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Shouldn't You Be in School? by Lemony Snicket, pictures by Seth Text

FOCUS ON COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS

Every book can meet most if not all Common Core English Language Arts Anchor Standards. However, we have found that some books address certain standards with particular strength. These activities seek to make the connections between a given text and the Common Core Anchor Standards—leaning on this text’s literary strengths.

CCRA.R.2

Shouldn't You Be in School? has a complex plot that goes off on tangents and circles back around to the main plot elements. Students can more fully understand the central ideas in the plot by filling out a KWL chart. Have them create a five-column chart, with the columns labeled as follows:

What I Know (or Think I Know)	Details that Support My Knowledge	What I Want to Find Out	What I Learn	Details that Support My New Knowledge

As they read, they can fill in the chart with information they learn and evidence that supports the information. By incorporating details from the text to support their knowledge and understanding, students will be able to separate the vital plot elements from the false leads and red herrings that the author includes in the story.

CCRA.R.3

Characters are often not exactly who they seem to be in *Shouldn't You Be in School?* Have students work in pairs to choose one character from the story who changes—at least in the narrator’s eyes—from the beginning of the story to the end. Possibilities include Ellington Feint, S. Theodora Markson, and Kellar Haines. Students can fill out a chart like the one below showing how Lemony Snicket views the character at the beginning of the book, in the middle, and at the end. Remind them to include evidence from the text to support their responses.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION	Story Beginning	EVIDENCE
CHARACTER DESCRIPTION	Story Middle	EVIDENCE
CHARACTER DESCRIPTION	Story End	EVIDENCE



CCRA.R.4 and CCRA.L.5

Lemony Snicket uses a number of unusual similes in *Shouldn't You Be in School?* Some of them can be found on the following pages: p. 82, p. 86, p. 156, p. 169, p. 207, and p. 260. Have students locate the similes on these pages and find at least one additional simile in the text. Ask them to write down the simile, tell what it describes, and explain how the author uses comparison to strengthen the description.

CCRA.R.6 and CCRA.SL.1

Lemony Snicket, the story's narrator, has a very dark view of life and of the events that take place in the story. Have students work in small groups to find examples of his point of view, noting evidence from the text that supports their responses, such as on page 245, when he states, "It was a sickness in my stomach and in my mouth and even in my heart. The symptoms were nervousness and dread. I don't know what the illness is called. I've had it since I was a child." Then ask them to explain how the narrator's point of view helps to create the mood of unease and foreboding in the story. In oral presentations, students can read the evidence they have found and explain how the narrator's point of view helps to create the story's atmosphere.

CCRA.R.7 and CCRA.SL.5

The author describes several of the settings in *Shouldn't You Be in School?* using vivid words that create compelling mental images and moods. Have students work in groups to choose one such description, such as the one on pages 214-215. Ask them to use the description, along with drawings, photographs they find online or in magazines, and other art to construct a collage that suggests the image and mood the description creates for them. Groups can explain to the class how their artwork reflects elements of the author's description.

CCRA.L.5

The author includes a number of idioms, or expressions whose meanings can't be defined by defining the words in them, throughout the novel. Have students copy the chart below, locate each idiom listed, and write an explanation of the meaning of the idiom.

Page number	Idiom	Meaning
78	the skinny	
116	cast a pall	
238	driving them to distraction	
270	looking daggers	

CCRA.L.4

Throughout *Shouldn't You Be in School?* the author includes complex vocabulary words and their definitions. Students will enjoy going through the book and competing to locate these words. Have students work in pairs to find six words and their definitions, such as the ones on pages 73, 103, 113, 114, and 135. The first pair to write down six words and their definitions wins the competition.