

Lesson Plans for *Dewey Fairchild, Parent Problem Solver*
Written by National Board Certified Teacher and Author, Lorri Horn
<http://deweyfairchild.com>

Chapter “Showering 101”:

Anticipatory set: Students will make personal connections to how Dewey is feeling in the first chapter and also gain a metacognitive understanding of how readers approach a new text when exposition is all new to them.

Tell students: We are going to write something on a piece of paper that you are going to rip up and no one is going to see! So, feel 100% free to write anything you want down. I won't see it. Another student won't see it. You will write it. Fold it up. And when I say go, we will shred it. So, write freely!

Write one secret that you have that if someone knew about right now you'd be very unhappy about them learning. It could be your parents, your friends, your teacher, anyone. You can write it small, but write what it is in a full complete sentence.

When everyone is done, have students shred their papers into tiny pieces.

This gives students the chance to feel what it feels like to have a secret and experience that feeling of not wanting to get caught. You have them shred it, and know they will shred it, so they will get a real enough secret to have the authentic feeling.

Discuss what that feeling is like if you'd like.

Then, begin reading chapter 1, *Dewey Fairchild, Parent Problem Solver* (DFPPS) where Dewey has a couple secrets of his own

- he's faking a shower
- do you think he has any other secrets?

The first chapter of a book often gives us a lot of information that we don't really understand yet and we must just wait to find out more about. Can you find examples of people or things being introduced that you guess we might learn more about later?

- Who is Clara?
- Why does Dewey have an assistant?
- Who is Danny Tedfrey and why is he asking Dewey for help?

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Chapter “How It All Began”:

Outcome: Students will better understand characterization

We learn a lot about a character by:

- What they do
- What they say
- What others say about them
- Symbolic clues
- Figurative language used to describe them

What do Colin, Seraphina, Dewey, and Seraphina’s mom, each reveal themselves in the above ways in this chapter? What can we learn more about them early in the book?

Divide into groups and each group looks for what one of these characters says, does, what others say, symbolic clues, and the figurative language used to describe him or her.

Students can create and present these in variety of ways from open minds, life-sized characters traced on butcher paper, shared google docs, etc.

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Chapters “Octopushy” and “Royal Peas and Carrots”

Outcome: Students will define and understand theme. Students will continue to demonstrate their ability to recognize of how authors use figurative language to reflect and reveal character. Students will be able to apply the idea of theme to figurative language.

Have someone read aloud all of Clara’s birthday parties.

Put on the board all the different birthday party themes that the students in the class have had over the years.

What is a theme? Why do people have themes? How do you pick the themes of your parties or decide not to have a theme at all?

Use this idea of themes to help then scaffold the idea of figurative language. How does figurative language reflect people symbolically in literature?

- p. 31 “Like a cat, she loved a sunny spot, and it was a warm sunny day.”
- p. 34 ““She’s got eight arms like an octopus your mom.””
- p. 34 ““We need her to run out of steam not blow her lid.””
- p. 35 “And although Seraphina was not looking forward to all the other kids seeing her cling to her mother like a baby monkey when a lion roars...”
- p. 37 “I passed ‘as healthy as a honey crisp apple.’”
- p. 38 “Seraphina Johnson was walking herself across the street, wearing a smile as wide as the back of her mother’s minivan that pulled away as she waved goodbye for the day.”

Discuss how in these examples how the comparison is fitting for the character, or represents the character, or what is going on in the story.

Take one of the themes from your birthday and use it as a metaphor, simile, or symbol for yourself. Or, take a theme of a birthday for someone else you know and use it as a metaphor, simile or symbol for them.

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“Dewey Fairchild, PPS”

Objective: Students will understand what imagery is and how authors use it to create setting and what characters look like.

Talk about how when students were young they had picture books (and show them one) and how the pictures helped to tell the story as much as or more than the words themselves. As they got older though, they grew into books without pictures. Where did the pictures go?

Define imagery: Imagery is language that draws on the five senses, namely the details of taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound. Imagery can also pertain to details about movement or a sense of a body in motion (kinesthetic imagery).

Assign small groups of students, or individually, to visually represent with as much detail as possible, the following images depicted:

- p. 43-44 Wolfie
- p. 47-48 The client slide and the landing spot
- p. 48 Danny Tedfrey

On page 57, the family plays a game of crayon color eyes: (look at boxes or online at the Crayola colors):

- p. 57 Pooh Bear’s eyes are denim—find yours
- p. 58 Pooh Bear’s lips are “pig pink”—find yours
- p. 64 Wolfie Tickle Me Pink tongue—find yours

These can be expanded to hair, skin, etc. and drawn as pictures or just looked up as time and interest allow.

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“Mission Accomplished”

Objective: Students will connect with the idea of being a “problem solver” and how it might relate to their lives.

Discuss the fixing of Danny’s dad.

Seraphina’s mom was over-protective. Danny’s dad played practical jokes.

Think of your life. Your friends you know. You all have parents or guardians. Think of a parent problem you have, or someone you know has, that needs solving.

Pair share (to get the energy of this going in the room and so they won’t just stare at a blank form).

Task: Pretend that you can go to Dewey with any parent problem you have. Give students the ‘Dewey form’ from page 50 and have them fill it out with an issue for Dewey to solve. If they don’t have one they want to do that’s real, have them make up one that they think Dewey should do for fun in the book.

Then, get in groups of 3-4 people. Pass the paper around and let someone else see if they can come up with an idea for how to solve it. Fold their solution over so the next person doesn’t see their solution and pass it to them to come up with their own solution to the same problem. At the end, the student gets the paper back and reads the problem and all the different solutions to the group. The group can then pick their best ones to share with the whole class.

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“Clara’s Roll” and “Michael Eats Tootsie Rolls” and “Everyone Out of the Pool”

Objective: Students will understand how to apply figurative language to a commonly known object. Students will apply Dewey’s skills as a problem solver and researcher to themselves as the Common Core standard of a “literate individual.”

Before students read this chapter, hand out Tootsie Rolls and work on figurative language
My Tootsie Roll smells like:

feels like:

tastes like:

looks like:

This may get some silliness.

Then, read the chapters in small groups or pairs aloud.

Dewey Problem Solver:

Dewey is a problem solver. He or others identify a problem to be solved and then he sets out to solve it. Common Core Standards in Language Arts identifies the following “capacities of the literate individual.” http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards1.pdf

Pick one of the cases Dewey solves in the book and show students how Dewey is on his way to being a Common Core Kid (you don’t have to tell him that’s what he’s called, just have them find that he has these elements).

What are the steps Dewey takes to solve the case?

Where does he do the following Common Core standards? (Personally, I wouldn’t call them that with the kids. We don’t want to kill the fun of research and problem solving, by naming it in such pedantic terms. Instead, I’d just have them find where he does these things because that’s what we want them to do themselves!) Where does he seem to need to do more of it? (This can be done in small groups assigned his different cases, individually, or in pairs.)

- Demonstrates independence
- Build strong content knowledge.
- Responds to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Comprehends as well as critiques
- Value evidence
- Uses technology and digital media strategically and capably
- Comes to understand other perspectives and cultures

Share your findings with the larger group.

Then, pick a topic that you care about solving. What problems in your life or the life of others need solving? Apply the different steps that Dewey applied and any that you felt he was missing to solve your own problem or a problem for someone else using the above criteria.