

Kid Authors

TRUE TALES OF CHILDHOOD FROM

FAMOUS WRITERS

CURRICULUM GUIDE

STORIES BY *DAVID STABLER* ILLUSTRATIONS BY *DOOGIE HORNER*



COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

Kid Authors: True Tales of Childhood from Famous Writers contains kid-friendly and relatable childhood stories of fifteen of the world's most beloved and talented writers. This curriculum guide, with connections to the Common Core, includes an array of language arts activities, book discussions, vocabulary instruction, and more to accommodate the learning needs of most students in grades 4–7. Students are asked to be careful readers without jeopardizing the fun of reading.

Noted throughout the guide are correlations between the discussion questions and activities and specific Common Core Language Arts Standards. For more information on specific standards, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.

★ Pre-Reading Brainstorming ★

Previewing the text helps students understand the informational purpose of the book. Key characteristics of the text include the titles, table of contents, use of illustrations, chapter headings, bibliography, and index. Ask students to compare and contrast the format of *Kid Authors* with that of a narrative book.

Have students choose an author featured in *Kid Authors*. Then ask them to research the books their author wrote and choose one to read (you can help them choose a chapter or excerpt if the book is long). Invite students to share the plot of the story with the class via a multimedia book report.

Ask your class the following questions. Have students brainstorm, and then call on individual students to answer and write their answers on the board.

- ★ What is your favorite story, and why?
- ★ Who is your favorite author?
- ★ What makes a writer great?
- ★ Why do you think someone decides to become a writer?
- ★ How do you think a person becomes an author?
- ★ How do you think an author decides what stories to write?
- ★ If you were an author what types of stories would you write?
- ★ What do you think your favorite author was like as a kid?
- ★ What do you think is the most important characteristic a person needs in order to become an author? Why?
- ★ List five ways an author can get ideas for his or her books.
- ★ Which writer featured in *Kid Authors* are you most interested in learning about? Why?
- ★ Write a paragraph on why you think it's important to learn about authors' backgrounds.

PRE-READING COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The Discussion Points address the following Common Core State Standards:

WRITING:

Text Types and Purposes

Grade 4 – W.4.1-3e

Grade 5 – W.5.1-3e

Grade 6 – W.6.1-3e

Grade 7 – W.7.1-1c, 2-2d, 3-3e

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Grade 4 – W.4.7-9b

Grade 5 – W.5.7-9b

Grade 6 – W.6.7-9

Grade 7 – W.7.7-9a

SPEAKING AND LISTENING:

Comprehension and Collaboration

Grade 4 – SL.4.1-2

Grade 5 – SL.5.1-1d

Grade 6 – SL.6.1-2

Grade 7 – SL.7.1

SPEAKING AND LISTENING:

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 4 – SL.4.4-6

Grade 5 – SL.5.4-5

Grade 6 – SL.6.4-5

Grade 7 – SL.7.4-5

★ Didactic Discussion Questions ★

- ★ What childhood memories play a role in J. R. R. Tolkien's writing?
- ★ List three examples from J. K. Rowling's childhood that inspired a person, place, or thing in the Harry Potter series.
- ★ How did Edgar Allan Poe's fear of ghosts and monsters help him become one of the most celebrated macabre authors of all time?
- ★ Why did Sherman Alexie leave his reservation? Why was it difficult for him to do this? How did his childhood influence his writing?
- ★ Why was Lewis Carroll a target for bullies? How did writing help him beat his bullies?
- ★ Name five ways that Laura Ingalls Wilder's childhood influenced her classic novels.
- ★ What advice did Zora Neale Hurston's mother give her that helped shape Zora's life? How did it help Zora succeed in life and as a writer?
- ★ Give three examples of how Mark Twain's misbehaving as a boy made him more successful later in life.
- ★ How did Langston Hughes's grandmother inspire his poetry?
- ★ How do Jules Verne's books "excite young boys to quit their homes for adventurous travel"? Use examples from *Kid Authors* to explain why you think Jules Verne would like or not like this statement about his writing.
- ★ What role did candy play in Roald Dahl's daily life as a boy, while he was at boarding school, and in his writing?
- ★ List three ways that being poor helped Stan Lee become one of the greatest comic book writers ever.
- ★ Use examples from the book to show how reading made Beverly Cleary both struggle and succeed early in life.
- ★ What was Lucy Maud Montgomery's nickname? Explain what was really behind her encounter with the "ghost."
- ★ How did being the "often overlooked middle child" set Jeff Kinney up for future success?
- ★ Compare and contrast two of the Kid Authors' childhoods and explain how each one's upbringing contributed to his or her success as a writer.
- ★ What do the authors in each of the three parts of the book—Part One: It's Not Easy Being a Kid, Part Two: All in the Family, and Part Three: The Write Stuff—all have in common? Why did the author set the book up this way?
- ★ List all fifteen authors featured in *Kid Authors*. Then write down two adjectives that describe each one.
- ★ Which author featured in *Kid Authors* do you like best? Why?
- ★ Using examples from the book, explain how you relate to one of the writers in *Kid Authors*.

DISCUSSION POINTS COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The Discussion Points address the following Common Core State Standards for Reading Informational Text:

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 4 – RI.4.1-3
Grade 5 – RI.5.1-3
Grade 6 – RI.6.1-3
Grade 7 – RI.7.1-3

Craft and Structure

Grade 4 – RI.4.4-6
Grade 5 – RI.5.4-6
Grade 6 – RI.6.4-6
Grade 7 – RI.7.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 4 – RI.4.7, 9
Grade 5 – RI.5.9
Grade 6 – RI.6.9
Grade 7 – RI.7.9

Range of Reading Level of Text Complexity

Grade 4 – RI.4.10
Grade 5 – RI.5.10

★ Vocabulary in Verse ★

Review this list of vocabulary words found throughout *Kid Authors*. First ask students if they can guess each word's meaning by rereading it in the context of the story. Then have them use dictionaries to define the word and check their guesses. Also have them use each word in a sentence of their own. Since there are so many vocabulary words, you may choose to review these words over a few class periods and assign some for homework. You can also use them for your weekly list, daily word study, or spelling exercises.

Introduction

legendary
frontier
locusts
fend
heroin
formidable

J. R. R. Tolkien Meets a Baboon Tarantula

realm
encounter
vivid
province
frilly
vaulted
rampaged
pinnae
incident
rarest
aggressive
haste
scuttled
winging
swollen
fateful

J. K. Rowling, A Storybook Life

defy
aspiring
bound
enchanted
sensation
managed
laboratory
constant
companions
plummeted
plunged
dismiss
inspiration
don
portray
ancient
centuries
recalled
severe
promotion
rubbish
rumor
tormentor
peering
ambush
feisty
ditched
excel

regarded
dignitaries
resourceful
persevered
hailed
dedicated

Edgar Allan Poe, Little Orphan Edgar

supernatural
macabre
nursemaid
abandoned
distraught
misfortunes
tuberculosis
prosperous
merchant
determined
doted
lavish
recite
theatrical
enthralled
adoration
spoiled
criticized
humiliating
shambling
horde
convinced
suffocated
plagued
pursue
earshot
horticulture
verses
compiled
manuscript
headmaster
adulation
swelled
shied
slights
solitary
notorious
submission
episode
feat
subdued
heartily
thespian
vacant
traits
panache

Sherman Alexie, Off the Reservation

reservation
boundaries
slightly
seizures
subsided
cultures
strolling
opportunity
insomnia
manuals
powwows
enlarged
mocked
dissatisfied
close-knit
reunions
broaden
enrolled
hitch
prestigious

Lewis Carroll, One Tough Nerd

imposing
frail
stutter
exterior
relies
populated
complex
logarithms
gesturing
protective
advised
stammered
reverend
rural
livestock
parsonage
rector
opulent
lounging
coax
combat
complicated
regulations
qualified
marionettes
instructive
limericks
endear
pale
reputation
harsher
rampant

vulnerable
imposition
sorely
deteriorating
contracted
nonsense

Laura Ingalls Wilder, Heart of a Pioneer

pioneer
trailblazer
reluctantly
relocations
flickering
tomboy
flitting
half-pint
tom-toms
settlers
territory
restless
irritated
sprawling
parcel
stripped
decimated
invasion
lore
vain
bombarded
content
projectiles
stroke
locomotive
toiled
tuition
primary
ritual
homesteader
enabled

Zora Neale Hurston, Jumping at the Sun

ambled
hovered
hailed
segregated
contrast
seamstress
dubbed
spools
swap
eavesdrop
basis
gatepost
skeptical
streetcar
wardrobe
troupe
urging

Mark Twain, Bad Boy Makes Good

streaking
reckless
dazzling
anxious

omen
stern
bustling
extrovert
indulgent
majestic
vessels
fathoms
currents
enslaved
perishing
incorrigible
cohorts
escapades
shabbily
limestone
hideous
cylinder
ne'er-do-well
inclined
idling
steered
errand
apprentice
unwieldy
grueling
grimy
ill-fitting
scarcely
stunt
rambling
uneasiness

Langston Hughes, History Lessons

relented
racism
reunite
massive
scampered
menial
wizened
rickety
shawl
squaw
heritage
occupied
abolitionist
coverlet
seekers
profoundly
integrated
unanimous
jotted
thunderous
illustrious
trademark
admiration
icons

Jules Verne, Castaway for a Day

predicted
innovations
fascinated
navigators

gaze
schooners
exotic
lacked
briny
watchman
clambered
commander
pungent
cargo
fancied
helmsman
telescope
waterway
franc
leaky
gushing
murky
islet
subsisting
provisions
castaway
waded
headwinds
foundering
disabled
mariner
reproach
harbor

Roald Dahl, The Boy Who Loved Candy

spark
inexorably
confections
magnet
blisteringly
stouthearted
froth
drawback
proprietor
dingy
gaggle
exaggerate
bizarre
gooseberry
exacts
triumphantly
commemorating
dismal
doled out
transgressions
worthwhile
posing
subtle
palate
insufficiently
plot
mogul
rival
formula

Stan Lee, The Incredible Reader

acquired
radioactive
gamma rays
mutants
immigrants
decade
scarce
economic
inability
specifications
smeared
chord
ventriloquist
mystical
contrary
galloping
transforming
correspondent
dispatches
exploits
rebel
distinctive
swashbuckling
derring-do
dictate
evaluated
summarize
polished
excelsior
pen name
protégé

Beverly Cleary, Flight of the Blackbird

perspective
gelatin
cleanser
establish
donate
well-stocked
intoned
narrate
advanced
struggling
mortified

memorize
dread
summoned
prancing
conquered
sequel
develop
ability
baffled
siege
praised
tour-de-force
contribution
appropriately

Lucy Maud Montgomery, The Adventures of Story Girl

knack
motherless
orchards
ward
arrangements
reflections
complaints
constructed
hinges
blood-curdling
grove
wraith
consumed
clutches
outskirts
unearthly
gloom
uncertainty
citing
beggar
indistinct
simultaneous
pitchfork
specter
solution
dyke
stampede

Jeff Kinney, Stuck in the Middle

overlooked
bedeviled
seemingly
hefty
sandwiched
warring
intense
revenge
rousted
scrambled
bamboozled
pantry
seethed
glee
obnoxious
consternation
devour
whips up
concoction
retold
renderings
rejections
observations
contract

Fun Facts about Famous Authors

tantrum
leap
menagerie
consulting
conductor
dueling
enslavement
auditioning
lunatic
descendent
pygmy
insisting

After your class is familiar with the vocabulary list, invite them to choose 15-20 words to use to write their own short stories featuring their favorite Kid Author.

VOCABULARY COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The vocabulary activities address the following Common Core State Standards for Language:

Conventions of Standard English

Grade 4 – L.4.1-2
Grade 5 – L.5.1-2
Grade 6 – L.6.1-2
Grade 7 – L.7.1-2

Knowledge of Language

Grade 4 – L.4.3
Grade 5 – L.5.3
Grade 6 – L.6.3
Grade 7 – L.7.3

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Grade 4 – L.4.4-6
Grade 5 – L.5.4-6
Grade 6 – L.6.4-6
Grade 7 – L.7.4-6

★ An Anthology of Language Arts Activities ★

There Once Was a Boy Who Loved Limericks...

A limerick is a funny, rhyming, and sometime nonsensical poem. They are great for kids to both read and write since they are short and silly. Page 59 of *Kid Authors* talks about how Lewis Carroll liked writing them when he was in school. Reread that passage to your class, and then look up some limericks to share with your class. Then lead a discussion explaining the structure of limericks. They have a rhyme scheme of AABBA—which means that lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme and lines 3 and 4 rhyme. Lines 1, 2, and 5 should have 7–10 syllables and lines 3 and 4 should have 5–7 syllables. And the first line of a limerick usually begins with “There was a....” and ends with a person’s name and a place. Invite students to write their own limericks and share them with the class.

Fun Fact Presentations

At the end of *Kid Authors* is a section of fun facts about 30 other authors. Ask students to research one of these authors, read one of his or her famous works, and then create a presentation about the author. The presentation should include a short biography of the author’s childhood, an excerpt of his or her writing, and images of the author. These presentations should be creative—some examples could be a diorama, collage, PowerPoint presentation, infographic, or brochure. Have students share their work with the class.

Kid Lit

The writers featured in *Kid Authors* are very different, but the one thing that they all have in common is that they were once all kids! Ask your students to choose a writer from *Kid Authors*, research that author’s writing, and write and illustrate a children’s story in his or her writing style. For example, a student using Edgar Allan Poe for inspiration could write a scary story, a student who chooses Langston Hughes might write a poem, and a student researching Beverly Cleary may write a humorous story about his or her family. Publish all of the student books in a class anthology for everyone to read and enjoy.

Writers’ Blogs

The internet hadn’t been invented when the people in *Kid Authors* were growing up. So, unlike many writers growing up today, none of them ever had a blog. Ask your students to choose an author and have them create a blog post (at blogger.com or in their notebooks), writing posts in the voice of their chosen author. Topics could include musings about the author’s daily life, thoughts about other authors’ works, and projects they are working on. Invite students to share their blogs with the class.

Famous Author Bookmarks

Have students choose their favorite author from *Kid Authors*, and ask them to research the author’s life and famous writing. Then have them create bookmarks using illustrations, words, and phrases highlighting the author’s major life events and accomplishments.

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Colorful Words and Phrases

Divide students into groups of two or three, and assign each group an author from *Kid Authors*. Ask them to go through the book and write down words or phrases that describe their author, and then illustrate each word or phrase on an index card. When each group has at least ten illustrated words or phrases, have them tape their creations to a wall. After every group is finished, instruct your class to share all the illustrated words or phrases with one another.

Authors vs. _____

Currently, there are four books in the Kid Legends series: *Kid Authors*, *Kid Presidents*, *Kid Athletes*, and *Kid Artists*. Have students choose one author and another person featured in another Kid Legends book. Then have the children compare and contrast the two figures by listing things they have in common and things about them that are different. Spark interest by suggesting they look at: why each person is famous, their careers, their family life, things that inspired them, childhood experiences, how they overcame obstacles, and what they are remembered for today. Instruct students to use their lists to help them write a compare-and-contrast essay.

Illustrated Quotes

All of the writers featured in *Kid Authors* have at least one famous quote attributed to them. Ask your students to research an author's or a few authors' works, and choose one quote they think is meaningful. Then have them write the quote on a piece of paper and decorate it with related images, words, and phrases. Finally, ask students to write a paragraph on why the quote interests them and to share the quote with the class.

LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The Language Arts Activities address the following Common Core State Standards:

WRITING:

Text Types and Purposes

Grade 4 – W.4.1–3e

Grade 5 – W.5.1–3e

Grade 6 – W.6.1–3e

Grade 7 – W.7.1–1c, 2–2d, 3–3e

Production and Distribution of Writing

Grade 4 – W.4.4–6

Grade 5 – W.5.4–6

Grade 6 – W.6.4–5

Grade 7 – W.7.4–6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Grade 4 – W.4.7–9b

Grade 5 – W.5.7–9b

Grade 6 – W.6.7–9

Grade 7 – W.7.7–9a

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Comprehension and Collaboration

Grade 4 – SL.4.1–2

Grade 5 – SL.5.1–1d

Grade 6 – SL.6.1–2

Grade 7 – SL.7.1

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Grade 4 – SL.4.4–6

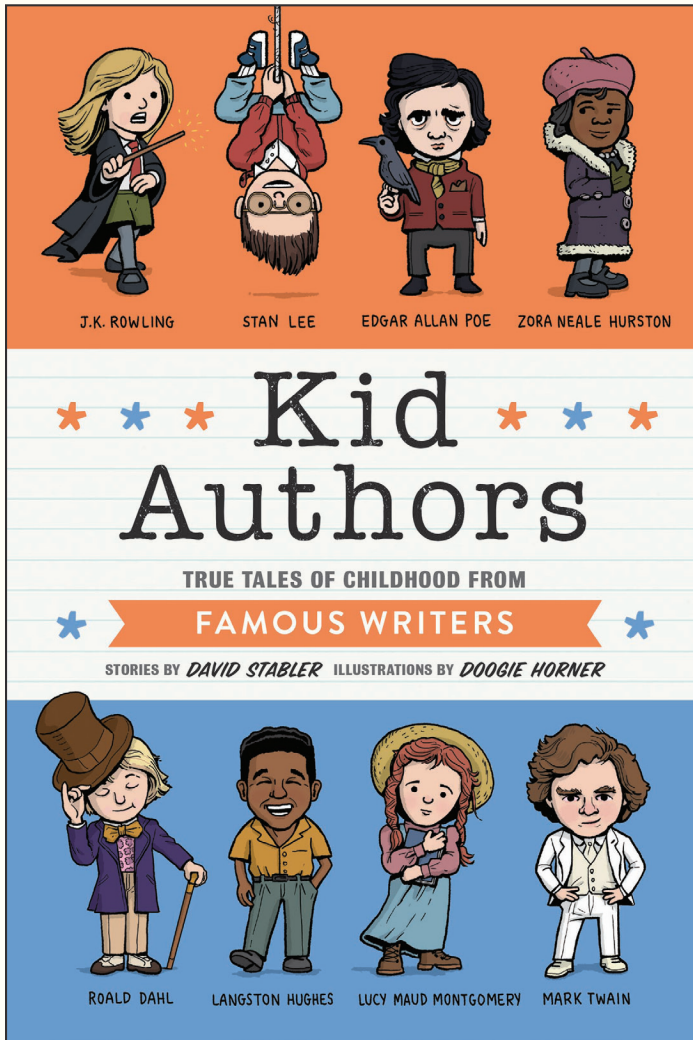
Grade 5 – SL.5.4–5

Grade 6 – SL.6.4–5

Grade 7 – SL.7.4–5

★ About the Book ★

“Lively glimpses of formative moments and budding talents.”—*Kirkus Reviews*



The series that includes *Kid Presidents*, *Kid Artists*, and *Kid Athletes* now chronicles the lives of *Kid Authors*! Here are true tales of famous writers, from long before they were famous—or even old enough to drive. Did you know:

- ★ Sam Clemens (aka Mark Twain) loved to skip school and make mischief, with his best friend Tom, of course!
- ★ A young J. R. R. Tolkien was bitten by a huge tarantula—or as he called it, “a spider as big as a dragon.”
- ★ Toddler Zora Neale Hurston took her first steps when a wild hog entered her house and started chasing her!

Forget all the best sellers, the sold-out book tours, and the crowds of fans seeking autographs. When the world’s most beloved authors were growing up, they had regular kid-problems just like you. *Kid Authors* tells these stories and more with full-color cartoon illustrations on nearly every page.

Learn about the young lives of Stan Lee, Jeff Kinney, Sherman Alexie, Zora Neale Hurston, J. R. R. Tolkien, Edgar Allan Poe, Lucy Maud Montgomery, Roald Dahl, Beverly Cleary, J. K. Rowling, Langston Hughes, Jules Verne, Lewis Carroll, Mark Twain, and Laura Ingalls Wilder.

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★ About the Author & Illustrator ★

Author David Stabler and illustrator Doogie Horner have created many books. Previous collaborations are *Kid Presidents* (Quirk Books, 2014), *Kid Athletes* (Quirk Books, 2015), and *Kid Artists* (Quirk Books, 2016). Stabler lives in New York City, and Horner lives in Philadelphia.