Close Reading Read Aloud

Text Title: *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*
Author / Illustrator: Amy Hest, P. J. Lynch
Publisher: Scholastic INC.
ISBN-10: 0-439-13702-0

**Learning Objectives:**
The goal of this series of lessons is to give students the opportunity to explore a historical fiction by author Amy Hest. The students will, through teacher aural reading and scaffolded discussion of text-dependent questions, recognize that content information is gleaned from careful reading and rereading of texts, vocabulary is learned from context, illustrations can be a key to author focus, and writing supports deeper understanding of what is read.

**Rationale:** *When Jessie Came Across the Sea* was chosen as a piece of complex literature to be read aloud. Its use will allow students to practice literary grade level standards with teacher guidance and support in 2nd grade and will further facilitate discussions related to immigration.

**Reading Literature Task:** The students will listen to the teacher read the text aloud in its entirety at least one time. Students will then, with teacher guidance, revisit chunks of the text to practice continually attempting to clarify the meaning of what they read and making inferences about the text. The teacher will ask questions and solicit student’s ideas and thoughts to guide them through purposeful interaction with the text. The questions will focus on Key Ideas (RL.2.1 and RL.2.3), Craft and Structure (RL.2.4, RL.2.5 and RL.2.6), Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (RL.2.7).

**Speaking and Listening Task:** Through the use of text-dependent questions and then engaging in whole class discussion based on answers supported by the text, the students will engage in collaborative conversations that will deepen their understanding of key ideas (SL.2.1) that were presented in the text.

**Language: Vocabulary Task:** Most of the meanings of the words in this text can be discovered from careful reading of the text or using the context of the surrounding text. Teachers will read and discuss selected words from the story and model how to figure out a word based on surrounding text and other strategies (RL.2.4).

**Language: Conventions Task:** A careful examination of the text will reinforce developing language as the teacher and students explore the use of commas in greetings and closings of letters that are used throughout the text. (L.1.2b)

**Writing Task:** When Jessie Came Across the Sea may also be used as a mentor text when teaching students about writing dialogue with correct punctuation such as apostrophes. Students will write a letter to one of the characters in the story, a journal entry describing an event from the text, or an opinion piece using details from text to support t the opinion (W.2.1 and W.2.8).

**Marion County Unit of Study Link:** Students will participate in this close reading read-aloud as part of the 2nd Grade Coming to America Unit of Study. Students will use writing to summarize learning as they practice note taking skills at various intervals and engage in a culminating activity (W.2.1).
Common Core Standards Addressed: Second Grade

- RL.2.1 – Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- RL.2.3 – Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- RL2.5 – Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- RL.2.6 – Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
- RL.2.7 – Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- SL.2.1 – Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- W.2.1 – Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- W.2.8 – Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.
- L.2.2 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- L.2.5 – Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Social Studies Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

- SS.2.A.1.1 – Examine primary and secondary sources
- SS.2.A.2.3 – Describe the impact of immigrants on the Native Americans.
- SS.2.A.2.5 – Identify reasons people came to the United States throughout history.
- SS.2.A.2.6 – Discuss the importance of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty to immigration from 1892-1954
- SS.2.A.2.7 – Discuss why immigration continues today.
- SS.2.A.2.8 – Explain the cultural influences and contributions of immigrants today.
- SS.2.A.3.1 – Identify terms and designations of time sequence.
**Vocabulary List:**
Vocabulary in the story is critical to the students’ understanding of the text although the amount of focus on each word should vary. Tier 2 words are more abstract, likely to be encountered in a variety of situations and could have different meanings depending on the context. These words deserve more attention in the context and in daily vocabulary instruction and use. Tier 3 words in the text are more concrete and can quickly be told or pointed out with respect to the illustrations so the student can make meaning of the context and text. They do not need extensive focus. The student-friendly definitions for the words below were found at [www.wordsmyth.net](http://www.wordsmyth.net).

**Tier 2 words:**
- lace – (n) a fabric made of fine threads that has holes in it as part of the design.
- village – (n) a small town or community, often in the country.
- logic – (n) a way of solving a problem that uses careful thought and reasoning.
- boast – (v) to talk with too much pride; brag.
- guidance – (n) advice.
- journey – (v) to go on a trip; travel.
- mist – (n) a mass or cloud of tiny water drops in the air.
- trunk – (n) a large, strong container, often with a lock, used to store or transport goods; chest.
- inspections- (v) an official review or examination.
- crammed-(v) to force into a space that is too small; stuff.
- frail- (adj) weak or sickly.

**Tier 3 words:**
- rabbi – (n) a teacher of the Jewish religion who is usually the leader of a Jewish congregation.
- synagogue- (n) a place used by Jews for worship and religious instruction.

Not in the book, but used in lesson:
- immigration – (n) the act of coming to live in a new country.

**Reminders:**
- It is important that the text remains the expert, not the teacher. All answers to questions must be supported with specific text sections or selections. Students must be asked to support their claims by giving specific text sections to justify their answers.
- Collaborative discussion and processing is an important piece of this lesson. Ask students to share with partners their thoughts and ideas, and then ask them to share out their answer. When possible, the teacher should ask a question, allow partners to discuss an answer that they can support with the text, then allow them to answer. Subsequent partners should be allowed to share additional justified answers before the teacher moves to the next question.
- The goal is for deep understanding of text and not rushing through the text. Lessons should be completed over the course of SEVERAL days or even multiple weeks. Reading a book to a class once is not sufficient to really enjoy the text and to understand the deeper meanings of the text.
- When possible, allow students to see the text during the discussion. If each student cannot have his/her own copy, or even share with a partner, the teacher should display the pages so all the students have exposure to the text during discussions.
- Have the text available to students when it is not being discussed so that they can explore the text independently as their confidence with the text improves and their understanding deepens. You will find students returning for multiple reads of this text independently.
- Do not front-load the text prior to the first read, and do not front-load any assignments. It is important that students discover and develop answers on their own or through collaborative discussion with peers.
**Lesson Sequence:**
Day 1: Read the story aloud to students straight through with very little discussion. When the story is over, ask the students to turn and talk to their partners about how they liked or disliked the story. Ask students to support their statements with specific examples in the text. After a short time, have students that are willing share their discussion points. (Note: The teacher should not share his/her opinion about the story, as students need to use their own judgment.)

Day 2 and beyond (varies): Revisit specific sections of text for the various lesson points listed below. Student responses and behaviors should be noted so that the discussion activities do not last too long for their age and attention span. Make note which activities were completed each day, so that the other lesson discussions can be complete on subsequent days. (Note: Not all discussion lessons need to be completed. In addition, discussions do not need to follow a specific sequence.)

Final Day: Introduce and complete one of the cumulative writing activities listed below.

**Conclusion / Cumulative Writing Activity Options:**
- **Friendly Letter:** Have students select a character within the story. Students will write a letter as if they are that character describing an experience they have had. For example, students may want to write as if they are the character Lou, writing to Jessie about what is new life is like in America.
- **Personal Narrative:** Students will create a diary entry describing Jessie’s time on the ship. The entries could then be read to the class, having students ask clarifying questions of others about the entries.
- **Opinion Writing:** Have students write to one of the following prompts to express their opinions. It is important that student use specific examples from the text to support their opinion.
  - *Did the rabbi make a good choice selecting Jessie to travel to America?*
  - *Do you believe Jessie should have left her Grandmother to immigrate to America?*

**Additional Activity Options:**
- **Compare and Contrast:** Create a Venn Diagram or Double Bubble map comparing and contrasting Jessie’s village with her home on the Lower East Side.
- Additional lesson activities can be found at: [http://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/When-Jessie-Came-Across-the-Sea-ideas.html](http://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/When-Jessie-Came-Across-the-Sea-ideas.html)
| Once, in a poor village far from here, there was a very small house with a slanting roof. Inside were two chairs, two narrow beds, and a table with a fine lace cloth. A potbellied stove warmed the place in winter, and warmed thin soup. Jessie lived in that house with Grandmother. They had one skinny cow-Miss Minnie-and a patch of garden. Carrots came up here and there, and sometimes a potato. Long ago, when Jessie was a baby her parents died. Jessie kept her other's wedding band, though, in a tiny silver box with a tiny lace lining. From time to time she tried it on. | What does the author’s description of Grandmother’s house tell us about what their life is probably like? |
| Why do you believe Jessie tried on her mother’s ring from time to time? |

| On the morning, when the village boys went to the rabbi for lessons, Jessie went, too. Grandmother insisted. At night, after supper, Jessie read out loud. She practiced her letters by the fire. Grandmother sewed lace. The coins she earned were dropped in a jar on the table. “Now, you read, Grandmother, and copy my good letters.” Jessie liked being teacher. “Me? Learn to read and write?” Grandmother scoffed. Sometime, you never know you may want to read some things,” Jessie said. “You may want to write.” Grandmother showed Jessie how to sew lace. But Jessie stuck herself often. “Why do I have to learn?” she cried. “Sometime, you never know, you may want to sew some things,” Grandmother answered. “You may want to earn some money. | Why do you believe Grandmother insisted that Jessie attend lessons? |
| What insight into the culture of the education in the village does the author give us with phrase, “when the village boys went to the rabbi for lessons”? |
One evening toward the end of summer, the rabbi called the people of the village to the synagogue. “The news from America is sad,” said the rabbi. “My good brother, Mordecai, has left this world.” The villagers sighed and shook their heads. “Rest in peace,” They said. “Shortly before he died, my Mordecai sent me a ticket to America.” The rabbi paused. “He wanted me to join him there.” “America! The promised land!” The voices rose as one. “Bus alas!” The rabbi sighed. “I am the rabbi. How do I leave this village? How do I quit my people?” He threw up his hands. “Someone else must go in my place, someone of my choosing.”

How does the illustration show the importance of the rabbi to the village and villagers?

Why does the rabbi refer to America as the promised land?

What does the rabbi mean when he says, “How do I quit my people?”

Later that night, many villagers came to the rabbi’s house. “Rabbi, listen to reason! I must go to America, for I am smart!” “Rabbi, listen to logic! I must go to America for I am brave!” The rabbi listened. How they boast and brag! He thought. “Tonight I shall seek guidance from the Almighty,” he told the villagers. “You go home. Tomorrow I will choose.”

How does the rabbi feel about the villagers comments?

How do you think the rabbi should choose who goes to America?

Early the next morning, Jessie and Grandmother had a caller. “I have decided,” announced the rabbi. “Jessie will go to America. My brother’s widow has a dress shop in New York City. Her name is Kay and Jessie can help with the sewing. She will comfort the good lady?” Jessie’s hands started to shake. America? So far away from Grandmother! She bit her lip, for she must not cry in front of the rabbi. Don’t make me go! She thought. “You, know best.” Grandmother spoke quietly to the rabbi. Oh, but her heart was breaking! Dear Jessie, alone on a ship to America! Grandmother’s’ heart said one thing, but her head said another. Jessie must go.

Which text feature is used to show the reader the character’s thoughts?

Which text feature is used to show the reader’s spoken words in the story?

Why does Grandmother believe that the rabbi knows best?

What does the author mean with the following phrase: “Grandmother’s heart said one thing, but her head said another”?

What are some advantages and disadvantages a young girl may have experienced in immigrating to American during the 19th century?
A week passed quickly, then two more, as Grandmother prepared Jessie for her journey. The morning the ship was to sail, it rained so hard there was no telling where the sky met the sea. “America! Good things await you there,” Grandmother had promised. Jessie stood at the rail, holding her hat against the wind and the rain. At her feet was a small trunk, packed with a few simple clothes and layers of lace. In Jessie’s pocket was the tiny silver box with a tiny lace linin, but her mother’s wedding band was not inside. “Keep it safe for me, Grandmother, “she had whispered as they kissed good-bye. “Grandmother!” She called. But the boat slipped away from the dock, then into the channel on toward the sea. Umbrellas faded in the mist. Rain pelted Jessie’s face. It slid down the back of her collar.

How does the weather at the dock mirror or imitate the moods of Jessie and Grandmother? Why does the author offer the detail of Jessie’s trunk being small and packed with few items?

Later, she sat on her trunk and cried. Passengers pitied the girl with the auburn hair and ginger-colored freckles. But what could they do? Crammed together and fearful, speaking strange languages, huddling close to keep warm, what could they do for Jessie? The ship sailed west for many days. At first it was stormy. Jessie lay curled on a mat, too ill to eat, too ill to sleep. She thought about Grandmother in the hut with the slanting roof, eating her soup alone.

Why does the author describe the people on the ship as speaking “strange” languages?

Looking at the illustration on this page, what do you think the journey on the ship was like for the passengers?

On the fourth morning the sun came up and the passengers dried out. They played cards and sang, and sometimes they argued. But mostly they talked, swapping stories and dreams. Dreams of America where the streets were paved with gold. America, land of plenty. Jessie began sewing to pass the time. Just to touch the soft lace was like touching Grandmother again. A little girl with almond eyes climbed on Jessie’s lap. They sang and played finger games. The Jessie sewed lace, a tiny heart pocket for the girls’ plain dress. Miss Almond Eyes danced. An old woman came along in a tattered coat. Jessie sewed lace, a collar and cuffs, and soon that coat was grand.

How does the weather reflect the passengers’ moods on the fourth day of their trip?

What point is the author trying to make when describing America as “where the streets were paved with gold”?

What is the importance of lace in the story?
A boy named Lou—he was a shoemaker’s son—watched as Jessie sewed lace. “How do you do?” he asked, tipping his hat. Jessie smiled. Lou took patches of leather form his splintered crate. He stitched shoes for a baby, who cried when his mother put them on his fat baby feet. This time Jessie laughed. Later, Lou and Jessie walked on the deck and talked. They shared black bread as the ship rolled and pitched in the wide, wide sea.

**Why was Lou so interested in watching Jessie sew the lace?**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>On a fine fall day they sailed past the Statue of Liberty. America! No one swapped stories or argued. Babies hushed. Even the oldest passengers and the most seasick stood against the rail. America! And there it was, New York City with those tall, tall buildings that touched the sky. Grandmother! Jessie thought. <em>If only you could see what I see now!</em></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How do the expressions of the passengers’ faces in the illustration show how they feel about seeing America for the first time?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Why were the passengers and babies quiet during this time?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What is the importance of Ellis Island?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Why is Jessie required to pass inspections and answer questions?</strong></td>
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<td>If Jessie’s answered had been different, do you believe she would have been allowed to stay in America, or would she have been turned away and sent back to her village?</td>
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Cousin Kay lived on the Lower East Side. Her house was three flights up. There was a bathtub in the kitchen, a dress shop in the parlor.

Dear Grandmother, I miss you. Cousin Kay takes me all around the city. I wish you could see the pushcarts and shops and the trolleys speeding by. But there are too many people in America, and the streets are not gold. There are no cows. Cousin Kay bought me a pickle from a barrel. Tomorrow I begin to sew for her. Love, Jessie

Jessie chose the yellow chair near the window in the parlor. The light was good for sewing there, and she could see the street. Best of all, Jessie liked to sew lace. A collar, cuffs, a delicate sash.

Every Friday Cousin Kay gave three coins to Jessie, who dropped all three in a jar.

One afternoon, just for the fun of it, Jessie pinned a lace bodice to a plain white dress on the cutting board. She pinned lace to the sleeves. “What a beautiful bride’s dress that would be,” said Cousin Kay. Miss Emily Levy was browsing in the shop that very day. “Well, I’m getting married! Can this dress be for me?” The wedding dress was lovely. So lovely that Emily’s cousin, Miss Rachel Katz, wanted one just like to for her wedding day. Before long, brides were filling up Cousin Kay’s parlor.

“You must go to school,” said Cousin Kay one day. “Everyone in America speaks English. My Jessie will speak it, too.” Son in the morning, Jessie went to school. A Apple. B Boy. C Carrot. This English was hard!

Dear Grandmother,
I miss you more than ever. There’s a library here with rows of books. I want to read them all. On Sundays I take long walks on city streets and don’t get lost anymore. There are flowers in the parks
Love, Jessie

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<tr>
<td>How does the Lower East Side compare to Jessie’s village?</td>
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<td>Why does Jessie drop the coins in the jar?</td>
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<td>How do you believe the author wants the reader to feel about Jessie’s new life in America?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why is it important that Jessie attends school?</td>
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<td>How will learning English benefit Jessie?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the author use Jessie’s letters to Grandmother to help the reader understand Jessie’s thoughts?</td>
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Jessie learned more and more English. She sewed beautiful lace. And so three years passed. She was a young lady now, sixteen. On an icy cold Sunday in March, Jessie walked up Fifth Avenue, then into the park, where the trees were covered with new snow. Sleds crisscrossed the hills. Jessie sat on a bench and watched a young man as the wind shipped up and blew his hat off. She laughed out loud. The young man turned. Lou! Jessie couldn’t believe her eyes. Lou, her friend from the ship! Jessie waved. And Lou, the shoemaker’s son, waved back. He would have tipped his hat, but it was far away. The next Sunday they met again on the bench in the park. And the Sunday after that.

| Based on the illustration, what time of year, or season is it now? |
| How do Jessie and Lou feel about seeing each other again? |

**Dear Grandmother, I have a special friend. He makes good strong shoes from patches of leather. His name is Lou. You will like him, Grandmother. I promise. Love, Jessie**

One evening Jessie met Lou’s parents, his brother, and his three sisters. She brought a basket of bread with a lace cloth. The two littlest sisters cried when she left. “Marry me?” asked Lou, on the stairs outside his house. “Soon.” Jessie smiled and held his hand.

Jessie brings a basket of bread with lace cloth to Jessie’s house. What does this action say about how Jessie feels about meeting Lou’s family?

| Days passed, and weeks. Jessie sewed lace, early and late. Months went by. Jessie sewed and sewed, and then one day the jar was filled with coins. She brought it to a man who sold tickets to America. “I need a ticket for Grandmother,” she said. Every day, Jessie rushed down three flights of stairs to the mailbox. The letter came, finally, on a breezy day. The handwriting was shaky, but Jessie knew Grandmother had written every word herself. Dear Jessie, I sewed the ticket to the lining of my coat. I say goodbye to this village. The rabbi is taking Miss Minnie. Your loving Grandmother |
| Using the illustrations on this page, how does Jessie’s facial expression tell the reader how she is feeling during these moments? What specific words could we use to describe her emotions? |
| Why does the author point out that the handwriting was shaky in Grandmother’s letter? |
| Why do you think Grandmother has decided to leave her village to come to America? |
The morning her ship arrived in New York Harbor, it rained so hard there was no telling where the sky met the sea. Grandmother was older than Jessie remembered, and much more frail. They held each other for a long time. “I’ve brought something for you,” Grandmother whispered, “from across the sea.” With that, she slipped Jessie’s mother’s wedding band into Jessie’s hand. Then they went home, for there was going to be a wedding.

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<tr>
<td>Why do you think the author uses rainy weather during Jessie and Grandmother’s separation and reunion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the importance of the wedding band?</td>
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<td>Do you immigrating to America changed Jessie’s life for the better? For Jessie, did America turn out to be a Promised Land?</td>
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