

Anchor Text: The Legacy of “Snowflake Bentley” by Barbara Eaglesham

Overview: This text has been chosen as an anchor text for the unit because it talks both about an extraordinary person and about the extraordinary nature of the smallest items in our world. It provides a strong foundation for both text sets, one of which deals with extraordinary people and one of which deals with our extraordinary world. The article is well structured and contains rigorous scientific vocabulary and helps to build knowledge of photography, microscopy, and weather. It is a clear, concise article that lends itself well to determining central idea.

Note on the Text being used for this anchor:

Synopsis: This informational text tells the story of Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley, who spent his entire life studying and photographing snowflakes. It illustrates that very ordinary people do extraordinary things and make an extraordinary impact on the world, which will direct students and teachers down text set one, “Extraordinary People.” It also shows that our world, even though we are very familiar with it, is an extraordinary one when you look closely, which directs students and teachers to text set two, “Extraordinary World.”

Focus Standard:

RI.7.2: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Instructional Sequence Modified from Cmapp:

Day One

Hook Activity 1: Digging into what’s ordinary and what’s extraordinary - Slide show of “extraordinary pictures”. Discuss what exactly is “ordinary” vs “extraordinary”

Hook Activity 2: (Quick write – turn and talk – share out a few)

1) Show slide of snowflake and ask kids to ponder what it is and whether it is ordinary or extraordinary. Why?

Watch the video and come back to the same question.

2) Make a snowflake. Put students in groups of 4 or 5. They have a time limit and 2 criteria – make snowflakes as extraordinary as you can and collaborate together. You can have kids first decide the guidelines for a collaborative group. Demonstrate making a snowflake and then give them 5 minutes to see what they can do. After the 5 minutes, ask them to decide which snowflake is their most extraordinary. Compare between groups. Collect these snowflakes and post for a gallery walk later on.

3) Finally, quick write – how is a snowflake like a person? Silent and then turn and talk. Share out – OR.... Have kids write on a sticky not to post for the “gallery.”

Moving into the Lesson (Day One continued to Day Two)

- 1) Tell the students we are going to begin a Unit called “The Extraordinary in the Ordinary” and the first Text we will read will be informational. Tell them the photograph you are about to show them has the man in it that the article is about. Show the image and follow directions on the slide.
- 2) Follow the slides and collect GIST words. (Kids need to know that the first step in good reading and analysis is “getting the gist.”)

Reading the Article:

- 1) Pass out the first part of the article (on a google doc)
- 2) Read this first part outloud. Ask for their initial thoughts. Explain to them that you are going to model interacting with the text (as many of them already know), in order to track thinking. However, we are going to concentrate on getting the “gist”. Ask students to take a few minutes to annotate quietly. Then begin modeling with their suggestions. Be sure to summarize (write the gist) at the end, with their help. Finally, have them come up with 2 to 4 “GIST” words to capture the “essence” of the passage.

Examples are

- GIFT
- LIFE-CHANGING
- SNOWFLAKE
- PASSION
- FASCINATION

Share out a few and collect some “gist” words. You can list these words on the board.

- 3) Continue by giving them the whole story. You read through the story first while they listen. Then they continue by annotating and writing the “gist” for each section. This can be done in the text book with sticky notes or each student can get a PDF copy of the article.

The remainder of the instructional days will involve groups sharing their annotations, answering text-dependent questions. The questions can be printed and cut, put into a plastic bag for each small group of 3 or 4. Students randomly pick the questions, discuss the answers and record them as a group on chart paper for their group. These can then be posted for a gallery walk ...



What am I?

Am I ordinary? Or...extraordinary?

Let's Make Snowflakes.

How Extraordinary can each one be?

Task:

In your group you each have scissors and a pile of paper. I will demonstrate how to make a snowflake so you need to pay close attention. After my demonstration, you will have 4 minutes to create snowflakes in your group, collaborating and communicating with each other to create the most extraordinary snowflakes that you can. There is no limit to the number of snowflakes but each of you should make AT LEAST one. Be efficient and use “language of support” with each other.

You will be given a 30-second warning. After 5 minutes, all work stops. You will then be asked to choose your group's MOST extraordinary snowflake to share. We will compare all of the groups' most extraordinary snowflakes.

How is a snowflake
like a person?

What's going on?
What specific details
do you see and what is
their connection?

What are you
thinking?
What do you wonder?
What's the setting?
Who is the character?

What is the "gist?"

SILENTLY WRITE.



Turn and Talk.

Share your thoughts.

Value the thoughts of others.

Share out a few....

Let's go back to the image.

What's ordinary?

What's extraordinary?

Wilson Bentley received a gift on his 15th birthday that was to change his life – an old microscope his mother had once used in teaching. As birthday gifts go, it might not have seemed like much, but to this 1880's Vermont farm boy it was special indeed. "When the other boys of my age were playing with popguns and sling-shots, I was absorbed in studying things under this microscope," he later wrote.

And nothing fascinated him more than snowflakes. It would become a passion that would last a lifetime, earn him the nickname "Snowflake Bentley," and make him known around the world.

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Text-Dependent Questions for “The Legacy of Snowflake Bentley”

1. How does the author of “The Legacy of Snowflake Bentley” establish that Wilson Bentley was different from other boys?
2. Use the text as a basis to write a timeline of Bentley’s study of snowflakes.
3. The author states, “His father, being a serious, hardworking farmer, felt that looking through a microscope was a waste of time. “Somehow my mother got him to spend the money.” Bentley wrote, “but he never came to believe it had been worthwhile.” That was probably a feeling shared by the locals of Jericho, who nicknamed him “Snowflake” Bentley.”(Prentice Hall 165)
 - Why do you think the author included this section?
 - What does it show the reader about how Bentley was perceived or viewed by others?
4. The text states, “Undeterred, he began his quest to photograph a snow crystal.”(Prentice Hall 166). What do you think the word **undeterred** means based on the context of the paragraph?
5. Reread the final two paragraphs. Based on these paragraphs, what do you think Bentley has done that is extraordinary? What about him is ordinary? Justify your answer using evidence from the text.
6. Based on the text, what did Bentley show people about the world that they lived in?

Answers:

- i. She states that while other boys played with popguns and sling-shots, Bentley spent his time looking at things under this microscope. Bentley had a microscope, even a used one.
- ii. - On his 15th birthday, he received a microscope.
-A few years later, he began to use the microscope and camera.
-In 1885, he photographed the first snowflake.
-He published his book on snowflakes.
- iii. This section shows that Bentley was not as foolish or eccentric by others as he was perceived to be. He was focused and prevailed despite the odds.

Central Idea or “GIST” of entire Article (Culminating Activity)



Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

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Supporting Detail