example, you can:

- Have students sit in a circle and some students share their thinking with the entire group.

- Have each student share one brief thought ("popcorn") around the circle.

- Have students talk first in pairs or threes and then gather a few comments for the larger group.

Sharing at the end of readers' workshop takes only a few minutes and is very valuable. Students' observational powers are sharpened because they know they are expected to share with the group. They benefit from the thoughts of their peers. Reinforce the minilesson principle with students' own examples and at the same time quickly assess student understanding. Sharing provides you with immediate feedback on the effectiveness of the minilesson.

By sharing during a genre study, students learn from one another. For example:

> *Reading.* Students can share with a partner what they noticed about the features of the genre in the books they are reading. After this brief "buzz," some students can share comments with the entire group. Or students can go around the circle and quickly share features they have noticed in the books they are reading.

> *Writing.* Students can share how they used a mentor text to help them craft their writing. Or they can share how they used what they know about a genre to help them write in a · genre.

There are many other ways students can share their understandings. Readers'/writers' workshop provides a predictable and productive series of opportunities that support students in learning the specifics of reading and writing.

Genre Study in Readers' Workshop

When introducing genre study in readers' workshop, keep in mind the close relationship between your intentional teaching in interactive read-aloud and the minilessons and group shares that take place in the workshop. Together, they provide the powerful teaching that helps your students not only comprehend texts deeply but also talk and write about them analytically. These goals will not be accomplished by dipping randomly into a genre or literary element. Genre study needs to be systematic, well planned, and connected. Ideally, with colleagues in your school, construct a tentative genre study curriculum map across a grade level and if possible across several grades (see examples in Figures 15.7, 15.8, and 15.9). Students need to learn that texts employ a predictable, consistent set of codes that make up the genres and their elements and characteristics. They need to become familiar with a wide range of genres. They also need to study genres with texts that become more complex across the grades. Plan conceptual units that help students build strong understandings, one upon the other, in each genre.

Moving from interactive read-aloud to a readers' workshop enables you to establish a foundation through inquiry and also to ensure that students have clear examples as anchors. As you teach, bring these specific examples back to mind (along with previous discussions, characteristics, and definitions) to ground your points. (See Figure 15.10.)

Using Minilessons and Group Share to Support Genre Study

Let's walk through the process of moving from interactive read-aloud to a readers' workshop during genre study and look specifically at how minilessons and group share supports the process. Figure 15.9 provides a snapshot of a three week genre study in the month of October in a fifth-grade classroom. You will also want to glance back at Figure 15.8, an example of a fifth grade curriculum map, to see how this realistic fiction genre study relates to other genre studies across the school year. This genre study and the ones that follow in this chapter help students to see a relationship among genres. This example is not a rigid path requiring that one thing be done before another. Rather, think through the relationships yourself and help students build the map of genres in their own heads. The three-week example of a genre study is only one example of a way a teacher might approach the study of realistic fiction. Genre studies usually last about two to four weeks. Decide what your students need and think about what literary elements you will revisit or focus on in subsequent genre studies. Thinking through these points will help you determine how long to spend on a given genre.

In the three-week example (Figure 15.9), Matt begins the genre study of realistic fiction by immersing his fifth grade students in realistic fiction picture books (using picture books quickly builds a repertoire of shared texts) during interactive read-aloud. Notice that Matt does not incorporate genre study into his reading minilessons and group share in the first week. However, he has made sure realistic fiction books are available at a range of levels in his classroom library. As students discuss the genre in interactive read-aloud, becoming more familiar with the elements of realistic fiction, Matt introduces book club

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	September	October
Time spent	2 weeks	4 weeks	2 weeks
Genre Study	**Mini Study: Fiction vs. Nonfiction**	**Realistic Fiction**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Collect a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts.	Collect a text set of realistic fiction texts (including picture books, plays, short stories and short chapter books).	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study.
	Immerse students in both nonfiction and fiction texts during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts.	Immerse students in realistic fiction during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on realistic fiction at a range of reading levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in this text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on realistic fiction at a range of reading levels for independent reading.
	Create list of characteristics defining difference between fiction and nonfiction.	Create a list of characteristics defining realistic fiction.	
	Co-construct a definition for fiction and nonfiction to distinguish between the two.	Co-construct a definition of realistic fiction. Read and revise definition.	Teach minilessons on principles related to the study. For example:
	Teach a series of minilessons focusing on how readers can tell they are reading fiction or nonfiction and have students try classifying their own reading.	Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of realistic fiction. For example: • Characters • Setting • Problem resolution • Themes and messages • Perspective • Illustrations	• Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Help students notice the genres of the texts.
	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	**November**	
Time spent	3 weeks	1 week
Genre Study	**Expository Texts**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Collect four or five nonfiction read-aloud titles that are clearly expository texts, not biography, how-to, or narrative nonfiction. Immerse students in this genre through interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on expository texts at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining expository nonfiction. Co-construct a definition of expository nonfiction. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of expository nonfiction. For example: • Information in text • Text structure • Big ideas • Tone, voice, and perspective • Text features Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Help students notice the genres of the texts. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	December	
Time spent	3 weeks	1–2 weeks
Genre Study	**Animal Fantasy**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Collect a text set of animal fantasy texts.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study.
	Immerse students in animal fantasy using this text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on animal fantasy texts at a range of reading levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading.
	Create a list of characteristics defining animal fantasy.	
	Co-construct a definition of fantasy. (You can choose if you want to specify animal fantasy).	
	Read and revise definition.	
	Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of animal fantasy. For example:	Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example:
	• Characters	• Literary elements
	• Setting	• Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft
	• Problem resolution	• Themes and messages across texts
	• Lesson/Message	• Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator
	• Perspective	
	• Illustrations	Help students notice the genres of the texts.
	• Common motifs/elements of fantasy	
	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	**January**	
Time spent	1–2 weeks	2–3 weeks	1–2 weeks
Genre Study	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**	**Procedural Texts (How-to-Books)**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study.	Collect a text set of procedural or "how-to" texts.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study.
	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in procedural texts during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of levels for independent reading.
		Create a list of characteristics defining procedural texts.	
		Co-construct a definition of procedural (how-to) texts.	
		Read and revise definition.	
	Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example:	Teach a series of minilessons on some of the elements or demands of procedural texts. For example:	Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example:
	• Literary elements • Analyzing the author's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author	• Gathering information • Considering the significance of each step in a complex process • Understanding the conventions in which instructions are written • Analyzing the logic of text or critiquing it for errors	• Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator
	Help students notice the genres of the texts.		Help students notice the genres of the texts.
	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	February	
Time spent	1–2 weeks	3–4 weeks
Genre Study	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**	**Folktales and Fairy Tales** (You may want to focus on a couple of types of folktales only and follow with fables.)
Process	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represent the category you plan to study. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Help students notice the genres of the texts. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	• Beast Tales • Cumulative Tales • Pourquoi Tales • Trickster Tales • Noodlehead Tales • Realistic Tales • Tall Tales Collect a text set of folktales. (At this grade level, it is not necessary to make a distinction between folktales and fairy tales as they are both forms of folktales, and the main goal is for students to begin to understand how traditional literature is different from the other genres they have read.) Immerse students in folktales during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on different folktales and fairy tales at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining folktales. Co-construct a definition of folktales. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of folktales. For example: • Characters • Setting • Problem resolution • Themes and messages: Reflections of the culture • Perspective • Illustrations

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2	
Month	**March**
Time spent	1–2 weeks	1–2 weeks
Genre Study	**Reviewing Fiction vs. Nonfiction** (or further types of folktales) Note: If your students have a good grasp of the differences between fiction and nonfiction, you may also want to revisit realistic fiction and fantasy and discuss the differences between these two types of fiction.	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Spend time reviewing what you and your students have learned about fiction and nonfiction and/or realistic fiction and fantasy by revisiting texts and charts you created during the inquiry process. Have students spend time reading their choice of genre during independent reading and identifying the texts as fiction or nonfiction or categorizing them by genre.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represent the category you plan to study. Immerse student in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Help students notice the genres of the texts. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	**April**	
Time Spent	3–4 weeks	1–2 weeks
Genre Study	**Realistic Fiction**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Revisit realistic fiction with another text set of realistic fiction texts (including picture books, plays, short stories, and short chapter books). Immerse students in realistic fiction during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on realistic fiction at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Revisit the list of characteristics defining realistic fiction. Revise or add any new noticings to your chart. Revise/co-construct a definition of realistic fiction. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of realistic fiction that you may not have addressed previously. For example: • Characters • Setting • Problem resolution • Themes and messages • Perspective • Illustrations Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Help students notice the genres of the texts. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

SAMPLE CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 2		
Month	May	June
Time spent	4 weeks	3 weeks
Genre Study	**Expository Nonfiction**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study or Review of Fiction and Nonfiction**
Process	Revisit expository nonfiction with another text set of four or five nonfiction read-aloud titles that are clearly expository texts, not biography, how-to, or narrative nonfiction. Immerse students in this genre through interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on expository nonfiction at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Revisit the list of characteristics defining expository nonfiction you made at the beginning of the year. Revise or add any new noticings to your chart. Revise/co-construct a definition of expository nonfiction. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of expository nonfiction. You will probably want to choose an element you did not address previously. For example: • Information in text • Text structure • Big ideas • Tone, voice, and perspective • Text features Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Depending on student need, review differences between fiction and nonfiction. Conclude the year with another author, illustrator, or craft study.

Figure 15.7 Sample curriculum map for genre study, grade 2 *(cont.)*

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5		
Month	**September**	
Time spent	3 weeks	1–2 weeks
Genre Study	**Memoir**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Collect a text set of memoirs.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books by an author you plan to study.
	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read aloud. Give book talks on memoirs at a range of reading levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in this text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading.
	Create a list of characteristics defining memoir.	
	Co-construct a definition of memoir.	
	Read and revise definition.	
	Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of memoir. For example:	Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example:
	• Perspective	• Literary elements
	• Setting	• Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft
	• Message/ Theme	• Themes and messages across texts
	• Imagery	• Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator
	• Communication of emotion	Help students notice the genres of the texts.
	• Tone, attitude, mood	
	• Style/Language	
	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5	
Month	**October**
Time spent	3–4 weeks	1 week
Genre Study	**Realistic Fiction**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**
Process	Collect a text set of realistic fiction texts (including picture books, plays, short stories, and short chapter books).	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study.
	Immerse students in realistic fiction during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on realistic fiction at a range of reading levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading.
	Create a list of characteristics defining realistic fiction.	
	Co-Construct a definition of realistic fiction.	
	Read and revise definition.	
	Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of realistic fiction. For example:	Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example:
	• Characters	• Literary elements
	• Setting	• Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft
	• Plot and problem resolution	• Themes and messages across texts
	• Themes and messages	• Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator
	• Tone	
	• Mood	Help students notice the genres of the texts.
	• Perspective	
	• Illustrations	
	• Style/Language	
	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5 *(cont.)*

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5		
Month	November	
Time spent	3–4 weeks	1 week
Genre Study	Biography	Author, Illustrator, or Craft
Process	Collect a text set of biographies (including picture books, plays, short chapter books)	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study.
	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on biographies at a range of reading levels for independent reading.	Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading.
	Create a list of characteristics defining biography.	
	Co-construct a definition of biography.	
	Read and revise definition.	
	Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of biography. For example:	Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example:
	• Subject	• Literary elements
	• Attitude, tone	• Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft
	• Illustrations	• Themes and messages across texts
	• Influence of setting	• Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator
	• Decision points	
	• Larger messages	Help students notice the genres of the texts.
	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5 *(cont.)*

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5		
Month	**December**	**January**
Time spent	3 weeks	1–2 weeks	3 weeks
Genre Study	**Historical Fiction**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**	**Expository Texts: Feature Articles** (or other forms of expository texts)
Process	Collect a text set of historical fiction texts (including picture books, plays, short stories, and short chapter books). Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on historical fiction at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining historical fiction. Co-construct a definition of historical fiction. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of historical fiction. For example: • Characters • Setting • Plot and problem resolution • Themes and messages • Tone • Mood • Perspective • Illustrations • Style/Language Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author Help students notice the genres of the texts. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Collect four or five examples of feature articles from newspapers, magazines, etc. (or collect examples of other expository texts). Immerse students in this genre through interactive read-aloud. Provide access to feature articles in print and online at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining feature articles (or other forms of expository texts). Co-construct a definition of feature articles as one type of nonfiction. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of feature articles. For example: • Information in text • Text structure • Big ideas • Tone, voice, and attitude • Text features Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5 *(cont.)*

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5	
Month	**February**
Time spent	1–2 weeks	2–3 weeks
Genre Study	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**	Tests
Process	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Help students notice the genres of the texts. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Collect several examples of test questions. Give students the opportunity to look at the tests and try them. Create a list of characteristics defining the "testing genre." Co-construct a definition for tests as a genre. Teach minilessons around analyzing the language of testing, testing strategies, and the defining characteristics of the testing genre. Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5 *(cont.)*

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5			
Month	March		April
Time spent	3–4 weeks	1–2 weeks	3–4 weeks
Genre Study	**Legends, Epics, Ballads, Myths**	**Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study**	**Persuasive Texts**
Process	Collect a text set of legends, epics, ballads, or myths (including picture books, plays, short stories, and short chapter books). Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on books in this genre at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining legends, epics, ballads, or myths. Co-construct a definition of legends, epics, ballads, or myths. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of legends, epics, ballads, or myths. For example: • Characters/Heroes/Gods • Setting • Plot and Problem resolution (good v. evil) • Themes and messages (reflections of culture/society) • Symbolism • Style/Language • Common motifs	*Author, Illustrator, or Craft Study:* Collect a text set of books that represents the category you plan to study. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Help students notice the genres of the texts. Teach minilessons on subjects related to the study. For example: • Literary elements • Analyzing the author's or illustrator's craft • Themes and messages across texts • Making connections across texts by the same author or illustrator Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Collect examples of persuasive texts from picture books, newspapers, magazines, online, etc. Immerse students in this genre through interactive read-aloud. Provide access to persuasive texts in print and online for students' independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining persuasive texts. Co-construct a definition of persuasive texts. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of persuasive texts. For example: • Information in text • Text structure • Message • Perspective • Tone, voice, and attitude • Evaluating logic, accuracy, completeness • Language/Style Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5 *(cont.)*

continues

CURRICULUM MAP FOR GENRE STUDY, GRADE 5

Month	May	June
Time spent	3–4 weeks	4 weeks
Genre Study	Fantasy	Narrative Nonfiction or Author Study, Illustrator, or Craft Study
Process	Note: You will want to decide whether you want to simply label this genre "fantasy" or distinguish between modern fantasy and traditional literature for your students. Collect a set of fantasy texts. Immerse students in the text set during interactive read-aloud. Give book talks on texts in this genre at a range of reading levels for independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining fantasy. Co-construct a definition of fantasy. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of fantasy. For example: • Characters • Setting • Plot and problem resolution • Themes, lessons, messages • Common motifs • Style/Language Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.	Follow the process for author, illustrator, or craft study noted previously. Or Collect a text set of narrative nonfiction texts. Immerse students in this genre through interactive read-aloud. Provide book talks on narrative nonfiction for a range of reading for students' independent reading. Create a list of characteristics defining narrative nonfiction. Co-construct a definition of narrative nonfiction. Read and revise definition. Teach a series of minilessons on one or two of the defining elements of narrative nonfiction. For example: • Text structure • Information in text • Message • Tone, voice, and attitude • Evaluating accuracy • Language/Style Students choose from a variety of genres available in the classroom library for independent reading to apply their learning.

Figure 15.8 Curriculum map for genre study, grade 5 *(cont.)*

EXAMPLE OF A GENRE STUDY OF REALISTIC FICTION

Week 1	*Genre Study:* Immerse students in realistic fiction texts (Matt spent the weeks leading up to this study collecting a text set of realistic fiction books.)	*Book Talks:* Realistic fiction texts at a range of reading levels for independent reading. *Minilessons:* Matt has been teaching a series of minilessons on how writers use punctuation to show meaning (craft) that he will continue until he is ready to bring the learning from genre study into readers' workshop (after students have an understanding of the characteristics and a definition for the genre.) *Independent Reading:* Students begin to explore realistic fiction texts during independent reading. Matt makes sure his classroom library contains many baskets of realistic fiction on a variety of topics at a range of reading levels. *Book Clubs:* Matt decides to begin book clubs in his class around realistic fiction to further explore the genre. *Share:* Students share examples of writers' use of punctuation in relation to the minilessons at the beginning of the week. As the students become more familiar with realistic fiction in their book clubs and independent reading, they begin to share examples of realistic fiction during group share.	Students work on finishing a writing project that they might already be writing and begin planting seeds in their writer's notebook in preparation for writing their own fiction stories.
Weeks 2–3	*Genre Study:* At the beginning of the week, Matt helps his students create a list of the characteristics of realistic fiction based on the clear examples they have heard the week before. They work together to construct a definition of realistic fiction.	*Book Talks:* Realistic fiction texts at a range of reading levels for independent reading. *Minilessons:* While Matt works on listing the characteristics and defining realistic fiction with his students during interactive read-aloud. He spends the first two days of this week finishing his minilesson series on the craft of punctuation during readers' workshop. After he is confident his students have a working definition of realistic fiction, he further integrates the learning into readers' workshop by incorporating it into his reading minilessons. He decides to focus on	Students work on finishing a writing project they might already be writing and begin planting seeds in their writer's notebook in preparation for writing their own fiction stories.

Figure 15.9 Example of a genre study of realistic fiction

continues

EXAMPLE OF A GENRE STUDY OF REALISTIC FICTION

	Interactive Read-Aloud	Reader's Workshop	Writer's Workshop
Weeks 2-3	During his planning time, Matt begins collecting a text set for his upcoming author study. He plans to study Judith Viorst, since she writes many realistic fiction books, to continue immersing students in realistic fiction during the author study.	two elements of realistic fiction over the remainder of this week and next week based on his students' noticings: character and plot/problem/resolution. Each day's minilessons for the remainder of this week and next week address a different aspect (what characters do, what they say or think, how they look, what others say about them, how they change) of the following umbrella minilesson principle. *Readers notice how the writer shows what the characters are like to help them understand realistic fiction.* (See Figure 15.13 for a detailed look at this minilesson.) *Independent Reading:* Students continue reading realistic fiction during independent reading, and begin applying what they learn about characters to their own reading. *Book Clubs:* Matt supports students in thinking about characters during their realistic fiction book clubs. *Share:* At the beginning of the week, students continue to share examples of characters and how writers show what they are like in realistic fiction from their independent reading. As the minilessons begin focusing on character in realistic fiction, the students share about the characters in their books with examples related to the minilesson principle.	

Figure 15.9 Example of a genre study of realistic fiction *(cont.)*

Week 4	*Genre Study:* Matt continues to immerse students in realistic fiction texts and the class works to revise the definition according to new discoveries and understandings.	*Book Talks:* Realistic fiction texts at a range of reading levels for independent reading.	Students begin a discovery draft of a fiction piece.
	Toward the end of the week, Matt begins to read books from the Judith Viorst text set for his upcoming author study.	*Minilessons:* Matt uses the first two days of the week to finish looking at character in realistic fiction and then, begins focusing on plot/problem and resolution in relation to their definition of realistic fiction.	
		He and his students and he co-construct the umbrella minilesson principle:	
		Readers think about the plot of a story, particularly the problem(s) and resolution(s), to help them understand a realistic fiction story.	
		Over the remainder of the week and possibly into part of the next week, Matt's related minilessons address:	
		• How to identify the main problem(s) of a story	
		• Noticing the most exciting place in the story—often the resolution	
		• Noticing how characters respond to the problem/resolution (bringing together last week's work around characters and this week's work around plot)	
		Independent Reading: Students continue reading Realistic Fiction during independent reading and try applying new understandings from the minilessons to their own reading.	
		Guided Reading: Matt tries to select leveled realistic fiction texts when possible to share with his guided reading groups.	
		Share: Students begin the week by sharing about the characters in their books in application of the day's minilesson.	
		As the minilessons shift to addressing plot/problem/resolution in Realistic Fiction, they begin sharing about the problem and resolution in their independent reading.	

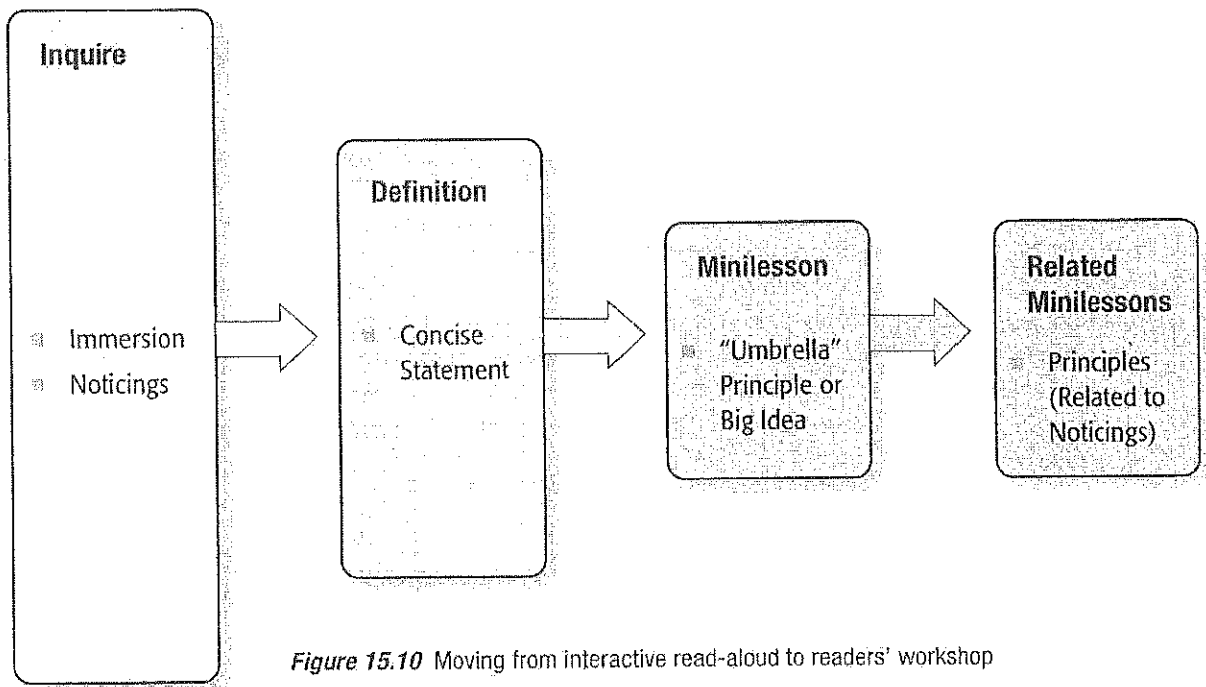*Figure 15.9* Example of a genre study of realistic fiction *(cont.)*

Figure 15.10 Moving from interactive read-aloud to readers' workshop

discussions of more picture books or longer texts during reading workshop, and they share examples of these elements from their own independent reading.

Toward the end of the inquiry period, Matt asks students to summarize what they notice about all of the realistic fiction books they experienced, and they construct a list of noticings (see Figure 15.11).

Having been grounded in several shared texts and having made an explicit list of characteristics together, Matt and the students next come up with a working definition of realistic fiction, which takes some time. The definition includes the important ideas and the essential elements and is concise (see Figure 15.12).

The grounding texts, the list of characteristics, and the definition set the scene for two or three weeks of powerful teaching

Building on the list of characteristics and the definition, Matt decides to focus on two important elements of realistic fiction for his reading minilessons and group share over the next two weeks: character and plot/problem and resolution. He decides character will be a good place to start exploring realistic fiction since he feels it is an accessible subject for his students based on their previous experiences and will help them analyze and critique the author's craft in creating a realistic

fiction story. He has also noticed many of his students struggling with inference. He hopes discussing character in relation to realistic fiction will not only strengthen their understanding of the genre but will give them specific opportunities to support their ability to infer understandings of character and character change from text. To launch his formal study of realistic fiction during readers' workshop, he presents an umbrella minilesson on character (see Figure 15.13). In this lesson, he links the umbrella lesson and its principle to previous inquiry work, asking students to read their definition of realistic fiction and discuss what they already know about characters in realistic fiction texts.

These students clearly understand quite a bit about characters in realistic fiction (although their knowledge may be somewhat superficial). Most do not yet know how this information will be useful to them as readers (and ultimately as writers). Matt spends several days developing the students' understanding of character using the mentor texts from the inquiry study as examples to demonstrate the minilesson principles related to this umbrella lesson (See Figure 15.14 for a more detailed look at this week-long focus on character). Matt's goal is to keep the information developed during minilessons accessible during the

Realistic Fiction

What we noticed:

- Imagined story but set in real world
- Has characters, plot, and setting
- Shows what real life is like
- Focuses on real-life problems and issues

Often:

- Has convincing and believable characters, plot, and setting
- Based on real events
- Tells about relationships between people and sometimes animals
- Has bigger themes
- Helps us to understand people and our world

Figure 15.11 Noticings about realistic fiction

Realistic Fiction

Realistic fiction is a story that is not true though it could really happen.

It has characters, a problem, and a solution.

Figure 15.12 Working definition of realistic fiction

work periods. Application time really means reading and/or writing about reading in connection with the minilesson principles. The minilessons put an intentional framework around the reading.

While students are reading independently, Matt has as many individual conferences as possible to support individuals and ensure students will be able to share their thinking clearly when he calls them back together. He makes sure he talks with students who he thinks may have difficulty applying the minilesson principle to their own reading. At the end of the workshop, students meet for a brief sharing period. Matt allows plenty of time to share because he thinks it's important for students to apply and hear one another's thinking about the principle. Alternatively, he could have students share their thinking in twos or threes so that everyone gets a chance to talk. When students have read books that are not realistic fiction, Matt resists the temptation to talk at length about these other texts. The goal is to focus on characters in realistic fiction. When students are confused about

the genre they are reading or can't decide about the genre, Matt quickly notes that he will need to confer with these students individually or address some of their confusion during guided reading. A couple of Matt's students are reading hybrid texts—a blend of fiction and nonfiction genres with the same text. Matt helps them to think about character within the context of these texts by clarifying which parts of the book are fiction and which are nonfiction. He tells students they will talk more later about texts that combine genres.

Through this series of minilessons (first on character, and then on plot/problem/resolution), Matt knows that in addition to learning more about realistic fiction, his students are learning about important aspects of character and plot that will also carry into other genres (for example, biography or historical fiction). Though he doesn't mention this to his students now, he will undoubtedly refer back to the learning from this series of minilessons as his students explore other genres throughout the year.

EXCERPT FROM AN UMBRELLA MINILESSON ON CHARACTER DURING REALISTIC FICTION GENRE STUDY

TEACHER: We have read many realistic fiction books and you have noticed a lot about what they are like. Rachel, would you read the definition we wrote for realistic fiction based on what we know now?

RACHEL: [Reads] "Realistic fiction is a story that is not true though it could really happen. It has characters, a problem, and a solution."

TEACHER: So, if you know that a text is realistic fiction, you know to expect some things. One of the things we wrote in our definition is that realistic fiction texts have characters. Over the next few days, we are going to spend time thinking about characters in the books we are reading. What are some things you already know about most of the characters in realistic fiction from the books we have shared?

CATHY: They will have a problem to solve, or they might have more than one problem but the big problem will be solved before the book ends.

LEAH: There will be important characters and less important characters.

RENE: The characters will like each other or they might not be nice to each other. They seem real.

OSCAR: The main character usually changes or learns something by the end.

FRANKIE: They usually talk with other characters.

TEACHER: You already know a lot about what we will be talking about this week. Have you ever thought about how the writer helps you to get to know the characters in the books we have read? This week, we will be looking closely at realistic fiction, finding evidence for our thinking, and analyzing how writers reveal characters to us. Would someone like to read the minilesson principle for this week? Stan?

> ### Minilesson Principle
>
> Readers think about the ways authors provide information about characters to help them understand realistic fiction.

STAN: Readers think about the ways authors provide information about characters to help them understand realistic fiction.

TEACHER: What words or phrases stand out for you from this statement? [Reads the minilesson principle again.]

FRANKIE: Authors provide information about characters.

TEACHER: I am going to highlight that part of the principle. Writers don't just tell you about the characters, they show you. Let's look at the character Meg in *Courage to Fly*. What is Meg like at the beginning of the story?

MARIAH: She's scared all the time.

TRAVIS: She doesn't want to play with any of the other kids—she's shy.

TEACHER: That's right. How do you know that?

RACHEL: It says she's like a frightened bird. And you can tell she's shy because she always said no when the girl down the hall asked her to play.

OSCAR: Some kids from her class call her "Nutty Meg."

TEACHER: All of these things help you get a sense of what Meg is like at the beginning of the story. Today when you're reading your realistic fiction book, I'd like you to first identify who the main character is and then think about how the writer shows you what the character is like. Be prepared to talk with a partner and share with the group at the end of writers' workshop.

Figure 15.13 Excerpt from an umbrella minilesson on character during realistic fiction genre study

WEEK-LONG FOCUS ON CHARACTER IN REALISTIC FICTION

Week-long Focus on Character within Realistic Fiction Genre Study	Minilesson Statements	Teacher Decision-Making and Thought Process	Strategic Actions Engaged/Supported Through Minilesson *Note: Though students will have to engage all of the strategic actions simultaneously and flexibly in order to fully understand their reading, specific minilessons will help support some areas of strategic actions in particular.*
Day 1	**Umbrella Minilesson:** Readers notice how the writer provides information about the characters to help them understand realistic fiction. (see Figure 15.13 for a look at this lesson in more detail)	Matt introduces this umbrella minilesson based on the students' noticings about character. He hopes looking more closely at characters in relation to realistic fiction will not only strengthen his students' understanding of the genre but will also give them opportunities to strengthen their ability to infer from text, an area with which his students need support.	• Inferring • Synthesizing • Analyzing • Critiquing
Day 2	**Related Minilesson:** Readers notice what characters do and what they say to understand what they are like.	Matt decides to start by looking at how authors give readers clues about the characters from their actions and dialogue. He is hoping this lesson will support his readers in inferring from the text. Matt has also noticed his students struggle with finding evidence from the text to support their thinking. By looking closely at the character's dialogue and actions, he will help students stay grounded in the text and find evidence to support their thinking. Matt uses the mentor texts they have already read during the immersion process to illustrate the minilesson principles. Though Matt decided to spend one day on this minilesson principle, he could have easily broken this down further over two or three days if he felt his students needed that level of support.	• Searching for and Using Information • Inferring • Synthesizing

Figure 15.14 Week-long focus on character in realistic fiction

WEEK-LONG FOCUS ON CHARACTER IN REALISTIC FICTION

Day 3	**Related Minilesson:** Readers notice what other characters think about or do to the main character to learn more about the main character.	Matt feels his students will benefit from looking at other ways characters are revealed in the text not only to support their ability to infer, but to help them think in more depth about the craft of realistic fiction. He plans to revisit the concepts raised in Day 2 and Day 3 of readers' workshop during writers' workshop so that students will begin thinking about how to reveal their own main characters through action, dialogue, and interaction with other characters. Again, he will use the same set of realistic fiction mentor texts for both readers' and writers' workshop.	• Searching for and Using Information • Inferring • Synthesizing
Day 4	**Related Minilesson:** Readers notice how the writer makes the characters seem real to think about the quality of the story.	After Matt spent time developing his students' ability to infer what characters are like and how they change in realistic fiction, he felt they were ready to think more critically about author's craft. In this minilesson, he demonstrates how to analyze whether a character seems real using some of the understandings that developed around characters' actions and dialogue during the previous three days. He wants his readers to think critically about how writers craft realistic characters not only to develop their critical eye as readers, but so they can also revisit this in crafting their own characters during writers workshop.	• Searching for and Using Information • Analyzing • Critiquing
Day 5	**Related Minilesson:** Readers think about how characters change to understand the meaning of the story.	Matt has also noticed his students need support in synthesizing information to form new understandings about text. As students look at character development, they will need to gather information from several parts of the story, synthesize it and come to new understandings about characters. He also thinks looking at character development will further support their understanding of plot and help them think deeper about the craft of realistic fiction.	• Searching for and Using Information • Inferring • Synthesizing

Figure 15.14 Week-long focus on character in realistic fiction *(cont.)*

Mapping a Sequence of Minilessons

As teachers, you can see the big picture if you plan a sequence of genre studies in advance and then identify some possible lessons. You need to see the relationships among principles if you are going to help students. Therefore, collect text sets and jot down observations you think are important to help students generate. Of course, they will come up with more or word them differently, and it's important when you make the chart to use their words unless the words are confusing. Creating the chart is a negotiation between you and your students. The same is true of minilesson principles, which can be expressed in several ways.

Let's now look at Matt's preplanning and overall structure for studies of realistic fiction, historical fiction, and folktales as examples (Figures 15.15, 15.17, and 15.19). These plans provide Matt with some guidelines as he goes through the inquiry process with his students. As we saw from his four-week study of realistic fiction, he could not possibly teach every element of realistic fiction or he would be spending a year studying one genre. The planning laid out in Figures 15.15, 15.17, and 15.19 allows him to think about his students' understandings about the genre in more depth and also helps him to support his students' developing systems of strategic actions. He will select the minilesson principles he thinks will best support his readers where they are in their learning. Having these in-depth plans across genres helps him to see where he might be able to revisit a literary element in more depth or address one he wasn't able to get to in an earlier study.

Studying Realistic Fiction

The diagram in Figure 15.15 illustrates Matt's planning of a realistic fiction genre study. Notice the coherence of his plan. The reading workshop minilessons provide explicit, direct teaching, but they rest on solid knowledge of examples and the students' experience during the genre study inquiry. The characteristics and definition are theirs, and Matt easily turns them into clear, explicit principles, each of which will be a follow-up minilesson.

Of course, the study of the literary elements of realistic fiction and the fiction writer's craft continues over several years. You could spend the entire year studying realistic fiction, but that is impossible: students need broader genre knowledge. Fortunately, as you move on to other genres, there are always ties back to the learning about realistic fiction. For example:

- Historical fiction has many of the same characteristics. The primary difference is the setting (time period).
- Fantasy also has many of the same characteristics, but the setting and/or characters could not exist in the real world.
- Biography requires understanding the setting to appreciate the decisions the subject had to make.

You can create continuous connections between genres while at the same time helping students contrast them to see what makes a genre unique.

You might focus on a genre like realistic fiction for a few weeks, but it depends on the grade level and the experience of the students. Within the time you allot, spend only a few days on some elements (see Figure 15.16) and much more time on others. Come back to the concepts related to revealing and understanding characters and their development many times; students benefit from the study of characters several times a year every year in greater complexity and with more sophisticated texts.

It's important to remember that you can start with any genre of fiction. Matt chose realistic fiction because he thought it would be most accessible to his group. But when he goes on to study historical fiction or fantasy, he'll find that everything they learned about the elements—characters, setting, etc.—also apply to those genres. In fact, the contrast helps students understand the unique and distinctive features that define genres.

FROM INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD TO READERS' WORKSHOP: REALISTIC FICTION

Inquiry	Definition		
What we noticed about realistic fiction: • Tells a story that could be true • Takes place in the real world • Shows what real life is like • Focuses on real-life problems and issues • Has narrative structure with characters, plot, and setting • Has important characters and less important characters • Has characters that have feelings about each other • Shows and tells what characters are like • Sometimes shows how characters change and tells why • Takes place somewhere that is described • Sometimes where the story takes place is very important in the story and sometimes it isn't	Realistic fiction is a story that is not true but has characters, a problem, and a solution that could be real.		
	Minilessons to Extend Learning About Realistic Fiction		**Strategic Actions Supported**
	Characters	• Readers decide who the important characters are and think about why they are important to help them understand the story. • Readers think about what the characters are like to help them understand the story. • Readers notice whether characters seem real to think about the quality of the fiction story. • Readers notice what characters say, think, and do to understand them. • Readers think about what others say about or do to a character to learn more about them. • Readers think about how characters change and why to help them understand the plot in fiction.	• Searching for and Using Information • Inferring • Critiquing • Searching for and Using Information • Summarizing • Analyzing • Searching for and Using Information • Inferring • Searching for and Using Information • Inferring • Synthesizing
	Setting	• Readers think about when and where the story takes place to help them understand the story. This is called the *setting*. • Readers think about whether the setting is important to help them understand the story.	• Searching for and Using Information • Making Connections • Analyzing
	Plot and Problem Resolution	• Readers notice the problem to help them understand the meaning of a story.	• Searching for and Using Information • Summarizing

Figure 15.15 From interactive read-aloud to readers' workshop: realistic fiction

• Has a problem that is resolved at the end; sometimes has one important problem and more related problems • Has a point in the story where things change and the problem is solved • Communicates one or more messages or big ideas • Sometimes the big ideas are not said but the writer shows the meaning • Shows how the writer feels about the story, the place it happened, or the characters • Can make you have feelings: happy, sad, afraid • Sometimes the story is told by one of the characters ("I") and sometimes it's just told by the writer ("they," "he," "she") • You can picture it happening • Sometimes gives more information in the pictures	**Plot and Problem Resolution,** *(cont.)*	• Readers think about the main or most important problems to help them understand the meaning of the story. • Readers notice the exciting point in a story where the problem is solved to help them understand the story.	• Searching for and Using Information • Summarizing • Searching for and Using Information • Summarizing • Analyzing
	Themes and Messages	• Readers think about the author's message to help them understand the story. • Readers think about what the author really meant but did not say to help them understand the important messages in the story.	• Inferring • Synthesizing • Inferring
	Tone	• Readers notice how the story makes them feel to help them think about the story.	• Inferring • Analyzing
	Mood	• Readers notice what the writer feels about the story and the characters to help them think about its meaning.	• Inferring • Synthesizing • Analyzing
	Point of View	• Readers notice who is telling the story to help them understand it. • Readers notice when an outside person (writer) is telling about the people in the story so they can understand the point of view. • Readers notice when the writer tells about the feelings and actions of one character so that they can understand the point of view. • Readers notice when a character is telling the story so that they can understand the point of view.	• Searching for and Using Information • Analyzing
	Illustrations	• Readers think about the information in the pictures and how they make them feel, to help them understand the story.	• Inferring • Analyzing

Figure 15.15 From interactive read-aloud to readers' workshop: realistic fiction *(cont.)*

ELEMENTS OF REALISTIC FICTION	
Characters	• Readers notice the characters in the story—the people or animals—so they can understand the problem.
	• Readers think about whether the characters seem real to help them understand the story.
	• Readers decide who the important characters are (main characters) so they can think about the story problem.
	• Readers think about why the main characters are important to help them understand the problem in the story.
	• Readers think about how writers reveal what characters are like—through telling how they look, what they say, do or think and what others say about them.
	• Readers think about the less important characters in a story to help understand their role in the plot. These are minor characters.
	• Readers think about how the characters feel about each other to help them understand the story problem and solution.
	• Readers think about how characters change to help them understand the plot and resolution.
	• Readers think about why characters change to help them understand the plot.
	• Readers notice how the writer tells or shows readers what the characters are like to help them understand the craft of realistic fiction.
Setting	• Readers think about the setting—when and where the story takes place to help them understand the story.
	• Readers think about whether the setting is important in the story to help them understand it.
	• Readers identify the characteristics of the setting that are important to the plot or that affect the characters so that they can understand the story.
	• Readers think about whether a setting is familiar or unfamiliar to them and adjust their reading in order to get a full picture of what the setting is like.
	• Readers notice details about the setting of a story in order to picture it in their minds.
	• Readers think about how the conflict in a story is resolved to help them understand the messages of a text.
Plot	• Readers think about the problem or plot in a story to help them understand it.
	• Readers notice the problem to help them understand a realistic fiction story.
	• Readers think about the main or most important problems to help them understand the plot of the story.
	• Readers notice the exciting place in a book where the problem is solved to help them understand the story. This is called the climax.
	• Readers identify the conflict in a story in order to understand what drives the plot (character against character; character against nature; character against society; character against himself—inner conflict).
	• Readers think about the conflict in the story to help them understand it.
	• Readers think about the different kinds of conflict to help them understand the story.
	• Readers identify the subplots in a story to help them understand it.

Figure 15.16 Elements of realistic fiction

ELEMENTS OF REALISTIC FICTION	
Plot *(cont.)*	• Readers identify how the events are presented in a story to help them understand the plot. • Readers identify different kinds of problems and plots to understand special types of realistic fiction (mystery, survival). • Readers notice when the same actions begin and end the story in order to understand that the story will repeat itself (circular plot). • Readers notice when a writer repeats lines and builds on them until the story ends in order to understand how it is organized (cumulative plot).
Theme	• Readers think about the theme or the author's message to understand what the story really means. • Readers notice more than one message or theme in a text to help them understand its full meaning. • Readers notice when an author states the theme or themes in the writing of a text to help them understand the writer's goal. • Readers think carefully about the specific language an author uses in order to understand exactly what the author is trying to say.
Point of View	• Readers notice the way an author tells the story in order to understand the writer's perspective or attitude. • Readers notice the person who tells the story in order to understand how the writer wanted readers to understand it. • Readers notice when a text is written in third person narrative in order to understand the action and all the characters ("he," "she," "they"). This is called third person. • Readers notice when the writer speaks directly to the reader in order to understand the writer's perspective ("you"). This is called second person. • Readers notice when a character in the story is a narrator in order to understand the character's perspective ("I," "me," "we," "us"). This is called first person. • Readers think about how the narrator shapes the information they get as readers in order to understand the point of view. • Readers consider the narrator's bias in order to understand the narrator's perspective. • Readers think about how the story might be different if the point of view changed in order to understand how the perspective shapes the story. • Readers critique the point of view of a story to think about its meaning.
Tone/Mood	• Readers think about how the story makes them feel to understand how the writer created the tone. • Readers think about the mood of a piece of writing in order to understand the author's writing style.
Style/ Language	• Readers notice the way the writer uses words and language in order to understand the author's writing style. • Readers notice the writing patterns in books in order to understand the author's style. • Readers think about how writers make things seem believable or real in order to make the story come alive.

Figure 15.16 Elements of realistic fiction *(cont.)*

# Using Inquiry and Readers' Workshop to Study Historical Fiction

Historical fiction has the same elements as realistic fiction, but you have to adjust your understanding of them because of the historical setting. Historical fiction demands that you stretch your thinking to understand the perspectives of people who lived in the near or distant past. There are many high-quality historical fiction picture books available, from simple and easy to understand examples to very complex treatments of mature topics. A genre study of historical fiction can also be coordinated with curriculum goals for social studies or history.

As shown in the curricular plan in Figure 15.17, the same elements are important for all fiction. The only real difference is the setting, and the minilessons make it clear that the time and place have a big influence on readers' thinking.

With this in-depth approach, the learning in one area strengthens learning in another. If you've already presented an umbrella minilesson followed by a series of related minilessons on the elements of realistic fiction, students will bring a basic knowledge of elements like character and setting to their study of historical fiction. As students acquire more understanding, the process goes more quickly.

You might also conduct a broad inquiry into fiction using a text set that includes a variety of types of fiction; however, if students are novices with regard to genre study, it is probably better to start with texts that can be connected without "noise." Too many variables make it harder for students to see the common elements.

Begin by collecting a high quality text set with clear examples of the genre. Then immerse students in reading, discussing, and enjoying the books. The list of noticed characteristics in Figure 15.17 is an example that helps push students a little harder to think in different ways, but the list should be generated *with* students, not presented to them. Then move on to the definition, again using Figure 15.17 as a guide but allowing students to work through the process of creating their own.
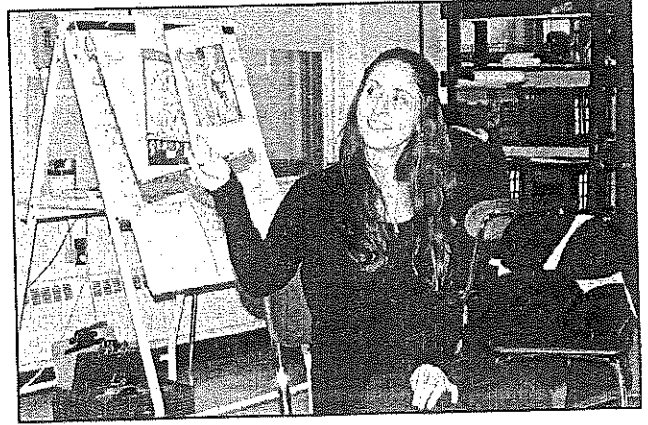
Provide a fairly large sample of historical fiction texts in the classroom library baskets for students' independent reading.

You can increase the intensity of the inquiry by:

- Reading aloud historical fiction books each day (even after minilessons begin).
- Teaching a daily minilesson on a specific characteristic of historical fiction.
- Having students read historical fiction in book clubs (either picture books they've heard read aloud or listened to on CD, or chapter books selected from a limited set).
- Selecting historical fiction for some guided reading lessons (if the level is appropriate).
- Having students read a book of historical fiction independently so they can apply the minilesson principle and present their thinking during group share.

Using Inquiry and Readers' Workshop to Study Traditional Literature

Traditional literature is one of the categories of fantasy It describes stories passed down orally over time (Modern fantasy includes animal fantasy, low or high fantasy, and science fiction). In early elementary school, most students have learned to tell the difference between stories that could or could not be real or true (fiction and nonfiction, or realism and fantasy). Thi

• Tells a story that could be true • Shows what life was like in the past • Has narrative structure with characters, plot, and setting • Focuses on problems and issues of life in the past Often: • Has convincing and believable characters, plot, and setting • Based on real people or events from the past • Connected to the author's own personal experiences • Begins as contemporary fiction but has been around long enough to acquire historical significance • Uses language of the times in dialogue	Historical fiction is an imagined story that shows life like it used to be, and focuses on the problems and issues of life in the past.		
	Characters	• Readers think about what the characters are like so that they can tell whether the story seems real.	• Searching for and using information • Inferring • Critiquing
		• Readers think about whether the characters seem like real people who lived in the past so that they can understand history.	• Searching for and using information • Summarizing • Analyzing
		• Readers decide who the important characters are and think about why they are important to help them understand the story.	
		• Readers think about how the characters feel about each other to help them understand the story.	• Searching for and using information • Inferring
		• Readers think about how characters change and why, so they can understand the plot in historical fiction.	• Searching for and using information • Inferring • Synthesizing
		• Readers notice how the writer shows that characters lived in the past so that they can identify historical fiction.	
	Setting	• Readers think about when and where the story takes place and if it has happened in the past to help them understand the story. This is called the setting and it is very important in historical fiction.	• Searching for and using information • Making connections • Analyzing
		• Readers recognize the setting for the story and think of what they know about it so they can understand the story.	• Synthesizing
		• Readers think about the important role of the setting to help them understand history.	• Analyzing
		• Readers think about how the writer shows that characters are people who lived in the past (how they talk, how they look and behave) to help them understand what life was like in the past.	• Searching for and using information

continues

Figure 15.17 From interactive read-aloud to readers' workshop: historical fiction

FROM INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD TO READERS' WORKSHOP: HISTORICAL FICTION

Minilessons to Extend Learning About Realistic Fiction		Strategic Action
Plot and Problem Resolution	• Readers think about the problem of the story and how it fits into the past to help them understand historical fiction. • Readers think about the events that took place in the past to help them understand the plot of historical fiction.	• Searching for and using information • Summarizing
	• Readers notice the point in the where the problem is solved to help them understand the story. • Readers think about whether the problem is solved in a way it would have in the past so that they can understand historical fiction.	• Searching for and using information • Analyzing
	• Readers think about how the author shows time in a story so that they can understand the plot. • Readers think about the choices characters have within their setting so that they can understand the plot.	• Analyzing
Themes and Messages	• Readers think about the importance of the author's messages for today's world so they can learn from historical fiction. • Readers think about what the author really means but does not say to help them understand the important messages in the story.	• Inferring • Synthesizing
	• Readers recognize recurring lessons from the past so that they can understand history and its implications for today.	• Inferring • Synthesizing
Mood	• Readers think about how the story makes them feel to help them understand the story. • Readers think about how and why their feelings toward characters or events change as they read so that they can understand the overall feeling developed by the writer.	• Inferring • Synthesizing • Analyzing
Point of View	• Readers notice who is telling the story to help them understand the problem or plot. • Readers notice when an outside person (writer) is telling about the people in the story so they can understand the point of view. • Readers notice when the writer tells about the feelings and actions of one character so that they can understand the point of view. • Readers notice when a character is telling the story so that they can understand the point of view.	• Searching for and using information • Analyzing
Illustrations	• Readers think about the information in the pictures and how they make them feel to help them understand the story and the setting.	• Inferring • Analyzing

Figure 15.17 From interactive read-aloud to readers' workshop: historical fiction *(cont.)*

distinction may seem simple, but it requires students to compare stories with their own experience and what they know about the world. When you consider that many children begin school believing that beings like fairies and Santa Claus could be real, helping them sorting fantasy from realism is no easy task. If students are not clear on what makes a text a fantasy, you can quickly make a visible comparison like the one in Figure 15.18. This kind of chart can be revisited as new fantasy elements are discovered and students learn more labels related to genre.

You can approach the study of fantasy the same way you study realistic and historical fiction. Children hear folktales from the time they are born—stories with simple plots and flat characters who don't really change. Even young children can understand these simple texts. Many kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade teachers read several versions of stories like "The Three Little Pigs" and children compare them. In the process, students internalize many of the elements of folktales, such as talking animals, simple conflicts, happy endings, victory for the weaker or smaller characters, and repetitive language.

When you study fantasy, however, the variety and complexity becomes evident. In many ways, fantasy is the most complex and demanding fiction genre. Readers must suspend disbelief and temporarily treat as true plots, characters, and settings that are unreal. You enter unreal worlds and need to understand and remember their parameters. (In high-quality fantasy, nothing can violate the "rules" of the fantasy world.) Fantasy often involves the struggle between good and evil, literary devices such as symbolism, and lofty language.

Characters in fantasy are often larger than life and undertake impossible quests; most of them fall neatly into the category of good or bad, but that doesn't mean they are simple. They may have weaknesses and flaws to overcome; they make big mistakes, for which they pay. Fantasy can follow a very structured form that involves adventure, but you must recognize underlying universal themes, such as the struggle between good and evil. Often, novels of fantasy are quite long (many are part of series totaling thousands of pages) and involve multiple quests and battles as the plot moves toward final resolution.

Traditional literature is a great place to start an inquiry into fantasy because it forms a strong foundation for understanding the entire genre. The roots of fantasy lie in traditional literature, which encompasses folktales, fairy tales, fables, legends, epics, ballads, and myths. A common characteristic of all these forms is that they originated as oral stories and were shared and passed down orally over many generations. Now, of course, there are written versions, and there are

COMPARING FANTASY AND REALISM	
Could Be Real or True	**Could Not Be Real or True**
▪ Real people ▪ Real animals ▪ Places that are like the real world today or in the past • Realistic Fiction • Historical Fiction	▪ Fairies, giants, elves ▪ People that can fly or do magic ▪ Animals who talk or act like people ▪ People that become animals or animals that become people ▪ Impossible tasks ▪ Magic • Folktales • Fairy Tales • Fables • Legends, Epics, Ballads • Myths • Modern Fantasy • Science Fiction

Figure 15.18 Comparing fantasy and realism
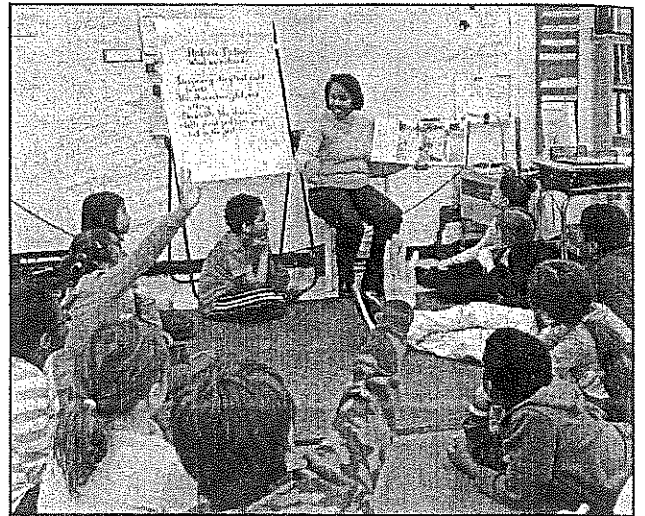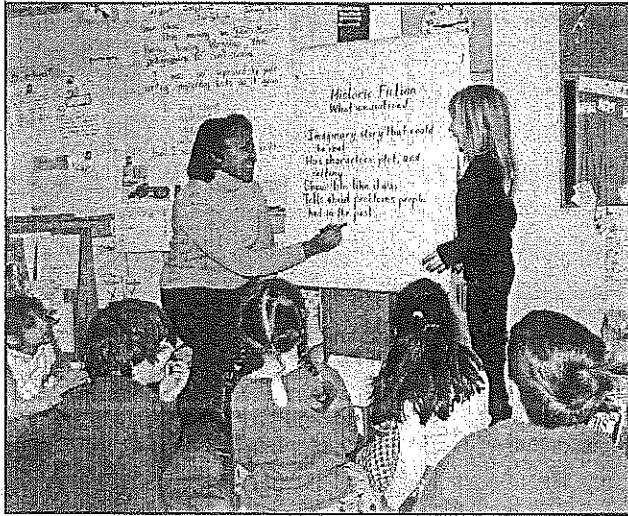
modern tales that are written in the *style* of the original oral tales. Modern fantasy and science fiction (as well as many works of poetry and realistic and historical fiction) allude to traditional literature, and the time you spend on traditional literature pays off when students study modern fantasy and other genres. As students learn more, they can sort traditional literature into subcategories that will help them analyze characteristics in greater detail, always realizing that some texts are difficult to place into just one category.

A plan for studying folktales, beginning with inquiry, is laid out in Figure 15.19. Because of the wide variety of folktales it is important to remember that every characteristic is not in every tale and those that are not always present are listed under "often" (see Chapter 8).

As with realism, you can examine many of the story elements, but your minilessons should help students see these elements in the light of an unreal world in which impossible things exist and can happen. Folktales also reveal the values of a group of people. They teach what is good and right. They use patterned language and often use repetition, possibly to help people remember and tell them without the help of written language.

Once you have presented broad minilessons related to the literary elements, your students can study more detailed aspects of folktales—motifs or particular forms, for example. (See Chapter 8). The minilessons you use for this and other genres that build upon your genre study will ultimately deepen your students' knowledge and understanding of a variety of literary genres and elements.