Third Grade Lesson Plan: "The Stomp-Clomp-Clump Monster Above the Bed" by J.W. Zarek

Overview

This lesson plan uses "The Stomp-Clomp-Clump Monster Above the Bed" to engage third-grade students (ages 8-9) in character analysis, perspective-taking, and problem-solving through focused, manageable activities that develop critical thinking and social-emotional skills.

Learning Objectives

Reading/Language Arts

- Students will analyze character feelings and motivations using text evidence
- Students will compare different character perspectives on the same events
- Students will write structured sentences about character changes

Mathematics

- Students will solve problems using spatial concepts connected to story themes
- Students will measure objects using standard units (inches/feet)
- Students will collect and organize simple data

Science

- Students will observe how sounds are made and can be modified
- Students will record observations using pictures and descriptive words

Social-Emotional Learning

- Students will identify assumptions characters make and how they change
- Students will practice perspective-taking in real situations
- Students will apply problem-solving strategies to classroom conflicts

Materials Needed

- "The Stomp-Clomp-Clump Monster Above the Bed" by J.W. Zarek
- Chart paper and markers
- Student notebooks

- Rulers (one per student)
- 4 small containers (plastic cups work well)
- Small objects for sound-making (rice, coins, paper clips)
- 3 pieces soft material (cotton balls, small towels, fabric)
- Timer

Vocabulary Focus

6 Essential Words (manageable progression): Days 1-2: perspective, assumption, evidence **Days 3-4:** empathy, cooperation, solution

Standards Alignment

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1:** Ask and answer questions using explicit text details
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3:** Describe character development using specific examples
- **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.MD.B.4:** Generate measurement data and display in line plots
- **SEL:** Self-awareness and social awareness

Day 1: Character Perspectives (25 minutes total)

Morning Meeting (5 minutes)

1. Show book cover: "Today we meet a monster who gets scared!"
2. **Introduce 2 vocabulary words:**
    - **Perspective** (what someone thinks about something - use example of looking at classroom from different seats)
    - **Assumption** (what we think before we know for sure - demonstrate with covered object)
3. **Reading purpose:** "Notice what Fred thinks about the sounds he hears"

Read-Aloud with Strategic Stops (12 minutes)

1. Read first half (through Fred hearing Billy's sounds)

2. **Three discussion stops:**
    - "What assumption does Fred make about the sounds?"
    - "What would you assume if you heard loud noises above you?"
    - "How might Billy feel if he knew someone was listening?"
3. **Use vocabulary:** "Fred's PERSPECTIVE is that something scary is above him. His ASSUMPTION is..."

Character Thinking Chart (6 minutes)

1. Create T-chart: "What Fred Thinks" | "What We Don't Know Yet"
2. Fill "Fred Thinks" with student responses: "Something big is above," "It might hurt him"
3. Fill "Don't Know Yet" with: "Who is making sounds," "Why they're making sounds"
4. **Vocabulary reinforcement:** "Fred's ASSUMPTIONS might change when he gets more information"

Closing (2 minutes)

1. **Exit reflection:** "Fred assumes the sounds come from _____" (students complete)
2. **Preview:** "Tomorrow we'll investigate sounds like Fred does"

Day 2: Sound Investigation (25 minutes total)

Vocabulary Review (3 minutes)

1. Quick review: perspective (point of view), assumption (guess before knowing)
2. **Add new word:** evidence (what we can see, hear, or find out - show with magnifying glass gesture)
3. **Story connection:** "Fred wants EVIDENCE about the sounds"

Teacher-Led Sound Exploration (15 minutes)

Setup: All materials at front, students observe and participate from seats

Sound Making Test (5 minutes)

- Teacher demonstrates making different sounds with 4 containers and materials

- 4 students take turns testing one material each while others observe
- **Class records together:** "Loud sounds: coins in cup" "Quiet sounds: cotton balls"

Sound Travel Investigation (5 minutes)

- Test how sounds travel through desk, wall, and soft material
- Students predict results, then observe
- **Discussion:** "Where do sounds travel best? Why might Fred hear Billy so clearly?"

Sound Dampening Test (5 minutes)

- Teacher tests 3 soft materials for making sounds quieter
- Students work in pairs to observe and record which works best
- **Connect to story:** "Which method would help Fred hear Billy's sounds less?"

Story-Connected Math (5 minutes)

1. **Perspective measurement:** "Stand at your desk. How many inches can you see above your head? How many below?" (connects to above/below themes)
2. **Problem-solving with spatial thinking:** "If Fred needs 2 feet of quiet space and Billy needs 3 feet of walking space, how much room do they need to share peacefully?" (use visual aids)
3. **Data collection:** "How many students prefer loud sounds vs. quiet sounds?" (simple tally)

Closing (2 minutes)

1. **Quick share:** "One thing that makes sounds quieter is _____"
2. **Preview:** "Tomorrow Fred gets new EVIDENCE about Billy"

Day 3: Changing Perspectives (25 minutes total)

Morning Review (3 minutes)

1. Review: perspective, assumption, evidence (with gestures)
2. **Add 2 new words:**

    - **Empathy** (understanding how someone else feels - point to heart, then to others)
    - **Cooperation** (working together - clasp hands together)
3. **Story preview:** "Today Fred learns to show EMPATHY for Billy"

Continue Reading and Analysis (12 minutes)

1. Read remainder of story (Fred investigates, meets Billy, they become friends)
2. **Two key discussion stops:**
    - "What new EVIDENCE does Fred discover about Billy?"
    - "How do Fred's ASSUMPTIONS change?"
3. **Update Day 1 chart** with new evidence and changed thinking
4. **Vocabulary use:** "How did learning more change Fred's PERSPECTIVE?"

Perspective-Taking Activity (8 minutes)

1. **Focus on meeting scene:** When Fred and Billy first see each other
2. **Structured pair work with guided questions:**
    - "Fred felt _____ because _____"
    - "Billy felt _____ because _____"
    - "What EVIDENCE did each character have about the other?"
3. **Share insights:** 2 pairs share one discovery with class
4. **Discussion:** "Why did they both feel scared at first?"

Closing (2 minutes)

1. **Reflection question:** "How did Fred and Billy show EMPATHY for each other?"
2. **Preview:** "Tomorrow we'll practice solving problems like they did"

Day 4: Problem-Solving Practice (28 minutes total)

Morning Review (3 minutes)

1. Review Fred and Billy's solution: talking, sharing, understanding

2. **Add final word:** solution (an answer to a problem - lightbulb gesture)
3. **Connect to school:** "What problems happen when people make assumptions about each other?"

Extended Problem-Solving Practice (15 minutes)

Structured Application Activity

Scenario Presentation and Analysis (8 minutes) Present prepared scenario: "Alex thinks Sam is ignoring him at lunch, but Sam is actually shy and doesn't know what to say."

Guided Class Discussion:

- "What ASSUMPTIONS is each person making?"
- "What EVIDENCE do they actually have?"
- "How could they show EMPATHY for each other?"
- "What SOLUTION might work through COOPERATION?"

Partner Practice (7 minutes) Students work in pairs with simpler scenario: "Two students both want to use the same book"

- Use provided graphic organizer with Fred and Billy's steps
- Focus on perspective-taking and solution-finding
- Each pair shares one solution with class

Simplified Writing Activity (8 minutes)

1. **Focused prompt:** "How did Fred's feelings change in the story?"
2. **Concrete sentence frames:**
    - "At first Fred felt _____ because _____"
    - "When Fred met Billy, he felt _____ because _____"
    - "At the end, Fred felt _____ because _____"
3. **Word bank:** scared, curious, surprised, happy, assumption, evidence, perspective, empathy
4. **Realistic expectation:** 2-3 sentences focusing on feelings rather than abstract thinking

Closing (2 minutes)

1. **Share:** One student reads their first sentence
2. **Preview:** "Tomorrow we'll show everything we learned"

Day 5: Demonstrate Learning (25 minutes total)

Vocabulary Review Game (4 minutes)

1. **Quick action review:** Teacher says word, students demonstrate understanding
    - "Perspective" → look around from different angles
    - "Assumption" → scratch head thoughtfully
    - "Evidence" → pretend to examine with magnifying glass
    - "Empathy" → point to heart, then to classmate
    - "Cooperation" → link arms with neighbor
    - "Solution" → lightbulb gesture

Extended Project Time (18 minutes)

Students choose ONE manageable project:

Option 1: Fred's Feelings Journey

- Draw 3 pictures showing how Fred felt at beginning, middle, and end
- Write 1 sentence under each picture using vocabulary words
- Include how his PERSPECTIVE changed

Option 2: Simple Problem-Solving Steps

- Create 3-step guide: 1) Look for EVIDENCE, 2) Show EMPATHY, 3) Find SOLUTION
- Use pictures and simple words
- Include one example from Fred and Billy's story

Project Support:

- Clear templates provided for each option
- Vocabulary word bank visible on board

- Picture examples available for reference
- Teacher circulates to provide individual support

Sharing and Assessment (3 minutes)

1. **Gallery walk:** Students view each other's projects (2 minutes)
2. **Quick self-assessment:** Students use thumbs up/down for:
    - "I can explain how Fred's feelings changed"
    - "I can use vocabulary words correctly"
    - "I know steps for solving problems like Fred and Billy"

Streamlined Assessment Plan

Daily Evidence Collection (30 seconds each):

- **Day 1:** Note students who understand "assumption" during discussion
- **Day 2:** Observe vocabulary use during science investigation
- **Day 3:** Listen for perspective-taking during partner work
- **Day 4:** Review emotional understanding in writing samples
- **Day 5:** Check project completion and vocabulary use

End-of-Week Assessment (Choose ONE):

Project Review: Evaluate Day 5 project for understanding and vocabulary use **Simple Conversation:** 2-minute discussion about Fred's feelings and vocabulary **Written Check:** Complete sentence frames about story using vocabulary words

Success Indicators:

- Uses 4+ vocabulary words appropriately in discussions
- Explains character feelings with simple story examples
- Participates in problem-solving activities using story method
- Shows understanding that people's feelings can change with new information

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Differentiation for Diverse Learners

For Students Needing Support:

Vocabulary:

- Picture cards showing perspective (two people looking at same object differently), evidence (magnifying glass), empathy (heart symbol)
- Focus on 4 core words: perspective, evidence, empathy, solution

Writing Support:

- Additional sentence frames: "Fred felt _____ when _____"
- Allow drawing + 1 key word for responses
- Extended time for processing

Project Support:

- Provide partially completed templates
- Allow oral explanation instead of writing
- Partner support during work time

For Advanced Learners:

Extensions:

- Connect Fred's story to other books with similar themes
- Create additional scenarios for classmates to solve
- Write extra sentences about real-world applications
- Help struggling classmates during partner work

For English Language Learners:

Supports:

- Visual vocabulary cards with pictures and native language when possible
- Pre-teach vocabulary with gestures and actions
- Partner with supportive English speaker
- Accept drawing + key vocabulary for all written responses
- Use emotion cards to support feeling identification

Practical Implementation

Daily Setup (2-3 minutes):

- **Day 1:** Pre-draw T-chart, post vocabulary cards
- **Day 2:** Organize sound materials centrally, set timer
- **Day 3:** Prepare guided questions, have chart ready for updates
- **Day 4:** Set up graphic organizers, prepare scenario cards
- **Day 5:** Organize project templates and supplies in clearly labeled areas

Time Management:

- **Buffer time:** 2-3 minutes built into each lesson for transitions
- **Early finishers:** Vocabulary review games or quiet reading
- **Flexible pacing:** Activities can extend into next day if students are engaged

Behavior Management:

- **Clear expectations:** Materials demonstration before any hands-on use
- **Active participation:** Every student has speaking role each day
- **Positive reinforcement:** Specific praise for vocabulary use and kind perspective-taking

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Home Connection

Family Note: "This week we read about Fred the monster and Billy the boy who learned not to make assumptions about each other. We practiced important words: perspective, assumption, evidence, empathy, cooperation, and solution. Ask your child: How did Fred's feelings change? What evidence helped him understand Billy? How can we use Fred and Billy's method when we have problems at home?"

Optional Family Activity: Look for examples of times when first impressions changed with more information, and practice seeing situations from different family members' perspectives.

This comprehensive third-grade lesson plan maintains educational rigor while ensuring realistic classroom implementation. The focused vocabulary introduction, manageable time blocks, and practical assessment options make the content accessible for 8-9 year olds while building essential critical thinking and social-emotional skills through meaningful story engagement.