

Building Literacy in a Collaborative Classroom: Toys and Play

Overview

In this module, students build their literacy and citizenship skills as they engage in a study of toys and play. In Unit 1, students consider norms and behaviors for sharing toys and interacting with peers through structured conversations, learning experiences such as role-play and guided discovery of toys, and an analysis of the text *Llama Llama Time to Share* by Anna Dewdney.

In Unit 2, students learn more about toys as they consider what makes something a toy and what makes toys fun. They learn to sort and describe toys by specific attributes. They also begin to think about perspective as they discuss and write about their own toy preferences, using language and ideas from the text *Toys Galore* by Peter Stein.

In Unit 3, students deepen their understanding of perspective as they read the text *Have Fun, Molly Lou Melon* by Patty Lovell. Students also learn about toys from a historical perspective using the text *Playing with Friends: Comparing Past and Present* by Rebecca Rissman. As a culmination of the unit, students interview a classmate about his or her preferred classroom toy. They use the information from the interview to create their performance task: an informational piece of writing and drawing about their classmate's preferred toy and how the classmate likes to play with it. **This performance task centers on CCSS ELA W.K.2, W.K.8, L.K.2c, and L.K.2d.**

- **Topic:** Toys and play
- **Task:** Informational writing describing a classmate's toy preference
- **Targets (CCSS explicitly taught and assessed):** RL.K.1, RL.K.7, W.K.1, W.K.8, SL.K.1, S.L.K.3
- **Texts:** *Llama Llama Time to Share*; *Toys Galore*; *Playing with Friends*; *Have Fun, Molly Lou Melon*

Overview

Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- What can we do to make playing together fun?
People can learn to play and work together through cooperation.
- What makes toys fun?
Using your imagination makes toys fun.
- Which classroom toy do I prefer? Why do I prefer that classroom toy?
Everyone has preferences and reasons for their preferences.

- What toys do others prefer? Why do they prefer them?

Different people prefer different toys for different reasons.

Module 1 Performance Task - Describing a Classmate's Toy Preference

This performance task gives students an opportunity to showcase their deepened understanding of perspective through an informational writing piece about a classmate's preferred classroom toy. In this task, students use the information they gathered from interviewing a classmate to learn about his or her preferred classroom toy and how the classmate likes to play with that toy as a basis for their informational writing. Students first draw and label their classmate's preferred toy and add a sentence to accompany their drawing. Students then create a drawing with accompanying labels to show how their classmate likes to play with the preferred toy. Finally, students add a sentence to accompany this drawing. The entire task is scaffolded through heavy teacher guidance and modeling. (The format of this task should be somewhat familiar to students, since the Unit 2 assessment has a similar drawing and writing format and requires students to produce an informational piece of writing about their own preferred classroom toy.) Students share their written pieces with their classmates, the principal, and other classroom visitors during an end of module celebration. This task addresses CCSS ELA W.K.2, W.K.8, L.K.2c, and L.K.2d.

Social Studies Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards and to be taught during the integrated literacy block of the school day. The module also intentionally incorporates social studies content that many teachers across the nation are expected to address in first grade. These intentional connections are described below.

C3 Framework for Social Studies:

- **D2.Civ.9.K-2:** Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions while responding attentively to others when addressing ideas and making decisions as a group.
- **D2.Civ.10.K-2:** Compare their own point of view with others' perspectives.
- **D2.Civ.11.K-2:** Explain how people can work together to make decisions in the classroom.

