

Grade 4

Unit 3: *Contemporary Fiction: Mi Calle, Tu Calle*



Use the Interactive Read-Aloud lesson and text on the following page to kick off this unit with your students.

Unit-level Essential Question

How can a story's literary elements help readers learn implicit information from the story?

Lessons 1–5

Guiding Question: How do you determine a theme of a story?

Writing Prompt: What themes appear in the vignettes you have read so far, other than aspiration?

Lessons 6–10

Guiding Question: How can point of view change the meaning of a story?

Writing Prompt: Reread the vignette “My Name,” closely paying attention to the parts about Esperanza’s great-grandmother. Then write the ending of the story from the older Esperanza’s point of view. Did she “make the best with what she got,” or “was she sorry because she couldn’t be all the things she wanted to be”?

Lessons 11–13

Guiding Question: How can an author show how a character has grown?

Writing Prompt: What is the biggest change in Esperanza by the last vignette? What lines from the text brought you to that conclusion?

Unit 3 Culminating Activity

Will Esperanza’s aspirations work out in the end? Write a short narrative about one of Esperanza’s aspirations, such as becoming a writer or getting her own house. Is it exactly what she thought it would be?

GRADE 4 UNIT 3

Read-Aloud

Use the following Read-Aloud to introduce **Grade 4 Unit 3**.

Tell students that throughout this unit, they will think about the following **Essential Question**: How can a story's literary elements help readers learn implicit information from the story?

Explain that over the next few weeks they will learn about different ways that authors create a story—not just by the things they write explicitly, but also by using some skills and tools to communicate a message implicitly. In this Read-Aloud, they will hear about a girl named Martha who learns something surprising. As they listen, they should pay attention and think about what the author says directly and what is communicated without being said outright.

Read the Read-Aloud, pausing after each section to discuss the text-based questions.

Excerpt from *The Changeling*

by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Dinner that night at number two Castle Court in Rosewood Manor Estates was just the same as always. Everyone was there, at least all of the Abbotts except Tom and Cath Abbott, Martha's older brother and sister, who were away at college. The Abbotts present, besides Martha, included her father, Thomas Abbott, Junior; her mother, Louise Abbott; and her grandmother, Adelaide Abbott. Thomas Abbott was a lawyer, of the kind that mostly defends businesses against taxes. Louise Abbott was a housewife and didn't work, but she kept almost busier than if she did—at things like volunteer jobs and golf and staying very beautiful. Grandmother Abbott spent most of her time traveling and gardening and going to garden clubs, and she ordinarily only stayed at number two Castle Court during the best gardening months. The rest of the time her garden, which was very beautiful and elaborate, was Martha's responsibility.

Literal. Who is the main character in this story and how do you know?

- » We can tell that Martha is the main character because the author uses phrases like "Martha's older brother and sister," "her father," "her mother," etc.

Inferential. The passage repeats *beautiful* twice, when mentioning that Martha's mother is busy with "staying very beautiful" and that Grandmother Abbott's garden was "very beautiful and elaborate." What does this repetition suggest about the Abbott women?

- » Beauty and appearances are important to them. They seem to have this in common.

Inferential. The author mentions that Grandmother Abbott stays at the house only "during the best gardening months." What does this suggest about her relationship to her garden?

- » Answers may vary, but students should realize that the best months are the ones when the garden blooms. Because Grandmother Abbott leaves Martha to maintain the garden during the other times, it suggests she cares about showing off the garden's appearance but not doing the work to care for it.

The conversation that night followed the usual pattern. Martha's father talked about an especially difficult client, and her mother talked about her golf score, and Grandmother Abbott talked about the Hollandaise Sauce, which she had made herself because Martha's mother had been so late getting home. Martha, wearing her usual smoke screen smile, was not really listening, when suddenly one sentence ripped through the screen and whirled everything into chaos.

Literal. The author tells us, at first, the dinner conversation was normal. What was normal conversation for the Abbott family?

- » Martha's father talks about work, her mother talks about golf, and her grandmother talks about food.

Evaluative. The passage says that Grandmother Abbott spoke of how she had prepared some of dinner since Martha's mother was not home on time. What does including this reason reveal about Grandmother Abbott?

- » Answers will vary, but students should realize that Grandmother Abbott does not usually prepare dinner. She may be mentioning the reason out of frustration.

Inferential. The author writes that Martha was "wearing her usual smoke screen smile" and was not really listening to the conversation. How does the phrase "smoke screen," which means a kind of disguise, hint at how Martha feels around her family?

- » The smile might disguise her real feelings. She pretends to listen, but she is not really interested in what her family members are saying.

Inferential. The dinner conversation changed "when suddenly one sentence ripped through the screen and whirled everything into chaos." How did it change, and what words does the author use to signal that change?

- » It was an abrupt change in the normal conversation. Words: ripped, whirled, chaos.

"Oh, by the way," her father said, "Joe Peters says the Carsons have shown up again. Joe was up in Edgeport today, and on his way back he saw them from the freeway. They're moving back into the old Montoya house again. I was beginning to think we'd seen the last of that bunch around here. How long has it been since they left the last time? Must be two or three years."

"Two years," a strange voice said, which Martha hardly recognized as her own. "A little more than two years." And even while she was answering, another part of her mind was thinking, "So that was it. So that was what was going to happen."

Martha's father looked at her as if it had just occurred to him that she might have a particular interest in what he had said. "You didn't hear from your friend, did you?" he asked. "Did she let you know she was coming back?"

"No," Martha said. "I didn't hear from her. Was Mr. Peters sure? How could he tell for sure it was the Carsons, all the way from the freeway? He couldn't recognize faces from there."

“No, I suppose not, but Joe said he saw a bunch of people unloading what looked like the same old red truck they used to drive. Besides, who else would live in that old shell of a house? It must have been the Carsons, all right.”

“It must have been,” Martha said to herself. “It must have been.”

Literal. What news does Martha's father share?

- » The Carson family is moving back to town.

Inferential. How does Martha feel about the Carsons moving back, and how do you know this?

- » She is surprised or uncertain; her voice sounds strange when she answers her father.

Inferential. What was Martha's relationship to the Carson family?

- » She used to be friends with one of them.

“Well,” Martha's grandmother said, but not so much to Martha as to her mother, “I suppose now we'll be seeing a great deal of that Carson girl again. What was that child's name?”

There was an undercurrent in what Grandmother Abbott was saying, and everyone at the table knew what it was. She was saying that she had always advised against allowing Martha to spend so much time with the Carson girl. She was reminding them all of the things she had always said, but Martha, for one, didn't need to be reminded. She already remembered all the things Grandmother had said on the subject. Things like, “I can't understand why you permit it, Louise. It's not as if there weren't any other children her age in the neighborhood. There's that lovely little Peters girl right next door, and the Sutter children just down the block. And it's not just the child's unfortunate background. It's more than that. There's a strangeness about her—”

Martha remembered hearing Grandmother Abbott say that more than once. “There's a strangeness about her. A strangeness—.” Suddenly an interior explosion shook Martha so hard that her smoke screen smile was blown away and she had to bow her head quickly to hide her face. Staring down at her plate she tried to explore the damage and wound up lost in a rushing tide of memories. Above and around her the conversation went on as if from a great distance.

Literal/Inferential. How did Martha's grandmother feel about the “Carson girl”?

- » She does not like her. She has encouraged Martha's mother not to let Martha spend time with her.

Inferential. The author writes, “Suddenly an interior explosion shook Martha so hard that her smoke screen smile was blown away and she had to bow her head quickly to hide her face.” How do Martha's feelings change?

- » They become so powerful that she can no longer hide them with a smile. She must look away so that her parents cannot see her face.

Dinner finally ended and Martha, having cleared the table, was free to leave. Her father had made his regular retreat to the study with the paper, and in the kitchen Louise and Adelaide's regular polite argument was covering such things as "proper companions" and "interfering in your children's lives." Martha took her warm car coat from the hall closet and went out the double front doors of number two Castle Court into the April evening.

Martha walked uphill against a soft April wind, toward the unsubdivided green at the top of Rosewood Hills. Castle Court, which was formed by a cul-de-sac at the end of Castle Drive, was at the very top of Rosewood Manor Estates, so Martha had only to walk through the vacant lot that separated the Abbotts' house from the Peters' next door, and she was on a narrow foot trail that left suburbia behind. The path climbed steeply, zig-zagging through deep spring grass, and passing outcroppings of jagged turreted rock and scattered oak trees and madrone. The sky was just beginning to turn pink with sunset, but Martha could probably have climbed the narrow trail almost as well in complete darkness. All the hundreds of times her feet had climbed that path, walked it, run it, skipped or slid or scampered it, had printed a pattern somewhere in her mind. And now her feet followed that pattern automatically while her mind raced ahead, and back, rushed forward excitedly—and stopped—looking back longingly at yesterday and the day before.

Inferential. The text says that Martha knew the route to the Carsons' house as if she had "a pattern somewhere in her mind." What does this reveal about her friendship with the Carson girl?

- » Martha has made this trip many times, so it seems like they were good friends who saw each other often.

Inferential. The passage says that Martha's mother and grandmother have a "regular polite argument." What does the word *argument* suggest about their relationship?

- » They are not rude to each other, but they do not get along or agree about things. There seems to be tension in the way they relate to each other.

Inferential. How does Martha feel about the Carsons' return, and how do we know this?

- » She feels conflicted. She is excited but also longs for earlier days before the Carsons returned.

Use the following prompts to extend student understanding of the Read-Aloud.

Guiding Question: How do the author's word choice or details help reveal information about Martha and her family?

Writing Prompt: In this scene, the Abbotts seem not to have a very good opinion of the Carsons, though they do not say outright that they dislike them. Write a scene in which one character admires another very much but does not say that directly. Make sure to use word choice and descriptive details to show how the character feels.