

# **Charlotte's Web**

## **Language Arts Unit**



### **Unit Description**

I chose the book Charlotte's Web for a language arts unit not only for its unique characters, but also because it lends itself well to class discussion. My intent in creating this unit was to incorporate as many of the Grand Rapids KC4 curriculum unit outcomes as possible while still providing a unit with many choices for individual students.

This unit was designed specifically for Mrs. Garrett's Fourth Grade Class at Alger Elementary School. Because the learners in this classroom had already mastered a majority of the language arts standards for their curriculum, I designed this unit to provide additional practice of those objectives. The unit not only provided reinforcement for these objectives, but also brought the students to a new level of understanding of the objectives through more individualized practice.

The unit is organized to provide students with as much opportunity for choice as possible. I set up a bulletin board with various centers that the students could choose from during language arts time each day. The bulletin board also contained charts so that the students could track their own progress (I also kept my own charts to record when students turned in completed activities to me). The charts also contained a list of required activities for each student to complete (the students could choose when to complete the required activities). In this way, the students were given responsibility for their own learning, and could choose to work on activities that best promoted their own learning style.

## **Unit Objectives**

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to predict and verify events throughout the story.

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to apply reading strategies to construct meaning throughout the story.

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to determine the author's purpose for writing the story.

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to sequence various events from the story.

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to identify topics and main ideas of various selections from the story.

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to identify and apply character traits of a good friend to their own relationships.

While reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to answer questions about the story that deal with all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

After reading chapters one through three of the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to write a friendly letter to Wilbur using correct form, punctuation, and spellings.

After reading the book Charlotte's Web, students will be able to write an alternate ending to the story using correct punctuation and spelling.

After reading the book Charlotte's Web and watching the movie Charlotte's Web, students will be able to participate in a discussion of similarities and differences between the book and the movie, along with which they liked better and why.

After participating in a classroom discussion of how to develop a "how to" project, students will be able to develop their own pet invention using a "how to" format.

After participating in a classroom discussion of spiders (in KWL form), students will be able to fill out their own KWL form.

After participating in a classroom discussion of how to research a topic, students will be able to use various computer resources to find out information on spiders (guided by their KWL form).

After participating in a classroom discussion of how to write an informational presentation, students will be able to use previously researched facts to create an informational presentation.

After participating in a classroom discussion of proper presentation skills, students will be able to present their spider research to the class.

After participating in a unit on Charlotte's Web, students will be able to participate in a discussion of how the book has affected their lives.

## **Content Outline**

- I. Charts
  - A. How to read a chart
  - B. How to understand a chart
- II. Friendship
  - A. Specific Characters' Traits
    - 1. Loyalty
    - 2. Honesty
    - 3. Doing Favors
    - 4. Companionship
    - 5. Sharing Experiences
- III. Reading Strategies
  - A. KWL
  - B. Predicting and Verifying
  - C. Author's Purpose
  - D. Sequence of Events
  - E. Main Idea
  - F. Similarities and Differences
- IV. Research
  - A. Finding Information
  - B. Presenting Information
- V. Writing Strategies
  - A. Prewriting
  - B. Rough Draft
  - C. Revising
  - D. Editing
  - E. Publishing
- VI. Friendly Letters
  - A. Five Parts
  - B. Body Content

## **Learning Activities**

### **Week One**

#### **Day 1:** (3 hours)

1. Discuss unit format
2. Pass out student copies of books
3. Discuss cover picture (who?what?when?where?why?how?)
4. Discuss spiders in small groups using “A Look at Arthropods” worksheet
5. Read chapters one and two of the book individually or in pairs
6. Discuss first two chapters of book in cooperative groups using “Because” worksheet
7. Introduce unit choices chart
8. Introduce journal question one: Explain a time you compromised to stop a conflict.
9. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### **Day 2:** (2 hours)

1. Read chapters three and four of book individually or in pairs
2. Introduce chapter question format and chart
3. Complete chapter questions 1-3 individually or in pairs (considered a bulletin board required choice)
4. Introduce “Letter to Wilbur” choice on bulletin board
5. Encourage students to discuss chapter questions in their cooperative learning groups before turning them in
6. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### **Day 3:** (2 hours)

1. Discuss Monday’s spider activity
2. Fill out a KWL sheet as a class on spiders
3. Have each student choose a “W” comment from the KWL sheet, and list two places they could search for the answer to the question (this will help direct research)
4. Using Compton’s Encyclopedia and the Internet, search for answers to students’ “W” questions individually (which will allow them to fill out the “L” portion of the KWL)
5. If time, allow students to explore Charlotte’s Web Hyperstudio Stack

#### **Day 4:** (1 hour)

1. Read chapters five and six of book individually or in pairs
2. Introduce “Who Would Say That?” and “Blue Ribbon Math” choices on bulletin board
3. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### **Day 5:** (2 hours)

1. Read chapters seven and eight of book individually or in pairs
2. Discuss story vocabulary words and sequence of events from chapters one through eight as a class
3. Introduce requirement of Writing Book
4. Introduce and work on “Pig Interview” activity in pairs, including the write-up for their Writing Book

## **Learning Activities**

### **Week Two**

#### Day 6: (3 hours)

1. Rewrite the spider facts found on day 3 into a presentation (book) format
2. Discuss as a class and model ways to present to a group
3. Read chapters nine and ten of the book individually or in pairs
4. Discuss as a class author's purpose for the story
5. Introduce journal question two: Describe what part you are at in the story. Predict what will happen next.
6. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### Day 7: (1 hour)

1. Read chapters eleven and twelve of the book individually or in pairs
2. Introduce "Pet Inventions" choice on bulletin board
3. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### Day 8: (1 hour)

1. Discuss topics and main ideas of different parts of the story as a class
2. Read chapters thirteen and fourteen of the book individually or in pairs
3. Introduce "What Could Happen?" choice on bulletin board
4. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### Day 9: (2 hours)

1. Students present their spider research (in the form of cooperative learning group books) to the class
2. Read chapters fifteen and sixteen of the book individually or in pairs
3. Introduce "Visitor!" choice on bulletin board
4. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### Day 10: (2 hours)

1. Read chapters seventeen and eighteen of the book individually or in pairs
2. Discuss story vocabulary words and sequence of events from chapters nine through eighteen as a class
3. Discuss the character traits of a good friend, as demonstrated in the book, as a class
4. Introduce journal question three: What are some character traits of a good friend that you could apply to  
your own friendships? How could you apply them?
5. Introduce "Character Web" choice on bulletin board
6. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

## **Learning Activities**

### **Week Three**

#### Day 11: (2 hours)

1. Read chapters nineteen and twenty of the book individually or in pairs
2. Introduce “A New Creation” and “Character Web” choices on bulletin board
3. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### Day 12: (1 hour)

1. Read chapters twenty-one and twenty-two of the book individually or in pairs
2. Introduce “Pick A Part,” “Story Pictures,” and “Favorite Character Award” choices on bulletin board
3. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers

#### Day 13: (1 hour)

1. Discuss reactions to the book as a class, including how it affected the students’ lives
2. Introduce journal question four: Write an alternative ending to the story
3. Introduce “Acrostic Poem” and “Story Web” choices on bulletin board
4. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers
5. Encourage students to finish rewriting any activity they wish to include in their Writing Book

#### Day 14: (2 hours)

1. Allow students to work on bulletin board centers
2. Encourage students to finish rewriting any activity they wish to include in their Writing Book; allow students to decorate Writing Book cover
3. Begin watching Charlotte’s Web movie

#### Day 15: (2 hours)

1. Finish watching Charlotte’s Web movie
2. Discuss similarities and differences between the book and the movie, along with which they liked better  
and why, as a class
3. Allow students to finish any activities they are working on, especially their Writing Books (which must be turned in at the end of the day)

### **Adaptations for Individual Needs**

This unit lends itself well to adapting content for special needs learners in the classroom. I adapted the chapter questions for individuals by reducing the required questions for each chapter, by going over the questions orally with the student, or by assigning a partner to check for comprehension. I also paired special needs learners with more fluent readers to read the book.

For assignments, I reduced the amount due for special needs learners on an individualized basis. Along those lines, I also encouraged every student to work on activities that best fit their learning strengths, but also to work on a few activities that focused on their weaknesses. All adaptations were made during a one-on-one conference with the student so that we could work together to come up with some specific, yet very achievable, goals for the unit.

### **Evaluation Procedures**

The main form of evaluation and assessment for this unit will be a rubric (see following page), which will be filled out by both the student and the instructor. The grade will be taken from an average of the student and teacher scores. This way, the student will better understand where and how this grade comes about.

In addition to the unit rubric, I will continually be assessing students during all activities. Not only final products, but also a student's work habits and group participation will be assessed. In this manner, a student will be both formally and informally evaluated during activities and discussions.

The instructor will keep track of informal assessment through a checklist similar to the Bulletin Board Centers Activity Chart. She also will keep an anecdotal card on each student to record observations about work habits, group participation, and any other area that needs to be addressed. In this way, the instructor will be able to keep a reliable record of each student's progress.

### **Recordkeeping**

Due to the unstructured nature of this unit, I have come up with two separate charts for the students to record their progress. Both of these will be placed on the same bulletin board that contains the learning centers. Students are taught through explanation and modeling how to use both of the charts, and why they are needed. The charts can be found on the next two pages (after the unit rubric).

## Bulletin Board Centers

## Activity Chart

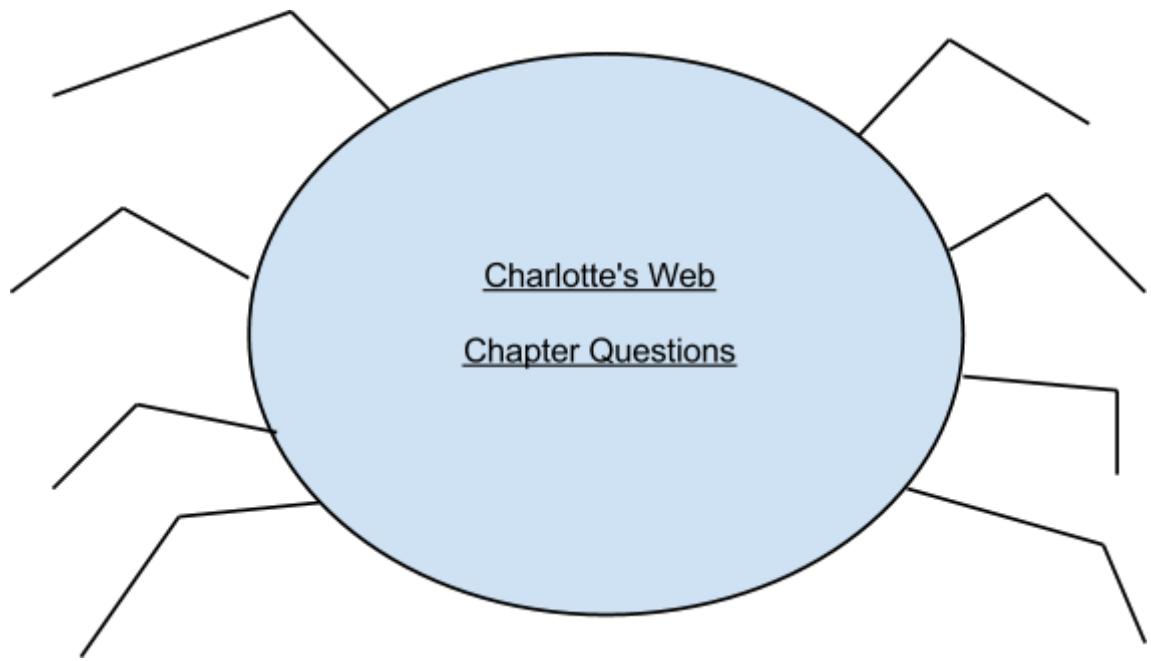
- 1=Story Web
- 2=Letter to Wilbur
- 3=Pig Interview
- 4=Pet Inventions
- 5=Favorite Character Award
- 6=Acrostic Poem
- 7=Blue Ribbon Math
- 8=Journal Writing One
- 9=Journal Writing Two

- 10=Journal Writing Three
- 11=Journal Writing Four
- 12=A New Creation
- 13=Story Pictures
- 14=Who Would Say That?
- 15=Visitor!
- 16=What Could Happen?
- 17=Character Web
- 18=Pick A Part

\* activities are required

## Chapter Questions

**After you finish questions, mark off your work!**



Chapters 1-3

1. How did Fern treat Wilbur like a baby?
2. What were the results of the bad things that the goose told Wilbur to do?
3. What are the advantages of having a pet like Wilbur? What are the disadvantages?

Chapters 4-6

1. Describe how Templeton spends his time.
2. Would you rather share a meal with Charlotte or Wilbur? Why?
3. Tell the good and bad qualities Wilbur discovered in Charlotte.

Chapters 7-9

1. Why is Wilbur unable to spin a web?
2. Do you believe that animals talk to each other? To people? How do they communicate?
3. Tell what you would do to save Wilbur's life.

Chapters 10-12

1. What words did Charlotte write in her web?
2. How did the miracle spider web change life for Wilbur and the Zuckermans?
3. Why does Templeton agree to save Wilbur's life?

Chapters 13-15

1. What did Lurvy have to do to change Wilbur's pigpen?
2. What were Wilbur and Charlotte worried about in the "crickets" chapter?
3. Fern said that her best friends were in the barn. What qualities do you look for in a best friend?

Chapters 16-18

1. What are some of the clues that the author uses to let the reader know that Charlotte is not herself?
2. Why did Fern have the best time ever at the fair?
3. What words do you think best describe Wilbur?

Chapters 19-22

1. What were Charlotte's two jobs at the fair?
2. Why did Wilbur get Templeton to take down Charlotte's egg sac?
3. How did you feel when Charlotte died? Why did you feel this way?

After Finishing the Book

1. What is the most important thing to remember about the story?
2. If you could, how would you change the ending of this story?
3. What did Charlotte teach Wilbur?