

LITTLE THINGS

by Nick Dyer; illustrated by Kelly Pousette



Common Core Teaching Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK

A child notices everyday small things from footprints to flowers, from berries to birds.

And what may seem like a small act to one, may be a lifesaving act to another—proving that even the littlest things in the world may have the biggest impact.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Teacher,

A girl travels throughout her world noticing the little things many overlook in *Little Things*, demonstrating for young readers the power of observation and perspective to open worlds of whimsy and delight.

Little Things provides opportunities for playful discussions of character in literature as well as the role of illustrations in our understanding of text. It also allows students to meet many Common Core Reading Literature, Speaking and Listening, and Writing standards.

Lastly, students can create a diorama to explore how to make something big into a little thing in an art extension activity.



Picture Book Parts & Plot

KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO:

Before reading *Little Things*, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers, and jacket flap.

Then ask:

- *What is the girl doing on the cover?*
 - *How do you think she feels?*
- *Try to mimic what she is doing on the cover.*
 - *How does it make you feel?*
- *Do you see any other characters on the front cover?*
 - *Who do you think those characters are?*
 - *What do you think the other characters are doing?*
 - *How do they feel?*
- *Can you guess what the story might be about?*
 - *What are some clues you can find in the cover illustration?*

Now have the students look at the back cover, and in their own words, describe what they see. Then read aloud the text on the back cover. Ask:

- *What do you think it means?*
- *Can you make any further predictions about what *Little Things* is about?*

Now read the book aloud to your students. Then help students summarize in their own words what the book was about and define the events in terms of a plot arc by using the following prompts.

- **Who** is the main character in the story?
- **How** do you know she is the main character?
- **What** does she like to do?
- **Why** does she like to do this? **How** does this make her feel?
- **Where** does she look? **What** does she find?
- **Where** does the story take place?
- **When** does this story take place? **What** clues do you see in the illustrations to tell you time of day and time of year?
- **How** does the littlest thing mean a big thing to the turtle at the end?
- **What** do you think is the message of this story?



A Character's Character

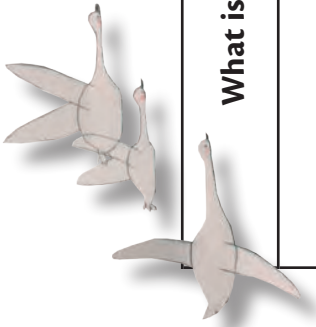
KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO:

How a character acts and what a character says can tell us a lot about who they are. Read *Little Things* aloud and ask your students to pay close attention to the character of the girl. Then, either as a class discussion, or having the students work in small groups or individually, study the book scene by scene, and use the **A Character's Character** chart, to record more about the girl's character.

GRADE TWO:

After gathering information regarding the girl's character in the **A Character's Character** chart, fill out the **WWSD? (What Would She Do?)** sheet and describe what the girl would do and say in various scenarios.





A CHARACTER'S CHARACTER



What is the girl doing?	What does the girl say?	How would you describe the girl?
<i>Example: watching squirrels and birds play in a tree</i>	<i>"My favorite things are little things."</i>	<i>Observant. Pays attention. Content/Happy.</i>

A Scene Sets the Story

KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO:

Together as a class, or working in small groups or individually, choose one of the illustrations in *Little Things*. Ask: *Can you guess what Kelly Pousette used to create this illustration?*

Then have the students describe in their own words what they see in this illustration. Ask:

- *What do you see?*
- *What is the girl doing?*
- *What little things are shown?*
- *How does the girl feel?*
- *Using your own words, what does the text mean?*

Then, have the older students write a story about this scene. Remind them to include a beginning, middle, and end.

I Spy Little Things

KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO:

Look closely at the following four spreads and ask the students to find the items listed on each.



CAN YOU FIND:

- 3 blue birds in a bird bath?
- 2 bunnies?
- 1 butterfly?



CAN YOU FIND:

- 9 rabbits?
- 5 pine trees?
- 2 bicycles?
- 1 pair of binoculars?



CAN YOU FIND:

- 4 seashells? • 2 turtles? • 9 blue fish? • 1 frog?



CAN YOU FIND:

- 7 buildings? • 5 vehicles? • 2 striped awnings? • 4 red balloons? • 1 turtle? • 1 kite?



More Little Things—Classroom Edition

KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO:

After reading and discussing *Little Things*, ask students to think about all the little things throughout the story. Talk about the many places the girl finds little things. Then, brainstorm about what little things are found within the classroom. Invite students individually, in small groups, or as a whole class, to write an additional scene for *Little Things* which takes place in the classroom. Invite kindergartners to draw, dictate, or write as they are developmentally able. Provide a variety of art materials including crayons, pencils, markers, paint, scissors, colored paper, old magazines, and glue for students to illustrate the scenes in their stories. Or, provide puppets, costumes, and props so students can recreate their new stories.

LITTLE THINGS SHOW AND TELL

KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO:

Ask your students to consider their favorite little thing. After each child has chosen a favorite little thing, invite them to write a story about where they found this little thing and why it is their favorite. For younger students, you might wish to conduct this as a group activity; however, older students will each be anxious to tell their tale.



ART EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Using the settings and artwork of *Little Things* as inspiration, have students build a shoebox diorama filled with little things and miniatures of bigger things.

Materials

- Large shoebox or gift box
 - A variety of small boxes
 - Various art supplies (ie: construction paper, craft foam, gift wrap paper, acrylic paint, paint brush, glue, scissors, self-hardening clay, pipe cleaners, beads, sequins, craft punches)
1. Decide on what type of setting to create. Some ideas might include places seen in *Little Things* or a completely new setting.
 2. Have students place the empty box on its side, with the inside facing towards them, allowing a space for where the scene will unfold. Some can set the box inside its top to act as an extension of the scene, if they wish.
 3. Start by setting up the background, just like a set designer. Help students to imagine the scene. What is the setting? Is it the morning, a sunny day, or night time? Indoors or outdoors?
 4. Next, begin to create details and props. For example, to make a birthday party scene, make the table, candles, cake, guests, presents, etc.
 5. Once all elements are constructed, arrange the items to create the scene. Is everything there? Does anything need to be added? Is there too much? Encourage students to evaluate their scene and readjust, add or edit items as they see fit.
 6. Help students to glue the objects in place. If they would prefer to keep it an interactive scene so the objects can move, skip this step.
 7. Share the scene with the class by displaying the diorama and pointing out all of the little things included.



Common Core Standards Met in this Guide

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 1

RL K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL 1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

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.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 3

RL K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

RL 1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

RL 2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 7

RL K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

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.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 2

SL K.2 Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.

SL 1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL 2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 4

SL K.4 Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

SL 1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

SL 2.4 Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

WRITING STANDARD 3

W K.3 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

W 1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

W 2.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR



NICK DYER is a writer, designer, and former middle school teacher from St. Paul, Minnesota. He was inspired by recent events to write this story about how caring for the littlest of things is so important. He now lives in a little white house near the Mississippi River with his wife and three children. This is Nick's debut picture book.



KELLY POUSETTE is an illustrator and storyteller. She fell in love with this story and couldn't wait to illustrate it. It is her debut picture book as well. Kelly is from the west coast of British Columbia but currently resides in northern British Columbia with her husband and very large dog Clovis.

