

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Lesson Plan Collection

Tulare County Office of Education

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Terrible Horses by Raymond Antrobus

SEL Competencies:

Self-Awareness: Understanding and reflecting on one's own emotions, strengths, and challenges.

Self-Management: Managing emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.

Social Awareness: Being able to empathize with others, understanding their feelings, and perspectives.

Relationship Skills: Building positive relationships through communication and collaboration.

Responsible Decision-Making: Making ethical and constructive choices, considering the impact on others.

Background

Terrible Horses by Raymond Antrobus is a heartfelt and evocative poetry book that delves into themes of disability, identity, and self-expression. The story is narrated by a child who feels disconnected from the world around them, struggling with their identity and how they communicate. Throughout the book, the child navigates relationships and the difficulty of expressing emotions, using metaphors like the "terrible horses" to symbolize their inner turmoil and fear. The book encourages reflection on personal experiences, overcoming challenges, and finding one's voice despite obstacles, offering a unique perspective on self-awareness and self-management.

Before You Read

What do you think the title *Terrible Horses* might mean?

(This question sparks curiosity and introduces students to the metaphor of the book.)

Have you ever had a time when you felt misunderstood or had trouble explaining your feelings?

(Encourages students to connect personally to the theme of communication and identity.)

What do you think makes someone feel different or separate from others?

(Prepares students to think about the feeling of isolation and empathy for others.)

What are some ways people can express themselves when they have trouble using words?

(Sets up the idea of non-verbal communication, which is central to the book's themes.)

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	<p>How do you think the book might explore feelings of fear or anxiety? (Encourages thinking about the emotional complexity that will unfold in the story.)</p>
<p>While You Read</p> <p>Guiding Questions</p>	<p>What do you think the "terrible horses" represent? How do they make the narrator feel? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Reflecting on how metaphors and imagery can represent emotions.)</p> <p>How does the narrator describe their struggle with communication? Have you ever found it hard to say what you feel? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Recognizing the challenges of expressing emotions.)</p> <p>What are some of the thoughts or fears that the narrator is dealing with? How do these fears affect how they interact with others? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Identifying how emotions can affect behavior and interactions.)</p> <p>How do the narrator's feelings about the "terrible horses" change throughout the story? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Recognizing how emotions evolve and how self-reflection can lead to growth.)</p> <p>When the narrator feels overwhelmed, what actions or choices do they make to try to deal with their emotions? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Reflecting on strategies for managing difficult emotions.)</p> <p>How does the narrator's relationship with their family or others evolve as the story progresses? Do they find ways to connect more? (SEL Competency: Relationship Skills – Understanding how relationships can grow as a result of communication and empathy.)</p> <p>What are some moments in the story where the narrator seeks help or support? How can we reach out when we need help? (SEL Competency: Social Awareness – Empathy for others and understanding the importance of asking for support.)</p>

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	<p>What does the narrator learn about themselves by the end of the book? How does this help them with their fear of the “terrible horses”? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Reflecting on personal growth and how confronting fears can lead to empowerment.)</p> <p>How does the narrator’s perspective on their challenges change over time? What does this teach us about overcoming difficult situations? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Encouraging perseverance and rethinking challenges as opportunities for growth.)</p> <p>What do you think the overall message of the book is? How can we apply this message to our own lives? (SEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making – Analyzing the lessons of the story and how to apply them to real-life situations.)</p>
After Reading	<p>Activity: "Drawing Our Terrible Horses"</p> <p>Objective: To help students express their own fears and challenges in a creative way, promoting emotional expression, self-awareness, and empathy.</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drawing paper• Crayons, markers, colored pencils• Journals or writing paper (optional) <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask students to think about a time when they felt scared, anxious, or overwhelmed—similar to how the narrator feels about the "terrible horses." Encourage them to think about what makes them feel uneasy.2. Have students draw their own "terrible horses" — these could be representations of their fears, anxieties, or challenges. Remind them that these “horses” can be anything they feel is hard to talk about or express.3. After completing their drawings, have students write a few sentences or share in small groups about what their "terrible horses" represent and how they cope with these feelings. If students prefer, they can use their journal to reflect on the experience privately.4. Once students have shared, have a class discussion about how the metaphor of the "terrible horses" can help us think about and talk about our fears, and how expressing these fears is a way to manage them.

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	<p>Reflection: Discuss how the narrator in <i>Terrible Horses</i> confronts their fears and how students can apply this to their own lives. Ask: <i>How do you think talking about our fears helps us feel better?</i> Encourage students to support each other and share ideas for managing difficult emotions.</p>
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