

Unit Overview: Parent Guide

Because of Winn-Dixie, Grade 3

What is the goal of this unit?

Your child will read fiction and nonfiction texts to understand the value of companionship, the joy of finding friends in unexpected places, and the significance of building a community of different perspectives.

What topics and skills is your third grader learning in this unit?

- Friendship
- Relationships
- Community
- Diversity
- Character development
- Informational writing

What tasks will your child engage in to help them consider the topics and skills of this unit?

- **Culminating Writing Task:** Your child will bring together all her learning near the end of the unit by writing an essay that responds to the questions: *How do Opal and another character from Because of Winn-Dixie interact and change through the series of events in the novel? What central message or lesson can we learn by reading Because of Winn-Dixie?*
- **Extension Task:** Your child will extend her learning by reading a related text, keeping a reading log or journal, and then preparing for a student-led literature circle discussion.

Your child will read these texts:

Text Title	Author/Source	How it is used in the Unit
<i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i>	Kate DiCamillo	Main text of the unit
<i>Unlikely Friendships for Kids: The Dog & The Piglet: And Four Other Stories of Animal Friendships</i>	Jennifer S. Holland	Student text
<i>Amos & Boris</i>	William Steig	Student text
<i>The Cricket in Times Square</i>	George Selden	Read aloud

<i>Owen and Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship</i>	Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Paula Kahumbou	Student text
Wild Wings	Gill Lewis	Group text
<i>Paint the Wind</i>	<i>Pam Muñoz Ryan</i>	Group text
Charlotte's Web	E.B. White	Group text
<i>How to Steal a Dog</i>	Barbara O'Connor	Group text
The One and Only Ivan	Katherine Applegate	Group text
The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane	Kate DiCamillo	Group text
Shiloh	Phyllis Reynolds Naylor	Group text
The Tiger Rising	Kate DiCamillo	Group text

Ideas for discussing friendship and community

- What is friendship?
- What makes someone a good friend?
- Where did you meet your best friend?
- What things do you like about your friends?
- How do your friends help you think about things?
- How are you and your friends similar?
- How are you and your friends different?
- What can you learn from your friends and their experiences?
- What is a community?
- How do communities grow?
- What communities are you part of?
- Why is it good to be different even if people might not agree with you?

Want to deepen your and your child's knowledge on the topic being studied?

Here is a suggested book list:

Title	Author
<i>Night of the Spadefoot Toads</i>	Bill Harley

<i>Ivy and Bean</i>	Annie Barrows
<i>Holes</i>	Louis Sachar
<i>Jamaica's Blue Marker</i>	Juanita Havill
<i>Friendship According to Humphrey</i>	Betty G. Birney
<i>The Old Woman Who Named Things</i>	Cynthia Rylant

What does independent reading look like at home?

Independent reading gives your child the opportunity to read and interact with books that are on her reading level and that address topics that she chooses. Supporting independent reading at home helps build your child's confidence with reading, her reading stamina and reading achievement, and will help her do better in school.

Here are some ways you can encourage independent reading at home:

- Let your child pick out books that she finds interesting
- Prioritize reading. Protect time every day for reading. Before bedtime is a great time to read!
- Read together
- Read aloud
- Discuss what you're reading. Ask questions like:
 - What was that book about?
 - What did you like about it?
 - What didn't you like about it?
 - What did you learn?
 - What questions do you have about what you read?
 - What didn't you understand about what you read?
 - What do you want to learn more about after reading the book?
 - How does this book connect to other books you've read?