Third Grade Comprehensive Lesson Plan

"Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket" by J.W. Zarek

Overview

This comprehensive lesson plan uses "Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket" to engage third-grade students in an integrated study of butterfly science, global geography, family traditions, and narrative writing. The plan leverages third graders' growing reading comprehension, research abilities, and writing skills while building connections across subject areas. Activities balance independent work with collaborative learning and incorporate appropriate levels of critical thinking for 8-9 year old students.

Learning Objectives

Reading/Language Arts

- Students will analyze characters' feelings and motivations in the story
- Students will identify and use figurative language (similes, metaphors) from the text
- Students will write a personal narrative about a special memory or tradition
- Students will use the writing process to plan, draft, revise, and edit their narratives
- Students will identify and discuss themes related to family connections and memories

Science

- Students will describe the butterfly life cycle and metamorphosis process
- Students will compare and contrast butterfly species from different regions
- Students will research and explain butterfly adaptations and environmental needs
- Students will investigate how butterflies contribute to ecosystems through pollination
- Students will design experiments to test butterfly habitat preferences

Social Studies

- Students will locate and research the four countries/regions from the story
- Students will compare geographic features that affect butterfly habitats
- Students will explore cultural perspectives on butterflies from different countries

- Students will examine how family stories and traditions preserve history
- Students will compare how people interact with butterflies across cultures

Mathematics

- Students will measure and graph butterfly characteristics using standard units
- Students will calculate and compare migration distances using scale maps
- Students will analyze butterfly population data using appropriate graphs
- Students will solve multi-step word problems using butterfly data
- Students will explore symmetry and geometric patterns in butterfly wings

Materials Needed

Reading/Writing Materials

- "Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket" by J.W. Zarek
- Reading response journals
- Graphic organizers for narrative writing
- Revision checklists for student writing
- Butterfly-themed vocabulary cards
- Figurative language examples from the text

Science Materials

- Butterfly life cycle models or diagrams
- Butterfly field guides (adapted for grade level)
- Butterfly comparison charts
- Materials for butterfly habitat models
- Pictures of butterfly species from the story
- Pollination demonstration materials

Social Studies Materials

- World maps and atlases
- Country fact cards for China, Japan, Colombia, and Arkansas (USA)

- Cultural artifact pictures related to butterflies
- Family tradition interview templates
- Global butterfly migration maps

Math Materials

- Rulers, tape measures, and other measuring tools
- Graph paper and graphing materials
- Butterfly measurement data sheets
- Calculators for distance calculations
- Symmetry templates and grid paper
- Butterfly population data tables

Week-Long Lesson Plan

Day 1: Story Introduction and Character Analysis

Morning Meeting (15 minutes)

1. Introduce "Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket"
2. Activate prior knowledge: "What do we know about butterflies and family traditions?"
3. Preview key vocabulary with context clues strategy
4. Set purpose for reading: "Notice how the author describes different butterflies and places"

Read-Aloud and Discussion (30 minutes)

1. Read the first part of the story (through the China memories)
2. Model thinking aloud about character feelings and motivations
3. Guide discussion with text-dependent questions:
    - "How does Bella feel when Grandma calls about the missing locket? How do you know?"
    - "Why is the butterfly locket so important to Grandma Yetta?"

    - "What can we infer about Bella and Grandma's relationship from this part of the story?"
4. Create a character traits chart for Bella and Grandma Yetta with text evidence

Figurative Language Hunt (20 minutes)

1. Introduce figurative language found in the butterfly descriptions
2. Model identifying similes and metaphors from the text
3. Students work in pairs to find additional examples
4. Create a class chart of butterfly figurative language
5. Discuss how figurative language helps readers visualize the butterflies

Butterfly Research Introduction (45 minutes)

1. Divide class into four expert groups (one for each butterfly/location):
    - Red Wing Butterflies (China)
    - White Butterflies (Japan)
    - Blue Morpho Butterflies (Colombia)
    - Monarch Butterflies (Arkansas)
2. Introduce research process and expectations:
    - Each group will become experts on their butterfly
    - Research will include habitat, characteristics, life cycle, and interesting facts
    - Information will be organized in a butterfly fact file
3. Model research process using age-appropriate resources
4. Groups begin collecting information using provided resources
5. Teacher conferences with groups to guide research

Butterfly Life Cycle Science (30 minutes)

1. Introduce butterfly metamorphosis with visual models
2. Discuss the four stages: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis), adult butterfly
3. Compare metamorphosis timelines for different butterfly species

4. Students create butterfly life cycle diagrams with descriptions of each stage
5. Extension: Add specific details about their research group's butterfly species

Math Connection: Butterfly Measurements (30 minutes)

1. Introduce standard measurement of butterflies (wingspan in cm/inches)
2. Demonstrate how to measure accurately using rulers
3. Provide data on wingspan measurements for butterflies in the story
4. Students create bar graphs comparing wingspans
5. Analyze the data: "Which butterfly has the largest wingspan? How much larger is it than the smallest?"

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

1. Review what we learned about butterflies today
2. Preview tomorrow's geography exploration
3. Exit ticket: "What's one interesting fact you learned about butterflies today?"

Day 2: Global Geography and Story Continuation

Morning Meeting (15 minutes)

1. Brief review of yesterday's learning
2. Introduce map skills for the day
3. Preview vocabulary: continent, hemisphere, latitude, migration
4. Movement break: "Fly" to different parts of the room labeled as continents

Read-Aloud Continuation (30 minutes)

1. Review the first part of the story
2. Continue reading about Japan and Colombia adventures
3. Focus on setting descriptions and how they affect the story
4. Discussion questions:
    - "How does the author help us 'see' the different settings?"
    - "How are the butterflies in Japan different from those in China?"

    - "What challenges did Bella and Grandma face in Colombia?"
5. Add to character analysis chart based on new information

World Geography Exploration (45 minutes)

1. Using wall maps and atlases, locate the four settings from the story
2. Discuss the distance between locations: "How far would Bella and Grandma need to travel?"
3. Identify key geographic features of each location that affect butterfly habitats:
    - Mountains in China
    - Island geography of Japan
    - Rainforests of Colombia
    - Temperate regions of Arkansas
4. Create a class comparison chart of the four locations
5. Students complete a map activity identifying and labeling the four locations

Cultural Connections Research (40 minutes)

1. Expert groups continue research, focusing on cultural significance:
    - Butterfly symbolism in Chinese culture
    - White butterflies in Japanese traditions
    - Blue Morpho importance in Colombian ecosystems
    - Monarch conservation efforts in North America
2. Provide structured note-taking templates
3. Students gather information from pre-selected resources
4. Teacher conferences with groups to support research
5. Groups begin creating visual displays of their findings

Math: Migration Mapping (30 minutes)

1. Introduce scale on maps: "How do we calculate real-world distances?"
2. Focus on Monarch butterfly migration from Mexico to Canada

3. Demonstrate how to use map scales to calculate distances
4. Students work in pairs to calculate distances between key migration points
5. Create a class chart of migration data
6. Problem-solving: "If a Monarch travels 50 miles per day, how many days would it take to travel 1,500 miles?"

Writing Workshop: Memory Narratives (40 minutes)

1. Connect to the story's theme of special memories
2. Introduce personal narrative writing: "A special memory with a family member"
3. Model planning using a graphic organizer:
    - Setting: Where and when did it happen?
    - People: Who was there?
    - Events: What happened in sequence?
    - Feelings: How did you feel?
4. Students brainstorm ideas for their own memory narratives
5. Begin planning using graphic organizers
6. Teacher conferences with students about their ideas

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

1. Share memory narrative ideas with a partner
2. Preview tomorrow's butterfly habitat investigation
3. Exit ticket: "What geographic feature might be most important for your butterfly's habitat?"

Day 3: Butterfly Habitats and Story Continuation

Morning Meeting (15 minutes)

1. Review previous learning
2. Introduce habitat investigation
3. Preview vocabulary: adaptation, environment, pollination
4. Quick sharing: "If you were a butterfly, where would you want to live?"

Read-Aloud Continuation (30 minutes)

1. Review story events so far
2. Read about Arkansas Monarch butterflies
3. Focus on sensory details and descriptive language
4. Discussion questions:
    - "How does the author help us 'hear' and 'see' the Monarchs?"
    - "Why were there so many Monarchs in Arkansas?"
    - "What's special about Monarch migration?"
5. Update story map with new settings and events

Butterfly Habitat Investigation (45 minutes)

1. Introduce key elements of butterfly habitats:
    - Host plants for laying eggs
    - Nectar sources for adult butterflies
    - Protection from predators
    - Climate conditions
2. Expert groups investigate specific habitat needs for their butterfly species
3. Students design a habitat model for their butterfly:
    - Draw or create a diorama showing ideal habitat
    - Label key features
    - Explain adaptations that help the butterfly survive
4. Gallery walk to view all habitat models
5. Discussion: "How are the habitats similar and different?"

Science: Pollination Exploration (30 minutes)

1. Introduce butterflies as pollinators
2. Demonstrate how pollination works with simple models
3. Discuss the importance of butterflies in ecosystems

4. Students create a flowchart showing:
    - Butterfly visits flower for nectar
    - Pollen sticks to butterfly body
    - Butterfly moves to new flower
    - Pollen transfers, enabling plant reproduction
5. Connect to real-world issues: "What might happen if butterfly populations decline?"

Math: Butterfly Data Analysis (30 minutes)

1. Present data tables with information about butterfly populations
2. Review how to create different types of graphs (bar, line, pictograph)
3. Students select appropriate graph types to represent different data sets
4. Create graphs showing butterfly population changes over time
5. Analyze the data: "What patterns do you notice? What might explain these patterns?"
6. Write data-based conclusions using evidence

Writing Workshop: Drafting Narratives (40 minutes)

1. Review narrative planning from previous day
2. Mini-lesson on strong beginnings that grab the reader's attention
3. Model drafting introduction and first events
4. Students begin drafting their memory narratives
5. Focus on including sensory details (like in the butterfly descriptions)
6. Teacher conferences with students as they write

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

1. Share a favorite sentence from their narrative drafts
2. Preview tomorrow's activities
3. Exit ticket: "One thing butterflies need in their habitat is..."

Day 4: Story Conclusion and Project Work

Morning Meeting (15 minutes)

1. Review story events so far
2. Introduce the concept of "themes" or big ideas
3. Preview vocabulary: conclusion, resolution, tradition, legacy
4. Quick sharing: "Why do families pass down special items?"

Read-Aloud Conclusion (30 minutes)

1. Finish reading the story (the surprise gift of the locket)
2. Discuss the resolution:
    - "How was the problem of the missing locket resolved?"
    - "Why did Grandma Yetta give the locket to Bella?"
    - "What does the locket symbolize in the story?"
3. Identify possible themes:
    - Family connections across generations
    - Memories as treasures
    - The importance of traditions
4. Complete story map with resolution and theme

Expert Group Presentations (45 minutes)

1. Butterfly expert groups finalize their research presentations
2. Each group prepares to teach the class about:
    - Their butterfly's characteristics and habitat
    - The country/region where it's found
    - Cultural connections to butterflies
    - Interesting facts and conservation status
3. Groups practice presentations
4. Present to class (8-10 minutes per group)
5. Audience takes notes and asks questions

Writing Workshop: Revising Narratives (40 minutes)

1. Mini-lesson on revising for sensory details
2. Model revision process using a sample paragraph
3. Introduce revision checklist:
    - Does my beginning grab the reader?
    - Did I include sensory details?
    - Is my sequence of events clear?
    - Did I share my feelings?
    - Does my ending connect to the beginning?
4. Students revise their memory narratives
5. Partner feedback using revision checklist
6. Teacher conferences with students as needed

Math: Butterfly Symmetry and Patterns (30 minutes)

1. Examine butterfly wing patterns and symmetry
2. Introduce line symmetry and rotational symmetry
3. Students create butterfly designs on grid paper showing symmetry
4. Measure to ensure symmetrical accuracy
5. Extension: Create butterfly designs with specific geometric shapes
6. Math talk: "How does symmetry help butterflies in nature?"

Family Traditions Investigation (30 minutes)

1. Connect to the story's theme of family keepsakes
2. Discuss different types of family traditions:
    - Special objects passed down
    - Stories and recipes
    - Activities and celebrations
3. Students complete a "Family Traditions" planning web

4. Write 3-5 interview questions to ask family members
5. Plan to bring or draw a picture of a special family item (if appropriate)

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

1. Review learning about butterflies and family traditions
2. Preview culminating projects for tomorrow
3. Exit ticket: "How are butterfly journeys and family traditions similar?"

Day 5: Culminating Projects and Celebrations

Morning Meeting (15 minutes)

1. Review the week's learning
2. Preview culminating projects
3. Set expectations for the Butterfly Museum
4. Movement break: Butterfly life cycle dance

Writing Workshop: Publishing Narratives (45 minutes)

1. Mini-lesson on editing for conventions:
    - Capitalization
    - Punctuation
    - Spelling of high-frequency words
2. Model editing process
3. Students edit their narratives using editing checklist
4. Publish final versions:
    - Type or write neatly on special paper
    - Add illustrations if desired
    - Create a title page
5. Prepare to share narratives in Author's Chair

Butterfly Conservation Action Plan (30 minutes)

1. Discuss threats to butterfly populations:

    - Habitat loss
    - Climate change
    - Pesticides
2. Research conservation efforts for different butterfly species
3. In small groups, create action plans:
    - Ways to help butterflies at school
    - Ways to help butterflies at home
    - Ways to educate others about butterflies
4. Design conservation posters or pamphlets
5. Share action plans with the class

Family Traditions Gallery (30 minutes)

1. Students share about their family traditions or special items
2. Create a gallery of family tradition stories and pictures
3. Make connections between different traditions
4. Discuss how traditions connect generations, like in the story
5. Write a reflection: "Why are family traditions important?"

Butterfly Celebration Preparations (30 minutes)

1. Prepare butterfly-themed refreshments
2. Set up classroom for Butterfly Museum
3. Organize stations:
    - Butterfly Research Gallery
    - Habitat Models Display
    - Conservation Action Plans
    - Family Traditions Gallery
    - Memory Narratives Reading Corner
    - Interactive Math Station with Symmetry Activities

4. Students practice being docents for different stations
5. Create museum guide maps

Butterfly Museum Celebration (60 minutes)

1. Invite another class or family members to visit
2. Students guide visitors through the museum stations
3. Author's Chair: Selected students read their memory narratives
4. Conservation pledges: Visitors sign commitments to help butterflies
5. Butterfly-themed refreshments and celebration

Closing Reflection (30 minutes)

1. Complete KWL chart with final learnings
2. Individual written reflection:
    - "What did you learn about butterflies?"
    - "What did you learn about family traditions?"
    - "How are butterfly journeys and family stories connected?"
3. Circle share: "My favorite part of our butterfly journey was..."
4. Present butterfly conservation certificates

Assessment Strategies

Formative Assessment

- Observation during discussions and activities
- Reading response journal entries
- Research notes and graphic organizers
- Exit tickets
- Math problem-solving demonstrations
- Writing conferences

Summative Assessment

- Butterfly research presentation

- Habitat model with explanation
- Memory narrative (final version)
- Butterfly data analysis and conclusions
- Conservation action plan
- Map activity identifying story locations

Performance-Based Assessment

- Butterfly Museum presentation
- Research group collaboration
- Memory narrative author's chair
- Conservation plan presentation

Differentiation Strategies

For Students Needing Additional Support

- Provide structured research templates
- Offer sentence frames for discussions and writing
- Pre-teach key vocabulary with visual supports
- Create heterogeneous research groups
- Break writing process into smaller steps
- Provide modified graphic organizers
- Offer audio recording options for narrative drafting

For Advanced Learners

- Extend research to include butterfly migration patterns
- Compare multiple butterfly species within the same region
- Analyze more complex data sets about butterfly populations
- Create digital presentations about butterfly conservation
- Write from the perspective of a butterfly character
- Design more complex habitat models based on research

- Compare butterfly adaptations across ecosystems

For English Language Learners

- Preview key vocabulary with visual supports
- Provide bilingual resources when available
- Use consistent visual supports and gestures
- Offer native language support for research
- Pair with supportive peers
- Allow for drawings and diagrams to supplement writing
- Create word banks for writing activities

Cross-Curricular Connections

Technology Integration

- Research using appropriate digital resources
- Create digital graphs of butterfly data
- Document the butterfly museum with photos and videos
- Use mapping software to track butterfly migrations
- Create digital story maps of the narrative
- Virtual field trips to butterfly gardens

Art Integration

- Butterfly symmetry art
- Habitat dioramas
- Cultural art techniques from story countries
- Watercolor butterfly life cycles
- Memory narrative illustrations
- Conservation campaign posters

Physical Education

- Butterfly migration relay races

- Butterfly life cycle movement activities
- Traditional games from countries in the story
- Pollination simulation games
- Butterfly-inspired yoga poses

Home Connection

Family Engagement

- Family traditions interview
- Invitation to Butterfly Museum celebration
- Take-home butterfly observation guide
- Family butterfly garden planting guide
- Butterfly conservation family pledges
- Reading list of butterfly-themed books

Extension Activities

- Visit local butterfly gardens or nature centers
- Plant a butterfly garden at home or school
- Monitor local butterfly populations
- Create a family keepsake or tradition book
- Participate in citizen science butterfly counting programs

Additional Resources

Book Connections

- "Monarch and Milkweed" by Helen Frost
- "Butterfly House" by Eve Bunting
- "When Butterflies Cross the Sky" by Sharon Katz Cooper
- "Family Pictures/Cuadros de Familia" by Carmen Lomas Garza
- "Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge" by Mem Fox (for family memories theme)

Online Resources

- National Geographic Kids butterfly resources
- Journey North (monarch migration tracking)
- Butterfly Conservation organizations
- Virtual butterfly garden tours
- Country culture guides for kids

Community Connections

- Local butterfly experts or entomologists
- Botanical gardens or nature centers
- Cultural centers representing countries in the story
- Senior centers for intergenerational sharing of traditions
- Local conservation organizations

Teacher Reflection Questions

After implementing the lesson, consider:

1. How did students connect personal experiences to the story themes?
2. Which research approaches were most effective for this age group?
3. How did the integration of subject areas deepen student understanding?
4. What evidence shows growth in narrative writing skills?
5. How did students demonstrate understanding of butterfly conservation needs?
6. What modifications would improve this unit for future implementation?