

# Dr. Seuss™

## in the Classroom

### An Educators' Guide Correlating to Common Core State Standards

#### Thematic Connections

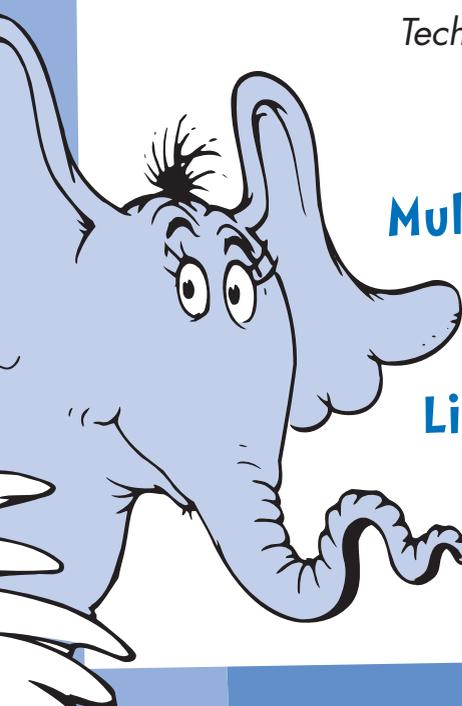
*Bullying, Community, Compassion and Forgiveness,  
Competition, Environmental Stewardship, Faithfulness,  
Fear, Freedom, Friendship, Greed, Identity,  
Perseverance, Power, Prejudice, Pride,  
Technology and Modernization, Transformation*

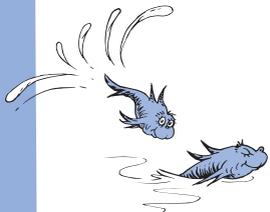
#### Reading Questions

#### Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

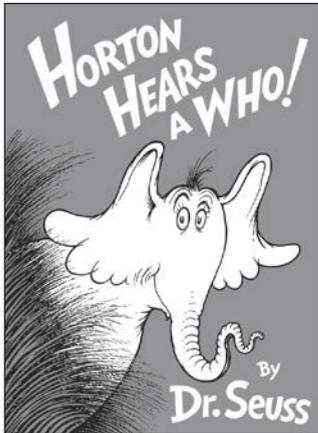
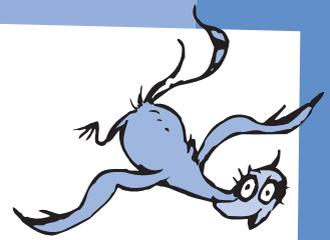
#### Writing Prompts

#### Listening/Speaking Activities





# Featured Titles



## Horton Hears a Who!

Themes: Perseverance, Community, Friendship

HC: 978-0-394-80078-3

GLB: 978-0-394-90078-0

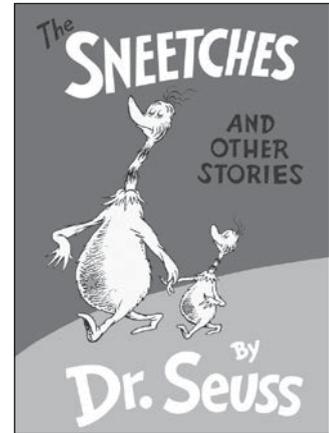


## Horton Hatches the Egg

Themes: Bullying, Faithfulness, Transformation, Freedom

HC: 978-0-394-80077-6

GLB: 978-0-394-90077-3



## The Sneetches and Other Stories

Themes: Prejudice, Pride, Identity

HC: 978-0-394-80089-9

GLB: 978-0-394-90089-6

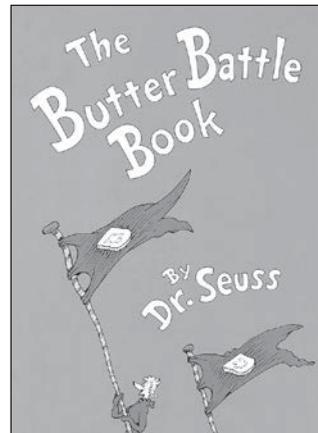


## The Lorax

Themes: Environmental Stewardship, Compassion and Forgiveness, Greed

HC: 978-0-394-82337-9

GLB: 978-0-394-92337-6

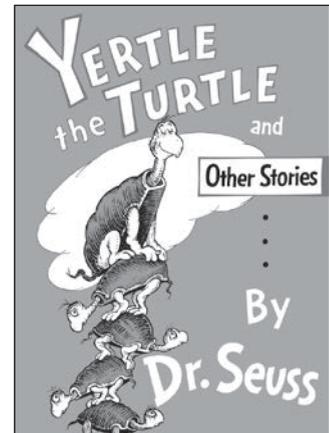


## The Butter Battle Book

Themes: Competition, Technology and Modernization

HC: 978-0-394-86580-5

GLB: 978-0-394-96580-2



## Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories

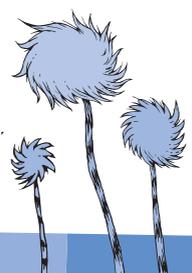
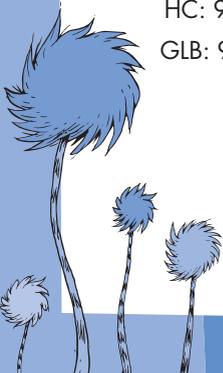
Themes: Competition, Power, Fear

HC: 978-0-394-80087-5

GLB: 978-0-394-90087-2



For a list of Dr. Seuss books available on audio, visit [ListeningLibrary.com](http://ListeningLibrary.com).



# Common Core State Standards Addressed in this Educators' Guide



## Reading Questions

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5:** Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6:** Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6:** Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7:** Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.9:** Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

## Writing Prompts

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.8:** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## Listening/Speaking Activities

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

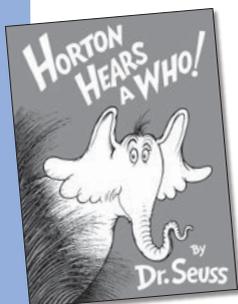
**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.3:** Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.4:** Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.5:** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.6:** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 6 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)





# Horton Hears a Who!

Horton the elephant is frolicking in a jungle pool when he hears a cry for help. The sound, he discovers, is coming from a person too small to see on a floating speck of dust. Horton places the speck in a safe place and discovers he has saved a whole town of tiny people called *Whos*. Horton vows to protect the *Whos*, but problems arise when the other jungle animals find Horton talking to the speck and don't believe him. They teach and chase Horton, try to splash the speck, then carry it off. Horton follows and searches for the speck in a field of clovers. After finding the speck, the jungle animals still don't believe Horton, so he asks the *Whos* to yell as loud as they can. Until the smallest of the *Whos* yells, the other animals can't hear anything. When the jungle animals finally do hear, they all get together to help protect the *Whos*.

including little Jo-Jo, the whole community becomes powerful enough to make itself heard. The jungle community is a community of proximity rather than one of shared identity—until the animals all hear the pleas of the *Whos*. At first, the animals don't see Horton as part of their community because he thinks differently. Then, once the big kangaroo hears the pleas of the *Whos*, the community comes together, joining Horton with the goal of protecting the *Whos*.

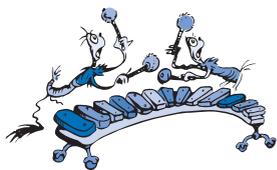
For discussion:

A community is made up of people living in the same place and having a shared identity.

- What is the difference between a community of proximity and a community of shared identity?
- How does the jungle become a community of shared identity? Why is a community of shared identity important? What is the power of a community of shared identity?
- How is your classroom a community of shared identity?
- What difference did Jo-Jo's voice make for the *Whos*? What do you think this demonstrates about community?
- How does Horton's statement "A person's a person no matter how small" exemplify that Horton sees a connection between his community of the jungle and the community of the *Whos*?

## Themes

### Perseverance



Horton never gives up. He hears the *Whos* on the small speck of dust and is determined to protect them regardless of how the other animals treat him. When the other animals take the speck, Horton maintains his determination to protect the *Whos* and chases the speck down. Later, he continues encouraging the *Whos* to yell until the other animals hear them. Horton never gives up.

For discussion:

- Why doesn't Horton give up after the other animals tease him?
- Why does Horton continue to look for the speck after it is dropped in the field with millions of clovers that all look the same?
- What does it mean to persevere through difficult situations?

## Community

Throughout the book, there are two different communities: the one of the jungle and the one of the *Whos*. A community is made up of people living in the same place and having a shared identity. In *Who*-ville, the community bands together to save itself from extinction at the hands of the Wickersham Brothers. Once the *Whos* get everyone involved,

## Friendship

Being a friend is not always easy. Friends support, listen to, and protect one another. Horton has only just met the *Whos* when he decides to become a faithful friend. He is a good friend because he keeps his promise. He makes sure his friends are not abandoned in the field of clovers despite the fact that finding them in the field was incredibly hard for him.

For discussion:

- What makes Horton a good friend?
- The *Whos* trust Horton. Why is this trust a very important part of what makes a good friend?
- What lessons can you learn about your own friendships from Horton?
- What does Horton's perseverance say about him as a friend?
- Why would you want a friend like Horton?



# Teaching Activities

## Reading Questions

Horton strives to protect the *Whos* despite many obstacles. What does it mean to have perseverance? How does Horton demonstrate perseverance? Use at least three examples from the book to support your response.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2

Choose one of the following quotes and describe how it relates to one of the themes of the text. In what ways do the specific words in the quote affect the meaning of the text?

🌟 "'My friend,' came the voice, 'you're a very fine friend. / You've helped all us folks on this dust speck no end.'" (p. 18)

🌟 "'I'll find it!' cried Horton. 'I'll find it or bust! / I SHALL find my friends on my small speck of dust!'" (p. 30)

🌟 "With the help of the Wickersham Brothers and dozens / Of Wickersham Uncles and Wickersham Cousins . . ." (p. 38)

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5

Throughout the book, the author chooses to put some words in a smaller font. How does the use of the smaller font affect the tone and meaning of the text?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4

The big kangaroo and Horton have very different perspectives on the *Whos* on the speck. How does the author show the two perspectives? How does the big kangaroo's perspective affect those of others in the text? What actions do the *Whos* and Horton take to change the big kangaroo's perspective?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

Horton is the protagonist in this text as well as in *Horton Hatches an Egg*. How is Horton similar across the two texts? How is he different? Based on the two texts, what does Horton illustrate about the themes of friendship and perseverance?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.9

## Writing Prompts

Horton can be described as persistent. Use evidence from the book to demonstrate how Horton is persistent.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

Dr. Seuss originally published this text in 1954, at the end of an era known as the Red Scare or McCarthyism. Think about how this text is about what happens when people across different populations don't understand each other. Then write an essay that examines the relationship between the ideas conveyed in *Horton Hears a Who!* and the fear that people in the United States had during the time of the Red Scare.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2, W.6.7-6.9

This book is mainly from the perspective of Horton. Choose the perspective of the Mayor of the *Who*-ville or of the big kangaroo and rewrite the story as if he were telling the story.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3

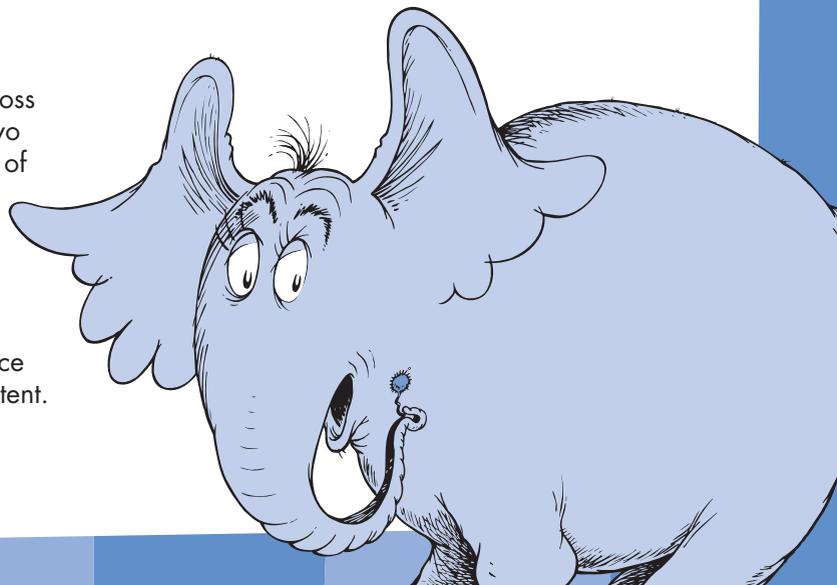
## Listening/Speaking Activities

Listen to Senator Joe McCarthy being questioned on the anticommunist investigation from a 1953 episode of NBC's *Meet the Press*. You can find the audio at [History.com/topics/cold-war/red-scare/speeches](http://History.com/topics/cold-war/red-scare/speeches). As students listen to the audio, have them note the specific arguments and claims made by Senator McCarthy regarding the Red Scare and the necessary actions of the US government in response to the scare. Then have the students find the connection between what Senator McCarthy says and what the jungle animals say to Horton about the *Whos*.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.3

Divide the class into two groups: one representing the jungle animals and the other representing Horton. Have the groups engage in a debate regarding the presence of the *Whos* and what constitutes evidence of the *Whos'* existence. As students listen to the opposing group, they need to identify the claims made and how those claims are supported by events in the text.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.3





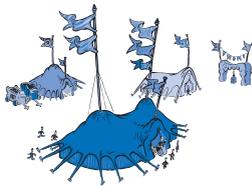
# Horton Hatches the Egg



This is the story of a faithful elephant who agrees to sit on the egg of Mayzie the bird while she goes off to play and frolic. At first, Horton tells Mayzie that he can't possibly sit on the egg, but eventually he acquiesces and ends up sitting on it, in a tree, through the seasons. He endures snow, rain, and even a group of hunters who sell him to a circus because no one has seen an elephant who can sit in a tree. Eventually, Mayzie encounters Horton and the egg, and the elephant-bird is hatched.

## Themes

### Bullying



Horton is kind, gentle, and good-hearted. He stands out for consistently doing what is right rather than doing what the crowd expects of him. Since Horton is different, he is bullied by Mayzie, the other animals in the jungle, and the humans in the story. Mayzie bullies Horton through intentional manipulation so he will sit on her egg for her, and then she essentially forgets about him. Horton's animal friends engage in verbal bullying when they shout, tease, and laugh at him for being in the tree. The hunters bully Horton physically by putting him—and the tree—in a wagon and moving him without his consent and then selling him to the circus, where he is taunted and embarrassed by the circus audience.

For discussion:

There are three main types of bullying: social, verbal, and physical. Throughout the book, different characters bully Horton in different ways.

- Describe what several characters do to bully Horton.
- How does Horton respond to the bullying of others?
- How does Horton's response help him in the end?

### Faithfulness

Several times in the story, Horton recites the line "I meant what I said / And I said what I meant. . . . / An elephant's faithful / One hundred per cent!" Horton is loyal and is steadfast in ensuring that the egg is well taken care of. Although Mayzie has abandoned her egg, Horton serves as a faithful surrogate.

For discussion:

- What does it mean to be faithful?
- Why does Mayzie leave her egg?
- Do you think Horton will leave the elephant-bird?
- What does it mean to be a faithful friend?

### Transformation

A transformation is a dramatic change in appearance or form. In this book, Mayzie's egg transforms from a bird egg to an elephant-bird egg. In real life, a human sitting on an egg will not hatch a person-bird. The transformation in this text symbolizes the power of love and faithfulness.

For discussion:

- Why do you think Horton's care and faithfulness for the egg lead to the transformation?
- Is it possible to undergo a transformation without a physical change?
- How can people transform themselves?

### Freedom

Mayzie's idea of freedom is being able to do what she wants when she wants to do it. She feels confined when she has to watch her egg. She is not willing to give up her freedom to be a mother. Yet to Horton, freedom is something that can be sacrificed for the rewards that come from doing what is right. He sacrifices his comfort when sitting in the tree through the rain and snow. He sacrifices his freedom when he is faced with teasing and when he is sent to the circus. Horton sticks by his choice to do what is right: to keep the egg safe. His sacrifice pays off in the end because he earns the companionship and love of the elephant-bird.

For discussion:

- Freedom means something different to everyone. What does it mean to have freedom? Is freedom getting to make your own choices? Is freedom the right to vote? Is freedom being able to do what you want when you want?
- How does Mayzie's definition of freedom affect what happens to her?
- What does freedom mean for Horton, and how does he achieve it in the end?

# Teaching Activities

## Reading Questions

What does it mean to be faithful? How was Horton faithful? Use specific examples from the book to support your reasoning. Is it possible to be partly faithful?

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2

Choose one of the following quotes and describe how it relates to one of the themes of the text. In what ways do the specific words in the quote affect the meaning of the text?

❁ "It's work! How I hate it! / I'd *much* rather play! / I'd take a vacation, fly off for a rest / If I could find *someone* to stay on my nest! / If I could find someone, I'd fly away—free. . . ." (p. 1)

❁ "I'll *stay* on this egg and I *won't* let it freeze. / I meant what I said / And I said what I meant. . . . / An elephant's faithful / One hundred per cent!" (p. 16)

❁ "His friends gathered round / And they shouted with glee. / 'Look! Horton the Elephant's / Up in a tree!' / They taunted. They teased him. / They yelled, 'How absurd!' / 'Old Horton the Elephant / Thinks he's a bird!' (pp. 18–19)

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5

Throughout the book, the author chooses to put some words in italics. How does the use of italics affect the tone and meaning of the text?

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

Have the class watch the 1942 ten-minute video *Horton Hatches the Egg* and compare the movie version to the written version. How is the experience of watching the video different from the experience of reading the book?

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7

View the movie *The Bully Project*. Have students describe how bullying is portrayed in the film and how it relates to *Horton Hatches the Egg*.

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7

## Writing Prompts

Should Horton get to raise the elephant-bird? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your reasoning.

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

Multiple times in the book, Horton recites the line "I meant what I said / And I said what I meant. . . . / An elephant's faithful / One hundred per cent!" Conduct research on either African or Asian elephants and learn why these animals are often characterized in fiction as being faithful.

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2, W.6.7-6.9

Write about a situation where you knew you were doing the right thing but others made fun of you.

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3

## Listening/Speaking Activities

Have students watch *The Bully Project*. Using what they learn from the film and what they have learned from the text, the students should work in groups to prepare and present a series of skits to demonstrate how to stand up against bullying.

● CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1

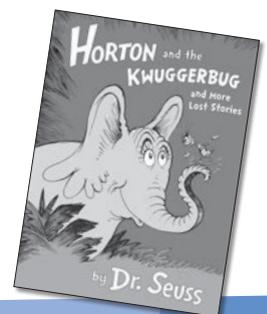


## Also Available:

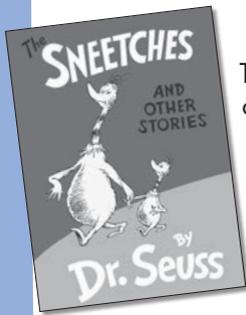
### **Horton and the Kwuggerbug and More Lost Stories**

HC: 978-0-385-38298-4

GLB: 978-0-375-97342-0



# The Sneetches and Other Stories



This book contains numerous stories all centered upon the theme of identity.

The titled story of the text, "The Sneetches," looks at identity through the lens of Sneetches on beaches.

Some have a star on their belly and some have none, and the identity of all Sneetches is wrapped up in

whether or not they have a star. The Sneetches believe that only those with a star are the best on the beach. One day, Sylvester McMonkey McBean arrives on the scene, and he gives the Sneetches the opportunity to change their identity by either adding or removing stars. Chaos ensues as the Sneetches with and without stars go in and out of the machine to obtain a new identity. They eventually run out of money, however, and are left unable to tell who is a Plain or a Star-Bellied Sneetch. At this point they realize that their identity is no longer wrapped up in having stars and they see each other as equals.

The second story, "The Zax," is about two Zax who are so invested in their identity that they are unwilling to compromise. The North-Going Zax and the South-Going Zax bump into each other. They both refuse to move. Time passes. Even a highway is built around them and they refuse to move. Their identity is unshakable.

The third story, "Too Many Daves," is about a woman named Mrs. McCave who has twenty-three sons, all named Dave. She comes to realize that giving each son the same name has made things difficult, as they all come whenever she calls one.

The fourth story, "What Was I Scared Of?" is about being afraid of something that is different. The narrator is walking around at night and is suddenly frightened by a pair of empty pants. He works to avoid the empty pants, but when he is finally cornered by them, he begins screaming and the pants begin to cry. The narrator learns that the pants were as scared of him as he was of the pants. Now that they know each other a little better, they greet and say hello whenever they see each other.



## Themes

### Prejudice

Prejudice is when someone does not like another because of some kind of difference. In this text, we see prejudice rear its ugly head in both "The Sneetches" and "What Was I Scared Of?" For the Sneetches, it is all about having (or not having) stars. And for the narrator of "What Was I Scared Of?" the prejudice comes from not knowing anything about the empty pants. In both stories, the readers can see how prejudice comes from a lack of knowledge about "people" who are different.

For discussion:

- ★ In the beginning of the Sneetches story, why do you think the Star-Belly Sneetches refuse to invite the other Sneetches to their party? Why do you think both types of Sneetches are so determined to remove or add on stars? Why do you think McBean says "They never learn. / No. You can't teach a Sneetch!" (p. 22)?
- ★ Why do you think the narrator of "What Was I Scared Of?" tries to avoid the empty pants? What does he learn when he has the opportunity to meet the empty pants?
- ★ Using examples from the both "What Was I Scared Of?" and "The Sneetches," create a pictorial definition of prejudice.



### Pride

In "The Sneetches" and "The Zax," the characters believe that they are more important than other people. This feeling of pride comes in the form of stubbornness for the characters in both stories. The Sneetches with stars spend the bulk of the book working to assure that they will always look different from those without. The Zax refuse to move and end up going nowhere. The Sneetches learn from their mistakes, but not the Zax.

For discussion:

- ★ Why are the Sneetches so proud of their stars? How does this pride affect how they treat other people?
- ★ What prevents the North-Going Zax and the South-Going Zax from going another way? How does this prevent them from accomplishing their original goals? What would you say to the Zax about their refusal to move forward?

## Identity

We use a variety of techniques for identifying people, places, and things. In “The Sneetches” and “What Was I Scared Of?” identity comes from outward appearance. In “The Zax” and “Too Many Daves,” identity comes from a name. In all of these stories, identity is a source of pride and prejudice among the characters.

For discussion:

- ★ Why do you think that identity is sometimes formed based on outward appearance? What are the perils of using outward appearance for identity?
- ★ How does identity come from a name in both “The Zax” and “Too Many Daves”? What are the negatives of creating an identity for someone based on their name?
- ★ How do pride and prejudice relate to identity?

## Teaching Activities

### Reading Questions

Identity is made up of the qualities and/or characteristics that we use to describe a particular group or individual. How is identity portrayed in each of the stories in this book? How is identity proposed in a positive or negative manner? Use specific examples from the text to support your response.

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2

Choose one of the following quotes and describe how it relates to one of the themes of the text. In what ways do the specific words in the quote affect the meaning of the text?

- ★ “I’m a North-Going Zax and I always go north. / Get out of my way, now, and let me go forth!” (p. 28)
- ★ “With their snoots in the air, they would sniff and they’d snort / ‘We’ll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort!’” (p. 4)
- ★ “What *could* those pants be there for? / What *could* a pair of pants at night / Be standing in the air for? / . . . But pants like that / I did not care for. No, sir.” (pp. 45–47)

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5

The Sneetches change their thoughts about “stars upon thars” at the end of the book. How does Dr. Seuss develop this changing perspective throughout the book? Use specific quotes and references to images to support your ideas.

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

View the 1973 movie *The Sneetches*. Compare the movie version to the written version. How is the experience of watching the video different from the experience of reading the book?

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7

## Writing Prompts

Social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, are places where people build online identities. Do you think it is positive or negative that people can build online identities? Why or why not? Use evidence from the stories in *The Sneetches and Other Stories*, as well as your personal experiences and outside research to support your ideas.

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

Prejudice can be seen in many different parts of our society. Find at least two recent news stories regarding prejudice, such as the racist comments of Donald Sterling in April 2014 and the recent resolutions regarding banning racial slurs in the naming of sports teams. Then research some definitions of prejudice. Finally, write a paper that describes the persistent role of prejudice in our society. Describe how prejudice is present in our culture and how you think we can overcome prejudice.

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2, W.6.7-6.9

Pretend that you are a Sneetch. Then write a well-structured story of your experience when McBean comes to the beach.

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3

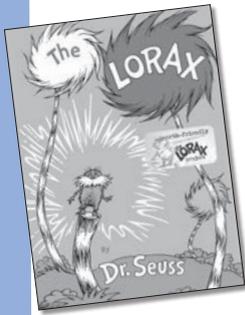
## Listening/Speaking Activities

Put the students in small groups to present and share their individual research on prejudice. Students will share what they learned about a prejudice and create connections between their research and the research of the classmates in their group.

◎ CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1, SL.6.3



# The Lorax



A common theme in many stories is a haunted house that is full of stories and mysteries for children. In *The Lorax*, a boy goes to visit such a

house where a mysterious creature called the Once-ler lives. The boy wants to know what happened and why the far end of town is deserted and who was this Lorax that once lived there. After paying the Once-ler, the boy learns that the Lorax was a creature who spoke for the trees and animals that once occupied this side of town, and that the Once-ler is the businessman whose greed drove the Lorax and his animal friends away. In the end, the Once-ler puts his trust in the boy to plant and care for a seed that will bring back the Lorax and his friends.

## Themes

### Environmental Stewardship

Our actions affect the world around us. We are all connected to the world that we live in, and should we choose not to protect it, it will not maintain its beauty. When the Once-ler first arrives, he hears the song of the Swomee-Swans and sees miles and miles of Truffula Trees, but as he creates more and more Thneeds, he doesn't take heed of the Lorax's warnings and of the changing environment around him.

For discussion:

- Why doesn't the Once-ler care about how his business affects the forest?
- Why do you think he ignores the warnings of the Lorax?
- How does this relate to issues of environment that you read about in the news today?

### Compassion and Forgiveness

The Lorax constantly tells the Once-ler about the woes of the Truffula forest animals. The Bar-ba-loots have crummies in their tummies, the Swomee-Swans can't sing, and the Humming-Fish no longer can hum. These descriptions help the reader have compassion for the plight of animals in nature who are the victims of our environmental pollution. However, the compassion extends beyond that of the animals and the environment to the Once-ler. At the end of the book, readers may feel sorry for the Once-ler because

he has recognized the damage that he has done and is now all alone. The reader forgives the Once-ler because he feels guilt and passes the last Truffula seed on.



For discussion:

- Why doesn't the Once-ler try to help when he sees that the forest creatures are sick?
- How can we demonstrate compassion for other people? How can we demonstrate compassion for animals?
- Can we forgive the Once-ler for destroying the Truffula Trees?

### Greed

When the Once-ler successfully sells his first Thneed, he calls his family and friends to help him produce more and more. He invents machines that make the production of Thneeds a faster and more efficient process. His greed blinds him until the Truffula Trees are destroyed and the animals all go away, leaving him alone in the destroyed forest.

For discussion:

- Why do you think that the Once-ler, who once got such joy from the beauty of the Truffula Trees, is blinded by greed?
- Why do you think the Once-ler's family leaves him once all the Truffula Trees are cut down? What does this have to do with greed?
- Why do you think greed is such a powerful force?



# Teaching Activities

## Reading Questions

Environmental stewardship is the responsibility to take care of the environment by all those who affect the environment. How does the Once-ler exhibit both a lack of environmental stewardship and an effort toward environmental stewardship? Use specific examples from the text to support your response.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2

Choose one of the following quotes and describe how it relates to one of the themes of the text. In what ways do the specific words in the quote affect the meaning of the text?

- 🌟 "I, the Once-ler, felt sad / as I watched them all go. / BUT . . . / business is business! / And business must grow / regardless of crummies in tummies, you know." (p. 37)
- 🌟 "I went right on biggering . . . selling more Thneeds. / And I biggered my money, which everyone needs." (p. 39)
- 🌟 "'I am the Lorax,' he coughed and he whiffed. / He sneezed and he snuffled. He snarggled. He sniffed. / 'Once-ler!' he cried with a cruffulous croak. / 'Once-ler! You're making such smogulous smoke! / My poor Swomee-Swans . . . why, they can't sing a note! / No one can sing who has smog in his throat.'" (p. 40)
- 🌟 "That was long, long ago. / But each day since that day / I've sat here and worried / and worried away. / Through the years, while my buildings / have fallen apart, / I've worried about it / with all of my heart." (p. 57)

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5

At the end of the book, the following quote puts the word *unless* in all capital letters. Why did the author choose to use capital letters to highlight this one word? What is the significance of the word *unless* to the overall theme of environmental stewardship?

- 🌟 "Now that *you're* here, / the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear. / UNLESS someone like you /cares a whole awful lot, / nothing is going to get better. / It's not." (p. 60)

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4

Throughout the book, the Once-ler and the Lorax have different opinions about how to treat the Truffula Trees. How are these two perspectives illustrated by Dr. Seuss? Use specific quotes to illustrate your ideas.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

View the 2012 movie *The Lorax*. In this version, the themes of environmental stewardship, compassion and forgiveness, and greed are also highlighted. How does the movie convey these themes differently than in the book? How does the experience of the movie differ from the experience of the book? Do you think the added plot points of the movie affect the themes in a positive or negative way?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7

## Writing Prompts

The Lorax is not very successful in preventing the Once-ler from destroying the Truffula Trees. Write a letter to the Once-ler that uses clear reasons and relevant evidence to convince him to stop destroying the forest prior to inventing the Super-Axe-Hacker.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

Research a recent environmental problem that has occurred—for instance, the January 2014 chemical leak into the Elk River in Charleston, West Virginia. What are the effects of pollution on the neighboring environment? How is business involved in the environmental problem? Why do you think people involved make the decisions that they do regarding the environment?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2, W.6.7-6.9

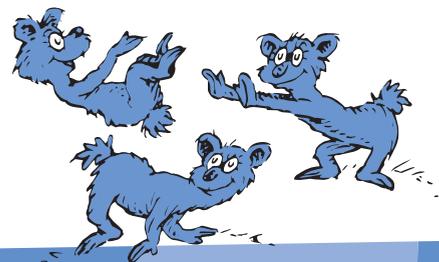
Research an environmental problem that has occurred—for instance, the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico that began on April 20, 2010. Pretend that you are either an animal or a person living in the vicinity of the environmental issue and write a well-structured story of your experience during the disaster.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3

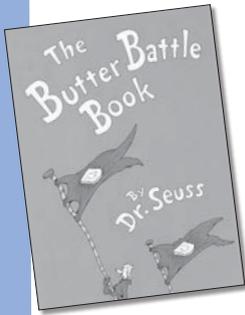
## Listening/Speaking Activities

Put the students in small groups to present and share their individual research on environmental problems. Students will share what they learned about an environmental problem and create connections between their research and the research of the classmates in their group.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1, SL.6.3

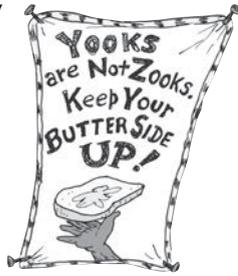


# The Butter Battle Book



The Butter Battle is about the Zooks, who butter their bread with the butter side down, and the Yooks, who butter their bread with the butter side up.

The plot is structured as a flashback by the narrator's grandfather, who monitored the wall that separates the Zooks from the Yooks. He retells a story of increasing tensions between the groups. The tensions spiral out of control when a Zook shoots his Snick-Berry Switch while he is out on patrol. The Yooks and the Zooks keep building bigger and bigger weapons and confronting each other to see who will fire first—until the biggest weapon of all, the Bitsy Big-Boy Boomeroo, leaves both the Yooks and Zooks waiting to see who will drop the weapon that will ultimately destroy all those who butter bread.



## Themes

### Competition

Competition occurs when people try to outdo one another by winning something or by simply having something that is considered better. In this text, competition is at the heart of the story. The Zooks and Yooks compete over who can have the bigger and better weapon. This competition is anything but friendly and begs for a discussion about what makes competition "good" or "bad."

For discussion:

- Why do you think that the Zooks and the Yooks feel that competition is necessary?
- Why do you think that the Yook leader says, "You're not to blame. / And those Zooks will be sorry they started this game" (p. 12)? How is this competition like a game? How is it not like a game? What is the difference between good competition and bad competition?
- Why do you think both the Zooks and the Yooks keep making bigger and bigger weapons rather than talking things out?

What do you think is the relationship between competition and power? How is this exemplified in the text?



## Technology and Modernization

Technology evolves so fast that as soon as you buy a phone or computer, a new one with more features is announced. Both governments and individuals can be seen pursuing the newest technology. In this story, the governments of the Zooks and the Yooks are striving for the best weapons technology can provide.

For discussion:

- Why is the technological arms race a dangerous game to play? Use evidence from the book as well as evidence that you find from researching the arms race of the early twentieth century.
- How does the constant evolution of technology impact your daily life?
- How does the technological divide between those who can afford the latest technology and those who cannot affect our society?

## Teaching Activities

### Reading Questions

Competition sets people or groups against one another in order to determine which one is "better." How is competition portrayed in this story? Use specific examples from the text to support your response.

© CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2

Choose one of the following quotes and describe how it relates to one of the themes of the text. In what ways do the specific words in the quote affect the meaning of the text?

- "Our slingshots have failed. / That was old-fashioned stuff. / Slingshots, dear boy, / are not modern enough. / All we need is some newfangled kind of a gun. / My Boys in the Back Room have already begun / to think up a walloping whizz-zinger one!" (pp. 18–19)
- "This machine was so modern, so frightfully new, / no one knew quite exactly just *what* it would do!" (p. 28)
- "You may fling those hard rocks with your Triple-Sling Jigger. / But I, also, now have *my* hand on a trigger! / My wonderful weapon, the Jigger-Rock Snatchem, / will fling 'em right back just as quick as we catch 'em." (pp. 16–17)

 "We didn't do. / And we didn't quite die. / But we sure did get worsted, poor Daniel and I."  
(p. 22)

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5](#)

The Zooks and the Yooks continue to build bigger weapons. How does Dr. Seuss escalate the competition throughout the book? Use specific quotes and references to images to support your ideas.

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.6](#)

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

View the 1989 video *The Butter Battle Book*. Compare the movie version to the written version. How is the experience of watching the video different from the experience of reading the book?

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7](#)

## Writing Prompts

Competition can be good or bad. In this text, you read how competition can lead to possible negative consequences. Use what you learned from the book to describe how competition can be good or bad. Be sure to pick one perspective and provide clear reasons and relevant evidence to support your response.

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1](#)

Are technology and modernization good or bad? Research modernization theory, then choose a position regarding the positives and negatives of modernization and research the position that you have chosen. Finally, write a paper that describes your position. Use specific facts and details to support your paper.

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2](#), [W.6.7-6.9](#)

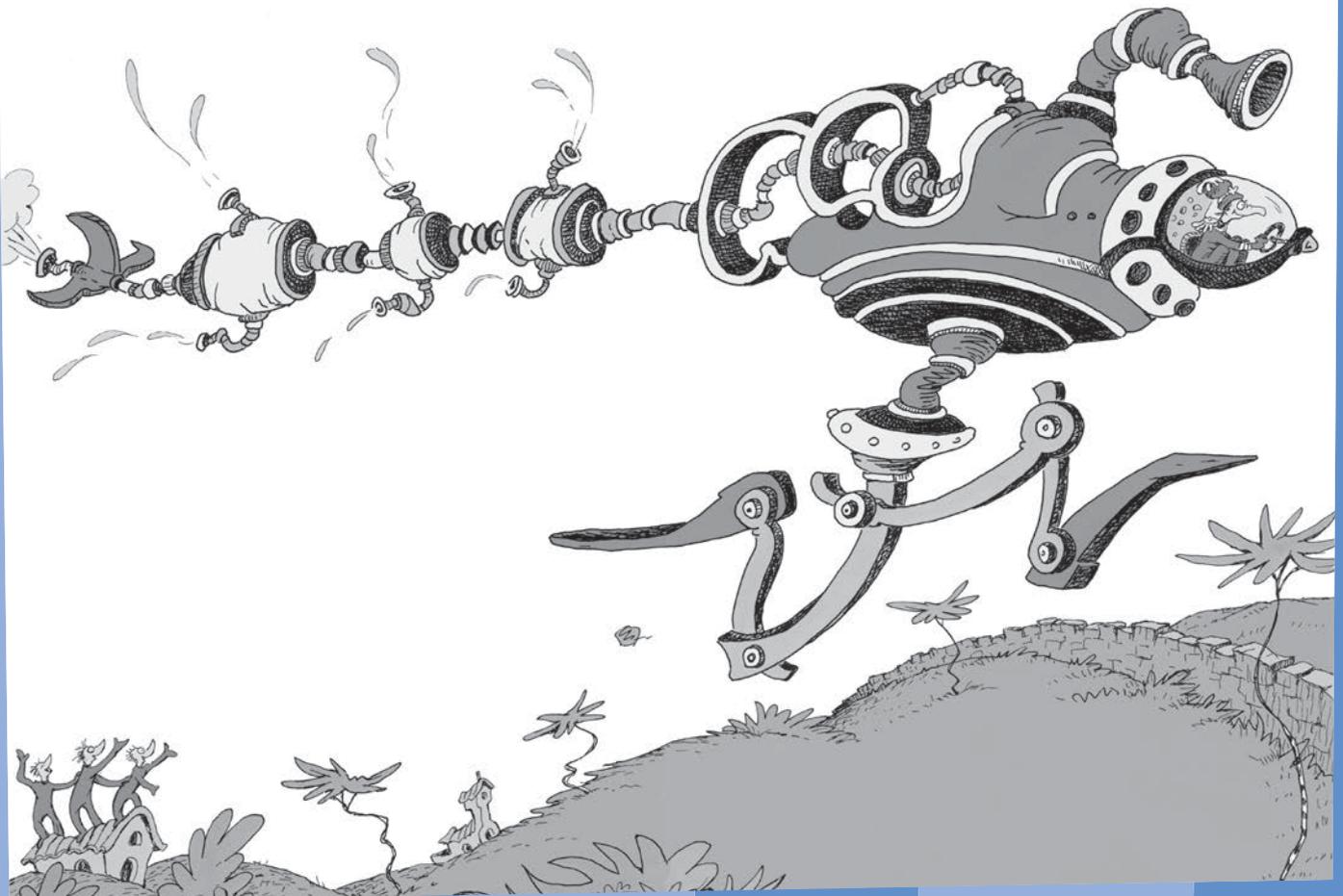
Pretend that you are the grandson in the book. Then write a well-structured story of how you react and feel about the story told by your grandfather.

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3](#)

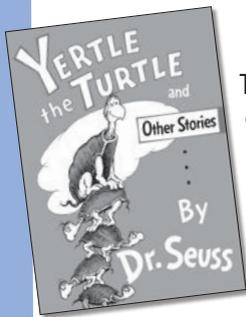
## Listening/Speaking Activities

Put the students in small groups to present and share their individual research on modernization. Students will share what they learned about modernization and create connections between their research and the research of the classmates in their group.

 [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1](#), [SL.6.3](#)



# Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories



This book contains three stories focused on issues of competition and power. The book opens with “Yertle the Turtle,” a story about power and how we treat others. Yertle is the king of the pond and rules all that he sees. He orders the other turtles to stand on each other’s backs so that he can climb on top for a better view. Yertle is brought down by a turtle named Mack, whose discomfort and need to burp upsets the leadership. In the end, the turtles are set free.

The second story in the book, “Gertrude McFuzz,” is about Gertrude’s desire for a fancier tail. Gertrude eats pill-berries until she has more feathers than any other bird. But when she tries to fly home to show off, she discovers that her tail is so heavy, she can’t move. When Gertrude finally does get home, she has the feathers plucked out. She learns to be happy with what she has.

The next story, “The Big Brag,” is also about proving who is better than another. A rabbit brags that he is the best of them all. He gets into a competition with a bear about who can hear and smell the farthest. They are both beat by a worm who claims to see around the world—right back to where they are standing, where he sees two fools, with nothing better to do than argue about who’s better than who.

## Themes Competition



There is often the drive to be our personal best. In “Yertle the Turtle,” Yertle wants to see more and more so that he is king of all he can see. In “Gertrude McFuzz,” the title character wants a tail that is better than Lolla-Lee-Lou’s. In “The Big Brag,” each animal is trying to prove that they are better than the others. Competition, as demonstrated through these characters, is not positive. Talk with your students about the difference between positive and negative competition.

For discussion:

- ☾ Why does Yertle get so angry with the moon? Why is Yertle’s desire to be higher than the moon an example of “bad” competition?

- ☾ Do you think Lolla-Lee-Lou is aware that Gertrude is desirous of her feathers? Do you think that Gertrude’s desire to have more tail feathers is an example of positive or negative competition?
- ☾ What does the worm say to the bear and rabbit to help them to understand that the competition they are having is negative?

## Power

Power is the ability to influence control over the behavior of other people. In these three stories, characters knowingly and unknowingly exert power over others to influence them to behave in a certain way. Yertle the Turtle has a thirst for power that encourages bullying and control over all the turtles in the pond.

For discussion:

- ☾ Why do the other turtles obey Yertle’s commands?
- ☾ How does Lolla-Lee-Lou have power over Gertrude?
- ☾ How does the rabbit’s bragging affect the behavior and feelings of the bear?
- ☾ How does the person trying to gain power affect how others around him feel?

## Fear

Connected to the ideas of power and competition is the fear of not being good enough. Yertle wants to be king of all that he can see and is angry at the moon because he fears that he is not the most powerful turtle. Gertrude is afraid that her lack of feathers makes her less worthy than Lolla-Lee-Lou. The rabbit and the bear fear that if they don’t have the best smelling and or the best hearing skills they may not be good enough. This fear of not being good enough affects how the characters act throughout this book and how we engage with others in our day-to-day lives.

For discussion:

- ☾ What is the role of fear in how we act on a daily basis?
- ☾ How does fear affect our choices for competition?
- ☾ How does fear of others affect the power that they may have over us?

# Teaching Activities

## Reading Questions

In "Yertle the Turtle," why do the turtles keep stacking on top of each other? How does the text reveal how they felt about Yertle's command?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1

In "Gertrude McFuzz," Gertrude continues to nibble pills off the vine even after she has the extra feather she was looking for. Why does she keep nibbling? How does the text reveal the problems associated with Gertrude's desire to be better than Lolla-Lee-Lou?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1

Choose one of the following quotes and describe how it relates to one of the themes of the text. In what ways do the specific words in the quote affect the meaning of the text?

☾ "'Hooray!' shouted Yertle. 'I'm king of the trees! / I'm king of the birds! And I'm king of the bees! / I'm king of the butterflies! King of the air! / Ah, me! What a throne! What a wonderful chair! / I'm Yertle the Turtle! Oh, marvelous me! / For I am the ruler of all that I see!'" (p. 16)

☾ "Then, one day she got awfully mad and she shouted: / 'This just isn't fair! I have one! She has two! / I MUST have a tail just like Lolla-Lee-Lou!'" (p. 33)

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.5

In "Gertrude McFuzz," Uncle Doctor tells Gertrude "Such talk! How absurd! / Your tail is just right for your kind of bird." What is the significance of this quote to the meaning of the story? (p. 34)

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4

In "Yertle the Turtle," how does Mack change throughout the story? How do the changes affect Yertle's leadership? Do you think Mack's burping incident was planned or an accident? Why?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6

## Multiple Text Prompts/Activities

Each of the three stories in this volume deal with issues of competition. Using the three texts, describe why competition is both good and bad. How is competition addressed in each of the three stories differently? When does competition turn negative according to the author?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.9

## Writing Prompts

Pretend that you are one of the turtles, like Mack, on the bottom of the stack. Write a letter to Yertle that uses clear reasons and relevant evidence to convince him to stop building a taller and taller tower of turtles.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

Since "Yertle the Turtle" was written just after the end of World War II, Yertle is thought to represent Hitler and other dictators that rose to power at that time. Research the rise of Hitler in Germany prior to WWII and use evidence from your research and the story to describe how Yertle represents Hitler. Who do you think Mack represents in the story? What evidence from the story and from your research supports this assumption?

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2, W.6.7-6.9

In many social interactions, you may have experienced feelings of inadequacy, such as those felt by Gertrude McFuzz, or the need to compete with others about who is the best, such as those portrayed in the "The Big Brag." Write a narrative using dialogue to describe one such social interaction or event that is similar to those you read about in the story.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3

## Listening/Speaking Activities

Create a presentation to describe why Yertle is a bully. Relate Yertle's bullying to that of totalitarian leaders of the past and present. Connect Yertle's behavior to bullying behavior you may have seen in your school. Research and present appropriate techniques for overcoming a bully and share these as well.

🕒 CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.4, SL.6.5, SL.6.6





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