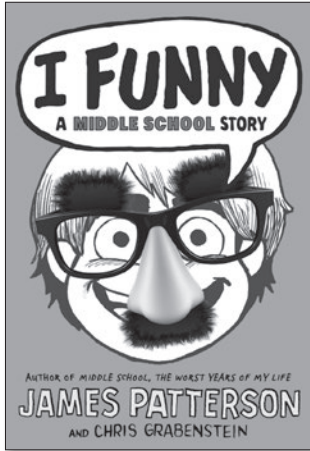




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I Funny: A Middle School Story

by James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein

Common Core Connections—Fifth Grade Focus

Many books can meet most, if not all, CC Standards. However, we have found that some books speak strongly to a few Standards. These one-page applications connect a focused text and the Common Core Standards as written for fifth graders—leaning on the text’s literary strengths.

KEY DETAILS AND IDEAS

RL.5.1, RL.5.2

Ask students to identify some of the challenges Jamie faces in *I Funny*; then ask them to find the places in the text where he meets those challenges. Ask them to record their findings on a chart like this one:

Jamie’s Challenge	Jamie’s Solution	Pg. #s
Jamie is afraid to talk to Gilda at lunch.	Jamie uses a joke to break the ice.	77 - 81

Encourage students to find as many struggles and solutions as they can and to try to spot a pattern in the way Jamie solves problems. Use this information to help students develop a theme statement for the book that incorporates evidence supporting their ideas.

RL.5.2

Use the chart from the first activity to help students write a brief summary of the book. First, ask students to arrange the information on the chart in the order it takes place in the book. Next, ask students to identify which of these events are the most important parts of the book. Use this activity to help students write a concise (5 – 7 sentence) summary.

RL.5.1, RL.5.3

Have your students choose one event from the chart above and ask them to predict how other characters would respond. Ask them to cite specific evidence from the book (how the characters responded to other situations, for example) to support their ideas.

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

RL.5.4

Jamie makes frequent use of similes and metaphors to describe how he feels throughout the book. Help students identify examples of similes and metaphors in the text (“baking like a bag of French fries” [2]; “flat on my back like a tipped-over turtle” [25]). Discuss with students how the uses of figurative language help them visualize the text and why they think the authors used similes and metaphors in these places. Ask students to use some of the drawings in the book to write their own similes and metaphors (consider using some of the double-page spreads, like the one on pages 174 – 175).



RL.5.4

Patterson and Grabenstein frequently use alliterative phrasing to tell Jamie's story. Help students identify some examples of alliteration ("drooling demons" in the "Zombie Zone," pg. 21; "wall-to-wall wheelchairs and walkers," pg. 288) in the book and discuss the effect these phrases have on the narrative.

RL.5.5

I Funny begins with a scene from the middle of the book, then reverts to earlier action. Discuss this structure with students. Why do the authors preview this climactic scene in the prologue before beginning the story? Would students have read the book differently without the prologue?

RL.5.5

When Patterson and Grabenstein repeat the scene from the prologue in the narrative, they do not tell it in exactly the same way. Although Laura Park's illustrations are similar, they, too, differ from the first appearance. Ask students to identify differences in both the text and the illustrations. Discuss why the authors and illustrator would vary the telling of this scene.

RL.5.6

I Funny is told entirely from Jamie's point of view. Discuss how parts of the story would be told differently if another character were relating them. Consider Chapter 39, "Taking No Prisoners." How would one of Jamie's friends or family members have told the story of his club performance differently? Discuss the effects of changing the point of view on the narrative. Encourage students to select other scenes and repeat the activity on their own.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

RL.5.7

Ask students to look closely at the pictures of Jamie in this book. How do the visual representations compare to the narrative? Look closely at the label on the back of Jamie's wheelchair. How do these messages influence the tone of the book? Would they read the book in the same way without the illustrations?

RL.5.8

The middle school years can be difficult for students; many authors, including James Patterson, choose to present the struggles humorously to make them seem more surmountable to young readers. Find a title with themes like those in *I Funny: A Middle School Story* (try *Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life* by James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts) and ask your students to compare how the authors created stories with similar themes using different premises.

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

RF.5.3, RF.5.4

Encourage your students to read *I Funny* aloud. As students read, monitor for fluency and comprehension.

RF.5.4

Obtain a copy of the audiobook for *I Funny*. Ask students to read along with the text as you play the audio. Discuss how the narrator's intonation and style influence how students visualize the text.