

Mirrors, Windows, and Doors: Our School Library

Student Material

"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows."
— Sydney J. Harris

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop once shared that books can be mirrors, windows, and doors. Mirrors reflect our own lives and help us see ourselves in the stories we read. Windows give us a view into someone else's experience, opening our minds to different lives and perspectives. And doors? They invite us in, giving us a chance to step through and live a story alongside its characters.



Now think about the books in our classroom and school library. Are they working as mirrors, windows, and doors for everyone who walks through these halls? Do they reflect the identities, cultures, and experiences of our school community? Or are some students left searching for themselves in stories that never show up?

You will work together to explore the books that line our shelves. You'll ask tough questions about whose stories are being told and whose are missing. You'll think about how we can make our library more inclusive and powerful for all readers. Then, you'll create a plan to raise awareness. You'll share your findings through a presentation, campaign, display, or proposal to our school.

Together, we can make sure our library isn't just full of books — it's full of belonging.

Mirrors, Windows, and Doors *Analytic Rubric*

Student Material

	Novice	Apprentice	Practitioner	Expert
Data Analysis	☐ lists questions to ask to find out what types of books students would like to see in the library ☐ identifies your audience and participants for accurate data collection and representation ☐ describes the survey results	☐ creates a survey to use to gauge classmates' opinions regarding the present selection of text ☐ determines a visual that would capture the audience most effectively for understanding the survey data ☐ describes the survey results	☐ develops and administers survey to collect classmates' opinions regarding the present selection of text ☐ creates a graphic representation of survey results ☐ evaluates survey results and clearly explains the impact of your findings	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: develops a survey that extends beyond the classroom and determines the impact of your findings
Personal Analysis of Texts	☐ reads a book from the library ☐ writes a reflection based on the book you read that identifies whether it is a mirror, window, and/or door	☐ reads 2 or more books from the library ☐ writes a reflection based on one of the books that explains whether it is a mirror, window, and/or door	☐ reads 2 or more books from the library ☐ for <i>each</i> book, writes a reflection explaining whether it is a mirror, window, and/or door for you ☐ cites specific evidence from each book to support your claim ☐ determines whether or not these books would benefit your classroom library	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: includes how each book could be a window, mirror, or door for a different group of people
Plan of Action	☐ brainstorms a possible list of solutions to improve your classroom library	☐ sifts through possible solutions to select the best solution, doing further research if necessary	☐ develops at least 2 recommendations to improve the status of your classroom library ☐ creates a method to share your findings ☐ uses evidence to support your recommendations	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: develops a recommendation to improve your school's library and/or neighborhood library

Story Creation	☐ completes a plot diagram for a short story that exhibits what you've learned about mirrors, windows, or doors	☐ creates a storyboard for a short story that represents the lens you choose on mirrors, windows, or doors ☐ includes aspects of each of the following: ☐ setting ☐ character development ☐ plot development ☐ conflict ☐ climax ☐ theme	☐ composes a short story that represents a mirror, window or door ☐ develops each of the following: ☐ setting ☐ character development ☐ plot development ☐ conflict ☐ climax ☐ theme	all of <i>Practitioner</i> plus: publishes your short story as an ebook to make it available for the public
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Mirrors, Windows, and Doors *Scaffold for Learning***Benchmark Video and Discussions**

- Mirrors, Windows, and Doors
- Story Elements
- The Power of Representation

**Instructional Activities: Learning****Instructional Activities: Additional**

Instructional Texts/Websites • Three Little Pigs (I, P, SG) • The True Story of the Three Little Pigs (I, P, SG) • Khan Academy (I) • IXL (I)	Instructional Videos •Types of Graphs (I/P) • The Elements of a Story (I/P) • Analyzing Data (I/P)	How-to Sheets • Create a survey using Google Forms • Create a bar graph • Cite using MLA format	Practice • Reading Bar Graphs (I, P, HW) • Collecting & Analyzing Data (I, P, SG) • Create a Survey (I, P, SG) • Explaining Survey Results (I, P, HW) • Finding Text Evidence (I, P, SG) • Citing Text Evidence (I, P, HW) • Identifying Story Elements (I, P, HW) • Exploring Themes (I, P, SG)
Interactive Websites • BrainPop (I/P) • EPIC! Books (I/P) • Other online books (I/P) • PBS LearningMedia (I) • Learner.org (I) • ESL Kids World (I)	Learning Centers • Novel Analysis (P/SG) • Plot Diagram with Narrative Readings (P/SG) • Using Evidence to Support Claim (P/SG) • Reading Bar Graphs (P/SG) • Building a Story (P/SG) • Theme Detectives (P/SG)	Small-Group Mini-Lessons • Elements of a Story (SG) • Understanding Survey Results (SG) • Creating a Survey (SG) • Creating a Bar Graph (SG) • Finding Evidence in the Text (SG) • Citing Evidence (SG) • What is a Theme? (SG)	Application • Research (I, P, SG) • Conduct survey (I, P, SG) • Development of narrative (I/P) • Interpreting survey data (I, P, SG)
			Assessment • Rubric Self-Assessment (I) • Story Elements Quiz (I) • Analyzing Data (I) • Interpreting Bar Graphs (I)
			Reflection • What was challenging about this unit? (I) • Why is it important for books to provide mirrors, windows, and doors? (I) • What have I learned that I didn’t know before? (I)

Key: Individual (I), Pairs (P), Small Groups (SG), Activities suitable for homework (HW), Insights Video (IV)

Teacher Material

Teacher Material

Mirrors, Windows, and Doors Content Facilitation Questions

COMPREHENSION: <i>Ask questions that ensure students understand content and skills needed to solve the problem.</i>	• What is a theme? • What types of people are represented in the novel? • Who are the main characters in the novel? What is tolerance? • What is point of view?
APPLICATION: <i>Ask questions that ensure the ability of students to apply learning to new situations.</i>	• How does the concept of mirrors, windows, and doors apply to the world today? • What conflicts do you see in the world that are similar to the themes and conflicts in the novel? • How can you use the characters from the novel to help yourself? • How will you call for representation in your article? • Why is point of view important to consider? • How can you use the survey results to create a visual graph?
CONNECTION: <i>Ask questions that ensure the ability of students to apply learning to their lives.</i>	• What connections do you draw to the novel? • How do you connect personally to the theme you chose for your narrative? • When considering your personal experiences with friends and family, what can you gather about their judgments about others? • What change will you make based upon the knowledge you have gained through studying mirrors, windows, and doors? • How will you alter your narrative writing based upon your audience?
SYNTHESIS: <i>Ask questions that encourage students to create new information from existing data.</i>	• How might you change the novel knowing what you know now about mirrors, windows, and doors? • What possible theme may be the focus of a novel that is reflective of a mirror? • Who can you imagine as a main character in a novel focused on a similar theme in the future? • How do you think your perspective regarding representation may be different during the upcoming school year? • What changes in perspective do you see coming in regard to your chosen theme?
METACOGNITION: <i>Ask questions that prompt students to think about their own thinking process.</i>	• What was the most challenging part of this task for you? • What was difficult about creating your narrative? • How has the research and exploration of injustice and representation impacted you? • How have your actions changed after studying mirrors, windows, and doors?

Mirrors, Windows, and Doors *Transfer Task*

Student Material

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop talks about **mirrors**, **windows**, and **doors** in the books we read. A **mirror** shows us our own experiences, a **window** lets us see into new worlds or perspectives, and a **door** invites us to step into and experience those new worlds.

Now, let's explore how you see this concept in your own life! Identify one experience in your life that acts as a **mirror**, one that acts as a **window**, and one that acts as a **door**. Write a short essay where you describe your **mirror**, **window**, and **door** experiences. Explain how each one helped shape who you are and what you've learned from them. Think about how recognizing **mirrors**, **windows**, and **doors** in your own life can help you grow. How can these concepts help you understand others better and make positive changes in your community? Include this reflection as part of your essay.

Use the following checklist to write and edit your essay:

- ☐ My introduction clearly explains the concept of **mirrors**, **windows**, and **doors** to help my readers understand my essay's focus.
- ☐ I describe my **mirror** experience in detail, explaining how it reflects my own life or experiences.
- ☐ I describe my **window** experience in detail, explaining how it gave me a new perspective or helped me understand others.
- ☐ I describe my **door** experience in detail, explaining how it allowed me to enter a new experience or opportunity.
- ☐ For each experience (mirror, window, door), I explain what I learned and how it has shaped who I am today.
- ☐ I've used clear examples and specific details to make my narrative engaging and personal.
- ☐ I've included transition words (such as *first*, *next*, *finally*) to connect my ideas smoothly.
- ☐ My conclusion reflects on the importance of recognizing **mirrors**, **windows**, and **doors** in life.
- ☐ I've read my narrative to check for clear and complete sentences.
- ☐ I've checked my spelling, grammar, and punctuation to make sure my writing is polished.
- ☐ My personal narrative is between 3 and 5 paragraphs long.
- ☐ I've included at least one lesson or realization I've had from my experiences.
- ☐ My essay shows a deep understanding of the concepts of **mirrors**, **windows**, and **doors**.

Unit Overview	
This equity-based unit is designed to have students understand the importance of having authentic representation within the books that are present in the classroom library. Students will conduct surveys and use those results to make recommendations of books for their classroom/school library.	
Common Core State Standards Addressed	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.5.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3, CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP4, CSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.SP.A.1, CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.SP.A.2, CSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.SP.B.5	
Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
- Books should be mirrors in which we can see ourselves, windows in which we can see the experiences of others, and doors that allow us to walk into the world of others. - Authentic representation is key to the success of students. - A library should reflect all voices and experiences. - We have the power to bring about change by identifying gaps in representation and proposing solutions.	- What does it mean to “see yourself” in a story? Why is it important to read stories where you feel represented? - How can we ensure authentic representation in the books available in our classroom library? - Why is it important to foster an environment of empathy? - What can we do to ensure that the books in our school reflect a wide variety of experiences and perspectives? - How does reading stories that reflect or challenge our experiences help us grow as individuals and as a community?
21 st Century Skills Addressed	

Core Content and Interdisciplinary Themes

- Subject-Area Mastery
- Global Awareness

Learning and Innovation

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Creativity and Innovation
- Communication and Collaboration

Information and Media Literacy

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy Information
- Communication and Technology

Life and Career

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility