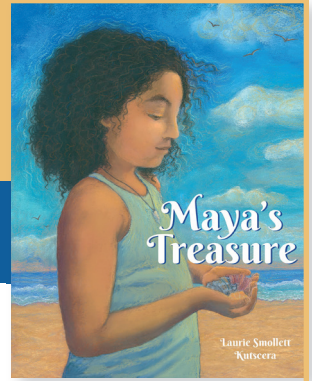


MAYA'S TREASURE

By Laurie Smollett Kutscera



Common Core Teaching Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK

“Just find the magic.”

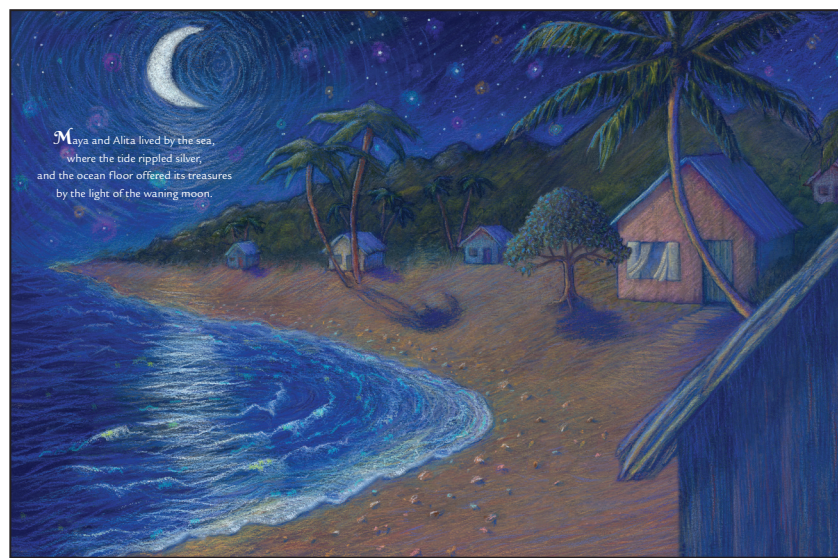
Each morning at sunrise, Maya and her sister Alita collect seashells from the shore to make treasures for the people of their island village. When Alita throws away broken and misshapen shells, Maya collects them and remembers the words of her grandmother: “Even the tiniest nub can be quite beautiful. You just have to find the magic in it.” But can she turn these clunky shells into something truly special?

INTRODUCTION

Dear Teacher,

Maya and her sister Alita live by the sea and follow the tradition their grandmother taught them of creating shell jewelry using treasures they collect on the beach. Maya does her best to use every shell and stone in her work, remembering her grandmother’s words of “finding the magic and beauty in each one.” She’s criticized by her sister for using the “ugly” pieces, but when a fierce storm rips through the island and Maya’s “ugly” creations help save the people of the village, everyone sees the magic in Maya’s treasures..

Maya’s Treasure provides opportunities for thoughtful discussion about culture, traditions, and familial relationships, and how they shape an individual’s character. It also allows students to meet many Common Core Reading, Listening and Speaking, Math Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards, and helps develop social/emotional skills. If you and your students have time to spare for some creative art, you can use the book as a springboard for an imaginative art activity.



This guide was prepared by Michelle Gajda, an elementary school teacher, reading specialist, and recipient of a Massachusetts Reading Association Sylvia D. Brown Scholarship for action research in the field of literacy.

Vocabulary Treasures

KINDERGARTEN, GRADE ONE:

Discuss some of the words from the Word Box below before reading the story. If possible, provide pictures for students to see. During the story, provide definitions or explanations of the words that students may not know.

GRADE TWO, GRADE THREE:

Maya's Treasure shares a message/theme of finding beauty in all things. The vocabulary itself used throughout the book is rich and beautiful. Using the vocabulary listed in the Word Box below, have students create a Word Map for the words assigned using the **Word Maps** activity sheet on the following page. Words can be assigned to a small group of students and then shared with the whole group, or students can work on their own individual word maps.



Word Box

surging	sturdy	fierce	churned	balmy	rippled
waning	surf	refuge	glistening	discarded	scalloped
bleached	tradition	legacy	amulets	marred	strands

WORD MAPS

Definition:	Illustration:
Word	
Sentence:	Antonym:

Definition:	Illustration:
Word	
Sentence:	Antonym:

Let's Talk: Discussion Stems Before, During and After Reading

GRADE TWO, GRADE THREE, GRADE FOUR:

Teach students to use the discussion stems on the following pages when talking about parts of the book. If desired, write out the discussion stems onto sentence strips to have visual, tangible reminders to help direct and drive their discussions. Some examples of direct connections to *Maya's Treasure* are written in blue.

BEFORE READING:

- *Does your family share any traditions? What are they? Why are they important to your life?*
- *Have any of your family members taught you to do a skill that they do? If so, what is it? Tell about it.*

DURING READING:

- *How does the setting affect the story? How would the story be different if the setting was different? Give an example.*

AFTER READING:

- *“Even the tiniest nub can be quite beautiful; you just have to find the magic in it.” What does Maya’s grandmother mean by this? How does it affect Maya’s personality?*
- *How are Maya’s and Alita’s lives the same and/or different than yours?*
- *What are some personality traits you would use to describe Maya? Alita? Give one example of evidence to support your answer.*



DISCUSSION STEMS

I agree/disagree with _____ because _____.

This reminds me of _____ because _____.

This reminds me of the book we read called "Miss Rumphius" because she also tried to make the world a more beautiful place and find the magic and beauty in everything.

I would like to add _____.

I understand that _____.

I didn't understand when _____.

I didn't understand when Maya was dancing with her grandmother as the storm began. Was she just dreaming?

When the book said _____, I thought the problem was

_____.

I predict _____ because _____.

It was _____ because _____.

(adjective)

It was scary when the storm came because I was worried that the people in Maya's village would be hurt.

When the book said _____, I visualized _____.

DISCUSSION STEMS

I think _____ and _____ are different because _____ .

I think Maya and Alita are different because Maya wants to find the magic in each shell and stone that she finds, but Alita only wants to use the pretty shells.

When the book said, _____ I felt _____ .

An important event from the story is _____. I think this is important because _____ .

An important event from the story is when Maya remembers her grandmother teaching her how to make jewelry from shells and stones and saying "even the tiniest nub can be quite beautiful." I think this is important because it becomes a big part of Maya's personality and her perseverance to find the magic in each shell and stone.

I think the author is telling me _____ .

When the book said _____ , I made a prediction.

I think _____ because _____ .

When the book said that the wind chimes became louder and louder, I made a prediction. I think the chimes will wake everyone in the village up and save them.

Who Is It? Character Traits

GRADE TWO:

Using the **Who Is It? Character Traits** activity sheet provided on the following page, students will choose one character trait that they feel best describes each of the characters in *Maya's Treasure* and provide evidence from the story to support their choice. Please note: When doing this activity, there is not necessarily a "right or wrong" answer. Teachers should look at the evidence provided by the student for their choices to determine if they have a clear understanding of each character.

What's the Message? Discussing Comparisons

GRADE TWO:

Maya's Treasure conveys the message of finding beauty in everything. Lead students in a discussion to compare this story to other children's books that share the same message/theme. Some suggestions for comparative titles are:

- *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney
- *Maybe Something Beautiful* by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell and illustrated by Rafael López
- *What If . . .* by Samantha Berger and illustrated by Mike Curato
- *Here We Are* by Oliver Jeffers
- *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox and illustrated by Julie Vivas
- *Sidewalk Flowers* by JonArno Lawson and illustrated by Sydney Smith

Stormy Weather

GRADE TWO, GRADE THREE, GRADE FOUR:





In *Maya's Treasure*, Maya and her family are warned about the storm from the high winds that develop during the night. In real life, there are many warning signs for extreme weather. Divide the students into three to four small groups. Assign each group an extreme weather/storm event such as a hurricane, tornado, tsunami, blizzard, etc. Have each group research what the warnings are for each type of storm and report back to the group.

- *Are there common warnings?*
- *Can they think of something they could create that would help to know when such storms were coming?*

WHO IS IT? CHARACTER TRAITS

Directions: Choose one character trait for each of the story's characters from the traits provided in the word box; then provide evidence (words and/or actions) from the story to support your choice.

determined	hardworking
creative	compassionate
loving	insightful
doubtful	thankful

Character	Trait	Evidence
Maya 		
Alita 		
Grandmother 		
Villagers 		

Ocean Treasures Math Centers

GRADE ONE, GRADE TWO, GRADE THREE, GRADE FOUR:

Math centers and independent math small group exploration time can provide an opportunity for students to have hands-on experiences in manipulating and working with numbers. Adding new materials to work with can add a fresh look and interest/motivation to centers, and using small shells, stones, etc. is a perfect way to tie *Maya's Treasure* into the math content area. Try these simple activities during math block:

- Use shells and smooth stones as “place markers” on 10 frames. (A **Tens Frame Work Mat** is provided on the following page.)
- Use shells and smooth stones as math manipulatives: group in piles of 2s, 5s, or 10s, etc.
- Sort and categorize shells and stones. Have students name their own category headings or provide them. For example: large, small, smooth, rough, shell, stone, fragile, strong, etc.
- Have younger students create patterns with the shells and stones. Have them describe their patterns.
- Make activity cards using math vocabulary: For example: “Make a group of more than 10”, “Make a group of less than 5”, “Make an array of 3 groups of 4”, “Show the sum of 6 and 3”. Students complete the task using the shells and stones and their working tools.
- Complete the math word problems sheet in the next section. Adjust the numbers as necessary for your age group.

Ocean Treasures Math Activity Sheet

GRADE TWO, GRADE THREE:

Use the **Ocean Treasures Math Activity Sheet** on the following pages as an extension to *Maya's Treasure*. If needed, adjust the numbers in each word problem to reflect the skill level of your students. Invite the students to create their own math word problems using *Maya's Treasure* as a theme in their problems.

Art and Engineering Extension Activity

LET IT RING: BUILD YOUR OWN WIND CHIMES

Before materials are gathered, brainstorm possible materials students will want as part of their windchimes. Have students draw out on paper a plan for their wind chime (part of the technology/engineering Next Generation Science Standards for all grade levels) before they begin gathering and construction. Have them consider not only what will look aesthetically pleasing, but also what may make a pleasing sound.

Then, take a walk outside with students and collect various items found in nature to create wind chimes. Suggested items could include: pinecones, smooth rocks, sticks, shells, leaves, acorns, burrs/thistles, etc. (If a nature walk is not a possibility, ask students to bring in any collections they may have at home or purchase items from a local craft store.) Once materials are gathered, experiment with the items to determine which items make sounds and which are silent. Revise original plans as necessary.

Be sure to collect a larger stick from which to hang the collected items. Give students string, yarn, or jute to tie their items onto the larger stick base. Hang creations near an open window or outside on the playground or common space for others to enjoy.

TENS FRAME WORK MAT

OCEAN TREASURES MATH ACTIVITY SHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read each word problem carefully. You may use whatever math strategy you would like to complete the problems. Please show your thinking/work. Be sure to label your answer.

1. Maya found 24 shells on the beach. How many pairs of earrings could she make?

2. If Maya wants to make a wind chime with 4 columns of rope with 3 shells on each rope, how many shells will she need for each wind chime?

3. If Maya collects 12 shells on Monday, 8 shells on Tuesday, 17 smooth stones on Wednesday, and only 6 stones on Thursday, how many pieces all together will she have to work with to make chimes on Friday?

4. If Maya sells all of her creations, she will earn \$15.97. If Alita sells all of her creations, she will earn \$11.15. How much more money will Maya earn than Alita? How much money will they earn all together?

5. Maya has 8 sets of wind chimes to sell. If she charges \$5.00 for each of them, how much money will she earn all together?

Common Core Standards Met in this Guide

LANGUAGE STANDARD 6

L.2.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING STANDARD 1

SL.2.1.B Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

SL.3.1.B Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

SL.3.1.C Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

SL.3.1.D Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 2

RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 3

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

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 7

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.

READING LITERATURE STANDARD 9

RL.2.9 Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

NUMBER & OPERATIONS IN BASE TEN STANDARD B.2

1.NBT.B.2 Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones.

OPERATIONS & ALGEBRAIC THINKING STANDARD A.1

K.OA.A.1 Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings, sounds (e.g., claps), acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations.

2.OA.A.1 Use addition and subtraction within 100 to solve one- and two-step word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, e.g., by using drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.

Next Generation Science Standards Met in this Guide

EARTH AND HUMAN ACTIVITY

3-ESS3-1 & 4-ESS3.B A variety of natural hazards result from natural processes (e.g., earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions). Humans cannot eliminate the hazards but can take steps to reduce their impacts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR



LAURIE SMOLLETT KUTSCERA was born in New York City and studied fine art and children's book illustration at Queens College. Her love for art, storytelling, and most of all the stories representing characters who discover hidden strength flourished throughout her graphic design career, leading her to illustrate *Ravita and the Land of Unknown Shadows*. *Maya's Treasure*, her second solo project after middle-grade novel *Misadventures of a Magician's Son*, also shares a story inspired by one of her dear friends, Enid, to whom the book is dedicated. Laurie lives on the north shore of Long Island with her husband, where she continues to bring stories to life through art. Learn more about Laurie at LSKillustration.com.

