

Lessons for annual use with the Donna Norvell Nominee list, which examine the criteria for a book's nomination and recognition of excellence in young children's literature.

Auxiliary Pre-Unit Lesson: Review Authors and Illustrators in order to facilitate discussion on their roles in achieving the aspects required of a Donna Norvell Nominee.

Week 1: Donna Norvell Introduction:

Use or modify [this presentation](#) to introduce your students to Donna Norvell and the criteria for the Donna Norvell Book Award.

- [Donna Norvell Intro Video from Youtube](#)

Week 2: Distinctive Use of Language

How can language change the way we read and understand a book?

How many ways can you describe a color? "Yellow" is great, but what about "gold," "sunflower," "mustard," or "sunshine"? How do those words change how we feel about "yellow"?

What words make your ears perk up or feel special? What words make your brain go "whoooooa"?

LESSON: Find five words in this book that make it feel extra special. Why are these words better than other choices? What happens if we change the special words in this book to words that aren't as special or specific?

Week 3: Excellent artistic presentation in illustration

First of all, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? Let's break those words down. We all know what "EXCELLENT" means, but what about "artistic presentation"? Why are we using those words instead of "these pictures are cool!"

Let's look at how the pictures in this book make it better, and make the story come alive and feel more real. Can we use this book and give it illustrations that don't match the story? How does that change this book and what it says to us?

LESSON: Make new pictures for this book and see how that changes the story. This is a great opportunity for an interdisciplinary collaboration with the art teacher.

Week 4: Age-Appropriate Style of Presentation

How are books for "big kids" different from books for younger readers? Are the pictures different? Are the words different? How does it make you feel when you look at a book and don't know some of the words?

LESSON: Compare picture books for older readers to picture books from the Donna Norvell list. What are the similarities and differences in the writing and illustration styles? Are there more words on each page? Are there more or fewer pictures?

Week 5: Engaging Writing and Illustration

What does “engaging” mean? What makes a book engaging instead of boring? Start an open discussion about what makes this book exciting or interesting. Is it the pictures, or the way the words and pictures work together? Is it the story? Use open-ended questions to facilitate conversation.

LESSON: Together, write and illustrate a “boring” picture book, and compare it to a Donna Norvell book. (Note: try not to compare it to another picture book to avoid calling another published work bad or boring.)

Week 6: Clarity of Presentation in Text and Illustrative Material

In order for a book to tell a story to the reader, it has to make sense and be clear in its message and story. How does this book tell its story? Do the pictures and words work together to make the story clear?

LESSON: Reader’s Theatre - split into two groups and choose a well-known story, perhaps the Three Little Pigs. The first group will tell/perform the story in a way that is confusing for the audience. Maybe they don’t introduce any of the characters, or everyone speaks in the same kind of voice. The second group will tell/perform the story in a way that is clear and makes sense. Differentiate the characters, make sure there’s a narrator to explain the story, etc. How are these stories different? How does the clarity affect the reader’s enjoyment of the story?