

The Big Block Literacy Framework



Conference Pro
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Four Blocks Resources

The Four Blocks Shop
www.thefourblocksshop.net

www.wfu.edu/fourblocks

www.arensconsulting.com

Four Blocks Conferences

Denver Four Blocks Conference
June 29 and 30, 2006

Midwest Four Blocks Conference
July 13 and 14, 2006 St. Louis, MO
Register on-line at www.conference-pro.com

Four Blocks Resources

- **Annual Four Blocks Conference**
September 9, 2006 Clemmons, NC
Register on-line at www.wfu.edu/fourblocks

- **Four Blocks Leadership Conference**
January 13-15, 2007 Clemmons, NC
Register on-line at www.wfu.edu/fourblocks

Scheduling

pages 17 - 20

- **Guided Reading = 180 minutes a week**
 - 60 minutes with literature
 - 60 minutes with Science texts
 - 60 minutes with Social Studies texts
- **Self-Selected Reading = 180 minutes a week**
- **Writing = 180 minutes a week**
- **Working with Words = 60 minutes a week**
 - three 20 minute lessons

Self – Selected Reading Goals

Page 24

- to introduce children to all types of literature through the teacher read aloud
- to model strategies effective readers use in mini-lessons
- to encourage children's reading interests
- to provide and encourage independent level reading
- to provide instructional guidance and support as students apply decoding and comprehension strategies in their reading
- to engage students in conversations about their reading
- to build intrinsic motivation for reading

Self – Selected Reading

- 180 Minutes a week recommended
- Components include:
 - Daily read aloud (page 29)
 - Mini-lessons when needed/have time (pg 30)
 - Students reading independently
 - Teacher conferencing/recording (pg 34)
 - Students responding to reading (once a week) [p36]
 - Students sharing (pg 41)

Genre Tracking

Genre	Picture Book	Chapter Book
Realistic Fiction		
Historical Fiction		
Biography		
Fantasy		
How-to		
Information		
Editorial		
Poetry		
Folktale		

Sample Mini-lesson

- Topic: Figurative language
 - Model with a familiar text
 - Read several excerpts containing figurative language
 - Tell how the language helps *you* as a reader
 - If time, allow students a few minutes to re-read and look for examples

Sample Mini-lesson

page 46

- Topic: How to Choose a book
 - Bring in three books
 - One that is just right, one that is difficult for some reason, one that is either easy or just right
 - Model how you choose books and make decisions about the best book for you

Time for Students to Read

- Use the first few weeks (and months?) to establish expectations
- Don't begin formal conferencing until students are reading – at least 10 minutes or more
- Decide how to use your space

Room Arrangement and Book Storage

page 21 and 27

- Create comfy spots!
- How will kids get access? What are your expectations?
- Store books face out
- Organize in book baskets-
 - Get kids involved
 - Change the organizational structures from time to time

Conferences are Conversations

pg 34

- Conferences are student run
- May involve student reading a portion of the text
- Tell what he liked/didn't like about the text
- Discuss plans for next week
- Connect to a reading strategy
- Talk reader to reader
- Make a record!

Responses to Reading

(page 37)

- Weekly responses
- Mini-lessons to teach appropriate responses and expectations
- Move to student choice in response
- For easy management, have group due each day
- Move beyond summaries

August 1, 2005

Dear Class,

I am reading Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince by J.K. Rowling. I really just started the book and I thought it was interesting that the first chapter wasn't about Harry and his time with the Dursleys. As far as I can remember, the other books always started on Privet Drive.

I am also intrigued by the second chapter which alludes to one of the main characters. I won't name the character in case you haven't read it so far. But I want to know has he/she *really* turned to the dark side? Has he/she been able to fool everyone for this long?

It will be the part that keeps me reading!

Sincerely,

Mrs.Arens

In the Company of Cheerful Ladies

Alexander McCall Smith

Text

"... They arrived at exactly the same time, even if they arrived in two vehicles, as in a convoy ..."

"This was the odour of poverty, of life on the edge of making do; the smell of carefully husbanded cooking fuel, of clothes that were not washed frequently enough – for lack of soap."

The man who was unjustly sentenced to prison for an accident rather than a crime.

Connection

Jeff and I seem to have to go in two vehicles all the time even when we are going to same place.

This reminds me of the lives of people in The Poisonwood Bible – the more typical life in Africa. So much desolation and poverty.

We hear of cases on the news when it is found out too late that someone was unjustly accused and sentenced.

Big Blocks Notebook

page 21

- Sections for Self-Selected Reading (pg 21)
- Daily Reading Log (pg 37)
- Reading Journal for responses (pg 37)
- Journal of books read

Record Keeping

Pages 39 – 41, 52 - 55

- Quick Check or Status of the Class for accountability
- Student journal of daily pages Reading Record of books abandoned and completed
- Anecdotal records from conferences

Writing Goals

page 56

- Students see writing as a way of telling about things
- Students develop fluency in writing
- Students learn to use grammar and mechanics in the context of their own writing
- Students learn about specific forms of writing during focused instruction
- Struggling writers are still supported in order to maintain their motivation and self-confidence.

Writing Block

- 180 minutes a week
(150 – 200 minutes)
- Keep in mind, it needs longer chunks of time
 - Time given is indicative of type of writing

Writing Block

Daily components include:

- Mini-lesson: 5-15 minutes of instruction
- Writing time: 20 – 40 minutes
- Sharing time: 5- 10 minutes

Writing Mini-lessons

- Whole group instruction
- Almost always includes you writing in front of students
- Make the writing process visible
- Gathering space – community
- Get ideas from:
 - » Curriculum
 - » Student writing
 - » Professional resources

Writing Handbook

page 61

- Create a section in your Big Blocks Notebook
- Students take notes at the end of the mini-lesson
- Teacher decides on what is written
- Student accountability and resource

Writing Handbook – Big Blocks Notebook

- Decide when to write and when to utilize the time in a different way!

Writing Time

- Students write independently on topics of their choosing
 - Organization is the key
 - Materials, storage
 - Location in room
- Students are never “finished”.
We DO NOT publish everything

Teacher – Student Conferences

page 72

Coaching – Revision - Editing

- Meet with students on a regular basis
- Conference is short to allow as many as possible
- Encourage kids to tell you what needs work
- Find a system for recording

Sharing

page 81

“We write to be read.” Nancie Atwell

- Author’s chair
- Partner share
- Focused share
- Outside the classroom
- Published
 - www.arenconsulting.com
 - Published works

Focused Writing

page 62

- Choose appropriate genres for your grade level/ curriculum/ state standards
- This is not writing to a story starter or prompt
- One genre per quarter
- Spend quality time modeling the genre (3-5 weeks)
- Make sure you have quality examples of that genre in your classroom

Focused Genre: Persuasive

page 94 - 95

- Suggested mini-lessons
- Read through the suggestions
- Use *your* curriculum to guide instructional decisions
- Extend and supplement lessons based on student need

Writing Mini-lesson for the Upper Grades

- Resource for mini-lessons
- Additional detailed genres for Focused Writing
 - Memoir
 - Biography
 - How To
 - Traditional Tale (Porquoi)
 - Research
 - Writing to a prompt

Record Keeping

- Quick Check or Status of the Class (pg 70 – 71, 97)
- Student Journal of finished pieces (pg 98)
- Anecdotal records of conferences (pg 100 – 101)

Working With Words Goals

page 156

- to teach students key words containing the major prefixes, suffixes, and spelling changes and how to use these to decode, spell, and build meaning for many polysyllabic words. *Nifty Thrifty Fifty* lessons, *Making Words*, *Word Sorts*, *Word Detectives*, and *Scavenger Hunts* address this goal.
- to teach students the correct spelling for high-frequency, often irregularly-spelled words such as **they**, **friend**, **could**, **there**, **their**, **they're**, **right**, **write**, etc. Word Wall Words and activities address this goal.

Working With Words Goals

- to teach students that spelling rhyming words is not as easy as decoding them because some rhymes, such as **right/bite**; **claim/name**; **toad/code**, have two spelling patterns. The reader has to develop a visual checking system and learn to use a dictionary when he is unsure about which pattern looks right. What Looks Right lessons address this goal.
- to teach students to use cross checking while reading and a visual checking system while writing to apply what they are learning as they engage in meaningful reading and writing. Guess the Covered Word lessons address this goal.

Working with Words

page 155

- 60 minutes a week
- Three twenty minute lessons
- Introduction of Nifty Thrifty Fifty words takes place in the first week of the month
- Introduction of the 8-10 Word Wall Words takes place in the third week of the month
- Use spare minutes here and there to practice the weekly words

Month at a Glance

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Week 1	Introduce the month's Nifty Thrifty Fifty words	Nifty Thrifty fifty Cards	Word Sort
Week 2	Mini-WORDO with NTF words	Guess the Covered Word	Scavenger Hunt
Week 3	Introduce the month's Word Wall words (chosen from drafts)	Making Words	Word Detectives
Week 4	Review all words on the wall (Riddles or Be A Mind Reader)	Guess the Covered Word	Root Word Lesson

Nifty Thrifty Fifty

page 162

- Should be done in both fourth and fifth grade
- Focuses on the most common morphemes and the changes needed to spell and decode other words with the same morphemes
- Students will work extensively with these words until spelling and combining is automatic!

Nifty Thrifty Fifty

page 195

- Month by Month Phonics for Upper Grades (Cunningham and Hall, 1998) is the best resource for the monthly introduction of these words
- New month by month books are being written
- To introduce, talk about the words, explain morphemes, have students chant the spelling and print one time

Nifty Thrifty Fifty

page 163

- Review activities:
 - Riddles
 - Be a Mind Reader
- Extending Nifty Thrifty Fifty
 - Scavenger Hunts
 - Index cards
 - Mini-WORDO
 - Word Sorts

August/September Examples

- Words to be added:
composer discovery encouragement hopeless
impossible musician richest unfriendly
- Riddles:
 1. Write the word that is the opposite of friendly
 2. Write the word with cover as a root word
 3. Write what you are if you have the most money

August/September Examples

- Words to be added:

composer discovery encouragement hopeless
impossible musician richest unfriendly

- Be a Mind Reader

1. It is one of the Nifty Thrifty Fifty Words
2. It has three syllables
3. It has a suffix
4. It has three vowels
5. It means someone who writes music

Nifty Thrifty Fifty Cards

un	friend	ly
	hope	less
dis	cover	y

Nifty Thrifty Fifty Cards

un	cover	
hope	less	ly

Nifty Thrifty Fifty Cards

- Neologisms –
 - A newly coined phrase or word

- Colorize

Technology has its own set of neologisms

- Texted, blog, wireless

Neologisms

- Kenny Rodgers
 - I can't unthink about you
 - I can't unfeel your touch
 - I can't unhear all the words
 - Unsay all the things
 - That used to mean so much
 - I wish I could unremember
 - Everything my heart's been through
 - And finding out it's impossible to do
 - Oh, it's no use
 - I can't unlove you

Neologisms

- Words to be added:

composer discovery encouragement hopeless
impossible musician richest unfriendly

- Neologism to make:

– This word means to make someone your friend

en	friend	ment
----	--------	------

– What neologism could you make?

Mini-WORDO

- Students take a Mini-WORDO card and fill in the nine Nifty Thrifty Fifty Words you have chosen
- Students determine the arrangement for their own words
- Using a marker of some kind, students cover a word that has any common part of the word called out by the teacher
- The words called out will not be NTF words, but words that are made up of the different morphemes and root words studied with the NTF.

Mini-WORDO

- Teacher says:
 - enrichment
- Students mark:
 - encouragement, richest
- Teacher says:
 - dispose
- Students mark:
 - discovery, composer

hopeless	musician	impossible
discovery	WORDO	richest
encouragement	unfriendly	composer

Other ways to extend Nifty Thrifty Fifty

- Word Sorts
- Word Detectives
- Scavenger Hunts
- Making Words

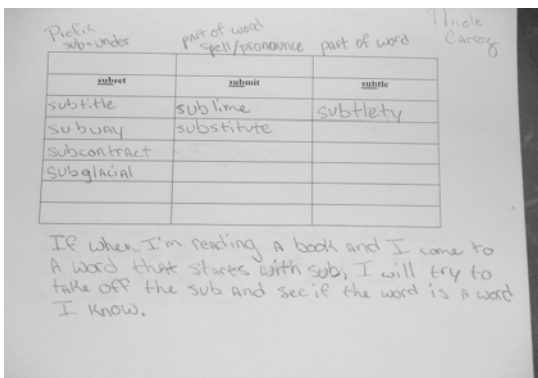
Word Sorts

page 168

- Make connections to the words students will encounter in their independent reading, content area reading, and writing
- Move beyond the memorization of the fifty words
- Focus on the role of morphemes to help decode, spell, and determine meanings of other words with similar parts

Word Sort

Un – prefix Opposite of; not	spelling/pronunciation only	Part of word
unfriendly	uncle	unicorn
unbutton	until	unique
unbelievable	understand	unit
uncertain	unless	universe
unfamiliar		united
unhealthy		



Suffix sort: er

Page 171

(Suffix)	(suffix)	(suffix)	
<u>People who do</u>	<u>Things that do</u>	<u>More</u>	<u>Word Part</u>
composer	computer	fatter	master
teacher	pointer	greater	cover
manager	heater	skinnier	never
fighter	typewriter	richer	diaper
winner	dishwasher	heavier	after
photographer	copier		under
runner	air conditioner		winter

Suffix sort: er

Page 171

(Suffix)	(suffix)	(suffix)	
<u>People who do</u>	<u>Things that do</u>	<u>More</u>	<u>Word</u>
part	computer	fatter	master
reporter	pointer	greater	cover
teacher	heater	skinnier	never
manager	typewriter	richer	diaper
fighter	dishwasher	heavier	after
winner	copier		under
photographer	air conditioner		winter
runner			

Scavenger Hunts

page 176

- Creates an awareness of other words with common prefixes/suffixes/root words and spelling changes within the NTF words
- Assists students in connecting their own reading to the Word Work being done

August/September Example

- Scavenger Hunt-
 - After you introduce the word composer, you may choose to have students look for other words that end with –er
 - Students look for examples as they read during SSR, Guided Reading, Social Studies, Science, or at home
 - They record the **word** and its root word on a page in their Big Blocks Notebook **and** on the chart in the classroom

August/September Example

Words than end with –er

Double the n
winner MKA

Drop the e
grader MKA

~~other~~ MKA

Drop the e
writer MKA

player MKA

locker MKA

Scavenger Hunt Homework

Words than end with –er

✓ winner

✓ grader

~~other~~

✓ writer

✓ player

✓ locker

Making Words

page 166

- Hands-on manipulative activity
- Lessons highlight patterns and how changing one letter changes the whole word
- Lessons will often sort to focus on morpheme connections
- Lessons should use a secret word connected to the content areas or to one of the morphemes introduced in a NTF word

Word Detectives

page 175

- Word Detectives encourages students to answer the questions:
 - “Do I know any other words that look and sound like this word?”
 - “Are any of these look-alike/sound-alike words related to each other?”

Word Detectives

- The answer to the first question should help students with pronouncing and spelling the word.
- The answer to the second question should help students discover what, if any, meaning relationships exist between this new word and others in their meaning vocabulary

Word Detectives

Transformation

Students think of:

transformer	formation	form
information	transfer	nation
transportation	format	translation
translate	transition	cremation
motivation	realization	transform
simulation	multiplication	transport
motion	transcontinental	

Word Detectives

- Transformation, transformer, transform, formation, format, and form are related because of the *root form* (the nature, structure, or essence of a thing)
- Transformer, transfer, transportation, translation, translate, transition, transform, transport, and transcontinental all have the *prefix trans* (change transfer or conversion/across or beyond)

Words for the Word Wall

page 157

- Use your students' first draft writing to decide what words make the most sense for your Word Wall
- 300 words provided on pages 192 – 195 to compare to your student writing
- Choose 90 – 100 for your Wall
- Combined with the NTF, you will have 140 – 150 words TOTAL

Word Wall

page 159

- Introduce each word giving explanation for its placement on the word wall

Example: said

"This is not a hard word, but many people misspell it because it does not look like it sounds. Long ago, it was pronounced to rhyme with raid and braid. But the pronunciation has changed. You'll just have to remember what it looks like.

- Students chant the words in a rhythmic manner
- Students print the word one time with careful attention to its spelling
- Students repeat the process with each of the four or five words
- Students check the words
- When time, review words already on the wall

Word Wall Review Activities

page 160

- Review Activities
 - Riddles
 - Be a Mind Reader

Guess the Covered Word

page 181

- Encourages students to use a combination of structure cues, semantic cues, and visual cues
- Direct connection to reading
- May be used to preview a text, review vocabulary or concepts, or focus on one part of speech

Guess the Covered Word

- Cover the same part of speech in each sentence
- Use as a way to introduce vocabulary at the beginning of units of study
- Use as a way to review vocabulary at the end of units of study

What Looks Right

page 179

- Focuses on patterns that spell the same sound
 - ai and ale or ite and ight
- Helps students use two important monitoring strategies –
 - Does it look like a word I've seen?
 - Can I find it in the dictionary to check?

What Looks Right

• Teacher's list

right
~~right~~
sight
night
~~qught~~

bite
kite
site
~~nie~~
quite

• Student's Paper

right bite
kite
sight site
night
quite

What Looks Right

- To share the What Looks Right Lesson with 4th and 5th grade:
 - Fourth grade does first lesson each month, and fifth grade does second (beginning in Nov.)
- Page 189 in Working with Words Supplement
 - Supply of extra polysyllabic words for extending the What Looks Right Lessons in the Month by Month book

Guided Reading Goals

page 103

- to teach comprehension strategies
- to teach students how to read and respond to all types of literature including content texts
- to develop background knowledge and vocabulary
- to provide as much instructional level material as possible
- to maintain the self-confidence and motivation of struggling readers

Guided Reading

- Guided Reading = 180 minutes a week
 - 60 minutes with literature
 - 60 minutes with Social Studies text
 - 60 minutes with Science text
- More emphasis on content area texts
- More written responses to text
- Choose texts carefully!

Guided Reading

- **Before:** Sets the purpose for reading
May include vocabulary work, predictions, picture walks, graphic organizer introductions, etc
- **During:** How the students will read
Should be the longest part of the lesson!
- **After:** Follow-up on the purpose set
Often involves written responses
Should be substantive and challenging

Before Activities

- Rivet (pg 125)
- Prove It (pg 138)
- Guess Yes or No (Anticipation Guides) (pg 112)
- Thinking Strategies (Connections, Questioning, etc) (pg 104)
- Alphabox (pg 129)
- Talking How and Why
- Fluency Strategies (pg 123)
- Vocabulary Work (List-Group-Label, Word Maps, etc) (pg 127)
- GIST (pg113)
- Quick Writes (pg 131)

Guess Yes or No

pg 112

- Write 10 statements about the text
- Imbed vocabulary and content you want highlighted
- Prepare the statements to share with the students prior to reading
- After direct instruction, give a hard copy to students
- Make a few statements easy guesses

Guess Yes or No

Before

After

- yes 1. Most Egyptians were farmers. _____
- yes 2. All the houses were very close together, except for the wealthy. _____
- no 3. Egyptians dressed warmly because of their cool climate. _____
- no 4. Men and women dressed up and wore make-up. _____

Alphaboxes

A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X/Y	Z

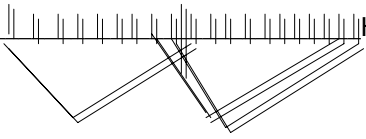
During Reading

page 105

- Echo
- Choral
- Partner
- Three Ring Circus
- Reading Teams
- Pick a Page
- Sticky note
- ERT (Everybody Read To . . .)
- Reader's Theater

Partnering Strategies

Low High



- Consider personalities when forming partnerships
- Not all partners have to use the same format for reading

Book Club Groups

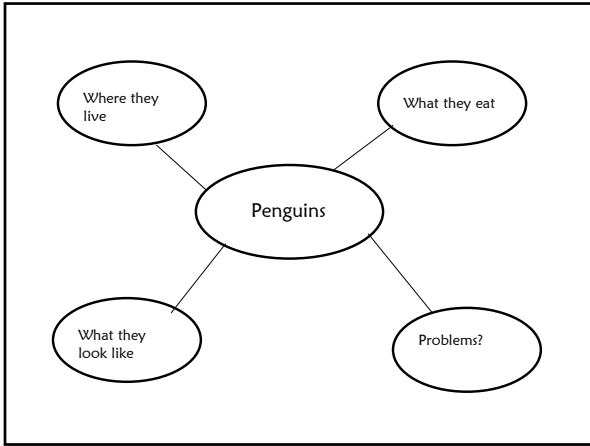
page 109

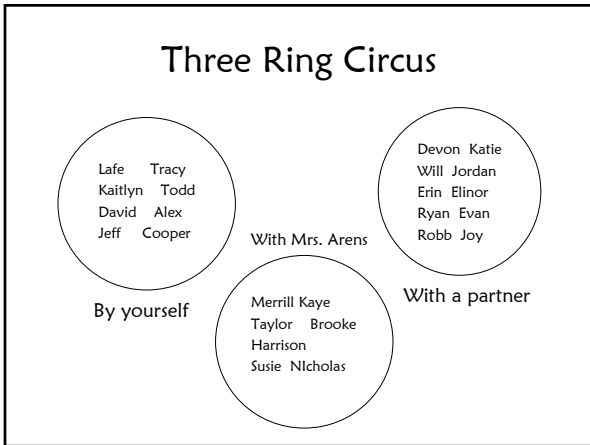
- Four titles
- Connection
 - Author, theme, genre
- Multiple levels
- Day 1 : Before – book talks
 - During – students survey each title
 - After – students choose top three

Sample lesson on pages 134-137

Book Club

- Day 2
 - Before: establish purpose for reading
 - Everyone reads for the same purpose
 - During: Students read within book clubs, either with partners, independently, or reading teams
 - After: class comes back together to share from the individual titles





After Reading

- **Written responses**
Connections, Predictions, Favorite Part, Summary, Questions, Quick Writes
- **Graphic Organizers**
Story Map, Venn Diagram, Excitement Map, Feature Matrix
- **Beach Ball**
- **Drawing in response**

Written Responses

- Quick Writes

Take 45 seconds and write one prediction for how the children will change Mr. Kodinski's mind.

In 90 seconds, write at least three new things you now know about the Civil War.

Write for two minutes and tell me about your favorite part of the story so far.
