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Untold Stories Grade 4

This sample includes the following:

Management Guide Cover (1 page)
Management Guide Table of Contents (2 pages)
Introducing the Resource (1 page)
Character Trait Chart (1 page)
Using this Resource (4 pages)
Biography Mini-Lesson (4 pages)
Presentation Rubric (1 page)
Text Cards and Lessons
Alice Augusta Ball (5 pages)
Born to Act (5 pages)

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Untold Stories

Management Guide

Grades 4–5

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What Are Untold Stories?

Information is everywhere. In today's highly digitized world, it is easy for students to feel overloaded. The presence of news, social media, blogs, the internet, textbooks, and even their cell phones can overwhelm students to the point where they become distracted from what's really valuable in their learning. Students receive information daily, hourly, and even minute-by-minute. Some information is good, and some is not so good. Much of the information students take in is about people and places they can't even relate to, as their experiences may differ from the information received.



Untold Stories fills a need in today's classroom—the need to add more value and insight to student learning through sharing authentic stories. By focusing student attention on the not-so-familiar stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things, the learning gives shape to raw emotions and makes the stories come to life. *Untold Stories* conveys the culture, history, experiences, and values that provide readers deeper understandings of the experiences of diverse people from throughout history.

Real-life stories are the essential building blocks of empathy and connection. These stories will connect, engage, and inspire readers as they read about people like you and me, who are living examples of empowerment, struggle, joy, resilience, and innovation.

The reality is that everyone has a story to tell. Stories not only of struggle, but more importantly, stories of bravery, determination, and hope.



Think about Sheyann Webb, who is a humanitarian, civil rights activist, mentor, and youth advocate. Throughout her life, she has had numerous encounters with racism and poverty, so she has dedicated her life to assisting youth in America to build self-esteem, confidence, overcome adversity, and find real purposes in their lives.

Consider Vicki Manolo Draves, who despite not being able to practice daily because of racism, found a way to persevere and become the first Asian American woman to win an Olympic gold medal.



Finally, think of Derek Rabelo, a 23-year-old surfer, who is blind. He relies on his heightened sense of hearing to navigate the oceans. This is a skill that took courage and perseverance to perfect.

Make Social-Emotional Connections (cont.)

Character Education Traits (cont.)

Character Trait	Purpose
citizenship	Citizenship means engaging in things that make the community a better place to be. Being a good citizen at school includes respecting the people, rules, and school property.
commitment	Commitment means being dedicated and finishing what you start. This shows the importance of keeping your word and doing what is expected, even when it is challenging or not preferred.
compassion	Compassion means understanding and showing deep care for someone's feelings. This shows the importance of supporting one another by practicing perspective taking and building empathy.
cooperation	Cooperation means working well together to reach the same goal. This shows students how teamwork can accomplish more than working alone.
courage	Courage means doing the right thing, even when it is difficult. This demonstrates that it's expected to be afraid sometimes, but courage is shown when we do the right thing despite those worries.
creativity	Creativity means approaching situations with a unique perspective. When students feel safe and comfortable, they will be more confident in expressing their original ideas and solutions.
fairness	Fairness means treating others justly. This includes following the rules, taking turns, and sharing.
honesty	Honesty means telling the truth. This encourages students to genuinely express their thoughts and feelings.
leadership	Leadership means being a positive role model to their peers. People can be leaders by using their kind words and actions to influence others to create positive change.
loyalty	Loyalty means being devoted and faithful to those you care for. This shows how students can build and keep healthy relationships by remaining true to their family and friends.
perseverance	Perseverance means continuing to do something you value, even when times are tough. This teaches students not to give up in the face of a challenge.
respect	Respect means showing kindness and consideration for others. This reinforces the importance of treating others how you want to be treated.
responsibility	Responsibility means taking ownership of your actions and doing what is expected of you. For students, this includes going to school, doing their work, and being a good friend to others.
trustworthiness	Trustworthiness means acting in ways that make others feel comfortable, especially when they are in need of help. Students can embody trustworthiness when they stick by their word and keep their promises to do what is right.

How to Implement This Resource

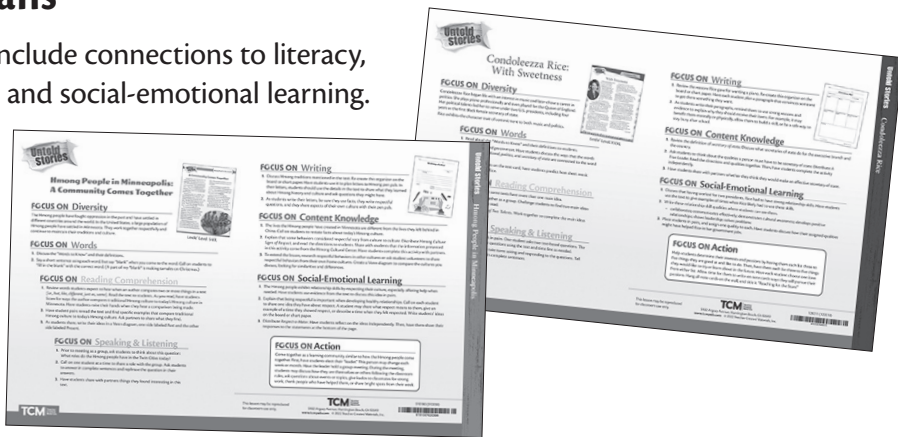
6 copies of 25 cards

Full-color cards tell the stories of extraordinary people.



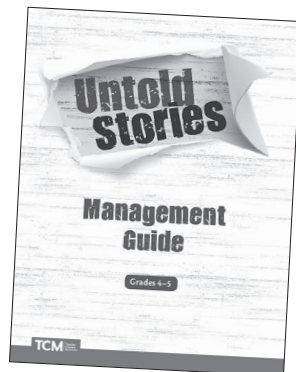
Lesson Plans

Lesson plans include connections to literacy, content areas, and social-emotional learning.



Management Guide

Management Guide provides program information and research-based teaching ideas. (The activities and rubrics in this book are shared over two grade levels. This allows teachers to better support students' critical analysis of the text cards, rather than focusing on the structure of the lessons.)



Digital Resources

Ecards, primary sources, and audio recordings increase student engagement and enhance instruction.



Text Cards

Subjects of the cards are easily identified on both sides of the card.

Untold Stories

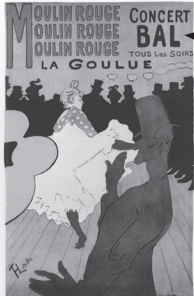
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

Life Through Art

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec loved to draw. Not only did he enjoy it, but it also gave him comfort. He lived most of his life in pain, and he spent long months sick in bed. Even when he could not walk, he could draw.

Toulouse-Lautrec was born in Albi, France. His parents were wealthy **aristocrats**. They lived on an **estate** in the French countryside. But his family had many health problems. Toulouse-Lautrec's only brother died very young, and Toulouse-Lautrec had troubles with his bones. When he was a young teen, he had two separate accidents. In each, he broke a leg. The breaks were not bad, but the results were. The bones stopped growing. Toulouse-Lautrec's upper body continued to grow while his legs stayed the same. He walked with a cane for the rest of his life and was always in pain.

Toulouse-Lautrec came from a family of artists, and he began his own formal training as a boy. When he was eighteen, he moved to Paris to pursue art. Two big things were happening in Paris at the time he arrived.



First, a new **nightlife** scene was taking shape. Toulouse-Lautrec loved it. He spent a great deal of time at the Moulin Rouge and other nightclubs there. Second, new ways to print on paper were coming into development. Toulouse-Lautrec used these methods to create vibrant posters of the clubs and performers.

Many people loved Toulouse-Lautrec's work. He made the performers and **patrons** come to life in exciting ways. His posters and paintings told stories of life in Paris. He did not shy away from anything, the happy or sad, the healthy or unwell. Toulouse-Lautrec showed it all. He had great love and respect for the world he saw and the people in it. He celebrated them all in his art.

Toulouse-Lautrec's health troubles cut his life short. He died at the age of 36. But he left a **legacy** of great art and a window into life in the Paris he knew and loved.

—Dona Herweck Rice

Titles help students to understand the theme or main idea of the text.

Images support text to aid in student comprehension. These primary source images make great discussion starters.

Authors of texts are identified for group discussions about author's purpose and writing choices.

Words to Know are bolded in the body text and defined on the backs of the cards. The Focus On Words section in each lesson highlights these key words.

Untold Stories

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
(ahn-REE DUH tuh-LOOZ luh-TREHK)

Life Through Art

Dates to Know

- 1864

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is born in Albi, France.
- 1871

He begins formal art training.
- 1878–1879

He breaks his legs and convalesces.
- 1882

He moves to Paris.
- 1891

New color print-making methods are developed.
- 1890s

He becomes a celebrity artist in Paris.
- 1901

Toulouse-Lautrec dies in Saint-André-du-Bois, France.

Words to Know

aristocrats—members of a high-class group in society with special titles who are usually rich, own land, and have positions of power

estate—a large piece of land with a house on it

legacy—something worthwhile that comes from someone or something in the past

nightlife—entertainment and social activities that take place at night, usually in bars and clubs

patrons—people who give money to support a person, practice, or business

About Character

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec had many challenges in his life. He persevered and found comfort in his art. Make a list of things you enjoy doing. Circle a few you could try if you are feeling down.

Time lines help students place each subject in the context of history or a larger world view.

Phonetic pronunciations are provided for cultural awareness and support while reading the text. Take time to review this before reading the text card aloud.

Opportunities are provided for students to investigate character traits exemplified by each subject. (See pages 14–15 for more information.)

Lesson Plans

A short summary is provided for easy recall of key characteristics of the subject.

Each lesson includes strong literacy activities to help students focus on key aspects of the text card. (See pages 20–22 for more information.)

Each card is connected to a content area through an interactive activity. Although many cards connect to social studies, there are other content areas covered as well.

Connections to the five SEL competencies are made through these cooperative activities. (See page 13 for more information.)

These activities provide opportunities for students to apply what they've learned by reading the text cards and participating in the activities. Rubrics are provided to assess student work on these activities. (See pages 73–76 for more information.)

Untold Stories
Christiane Amanpour
Telling the Truth

Lexile® Level: 510L

FOCUS ON Diversity
Christiane Amanpour wants the world to have access to truthful reporting. As a British-Iranian journalist and television host, her integrity may inspire young people everywhere. Amanpour exhibits the character trait of courage as she focuses on truthful reporting in dangerous places.

FOCUS ON Words
1. Discuss the "Words to Know" and their definitions from the back of the card.
2. Say a short sentence using each word, but say "blank" when you come to the word. Call on students to "fill in the blank" with the correct word. (Example: On Veterans Day, I will _____ someone who served in the military.)

FOCUS ON Reading Comprehension
1. Read the text aloud as students follow along, and ask what motivates them to do things, such as play sports or learn something new. Explain that there is always a reason for our actions. These reasons cause us to pursue new or different activities.
2. Ask students to identify a cause-and-effect relationship about Amanpour. Write their ideas on the board or chart paper similar to how they are written on the Cause and Effect activity sheet.
- What caused Amanpour's family to flee Iran? (effect)
Iran's leaders were overthrown. (Cause)
3. Distribute Cause and Effect. Have students work with partners to complete the activity.

FOCUS ON Speaking & Listening
1. Once students have completed the "Focus on Writing" activity, provide models for them to deliver their reports. Watch a local news station or online news report, preferably with students delivering the report, if possible. Discuss how the speakers speak clearly at an understandable pace.
2. Have students deliver their news reports.
3. If desired, have students ask follow-up questions of their fellow reporters.

TCM

The Lexile® level for each text card is provided to help with planning and differentiation.

Every writing activity includes a prewriting graphic organizer to help students gather their thoughts. Re-create these where your students can see them, or distribute copies found in the Digital Resources.

Subjects of the lesson plans are easily identified on both sides of the folder tab.

Untold Stories
Christiane Amanpour

FOCUS ON Writing
1. Reporting accurate facts and information is important. Tell students that they'll be acting like Amanpour as they create their own reports. Students may report on topics they are learning about in science or social studies or they may write about other topics of interest.
2. Re-create this graphic organizer on the board or chart paper, and have students use it to plan their reports.
3. Have them write reports on their chosen topics.

FOCUS ON Content Knowledge
1. Amanpour first reported on the Iran-Iraq War. This particular war lasted for eight years. Distribute Time Line of the Iran-Iraq War. Read the directions, and have students complete the time line. Be sure to point out that each mark on the time line represents one year.
2. After students have completed the activity, ask the following questions:
- When did the war begin?
- How many years passed between the cease fire and the peace agreement?
3. Have students create time lines of their own lives.

FOCUS ON Social-Emotional Learning
1. Amanpour shows self-awareness by demonstrating honesty and integrity in her reporting. She brought her determination to tell the truth to people all around the world. Have students use facts from the text to discuss this idea.
2. Guide students to develop their own personal self-awareness by reflecting on the importance of telling the truth. Create a two-column class chart. List reasons why students should be honest in one column. List potential consequences for being dishonest in the second column.
3. Have students discuss with partners what they learned about honesty and integrity during this lesson. Also, have them discuss how they can show honesty and integrity each day.

FOCUS ON Action
Ask students to consider what kinds of information they would put into a class newspaper. Have students write articles they would include in a class newspaper. Reinforce the idea that their articles should be factual and accurate. Help students compile and publish the newspaper digitally or physically (or both).

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Cause and Effect
Directions: Christiane Amanpour's life was guided by many causes. Use information from the text to write the missing causes and effects in the chart.

Causes	Effects
Amanpour's family fled Iran.	
Amanpour wanted to tell the world the truth about war-torn countries.	
Amanpour was a brave reporter.	Amanpour found the courage to keep reporting.
	Now, Amanpour interviews important people.

Time Line of the Iran-Iraq War
Directions: Christiane Amanpour reported on the Iran-Iraq War, which lasted for eight years. Cut out the events at the bottom of this page. Glue the events in the correct places along the time line.

1980
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990

September 4, 1980 Iran bombed border towns between the two countries.
September 22, 1980 Iraq began.
June 1983 Iraq asked for a peace agreement with Iran.
August 1980 Iran accepted a cease fire.
August 16, 1990 A peace agreement was signed.

Student reproducibles are provided both on the inside of the lesson folder and in the Digital Resources.

Lesson Plans (cont.)

Lesson Plan Pacing Guide

The following example pacing plan shows an option for using a text card and lesson over a one-week period. Teachers should customize this pacing suggestion according to their students' needs.

Lesson Section	Notes	Suggested Time
Focus On Diversity	Share with students key information from the summary, and preview the card with them. Have students pose a few questions that they hope will be answered in the text.	5–10 minutes
Focus On Words	Preview key vocabulary words, and help students prepare to read the text card. Based on the Lexile [®] level of the text, determine if any other preparation is needed before reading with students.	10–20 minutes
Focus On Reading Comprehension	Read the text card, and use it to practice important reading comprehension skills. Have students reread the text in pairs or small groups to revisit key parts.	30–45 minutes
Focus On Speaking & Listening	After the initial interaction with the text, allow focused time for students to work together to practice strong speaking skills and active listening.	15–20 minutes
Focus On Writing	Work together to help students complete graphic organizers to plan their writing. Then, provide time for students to compose their written responses. Re-create the graphic organizer where students can see it, or use the digital copy provided.	45–60 minutes
Focus On Content Knowledge	Key content is pulled from the text card for a short content-based activity. Connections are made to social studies, science, the arts, and more.	30–45 minutes
Focus On Social-Emotional Learning	Each lesson helps students work toward achieving the five SEL competencies. These activities often connect back to the character traits highlighted on the back of the cards.	20–30 minutes
Focus On Action	Serving as formative assessments, these hands-on activities provide opportunities for students to apply what they've learned. There are four general rubrics to be used with these activities to assess student work.	45–60 minutes

Biography Mini-Lessons

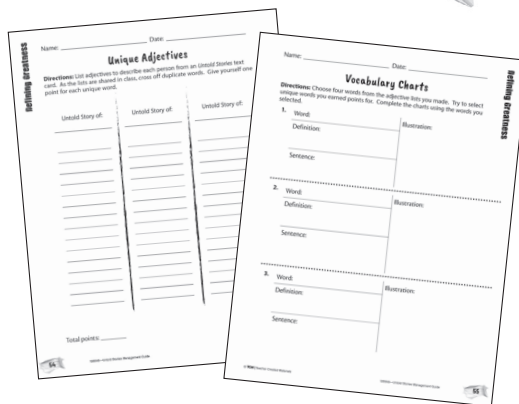
Defining Greatness

Overview

Students will work in small groups to brainstorm creative words that describe those featured in the *Untold Stories* text cards. Teams will compete to brainstorm unique adjectives that other teams did not list. Then, students will complete an in-depth word study.

Materials

- copies of *Unique Adjectives* (page 54)
- copies of *Vocabulary Charts* (page 55)
- sticky notes



Procedure

1. Choose three *Untold Stories* text cards for the focus of the lesson. Give students time to review the information on the card.
2. Place students into groups of three to four. Tell students they will be brainstorming adjectives that describe the three people, but they will only earn points for adjectives that no other group lists. Explain that if more than one group uses the same adjective to describe the same person, they must all cross that word off their lists. Only unique words will remain, and each one will earn them a point. The group with the most points wins. Model this activity by suggesting a word such as “smart,” and ask students what synonyms they might use instead (e.g., *intelligent*, *bright*, and *brilliant*). Remind students that the goal is to select words that no other group will choose.
3. Distribute *Unique Adjectives*, and read the directions aloud to students. Give students time to create their lists of adjectives. Encourage them to think of synonyms for common adjectives and to be specific in their word choice.

Procedure *(cont.)*

4. When students are finished, let groups share their words and cross out any repeats. Then, have groups tally their scores and determine the winning group.
5. Distribute *Vocabulary Charts*. Have students choose three unique adjectives from their lists to use on this page. (If students do not have three words, let them choose a word they had to cross off.) Give students time to complete their charts.

FOCUS ON

FOCUS ON Social-Emotional Learning

1. Tell students that an important part of building healthy relationships with others is recognizing their strengths. Giving sincere, specific compliments to people is a good thing to do.
2. Write the word *nice* where students can see it, and talk about how to give a more specific compliment. Have students think of people who are nice, and challenge them to brainstorm different ways to express that thought. Let students know it doesn't have to be a one-word answer or simple synonym; it can be a phrase or even a sentence. Encourage students to share their thoughts.
3. Encourage students to each share one sincere, specific compliment with someone at their home today. Check in with them during the next class to see how it went.

FOCUS ON Action

Assign each student the name of another student. Distribute sticky notes, and have students write a sincere, specific compliment about each other on them. Tell students to think of something specific they have observed about their assigned students. Students should write who the compliment is for, but not who it is from. When they are finished, collect the sticky notes, and distribute them.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Unique Adjectives

Directions: List adjectives to describe each person from an *Untold Stories* text card. As the lists are shared in class, cross off duplicate words. Give yourself one point for each unique word.

Untold Story of: _____

Untold Story of: _____

Untold Story of: _____

Total points: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Charts

Directions: Choose three words from the adjective lists you made. Try to select unique words you earned points for. Complete the charts using the words you selected.

1.	Word: _____	Illustration:
	Definition: _____	
	Sentence: _____	



2.	Word: _____	Illustration:
	Definition: _____	
	Sentence: _____	



3.	Word: _____	Illustration:
	Definition: _____	
	Sentence: _____	

Focus On Action Rubrics

Presentation-Based Activities

Student Name: _____

	4—Excellent	3—Great Job	2—Good Work	1—Not Quite
Presentation Content	All information was shared in an interesting and engaging way.	Most information was shared in an interesting and engaging way.	Some information was shared in an interesting and engaging way.	Little information was shared in an interesting and engaging way.
Presentation Skills	Student spoke very clearly and used appropriate volume.	Student spoke clearly and used appropriate volume.	Student spoke somewhat clearly and/or did not use appropriate volume.	Student did not speak clearly and/or did not use appropriate volume.
Work Completion	All parts of the activity were completed.	Almost all parts of the activity were completed.	Only a few parts of the activity were completed.	Little of the activity was completed.
Content Understanding	Presentation shows deep, complex understanding of the content.	Presentation shows strong understanding of the content.	Presentation shows some understanding of the content.	Presentation shows little understanding of the content.
Connection to Self or Others	Presentation shows complete connection to self or others with both factual and personal content.	Presentation shows strong connection to self or others with either factual or personal content.	Presentation shows some connection to self or others with little factual or personal content.	Presentation shows little connection to self or others with missing factual and personal content.

Comments: _____

Setting the Record Straight

Alice Augusta Ball was a scientist. She did great work in her short life. But it took many years for her to get the credit.

Ball grew up in Seattle in a family of photographers. They used chemicals to make their pictures. This may be how Ball's interest in chemistry began.

As a young adult, Ball went to college to study science. She earned a degree in chemistry. She also earned a degree in pharmacy. Then, Ball was offered a **scholarship** to the University of Hawai'i. It was there that she earned her master's degree.

Ball was an excellent student. She was a great teacher, too! Ball became the first woman and first Black person to teach science at her college. She continued her research work there as well. In fact, she soon found a new treatment for **leprosy**. She used an **injectable** oil extract from the chaulmoogra tree. The oil from the tree had already been in use for treatment. But Ball found a better method. Her treatment helped free people from the **symptoms** of the disease. In the past, people with leprosy had to **quarantine**. They lived in hospitals and other facilities. Ball's medicine helped them go home and live their lives.

Then, tragedy struck. There was an accident in Ball's lab, and she was badly injured. Complications from those injuries proved deadly. She died at the age of 24.

Few people knew of the great work she did. In fact, Ball did not receive credit for her work for many years. The college president, Dr. Arthur Dean, called her research the "Dean Method" and took full credit for it. But one of Ball's mentors, Dr. Harry T. Hollmann, published a paper. In it, he gave her full credit for her work and how it helped so many people. He renamed the research the "Ball Method."

Years later, Ball's college made a bronze plaque in her honor. It was placed near a chaulmoogra tree on campus. The city of Seattle also wanted to honor her. They named the Alice Ball Park in her memory.

—Shirley H. Harden



Setting the Record Straight



Dates to Know

1892

Alice Augusta Ball is born in Washington.

1915

She earns her master's degree and becomes the first female and first Black science professor at the University of Hawai'i.

1916

She develops the "Ball Method," an effective treatment for leprosy, but receives no credit for it. Soon after, she dies as the result of an accident.

1922

She is finally given credit for her research.

2000

Ball is honored by the University of Hawai'i.



Words to Know

injectable—able to be put into a person's body or bloodstream by using a special needle

leprosy—a serious disease that causes painful rough areas on the skin and badly damages nerves and flesh

quarantine—keep away from other people or animals so as to not spread a disease

scholarship—an amount of money given by a school or an organization to help pay for a student's education

symptoms—changes in the body or mind that indicate a disease is present



About Character

Alice Augusta Ball was committed to learning and teaching about science. As a result, she was able to help others. Write a paragraph to tell how she used her research to help people.





Alice Augusta Ball: Setting the Record Straight



Lexile® Level: 610L

FOCUS ON Diversity

Alice Augusta Ball was a Black chemist who taught science at her college and researched a cure for leprosy. Ball showed a commitment to learning about science, teaching science, and discovering new technologies through science. Initially, others took credit for her work. However, a fellow scientist made sure Ball received credit where credit was due.

FOCUS ON Words

1. Have students write each of the "Words to Know" on note cards. Discuss the definitions. Have student pairs work together to create categories for the words. An example could be that some words are related to medicine (*injectable, leprosy, quarantine, symptoms*).
2. Call on partners to explain the categories they created.

FOCUS ON Reading Comprehension

1. Tell students that when authors make claims about people, places, or events, they must support them with reasons and evidence.
2. Have students read the text with partners. As they read, instruct them to look for claims the author makes about Ball and her work.
3. Call on a student to identify a claim the author makes. Then, work together to find the reasons and evidence the author uses to support each claim. For example, in paragraph 4, the author makes the claim: "Ball was an excellent student." This claim is supported by the evidence: "She was offered a scholarship to the University of Hawai'i."
4. Have students each record one additional claim using reasons and evidence from the text.

FOCUS ON Speaking & Listening

1. Write the following questions on the board or chart paper. Have student pairs discuss the questions using evidence from the text.
 - How did Ball reach her goal of becoming a scientist?
 - What education did Ball use during her career?
 - How did other scientists value Ball's work?
2. Call on a pair of students to share one answer, and then call on another pair to connect what they heard to their own answer. Continue this process until the questions have been answered in multiple ways.

FOCUS ON Writing

1. People may have learned about Ball's work from a newspaper. Re-create this organizer on the board or chart paper. Have students use it to plan newspaper articles about Ball's discovery. Make sure they include headlines.
2. As students write their articles, encourage them to use evidence from the text and time line to support their ideas.



FOCUS ON Content Knowledge

1. Ball discovered that different plants could be used for medical purposes. Students may be surprised to learn that many common, everyday products are also made from plants. Call on students to make predictions about what plants (or plant parts) are used to make things they use every day.
2. Distribute *What's in That?* Read the descriptions together. Have students make their best guesses as to which product is made using each plant-based substance and write them on the lines. Reveal the answers at the end. (*sapodilla tree: gum; willow tree bark: aspirin; wood pulp: toothpaste; carnauba wax: dental floss; roots and fruits: shampoo; rubber tree: gloves*)

FOCUS ON Social-Emotional Learning

1. Ball demonstrated self-management by setting personal goals. Have students review the text to identify goals Ball may have set for herself from the time she was a little girl until the time of the lab accident.
2. Discuss how people go about reaching goals they set for themselves. Have students identify their personal goals and what they think they need to reach them. List their thinking on the board or chart paper as students share.
3. Distribute *Setting Goals*. Have students work through the steps to write personal goals. Then, have students share their goals with the group.

FOCUS ON Action

Long after Ball passed away, a fellow scientist finally granted her the credit she deserved for her discovery. Have students make cards for people they believe deserve credit for the things they do. They can write messages on the lined sides of large note cards and draw designs on the plain sides of the cards. Have students deliver their messages.

Name: _____ Date: _____

What's in That?

Directions: Read the description of each plant. Write the product that is made using each plant.

Word Bank

aspirin	gloves	shampoo
dental floss	gum	toothpaste

The sapodilla tree has chicle. This sap is used to make a chewable substance that is stretchy.

Willow tree bark has a special medicine. It is called salicin. This substance helps reduce pain.

Cellulose and cellulose gum are found in wood pulp. These substances can be used in products that clean teeth.

A special palm tree produces carnauba wax in its leaves. This substance is used in polishes. But it is used as a polished coating, too.

Some roots and fruits are used in products that lather up.

The rubber tree has latex. This substance is turned into a stretchy but strong material.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Setting Goals

Directions: Follow the steps to write a goal for yourself.

Step 1—Be specific.

What do you want to do? It could be something that happens soon or something that happens far in the future.

Step 2—Tell why this is important.

Why did you choose this goal?

Step 3—Identify the steps you will take.

What do you need to do to reach your goal? For example, if your goal is to improve your math grade, you may want to study or work with others to prepare for tests.

Step 4—Identify people who can help.

Who can you trust to help you reach your goal? How can they help?

Step 5—Tell when it will happen.

When do you expect to reach this goal?

News Article Organizer

What is the big event?

What amazing descriptive words can you use?

How will you organize the article?



How will you grab the reader's attention? (headline ideas)



Born to Act

We are all born to shine. Some people do it by helping others. Some make a difference in sports. Or, they teach others how to do something hard. Some tell stories. Others shine on the stage. These people are born to act.

This idea inspired the Born to Act Players. The theater group was started by Mary Rings in 1996. Rings's son Casey has **Down syndrome**. Casey loves acting. His best friend, Blair, also has Down syndrome. Blair's mom, Gail Williamson, worked in Hollywood. She helped people with **disabilities** get jobs in movies and TV. Rings and Williamson wanted to help their sons have fun and learn how to act. They also wanted to show agents and directors how much people with disabilities can do. They created Born to Act Players to train actors with and without disabilities.

Some members of the group have physical differences. Others struggle with mental health or other limitations. They might have **autism** or other special needs. But they learn to do the same things all actors do. They play acting games. They practice **memorizing** their lines. They sing, dance, and put on plays. Many of the actors have been on TV shows. Some members study lighting and sound technology, too.

The training also teaches skills that are important off stage. They practice focusing and paying attention. They learn new ways to use their voices and how to understand other people. They even learn how to **improvise**. Many actors find it difficult. But the process helps them learn to think quickly and overcome shyness.

The group's motto is "Every day I get better and better." It is clear that the teachers help the students. But it is also true that the students inspire the teachers. They help them feel better and better every day. It gives their lives meaning on and off the stage. As Mary Rings said, "It's the best thing I've ever done in my life, and I never want to stop doing this."

—Georgia Beth



Born to Act



Dates to Know

1996

Mary Rings founds Born to Act Players.

2002

The group performs *Special Home* at Horseshoe Theatre Valley College.

2004

They perform *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*.

2007

Inspired by the TV show *American Idol*, they perform *Born to Be Idols*.

2012

Born to Act Players writes and performs four original one-act plays.

2013

Life Is an Improv becomes the annual show.

2019

The group performs *Don't Stop Me Now*.

2020

Classes are offered online during the global pandemic.



Words to Know

autism—a condition that can make it difficult to process information and experiences or to interact with people

disabilities—conditions that make it difficult to do something mentally or physically

Down syndrome—a condition that causes physical and mental handicaps

improvise—to make up or invent without a plan; to act without dialogue or direction

memorizing—learning by heart



About Character

Born to Act Players is a place that respects, accepts, and supports people's differences. Write a list of all the things actors can learn and do at this theater. Choose one from the list, and describe why it is important for people to learn.





Untold Stories: The Arts Born to Act



Lexile® Level: 550L

FOCUS ON Diversity

The Born to Act Players is a theater group that supports people with disabilities by teaching them acting skills. Started in 1996 by two moms with children with Down Syndrome, the group respectfully includes people with many diverse physical and learning needs. Their success is evident in the many productions they have performed over the years.

FOCUS ON Words

1. Read the “Words to Know” and their definitions.
2. Have students identify three words that are related to people with special needs (*autism, disabilities, Down Syndrome*). Have students identify two words that are related to acting (*improvise, memorizing*).
3. Predict as a group how these two categories of words relate to the text.

FOCUS ON Reading Comprehension

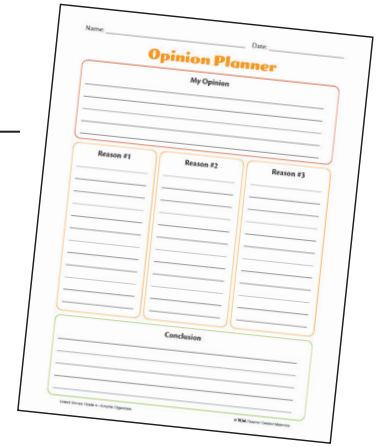
1. Have students read the text with partners. As they read, instruct students to think about how this acting group and the people in it compare to other acting groups. Have students look for text evidence to support their answers as you discuss this question as a group: Would you say the Born to Act Players is more similar to or more different from other acting groups? Why?
2. Distribute *A Different Kind of Acting*. Read the first question aloud, and have student pairs work together to discuss possible answers. Remind students to use evidence from the text to support their answers as they complete the activity.

FOCUS ON Speaking & Listening

1. Ask these questions about the card and the time line. Discuss whether students can answer each question based on the text, if they can infer an answer, or if they need more information.
 - What does the author mean by “we are all born to shine”?
 - What motivated Mary Rings and Gail Williamson to start the Born to Act Players?
 - How do members of the Born to Act Players learn to act?
 - How do both the students and teachers benefit from the Born to Act Players?
 - Is the Born to Act Players group successful? How do you know?

FOCUS ON Writing

1. The Born to Act Players is an important acting group. Re-create this graphic organizer on the board or chart paper. Have students copy the organizer, or provide them with copies to use as they plan paragraphs explaining why it is important that everyone gets a chance to participate.
2. Remind students to use reasons and details as they write to support the opinion that everyone deserves the opportunity to share their talents.



FOCUS ON Content Knowledge

1. Review how the student actors learn to improvise. Then, have students act out these scenarios. Have a different student start each task, and randomly call on a second student to join in.
 - baking a cake
 - riding a roller coaster
 - walking a dog through an obstacle course
 - building a toy train or car track
 - planting a garden
2. Have students reflect in writing about their experiences improvising.

FOCUS ON Social-Emotional Learning

1. Teachers and students of the Born to Act Players exhibit social awareness by recognizing strengths in others. Have students use facts from the card to discuss this idea with partners.
2. Guide students to practice developing social awareness by accepting others for who they are. List on the board or chart paper ways students can show acceptance for people who may be a little different from them.
3. Distribute *Dear Wise Owl*, and have students complete it independently. Then, call on students to share the suggestions they have for each situation. Finally, have students reflect in writing about the importance of accepting others.

FOCUS ON Action

The Born to Act Players has a motto, “Every day I get better and better.” Have students work together to create a motto for the class. Once a class motto is agreed upon, have students create small posters with the motto to be displayed around the classroom.

Name: _____ Date: _____

A Different Kind of Acting

Directions: Reread “Born to Act,” and review the time line on the back of the card. Then, answer the questions.

1. How have Casey and Blair been given the opportunity to share their talents?

2. How does the Born to Act Players theater group help people with disabilities overcome challenges?

3. What stage skills are also helpful offstage?

4. What is the Born to Act Players’ motto?

5. How do you know the Born to Act Players theater group believes in this motto?



Name: _____ Date: _____

Dear Wise Owl

Directions: Read these letters. They are from students who feel unaccepted. Write a letter back to one of the students. Explain what they can do to feel more accepted.

Dear Wise Owl,

No one wants to be my friend. For games, I am always the last person picked. When other students have to work with me in class, they ignore me. I try to make suggestions, but they just talk over me and don't listen. How can I make a friend?

Yours truly,
Friendless

Dear Wise Owl,

This one girl in class seems nice. But she is not nice to me during gym class. She tells me I can't throw right and that I'm not good at anything. One of my legs is shorter than the other, so I do not run well. But I like gym and recess. I may not be the best, but I like the challenges. How can I stop this girl from being mean?

Yours truly,
Giving Up

Dear _____,

Yours truly,
Wise Owl

Name: _____ Date: _____

Opinion Planner

My Opinion

Reason #1

Reason #2

Reason #3

Conclusion
