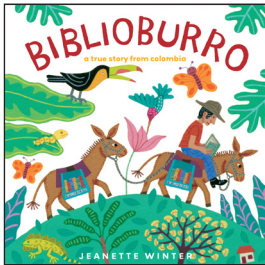


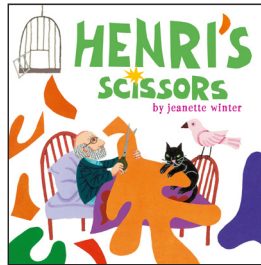
Launching Nonfiction Author Studies:
A focus for teaching the Common Core State Standards with books by
JEANETTE WINTER



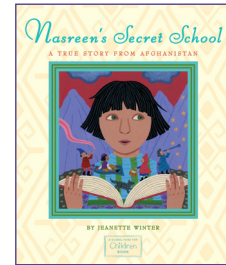
Books



Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia



Henri's Scissors



Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan



*Malala, a Brave Girl from Pakistan/ Iqbal, a Brave Boy from Pakistan:
Two Stories of Bravery*

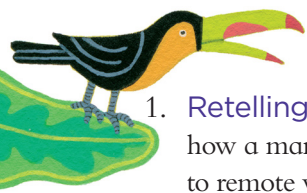


Background Information

As the author and illustrator of outstanding picture book biographies, Jeanette Winter is well known for her colorful, folk-style illustrations and her clear, well-researched writing. Her books, many of which emphasize the contributions of individuals to improving the lives of others, can be read with an emphasis on promoting peace and social justice. Jeanette Winter is the winner of the 2010 Jane Addams Children's Book Award in the Younger Children category—an award given for books that encourage children to think about peace, social justice, world community, and equality. Use these books to introduce your students to thoughtfully crafted picture book biographies.

Activities for Launching Your Author Study

CCSS Conection: The speaking and listening activity below gives students practice recounting a true story that consists of a short sequence of events, and adding appropriate facts and relevant details (SL.2–3.4). Working with a partner, students can practice telling the story to each other.



1. **Retelling a True Narrative: How Luis Soriano Brought Books to the Faraway Hills.** *Biblioburro* tells how a man who loved books brought stories to children in isolated villages. Using two burros, Luis Soriano traveled to remote villages in Colombia, bringing crates of books to share. On the way to the village of El Tormenta he faced a bandit, but still succeeded in reaching his destination, sharing a story, leaving books, and heading home.

Working with a partner, have the students cut out the words and phrases listed on the corresponding page and then put them in order so that they can retell the story. There are several possible ways to order the words. Have the students practice retelling the story. Encourage them to use words like *first*, *second*, *next*, *after that*, and *finally* to show the order in which things happened. Ask them to include relevant facts and details in their retelling.

How Luis Soriano Brought Books to the Faraway Hills

Luis	Alfa and Beto	Biblioburro	burros
bandit	books	Colombia	children
Diana	borrowed books	jungles	El Tormenta
crates	faraway villages	masks	choose books

CCSS Conenection: The activity below gives students practice in expressing an opinion and backing it up with evidence (W.1–3.1).

2. **Writing an Opinion: Was Nasreen’s grandmother right to take her to the secret school?** After the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan, girls were not allowed to attend school. *Nasreen’s Secret School* tells how—after soldiers took her father away and her mother set out to find him—Nasreen’s grandmother decided to take her to a secret school. Despite the danger, the school opened up the world of knowledge to Nasreen, making her feel less alone.

After reading *Nasreen’s Secret School*, have students work in partners to complete the discussion web below, writing all the reasons they can think of to answer the question with a YES and all the reasons to answer with a NO. Then have the students write a conclusion, giving the strongest reason they can think of to support their opinion.

QUESTION:

WAS NASREEN’S GRANDMOTHER RIGHT TO TAKE HER TO THE SECRET SCHOOL? WAS IT TOO DANGEROUS?



DISCUSSION WEB

YES

NO

CONCLUSION:

CCSS Connection: The activity below provides students with the opportunity to participate in collaborative conversations to build understanding (SL.1.1, 2)



3. Discussing Goals, Actions, and Character Traits

The subjects of Jeanette Winter’s biographies—Luis, Henri, and Nasreen and her grandmother—all work hard to pursue their goals. Have students work with a partner or small group to discuss each person’s goal, what that person did to achieve that goal, and what character traits the person displayed. Use the chart on the next page to record details such as those shown below.

PERSON	GOALS	ACTIONS	CHARACTER TRAIT
Luis	To share books and stories with children	He bought two burros and brought books to faraway villages	Determination
Nasreen	To be less lonely, to learn	Attended the secret school	Persistence
Nasreen’s grandmother	To open up the world to Nasreen	Took her to the secret school	Courage
Henri	To continue to create art	Began to cut colored paper with scissors to create colorful environment	Flexibility, Adaptability

Consider the ways that you are most like one of these four people. Explain how.

PERSON

GOALS

ACTIONS

CHARACTER TRAIT

Luis			
Nasreen			
Nasreen's grandmother			
Henri			

Why Author Studies?

Beyond seeing the author as a person—a writer with information and a point of view to share—author study (studying several books by one author) provides us with a rich yet manageable way of looking at the decisions an author makes when creating a work of nonfiction. These decisions are about content, word choice, illustration, and original thoughts and interpretations.

Thinking about how an author creates nonfiction raises many questions for young readers and writers to think about: After researching a topic, what information goes into the book? What doesn't? Why? How should the book begin in order to grab the reader's attention? How should it end in order to keep the reader thinking about the topic? What information is best introduced through pictures, photographs, graphs, or tables? What features like sidebars and primary sources would add interest to the page? In what ways are the author's books similar? How are they different? As students engage in author study they think about how an author answered these questions.

Not surprisingly, these same questions are highlighted in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Standards emphasize reading informational text to determine key ideas and details, an author's point of view, how the author structures and crafts information, how new vocabulary is introduced, and how visual material works together with written text. It's a match! That is, by engaging in author studies students are also meeting many Common Core Standards for reading and understanding informational text.

This guide features books and suggested activities that can be used to jumpstart a nonfiction author study. This will open the door to critical inquiry and focused discussion of informational text. By aligning activities to Common Core State Standards, students learn content while becoming critical consumers of that content. That's powerful instruction.

—Myra Zarnowski, Queens College, CUNY

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