



Because of Winn Dixie by Heather Blue

Grade Level: Grade 3

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Because of Winn Dixie

Lesson Description: The goal of this exemplar lesson is to give students the opportunity to use the reading and writing habits they've been practicing on a regular basis to absorb deep lessons from Kate DiCamillo's story. By reading and rereading the passage closely and focusing their reading through a series of questions and discussion about the text, students will identify how and why the three main characters become friends.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3: Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

Because of Win-Dixie

by Kate DiCamillo

Content: I spent a lot of time that summer at the Herman W. Block Memorial Library. The Herman W. Block Memorial Library sounds like it would be a big fancy place, but its not. Its just a little old house full of books, and Miss Franny Block is in charge of them all. She is a very small, very old woman with short gray hair, and she was the first friend I made in Naomi.

It all started with Winn-Dixie not liking it when I went into the library, because he couldnt go inside, too. But I showed him how he could stand up on his hind legs and look in the window and see me in there, selecting my books; and he was okay, as long as he could see me. But the thing was, the first time Miss Franny Block saw Winn-Dixie standing up on his hind legs like that, looking in the window, she didnt think he was a dog. She thought he was a bear.

This is what happened: I was picking out my books and kind of humming to myself, and all of a sudden, there was a loud and scary scream. I went running up to the front of the library, and there was Miss Franny Block, sitting on the floor behind her desk.

Miss Franny sat there trembling and shaking.

Come on, I said. Let me help you up. Its okay. I stuck out my hand and Miss Franny took hold of it, and I pulled her up off the floor. She didnt weigh hardly anything at all. Once she was standing on her feet, she started acting all embarrassed, saying how I must think she was a silly old lady, mistaking a dog for a bear, but that she had a bad experience with a bear coming into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library a long time ago, and she never had quite gotten over it.

When did it happen? I asked her.

Well, said Miss Franny, it is a very long story.

Thats okay, I told her. I am like my mama in that I like to be told stories. But

before you start telling it, can Winn-Dixie come in and listen, too? He gets lonely without me.

Well, I dont know, said Miss Franny. Dogs are not allowed in the Herman W. Block Memorial Library.

Hell be good, I told her. Hes a dog who goes to church. And before she could say yes or no, I went outside and got Winn-Dixie, and he came in and lay down with a huummppff and a sigh, right at Miss Frannys feet.

She looked down at him and said, He most certainly is a large dog.

Yes maam, I told her. He has a large heart, too.

Well, Miss Franny said. She bent over and gave Winn-Dixie a pat on the head,

and Winn-Dixie wagged his tail back and forth and snuffled his nose on her little old- lady feet. Let me get a chair and sit down so I can tell this story properly.

Back when Florida was wild, when it consisted of nothing but palmetto trees and mosquitoes so big they could fly away with you, Miss Franny Block started in, and I was just a little girl no bigger than you, my father, Herman W. Block, told me that I could have anything I wanted for my birthday. Anything at all.

Miss Franny looked around the library. She leaned in close to me. I dont want to appear prideful, she said, but my daddy was a very rich man. A very rich man. She nodded and then leaned back and said, And I was a little girl who loved to read. So I told him, I said, Daddy, I would most certainly love to have a library for my birthday, a small little library would be wonderful.

You asked for a whole library?

A small one, Miss Franny nodded. I wanted a little house full of nothing but books and I wanted to share them, too. And I got my wish. My father built me this house, the very one we are sitting in now. And at a very young age, I became a librarian. Yes maam.

What about the bear? I said.

Did I mention that Florida was wild in those days? Miss Franny Block said.

Uh-huh, you did.

It was wild. There were wild men and wild women and wild animals.

Like bears!

Yes maam. Thats right. Now, I have to tell you. I was a little-miss-know-it-all. I

was a miss-smarty-pants with my library full of books. Oh, yes maam, I thought I knew the answers to everything. Well, one hot Thursday, I was sitting in my library with all the doors and window open and my nose stuck in a book, when a shadow crossed the desk. And without looking up, yes maam, without even looking up, I said, Is there a book I can help you find?

Well, there was no answer. And I thought it might have been a wild man or a wild woman, scared of all these books and afraid to speak up. But then I became aware of a very peculiar smell, a very strong smell. I raised my eyes slowly. And standing right in front of me was a bear. Yes maam. A very large bear.

How big? I asked.

Oh, well, said Miss Franny, perhaps three times the size of your dog. Then what happened? I asked her.

Well, said Miss Franny, I looked at him and he looked at me. He put his big

nose up in the air and sniffed and sniffed as if he was trying to decide if a little-miss-know-it-all librarian was what he was in the mood to eat. And I sat there. And then I thought, Well, if this bear intends to eat me, I am not going to let it happen without a fight. No maam. So very slowly and carefully, I raised up the book I was reading.

What book was that? I asked.

Why, it was War and Peace, a very large book. I raised it up slowly and then I aimed it carefully and I threw it right at that bear and screamed, Be gone! And do you know what?

No maam, I said.

He went. But this is what I will never forget. He took the book with him. Nu-uh, I said.

Yes maam, said Miss Franny. He snatched it up and ran.

Did he come back? I asked.

No, I never saw him again. Well, the men in town used to tease me about it.

They used to say, Miss Franny, we saw that bear of yours out in the woods today. He was reading that book and he said it sure was good and would it be all right if he kept it for just another week. Yes maam. They did tease me about it. She said. I imagine Im the only one left from those days. I imagine Im the only one that even recalls that bear. All my friends, everyone I knew when I was young, they are all dead and gone.

She sighed again. She looked sad and old and wrinkled. It was the same way I felt sometimes, being friendless in a new town and not having a mama to comfort me. I sighed, too.

Winn-Dixie raised his head off his paws and looked back and forth between me and Miss Franny. He sat up then and showed Miss Franny his teeth.

Well now, look at that, she said. That dog is smiling at me.

Its a talent of his, I told her.

Its a fine talent, Miss Franny said. A very fine talent. And she smiled back at Winn-Dixie.

We could be friends, I said to Miss Franny. I mean you and me and Winn-Dixie, we could all be friends.

Miss Franny smiled even bigger. Why, that would be grand, she said, just grand.

And right at that minute, right when the three of us had decided to be friends, who should come marching into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library but old pinch- faced Amanda Wilkinson. She walked right up to Miss Frannys desk and said, I finished Johnny Tremain and I enjoyed it very much. I would like something even more difficult to read now, because I am an advanced reader.

Yes dear, I know, said Miss Franny. She got up out of her chair.

Amanda pretended like I wasnt there. She stared right past me. Are dogs allowed in the library? she asked Miss Franny as they walked away.

Certain ones, said Miss Franny, a select few. And then she turned around and winked at me. I smiled back. I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson.

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: recall **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: I imagine I'm the only one that even recalls that bear. ?What does the word "recalls" mean in this sentence?

A: remembers

B: believes in

C: misses

D: is afraid of

Question: Which one of the sentence below uses the word "recall" in the same meaning as provided in the passage?

A: I recalled my friend after I could not reach him the first time.

B: The product has three recalls already.

C: I recall in democracy.

D: Payment was in cash and i cannot recall seeing any checks being presented.

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Q: 2 WordPhrase: trembling **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: Miss Franny sat there trembling and shaking. What does the word "trembling" mean in this sentence?

A: sitting around

B: jumping

C: Feeling fear or anxiety

D: being surprised

Question: Which one of the sentence below uses the word "trembling" correctly?

A: He started trembling after hearing Georgie's name.

B: He is very good at trembling and collecting butterflies.

C: He started trembling bushes in front of his house.

D: Trembling is like winter weather, it is cold and rainy most of the days.

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Why was Miss Franny so scared?

Why was Miss Franny so scared by Winn-Dixie? Why was she acting all embarrassed??

2 - Herman W. Block Memorial Library

How did the Herman W. Block Memorial Library come to get its name??

3 - Three very important things in common

Opal and Miss Franny have three very important things in common - What are these??

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: The title of this selection is Because of Winn-Dixie. Explain why this is an appropriate title for the selection. Be sure to clearly cite evidence from the text for each part of your answer.?

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