



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# **Grade 5: Module 4: Unit 2: Lesson 8**

## **Reading about the Author's Perspective:**

### **Why Do Authors Write about Natural Disasters?**



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.  
Exempt third-party content is indicated by the footer: © (name of copyright holder). Used by permission and not subject to Creative Commons license.



**Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)**

- I can recognize and describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective. (RL.5.6a)<sup>1</sup>
- I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about fifth-grade topics and texts. (SL.5.1)

**Supporting Learning Targets**

- I can describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective.
- I can effectively engage in a discussion about the guiding question based on examples from the texts I have read.

**Ongoing Assessment**

- Students’ notes for discussion
- Students’ discussion participation

<sup>1</sup> This is standard is specific to New York State.



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<p>1. Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Engaging the Reader: Quick Poll (5 minutes)</li><li>B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</li></ul> <p>2. Work Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Reading and Discussing the Author's Note (15 minutes)</li><li>B. Taking Notes: Preparing for Discussion (15 minutes)</li><li>C. Guiding Question Discussion: Fishbowl (15 minutes)</li></ul> <p>3. Closing and Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Debrief and Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</li></ul> <p>4. Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Read your independent book and look for an author's note, author's biography, or the "about the author" section. Read about the author of the book you have been reading. Can you infer about the author's perspective on natural disasters? Why or why not?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Both this lesson and the end of unit assessment in the next lesson address New York specific standards RL.5.6a and W.5.11.</li><li>• In this lesson, students read the author's note from <i>Eight Days</i> and consider how the author's background affects her perspective (RL.5.6a). They take notes to prepare for this discussion in small groups first. They then join the whole class for a discussion of both the author's note and the Unit 2 guiding question.</li><li>• In the next Lesson, the End of Unit Assessment. Students are asked to perform a similar analysis of how the author's background affects his or her perspective independently with the text "In the Middle of a Storm". If you feel your students need more time to master this standard (NYS CCLS RL.5.6a), consider spending more time reading and analyzing the author's note in this lesson.</li></ul> <p>In advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Post the Group Norms anchor chart.</li><li>– Review Face-to-Face, Back-to-Back and Fishbowl protocol (see Appendix).</li></ul>



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
<p>author, background, affects, perspective, effectively, engage, discussion, examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit 2 guiding question (posted in Lesson 1)</li> <li>• Journals (students’ own)</li> <li>• <i>Eight Days</i> (book; one per student and one for display)</li> <li>• “Save Bella!” (one per student; from Lesson 4)</li> <li>• “In the Middle of the Storm” (one per student; from Lesson 6)</li> <li>• Notes for Discussion recording form (one per student)</li> <li>• Group Norms anchor chart (from Module 3A, Unit 3)</li> </ul>

Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Engaging the Reader: Quick Poll (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell students that they have now read three different stories about natural disasters. Tell them that you are curious about which story they have enjoyed the most so far and why.</li> <li>• Ask students to think for a minute about their favorite story so far and why it is their favorite. After a minute, ask for students who most liked the book <i>Eight Days</i> to stand. Select a volunteer to share why she or he picked this text.</li> <li>• Next, ask for students who most liked the short story “Save Bella!” to stand. Select a volunteer to share why she or he picked this story.</li> <li>• Finally, ask for students who most liked the assessment text “In the Middle of the Storm” to stand. Select a volunteer to share why she or he picked this story.</li> <li>• Tell students that all of these stories have allowed them to think more deeply about the Unit 2 guiding question and learn about the impact of natural disasters on humans.</li> <li>• Next, have students Think-Pair-Share the following question:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Why do you think the authors of these stories were inspired to write them?” (Students’ responses may vary.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tell students that today they will learn about the background of the author of <i>Eight Days</i> and consider how that background affected the author’s perspective on natural disasters. Tell them that they will also consider their own perspective on natural disasters and the disasters’ impact on people, through a final discussion of the <b>Unit 2 guiding question</b>.</li> </ul>	



Opening (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to get with a partner for a round of Back-to-Back, Face-to-Face.</li><li>• Ask for a volunteer to read the first learning target:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “I can describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective.”</li></ul></li><li>• Have students get back-to-back and ask them:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “What does this learning target mean?”</li></ul></li><li>• Give students a few moments to consider their response, then prompt them to face their partners and share their thinking. After a minute of discussion, cold call a few students to share what they think the target means. Underline two words in the target: <i>background</i> and <i>perspective</i>.</li><li>• Tell students that in this case the word <i>background</i> means the author’s life experience and culture. Explain that this life experience or background <i>affects</i> (or impacts) how this person sees the world, or their <i>perspective</i>. Tell students that today they will consider how the background of the author of <i>Eight Days</i>, Edwidge Danticat, affects her perspective on the earthquake in Haiti and how this may have inspired her to write <i>Eight Days</i>.</li><li>• Next, ask for a volunteer to read the second learning target:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “I can effectively engage in a discussion about the guiding question based on examples from the texts I have read.”</li></ul></li><li>• Ask students to turn back-to-back once more and consider the question:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “What does this learning target mean?”</li></ul></li><li>• After a minute of discussion, cold call a few students to share. Listen for students to say something like: “We will discuss the guiding question and use examples from the stories we have read.”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider pairing ELL students with those who speak the same first language.</li><li>• ELL students may benefit from reading the learning targets and thinking of a response to the question “What does this learning target mean?” in advance of this protocol.</li></ul>



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Reading and Discussing the Author's Note (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to get their <b>journals</b> and join their groups. Distribute a copy of <i><b>Eight Days</b></i> to each student.</li><li>• Ask students to turn to the last page of the text, which is “A Note from the Author.” Display this page using a <b>document camera</b> with your copy of the text.</li><li>• Tell students that you would like them to read along silently as you read the text aloud to them.</li><li>• Afterward, ask students to discuss what they think the gist of this author's note is with their groups and to write a gist statement in a new page in their journals. Give students a few minutes to discuss and craft their gist statements.</li><li>• Cold call groups to share their gist statements. Listen for statements such as: “This note tells about where the author was when the 2010 earthquake hit Haiti and how she and her family were worried about their friends and family in Haiti.”</li><li>• Ask students to reread Paragraphs 3–5 with their group and discuss and record an answer to the following question in their journals:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “What can we learn from the text about this author's background?”</li></ul></li><li>• Give students several minutes to reread and craft an answer. Afterward, call on several groups to share. Listen for: “She has a family in the U.S. and in Haiti,” “She is from Haiti but lives in Miami with her kids,” and “She has a mother and friends in Haiti.” You may need to help students determine that the “Grandma” mentioned in the note is the author's mother and her children's grandmother.</li><li>• Ask students to reread the first two paragraphs with their group and discuss and record an answer to the following question in their journals:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “What is the author's perspective on children in Haiti and how their lives changed as a result of the earthquake?”</li></ul></li><li>• Give students several minutes to reread and craft an answer. Afterward, call on several groups to share. Listen for: “She said children play everywhere in Haiti,” “She said that Haiti's children are precious and beautiful,” or “She said their lives changed because they watched loved ones die or got trapped like Junior.”</li><li>• Ask groups to consider the following question and use evidence from the text to support their answer:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “How do you think the author's background as a person with family and friends in Haiti, and as a mother of young children, affected her perspective of this natural disaster?”</li></ul></li><li>• Give students several minutes to craft an answer and gather evidence from the text. Afterward, call on several groups to share. Listen for: “Because the author is from Haiti, has family in Haiti, and is a mother, her perspective of the earthquake was focused on how it affected young children and families.”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To further support students, consider providing printed copies of the discussion questions in this section of the lesson or writing these questions on the board:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– What can we learn from the text about this author's background?</li><li>– What is the author's perspective on children in Haiti and why their lives changed as a result of the earthquake?</li><li>– How do you think the author's background as a person with family and friends in Haiti, and as a mother of young children, affected her perspective of this natural disaster?</li></ul></li></ul>



Work Time	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>B. Taking Notes: Preparing for Discussion (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students that they have considered many perspectives on natural disasters over the course of this unit. They considered perspectives of fictional characters such as Junior, Darren, and Rosa, and now the perspective of a real person, the author of <i>Eight Days</i>. Tell students that they have likely developed their own perspective on how natural disasters affect the people who survive them.</li><li>• Explain that the class will now discuss the Unit 2 guiding question—“What can literature about natural disasters teach us about their impact on the people who experience them?”—one final time. This time, however, they will be asked to select quotes from the various texts they have read to support their response.</li><li>• Distribute the “<b>Save Bella!</b>” and “<b>In the Middle of the Storm</b>” texts as well as a <b>Notes for Discussion recording form</b> to each student.</li><li>• Review the recording form with students and clarify any questions.</li><li>• Tell students that during this time you would like them to craft their own response to the guiding question; however, they are free to collaborate with their groups on this task. For example, they may like to start by talking about their response to this question with a partner before they begin gathering quotes, or they may ask a partner to help them locate a quote. Remind students that they can use both the analysis notes in their journals and the text itself to gather quotes.</li><li>• Circulate to support students as they reflect and gather quotes from the various texts they have read.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For students who struggle with individual reflection or synthesizing across multiple texts, consider pulling a small “collaborative group” to work with you for more support.</li></ul>
<p><b>C. Guiding Question Discussion: Fishbowl (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to bring their Notes for Discussion recording forms and gather together for the Fishbowl discussion protocol, with half of the class sitting in an inside circle facing inward and the other half sitting in an outer circle facing the inner circle. Point out the backside of students’ Notes for Discussion recording forms.</li><li>• Give students the following directions:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. When you sit in the inside circle, be sure each person gets a chance to share their response to the guiding question and at least one supporting quote.</li><li>2. When you sit in the outside circle, use the backside of the Notes for Discussion recording form to record how the inside circle is doing following the norms for discussion.</li></ol></li><li>• Clarify directions as needed. Review the <b>Group Norms anchor chart</b>. Begin the discussion; then halfway through, switch groups.</li><li>• After the Fishbowl discussion, collect students’ Notes for Discussion recording forms.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To further support students, post directions for both inside and outside circles.</li></ul>



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Debrief and Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to partner with a student they have not worked with today for another round of Back-to-Back, Face-to-Face.</li><li>• Ask for a volunteer to read the first learning target:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “I can describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective with my peers.”</li></ul></li><li>• Have students get back-to-back and ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “What does this target mean to you now?”</li></ul></li><li>• Give students a few moments to consider their response, and then prompt them to face their partners and share their thinking. After a minute of discussion, cold call a few students to share their current understanding of this target. Listen for something similar to the following: “Where a writer is from and their life experience affect their perspective on different things.” Because the end of unit assessment focuses on this target, consider whether or not students will need more practice with this target before the assessment.</li><li>• Next, ask for a volunteer to read the second learning target:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “I can effectively engage in a discussion about the guiding question based on examples from the texts I have read.”</li></ul></li><li>• Ask students to turn back-to-back once more and consider the question:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* “Based on your observations during the Fishbowl discussion, how did our class do with this target?”</li></ul></li><li>• After a minute of discussion, cold call a few students to share. Listen for students to share norms that the class did a good job with and those they could set as goals for improvement.</li><li>• Tell students that tomorrow they will have their end of unit assessment. Explain that on the assessment they will read about another of the authors whose story they have read in this unit, and that they will also have an opportunity to create some artwork to accompany their reflections on the guiding question for this unit.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider pairing ELL students with those who speak the same first language.</li><li>• ELL students may benefit from reflecting on the learning targets in advance of this protocol.</li></ul>



Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read your independent book and look for an author's note, author's biography, or the "about the author" section. Read about the author of the book you have been reading. Can you infer about the author's perspective on natural disasters? Why or why not?</li></ul> <p><i>Note: The next lesson contains the End of Unit 2 Assessment. This assessment contains an optional art component that addresses W.5.11. Review this portion of the assessment and decide if you will include this portion of the assessment for your students.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some students may not have a book that provides much biographical information on their author. If students do not have this information, you may want to ask them to find an online biography.</li></ul>



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 5: Module 4: Unit 2: Lesson 8

## Supporting Materials



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

Exempt third-party content is indicated by the footer: © (name of copyright holder). Used by permission and not subject to Creative Commons license.

Notes for Discussion Recording Form

Name:

Date:

**Guiding Question: What can literature about natural disasters teach us about their impact on the people who experience them?**

1. What is your response to the guiding question after reading *Eight Days*, “Save Bella!”, “In the Middle of the Storm,” and the author’s note from *Eight Days*?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. What are three quotes from the texts you have read that support your response?

1)

---

---

2)

---

---

3)

---

---



Notes for Discussion Recording Form (continued)

**Directions for Discussion Observation:**

1. Review the Group Norms anchor chart for our class.
2. Observe the discussion closely, looking for:
  - TWO norms that the group you observed did well with
  - ONE norm they need to improve on
3. Record your observation notes below.

<b>Stars:</b> List two norms done well below.	<b>Evidence:</b>
	
<b>Stairs:</b> List one norm for improvement below.	<b>Evidence:</b>
	