Title/Author: *Snowboard Twist* by Jean Craighead George

Suggested Time to Spend: 5 days (45 min blocks)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.3, RL.2.4, RL.2.7; W.2.2, W.2.8; SL.2.1, SL.2.2; L.2.1, L.2.2, L.2.4

Lesson Objective:

After reading and discussing this text, students will understand the importance of avalanche safety procedures while pursuing snow sports.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students**. This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

* How does the main character’s knowledge of avalanches lead to a safe outcome? The actions of the characters lead to a dangerous situation where they must rely on their knowledge of avalanche safety.
* What lesson is the author is trying to teach the reader? Avalanches can be both life threatening and beautiful. It is important to respect nature even when you are confident in your own abilities.

Synopsis

* Snowboarding season sets the stage for this adventure and also offers insight into the science of snowfalls in the Teton Mountains. As Axel, his dad, and his snowboarding rival Kelly check out the conditions after a fresh snowfall, an avalanche hits! When Axel endangers Kelly by not heeding the snow-warnings, it’s up to his dog Grits to help rescue her in this gripping account of the awesome wonder and potential peril of an avalanche.

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes this Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the sources of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Please Note: you may want to copy the questions vocabulary words and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| FIRST READING (Day One):  Read aloud the entire book (or chapter) with minimal interruptions. Stop to provide word meanings or clarify only when you know the majority of your students will be confused. You may want to use a document camera as you read so students have a clear view of the illustrations. | The first read is for enjoyment of the text. Students will be able to listen to the story read fluently, as well as view the illustrations. |
| SECOND READING (Suggested for Days Two and Three):  As you read the entire text for a second time, stop and ask clarifying questions on the pages indicated. Discuss as much of the vocabulary as you can while maintaining the flow of the story. You might also think about using the questions as a shared reading opportunity with your students, if you have a document camera, Smartboard, etc.  **Reread page**  Why does Axel want to go to Glory Bowl?  **Reread page 5**  What do Axel and his Dad have to do before they can snowboard in the Glory Bowl?  **Reread page 7**  Axel’s dog, Grits, is described as having **keen** ears. What does **keen** mean? Use clues in paragraph one on page 7 to help you determine the meaning.  **Reread the second paragraph of page 11**  Using page 11, give the definition of the word rival. Describe how Axel and Kelly are rivals in this text.  Why does Kelly look at Axel with a *superior* glance on page 13? What evidence from the text helps to explain this?  **Reread pages 5, 17 -18**  Using specific words and pictures from the text, describe an avalanche.  Describe what the author means when he says, “mammoth slab of snow sliding down the mountain and with a deep cosmic roar it avalanched down the valley”.  What happens due to Kelly showing off?  **Reread pages 16-17**  Why does Grits jump out of Axel’s backpack? What does he do?  Humble can mean not proud or arrogant. Why did the author choose this word to describe Kelly on page 22?  **Reread page 23**  How did the characters know that the avalanche threat was over? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.  **Reread page 27**  Why did Kelly write “Grits is a hero” on the window? | New snow had just fallen and Axel wants to go snowboarding.  On page 5, paragraph 2, Dag tells Axel that they have to check the avalanche conditions.  Keen means sharp; extremely sensitive or responsive. The clue of “listening” in the last sentence of the first paragraph should help them determine the meaning.  Rival means a person or thing competing with another for the same objective or for superiority in the same activity. On page 11, paragraph 2, Kelly brags that she can do more perfect grabs and flips  *(You may want to have a short discussion with* *students about the word rival, such as sports. Have students discuss in pairs, and then share their thoughts with the entire class.)*  Kelly thinks that she is a better snowboarder than Axel. On page 11 Kelly is referred to as Axel’s rival, she *brags* that she could do more perfect grabs and flips.  On page 5 the snow layers become like sliding boards. They slide downwards and thunder and boom. On pages 17 and 18, the avalanche is further described and illustrated. The author describes this particular avalanche as smashing trees, catapulting rocks, and sending clouds of ice into the sky.  \* *Note to instructor: You may want to show a video of an avalanche after students discuss this question. There is a video of avalanche control in the resources section of this lesson.*  The author is using figurative language to demonstrate the fury and speed of an avalanche.  On page 16 Kelly’s actions frighten a blue jay, which eventually leads to the avalanche.  Grits has a keen sense of hearing. When he heard the “whoompf” of the snow collapsing …. He runs to stop Kelly by knocking her down.  The author chose this word because Kelly shows off and has to be saved by Grits from the avalanche.  On page 23, the text states that the sun changed the structure of the snow crystals. The new snow fused with the lower layers of snow.  On page 11, paragraph 2, Kelly is described as Axel’s *rival* and *captain* of the school snowboard team. She is always *bragging* about her snowboard skills. On page 22 Axel tells Kelly that she can’t write “Grits is a hero with her snowboard. Later on page 27 she writes it on the window, where she brags “thought I couldn’t write it.” She writes this on the window to prove to Axel that she can write it, even though it is not with her snowboard she wanted to prove that she could do it. |
| Third Read and Beyond: Suggested Day Four  Reread pages 5-11 and create a list of avalanche safety procedures. Students will discuss the procedures with a partner, and then provide suggestions to the whole class for a shared writing piece. This can be done on sentence strips. Later, the sentence strips can be used in a center for a sequencing activity. |  |

Culminating Task

* In the text, *Snowboard Twist*, Axel and Kelly learn some important lessons. What is one lesson they learned? In a one-paragraph essay, using evidence from the text and the reasons to support your opinion, explain at least one lesson learned. Remember to provide a concluding statement and use correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
* Sample Answer: While Kelly was an excellent snowboarder, she let her overconfidence put her in a dangerous situation. When she started showing off for Axel she frightened a bird, which led to a large ball of snow rolling down the hill and starting an avalanche. She is saved when Grits knocks her down to keep her from snowboarding into the crack that opens in the snow from the avalanche. Kelly’s attitude turned from one of superiority, on pages thirteen through sixteen, to an attitude of humbleness, as we see read on through page twenty-two. She learned that when snowboarding in dangerous avalanche conditions she needs to be sure to follow safety procedures and wait until the snow is safe.

Vocabulary

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| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/  processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students ) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part  of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with) |
| Page 2- **dawn-** the first appearance of daylight in the morning  Page 5- **jolt-** to jar or shake roughly  Page 5 - **layer** – a thickness of some material laid on or spread over a surface  Page 5- **avalanche-** (verb) to come down in or like an avalanche ; (noun)-a large mass of snow, ice, etc., detached from a mountain slope and sliding or falling suddenly downward  Page 7- **keen**- sharp; extremely sensitive or responsive  Page 7- **mar**- to damage, spoil, or disfigure  Page 7 - **ridge**– a long narrow elevation of land; a chain of hills or mountains  Page 11– **collapsed** – to fall or cave in; crumble suddenly  Page 16- **roosting-** to sit or rest on  Page 17- **summit-** the highest point or part of a hill  Page 17- **catapulted-** to hurl or thrust quickly; as from a slingshot | Page 3- **snow patrol**- a group of people who work to maintain a sense of security on the snow by checking for avalanches  Page 5- **sound off**- to signal  Page 7- **potential** – possibility of something happening  Page 7 - **stable** – not likely to fall or give way as a structure, support, foundation; firm, steady  Page 10 - **fuse** – to become united or blended  Page 11 - **brag (bragging p.11-bragged p.22)-**to use boastful language, to speak with pride about yourself or your accomplishments  Page 11 - **rival** – a person who is competing for the same object or goal as another, or who tries to equal or outdo another; competitor  Page 13 - **superior**-better than others  Page 17 - **cosmic** – vast, very large  Page 22 - **humble** – not proud, arrogant, modest |

Fun Extension Activities for this book and other useful Resources

* **Read the book *Avalanche* by Stephen Kramer (Recommended sections are: Causes of Avalanches, p. 22, Avalanche Safety, p. 41)**
* **Have students create a pamphlet outlining avalanche safety procedures. This can be done individually, in pairs or as groups.**
* A short video of how dogs are trained to help avalanche victims.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ThrFO6YRNw>

* A short video, showing how the use of cannons causes a controlled avalanche.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XS1RfJEIP8>

Note to Teacher

This text is a good example of a narrative structure that also provides information. You may want to think about pairing this book with another informational text about weather or, specifically, snow. One possible text is *The Story of Snow: The Science Of Winters Wonder*, by Mark Cassino and Jon Nelson, PhD. This text explains the formation of snow.

**What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

520-820 Lexile range

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

The book tells the story of Axel and his dog Grits. The author also presents information about avalanche safety procedures. There is a lesson about how showing off can lead to a dangerous situation and the importance of respecting nature.

The story is told in a narrative structure with picture support. There is also a large section of information about how to check for avalanches that follows a more informational structure, this is interwoven into the narrative of the story.

The language is straightforward but there are examples of figurative language that might be confusing for students, (i.e. *cosmic roar*). The word **avalanche** is used both as a verb and a noun and should be discussed with students. There are also several examples of onomatopoeia in the text (whompff).

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Students who are unfamiliar with snow will need to understand the basic structure of snow, how it falls, accumulates, how it can be unstable and lead to avalanches. Video support can be helpful to explain the magnitude of an avalanche.

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

*The structure of the story is in a narrative form but still provides large amounts of factual information. Discussing how the story moves from a fictional event to providing factual information will need to be discussed with students. Teachers may want to read excerpts from an informational book, such as the avalanche book listed in the extension activities, and/or view a video on avalanches to support students understanding of the factual information provided in the text.*

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

*The text provides students with a lesson that it is important to respect nature even when you are confident in your own abilities. The text also provides information about how to detect possible avalanches and how to stay safe in avalanche situations.*

1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in? 2nd grade