

Phineas Gage by John Fleischman (Published by Houghton Mifflin)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 7

Summary

A science writer specializing in medicine, Fleischman tells how Gage, foreman of a railroad construction gang, survived an iron rod being blasted through his brain in 1848, and how the subsequent study of him contributed to the modern understanding of the central nervous system. (from SciTech Book News, December 1, 2002)

Connection to the Curriculum

This book nonfiction requires higher level reading skills; however, the high interest content and illustrations will keep students engaged and interested in learning more about brain anatomy. The expository text structure provides an opportunity for direct instruction in expository reading strategies and note taking. Teaching this book provides opportunities to address literary structure, fluency, expository text, disabilities, science, and change.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.2.2- The student reads expressively with appropriate pace, phrasing, intonation, and rhythm of speech.

1.4.10- The student identifies characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.14- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.15- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.18- The student explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.19- The student uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (e.g., stated and main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.

1.4.21- The student explains the relationship between elements of an author's style in a text (e.g., word choice, sentence structure) and his or her purpose for writing the text.

1.4.24- The student uses evidence from text to support conclusions drawn from grade level reading.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of major and minor characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and explains how those aspects influence characters' interactions with other characters and elements of the plot, including resolution of the major conflict.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor elements of the plot (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) and explains how these elements relate to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit/explicit information from the text.

2.1.5- The student identifies the use of literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, figurative language, irony, metaphor, tone/mood, symbolism).

2.2.9- The student recognizes connections between cultures and experiences through a variety of texts.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The main character of this story endures a life-changing injury. The nature of the injury Gage experiences is gruesome, but the details describing the incident are neither bloody nor gory.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities