

Instructional Overview

The Tale of Despereaux
By: Kate DiCamillo
Grade Level: 5 / Guided Reading Level: U

Book Club

Instructional Focus:
Story Structure: Linear vs. Nonlinear Plots

Background:
Linear plot is when the story is in chronological order and does not vary from that order. A **nonlinear narrative** occurs when an author portrays events out of chronological order.

In this story, the author begins with the birth of Despereaux, and then flashes back to the birth of Roscuro and how he and Gregory ended up in the dungeon. Book III goes backward even further so the reader can meet Miggery Sow. [Using this technique helps to set the stage as to why a dungeon exists at all and how it began, before the reader finds out what happens to Despereaux as a result of being sent to the dungeon.] Book IV brings us back to the story of Despereaux where these characters all come together. The techniques used in a nonlinear timeline include flashbacks and flash forwards.

Instructional Overview:

Meeting #1
Set Expectations for Book Club and Introduce Timelines

Meeting #2
(Book I: Chapters 4 – 15) Understanding Linear and Nonlinear Timelines

Meeting #3
(Book II: Chapters 16 – 23) Understanding Flashbacks, Events, and Consequences

Meeting #4
(Book III: Chapters 24 – 33) Examining Nonlinear Timelines

Meeting #5
(Book IV: Chapters 34 – 52) Understanding Flash Forwards

Final Meeting
(Coda) Recognizing the Author's Voice

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Instructional Focus

Description of the Instructional Focus

List of Book Club Meetings and the Instructional Focus for Each Meeting

List of Materials and Preparation

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Materials and Preparation:

- Determine which students will participate in the *The Tale of Despereaux* Book Club (4-6 students)
- Gather copies of *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo (1 per student)
- Prepare copies of the Book Club Calendar (1 per student)
- Prepare copies of the Expectations for Book Club (1 per student)
- Prepare copies of the Book Club Reading Response Board (1 per student)
- Prepare Reader's Notebooks (1 per student)
 - These may be spiral notebooks or several sheets of lined paper stapled together, or bound in a folder.
- Chart paper
- Optional: Examples of Author Interruptions (1 set for the group - Culminating Activity)
- Optional: Prepare Vocabulary Resources (1 set per student)
- Optional: Prepare Student Self-Evaluation Forms (1 per student per meeting)
- Optional: Prepare Assessment Resources (1 set per student)
- Drawings or cutouts of major characters to place on timelines, if desired

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