Close reading plan

"The Cloud: A Folktale", Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education

Created by Amy Inzero, 2014 Connecticut Dream Team teacher

What makes this text complex?			
Text and Author	The Cloud: A Folktale" Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education Text	**Where to Access Text**	http://teacher.depaul.edu/Documents/TheCloudFiction5thgrade.pdf

Text Description
This text is a folktale about the selfless act of one carefree cloud who is sympathetic to the needs of a poor group of field workers suffering in a hot, desolate land. In this emotional story, the Cloud makes a difficult decision that leads to an inevitable outcome.

Quantitative			
Lexile and Grade Level	830-4th Grade	**Text Length**	513 words

Qualitative	
Meaning/Central Ideas	**Text Structure/Organization**
The central idea of giving generously to others who are less fortunate, despite unfavorable consequences, can be implied in the story through the unselfish actions of the Cloud.	The organization of this folktale subtly compares and contrasts features of the characters. The Cloud also experiences a brief flashback when she was given advice as a child. There are no graphics or illustrations.
Prior Knowledge Demands	**Language Features**
Students will need to draw on what they previously learned about folktales in RL 3.2, as well as have some familiarity with the water cycle.	Some fairly complex text with figurative language, personification and similes.

Vocabulary		
Tier Two Words (General academic vocabulary) *"Words that are far more likely to appear in written texts than in speech. [They] often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things—saunter instead of walk, for example."* (CCSS ELA Appendix A)		**Tier Three Words (Domain-specific words)** *"[Tier Three words]…are specific to a domain or field of study (lava, carburetor, legislature, circumference, aorta) and key to understanding a new concept within a text."* (CCSS ELA Appendix A)
• Desolate • Drought • Suffering • Fiercely • Obliged • Swayed	• Boldly • Marvelously • Majestic • Awe-struck • Deed • Blessing	There are no Tier 3 words in this text.

Potential Reader/Task Challenges
Characteristics of a folktale may be unfamiliar to some students, as well as the setting features and character personification. The theme is subtly implied throughout the text.

Text-dependent questions		
Question	Standard alignment	Page of this document
TDQ #1 Describe the setting where the poor people are working at the beginning of the story. How does this setting affect how the people are feeling?	RL 4.1	p.4
TDQ #2 How does the Cloud grow and change in this passage? Examine the thoughts and actions of the Cloud to explain in depth how she developed throughout the story.	RL 4.3	p.7
TDQ #3 Folktales have specific characteristics that distinguish them from other types of prose. What makes this story a folktale? Use evidence from the story to tell at least three characteristics that make this folktale different from other prose.	RL 4.5	p.12
TDQ #4 In the story, the author uses the phrase, "an angel of blessing" to describe the Cloud. Based on clues from the story, what do you think "an angel of blessing" means? Do you agree with this description of the cloud? Use evidence to explain why or why not.	RL 4.4	p.17
TDQ #5 Based on what you know about the Cloud and her actions, what do you think the theme of this story might be? Use evidence from the text to defend your thinking.	RL 4.2	p.21
Target Standards		

- RL 4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL 4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
- RL 4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.
- RL 4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
- RL 4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

Question 1

Question #1	**Describe the setting where the poor people are working at the beginning of the story. How does this setting affect how they are feeling?**
Standard(s) covered:	RL 4.1 – Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
In this folktale, the setting definitely affects the feelings of the people. The people are working in fields that are hot and sunny. The earth there is described as "brown, dry and desolate, from drought." The author uses the word "suffering" to describe the people. I can infer that the people feel troubled, sick from the heat, and desperate for rain because of the setting they are in.	• Accurately identifies the setting of the story and words used to describe it. • Makes an inference that is supported by the description of the setting.

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:

Objective	In this lesson you will learn to make an inference by using specific details from the story.
Prior knowledge to review	RL 3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. RL 3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. Understand the characteristics of folktales that may include personification, a magical event, and a lesson.
Steps to achieve objective	**Think aloud for direct instruction**
1) Determine the part of the story you need to make an inference about.	• I'm going to reread the question to see what part of the story I need to focus on. • It looks like this question has two parts. First, I need to describe the setting, and then I need to figure out how the setting might affect how the people are feeling. • I know that the setting means where the story takes place. I'm going to have to find the part in the story that tells about the setting so that I can describe it. • I'm going to scan the beginning part of the story to find out what the setting is. First the author describes the Cloud rising out of the sea and floating across the blue sky. The sea and sky can be settings, but the question specifically asks about the setting where the poor people are working, so I'm going to read on. • I notice the author talks about the earth next, and the people working in fields, so the fields on earth must be the setting.

2) Ask yourself, "What words does the author use to describe the part of the story?"	• Now that I have found the setting, I need to find the words that describe the setting. • If I scan the beginning part of the story again, I think I can find specific words that tell about the earth where the people are working in the fields. • After the author mentions the earth, the words "brown, dry, and desolate from drought" are listed. So these must be the words the author is using to describe the setting where the people are working. • I'm going to read on a little bit and see if the author uses any more words to describe the earth and the fields. • Ah, yes, in the third line down the author uses the word "hot" to describe the fields.
3) Make your inference based on what you know about the specific details found in the text.	• Now that I found the words, I need to think about the specific words that tell about the setting. • I can create a mental image in my mind of what the earth and fields are like if they are brown, dry, and hot. I visualize lots of dark dusty dirt, with plants that are brown, crumbly and dry. I can also feel the heat of the sun beating down on the people and the fields. I'm not absolutely sure what desolate and drought mean, but if it's brown, dry, and hot, I'm thinking that there probably isn't much growing there which is what desolate might mean. If it's brown, dry, hot, and it's "desolate from drought," then maybe drought means that it hasn't rained there in awhile. • Now I'm thinking about how I would feel in a setting that's brown, dry, hot, and desolate from drought. I notice that the author also used the word "suffering" to describe the people in the hot fields. I'm thinking that the people are not feeling very good. But I know I should describe their feelings more specifically than just "not good" or "bad." • When I put the words together, with my mental image, and my own schema, I can infer that the characters might feel troubled, sick from the heat, and desperate for rain. • So now that I understand the setting and how it makes the people feel, I can write my answer. • I'll start my answer by restating the question. • Then I'll talk about the setting and describe it. I'll talk about one or two words the author mentions to tell how the people are feeling. • Then I'll wrap up my answer with how the people feel based on the characteristics of the setting.

Extension and practice

- If students are having difficulty determining the setting, review the concept of setting and show them various pictures. Have them determine the setting of each picture.
- If students are having trouble visualizing the setting, have them draw a picture of what they think it might look like.
- If students are having difficulty inferring the feelings of the people, find pictures that show a hot, desolate, barren earth. Ask students to describe the details they see in the picture using words. Ask them to consider their own schema and how they might feel if they were in the picture.
- For students who have met this standard, consider having students work on the following higher level inferencing questions:
  Why do you think the little Cloud decided to help the people of the earth? Use evidence from the story to defend your thinking.
  How do the feelings of the people and the cloud differ at the beginning of the story? Use evidence from the story to defend your thinking.
- For an additional challenge, have students read "The Community" on http://teacher.depaul.edu/. Students may describe the characteristics of the setting and how it changes throughout the story. Students can infer and chart or graph the feelings of the grandmother and the narrator based on the descriptions of the setting in each part of the selection.

What next?

For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to other prose, poetry, and drama to make inferences.	See more examples of how to teach inferring. (4.1)
Objective: In this lesson you will learn to infer by using specific descriptive words from the story. 1. Determine the part of the story you need to make an inference about. 2. Ask yourself, "What words does the author use to describe the part of the story? 3. Make your inference based on what you know about the specific details found in the text.	Close Reading Drama: "Little Red Riding Hood" http://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/544 Close Reading Poetry: "The Land of Nod" http://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/488

Question 2

Question #2	How does the Cloud grow and change in this passage? Examine the thoughts and actions of the Cloud to explain in depth how she developed throughout the story.
Standard(s) covered:	RL 4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
The thoughts and actions of the Cloud show how she grew and changed in this folktale. In the beginning of the story the Cloud is described as the "little Cloud". She floated "lightly and happily" and "hither and thither, without a care." As the story continues, the Cloud begins to grow bigger. Soon she is no longer without a care. She is worried about the poor people who are suffering in the hot and dry fields. She begins to float down to help them, but then held herself from sinking as she thought about what she should do. As she considers helping the people and the consequences she knew would follow based on her Mother's warning, her decision to give up her life and assist them leads her to suddenly become "big, strong, and powerful." The author describes her as "great and majestic." Once the Cloud scatters all of her rain, she is no longer a cloud at all. She has grown from a "little Cloud." to a big and powerful Cloud, to nothing at all.	• Identifies characteristics of the Cloud at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. • Accurately quotes from the text to explain in depth how the Cloud changes throughout the story.

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:

Objective	In this lesson, you will learn to describe a character in depth by drawing on specific details in the text.
Prior knowledge to review	RL 3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. RL 3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. Understanding the characteristics of personification often included in folktales. Create mental images
Steps to achieve objective	**Think aloud for direct instruction**

1) Examine the text for words that may describe the character directly at the beginning of the story.	• I think I'll look at the beginning part of the story first to see if the author uses any words to describe the Cloud directly. • I see here that the author immediately refers to the Cloud as "little Cloud" in the very first sentence. • I can picture a small white cloud in my in my mind.
2) Ask yourself, "What additional thoughts, words, and actions will help me describe the character in depth?	• As I read on, I notice that the author explains the actions of the Cloud as floating " lightly and happily" and "hither and thither without a care." • I'm not sure I've ever heard the words "hither and thither," but because they come right after "lightly and happily" I think they might mean the same as "lightly and happily". • Based on her actions and what I'm picturing in my mind, I think the cloud is pretty carefree until I read on and I see that she's starting to think about helping the poor people working in the fields. As she is considering this, I can see from the words that she is growing larger! • I'm going to keep reading to see if there are other thoughts, words, or actions that tell me more about the Cloud. • Oh, here, right in the middle of the story, she starts wondering if she should risk her life to help. She "held herself from sinking and swayed here and there on the breeze." This action tells me that she is indecisive at that moment. • But then the sentence afterward refers to her "speaking boldly and loudly" when she finally moved beyond her indecision and confidently made the decision to help. I am picturing the Cloud growing even bigger now! • The author actually says in the first sentence of the 6th paragraph that the thought of helping, no matter what, made her "big, strong and powerful." • Wow! She has really changed from the little, happy, and carefree cloud she was at the beginning of the story! The author even describes her as "great and majestic" now!
3) Determine if the character changed or remained the same at the conclusion of the story.	• Now I'm going to read over the last part of the story to see what the Cloud is like at the very end. • It looks like she is definitely going to give up her life for the people allowing all her water droplets to fall until she is gone. • The author states that when she makes this final decision there's a "wonderful light" that glows from her heart because she is filled with love. • That's pretty amazing! She didn't look or feel that way when she was just a little cloud! • Then, the rain falls down from the Cloud, eventually causing her to completely disappear. • How interesting that the little Cloud from the beginning of the story grew into a mighty and powerful Cloud, and then completely disappeared at the end! • When I look closely at the descriptive words the author used, and all the Cloud's thought, words and actions, I notice she went through many changes in her short lifetime! • Now I can take what I've discovered about the Cloud and put the details into my answer. • First, I'll restate the question and talk about how the thoughts and actions of the Cloud show how she grew and changed. • Then I'll explain the details that show how she grew and changed from the beginning of the story to the end of the story. • I'll wrap my answer up with a statement that tells how the Cloud started off little, grew to be big and powerful, and then became nothing at all.

Extension and practice
• If students are having trouble visualizing the character, have them draw a picture of what they think he/she might look like.   • If students are having trouble organizing the traits of the character to create a written response, have them complete a character map first.   • For an additional challenge, have students read "Mercury and the Woodman" at http://www.parenting-by-example.com/aesop-fables/MERCURY-AND-THE-WOODMAN.pdf. Students may create a trading card on the ipad using the free readwritethink trading card app or develop a mock facebook profile on the computer for the Woodman through a "fakebook" website based on the characteristics they have determined through his thoughts, words, and actions.

What next?

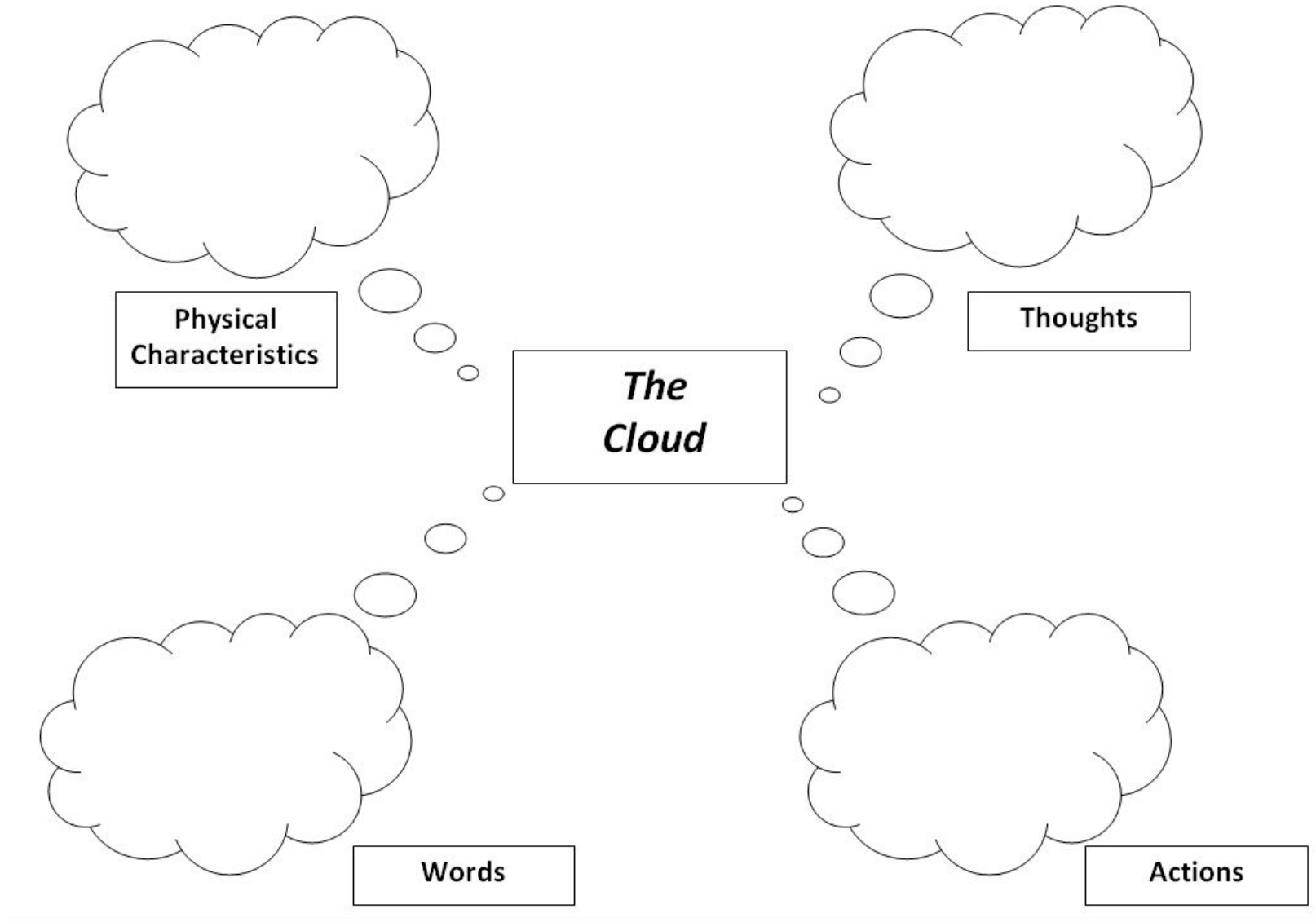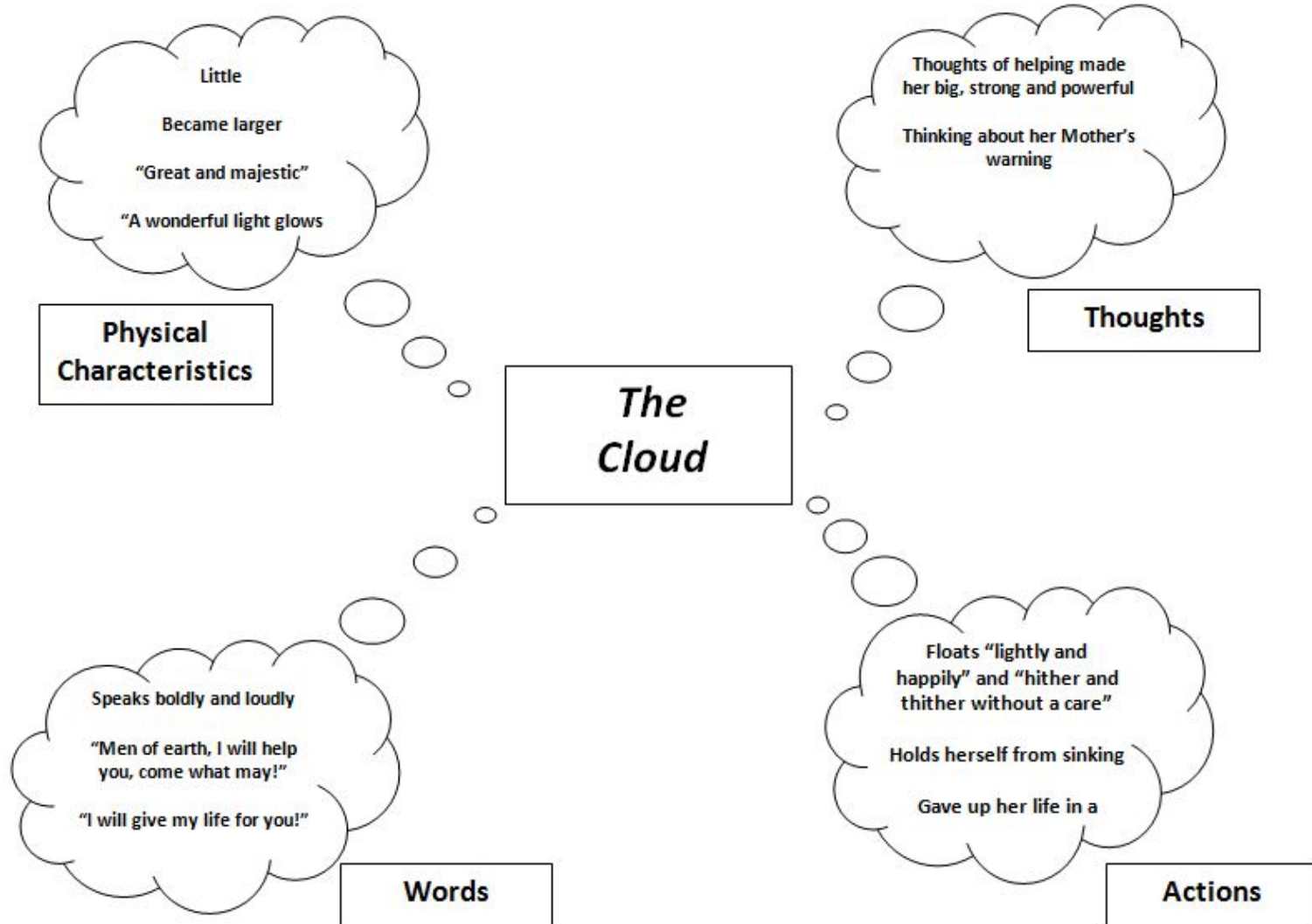| For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to any prose or drama to describe a character in depth.	See more examples of how to teach describing a character in depth using details from the text. (4.3)

In this lesson, you will learn to describe a character in depth, drawing on specific details in the text.
     1) Examine the text for words that may describe the character directly at the beginning of the story.
     2) Look for additional thoughts, words, and actions that help to describe the character in depth.
     3) Determine if the character changed or remained the same at the conclusion of the story.
	Describe a change in character: *The Story of Dr. Dolittle Ch. 1&2*
	 http://www.learnzillion.com/lessons/2009
	
	 Describe a character using evidence from what the character does, says, and thinks: *The Story of Dr. Dolittle Ch. 1&2*
	 http://www.learnzillion.com/lessons/2041
	
	 Describe a character's personality using details from the text: Close Reading Drama: *Little Red Riding Hood*
	 http://www.learnzillion.com/lessons/1975
	
	 Reading Literature: *A Dog's Tale*
	 http://www.learnzillion.com/lessons/921

Character Map for "The Cloud"

Physical
Characteristics

Thoughts

The Cloud

Words

Actions

Character Map for "The Cloud"

Physical Characteristics

Little

Became larger

"Great and majestic"

"A wonderful light glows

Thoughts

Thoughts of helping made her big, strong and powerful

Thinking about her Mother's warning

The Cloud

Words

Speaks boldly and loudly

"Men of earth, I will help you, come what may!"

"I will give my life for you!"

Actions

Floats "lightly and happily" and "hither and thither without a care"

Holds herself from sinking

Gave up her life in a

Question 3	

Question #3	Folktales have specific characteristics that distinguish them from other types of prose. What makes this story a folktale? Use evidence from the story to tell at least three characteristics that make this folktale different from other prose.
Standard(s) covered:	RL 4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
This story is a folktale for many reasons. Because there is no author listed, the story has probably been handed down from generation to generation. In addition it has some magical parts and it takes place in nature up in the sky and within the fields. The Cloud is also like a human in many ways: She wants to help the poor people of the earth; she thinks about the warnings of her "Mother Ocean;" she is referred to as a female throughout the story;" and she is described as "majestic" and acts as a heroine. The plot of this story is simple and it has a message of love and compassion with a happy ending. These are all typical characteristics of the folktale genre. Because the story has no specific author, has a main character with magical qualities, is short with a simple setting and plot, and has the theme of doing good for others, this folktale differs greatly from other prose I have read such as realistic or historical fiction which usually do not contain all these qualities.	• At least one feature of a folktale that relates to the character. • At least 2 other features that relate to the following: Setting, Plot, Theme, or Style

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:	

Objective	In this lesson you will learn to distinguish a folktale from other types of prose by finding features of a folktale within the text.
Prior knowledge to review	The difference between prose and poetry Characteristics of folktales Characteristics of other genres
Steps to achieve objective	**Think aloud for direct instruction**

1.) Determine what you know about a particular genre.	• So the question is telling me that "The Cloud" is a folktale. • If I look under the title right on the story, it also says "A Folktale," so I'm certain that's the type of story it is. • Hmm…what do I know about folktales? • I remember that they are stories that are handed down from generation to generation, and because people are telling them over and over to each other, they are pretty short. They can't be really long stories like chapter books! • So because they are stories someone made up a long time ago, I don't think there's usually an author listed for folktales. • O.K. So when I think about the important parts of a story, I think about the characters first. I seem to remember that characters in a folktale can be kind of magical. I know that sometimes objects in a folktale can even be characters, especially things in nature. I seem to remember that objects can even think and talk and act like humans! This is called personification. • Another part in the story that's important is the setting. When I think about the setting of a folktale, I always think about a simple place in nature during no real specific time period other than maybe long, long ago. • Let's see, what else might be important to think about in a folktale? I guess the plot is pretty important! I think because folktales are short, the plot has to be mostly straightforward. I'm sure there is a problem, but I seem to remember folktales usually having a happy ending. They're kind of like fairy tales in that lots of times good wins over evil. I guess there might be a theme related to that idea sometimes too.
2) Ask yourself, "What specific evidence in the text matches the characteristics of the genre?"	• So, if I go back to my story now, I might be able to find some of these ideas I mentioned about folktales. • Let me see if this story looks like it could have been handed down from a long time ago. • Well, if I look under the title, I don't see an author's name! That's a good sign that someone probably made it up and started telling it before someone else wrote it down. • Now let me take a look at the main character in this folktale…the Cloud. Wow. She can talk and think just like a person! I would say that's pretty magical! And they call her "she" throughout the story like the Cloud is a real person! That's a big feature of the folktale genre! • OK. So how about the setting? It's pretty basic…"outside, in a field, one hot morning"…kind of what I would expect for a folktale. No real specific place or time. • So now I can think about the plot. There's a cloud who gives up her life to save the people from dying in the hot fields, and then she turns into a rainbow. That's pretty straightforward! The Cloud is part of nature and is really a good force overcoming something that's pretty bad. It's like that good over evil theme you see in lots of folktales.
3) Examine how this genre might be different from another genre.	• I know that there are lots of different types of prose…realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy…and they may have some of these characteristics of a folktale, but I don't think any of them have all of the characteristics. • Lots of other prose are longer, and the author of the story is usually right there. • They don't have magical parts or characters. • In other prose they talk a lot about the setting and especially in realistic fiction and historical fiction, the stories occur in really specific times and places. • The themes of those types of stories aren't always really clear either. There aren't always good people winning over the bad people and sometimes there aren't even happy endings!! • So now that I've thought about what makes a folktale, and what parts of a folktale are in this story, I can write my answer. • I'll start with a general statement telling that this story has many reasons why it's a folktale. Then I'll write the details from the story that support that statement. I'll give specific examples that tell how there is no author, how it takes place in nature, has some magical qualities, and a simple plot and message. Then I'll wrap up my answer with a little summary of all of those characteristics that make it a folktale and how it's different from other prose.

Extension and practice

- If students are having trouble recalling the characteristics of a folktale, show slides on "What is a folktale" at: http://www.slideshare.net/skhill/what-is-a-folktale and discuss
- If students are having trouble finding evidence in the text that matches the genre, give them a "treasure hunting" graphic organizer. Have them search for magical characteristics of the story, human qualities given to inanimate objects, general settings in nature, a theme where good prevails, etc.
- For an additional challenge, show students information on folktales, trickster tales, fables and myths at: http://www.slideshare.net/skhill/what-is-a-folktale. Then choose one example of each from http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2010/07/folklore_definitions.html . Have students classify the stories and explain why they categorized each story the way they did.

What next?

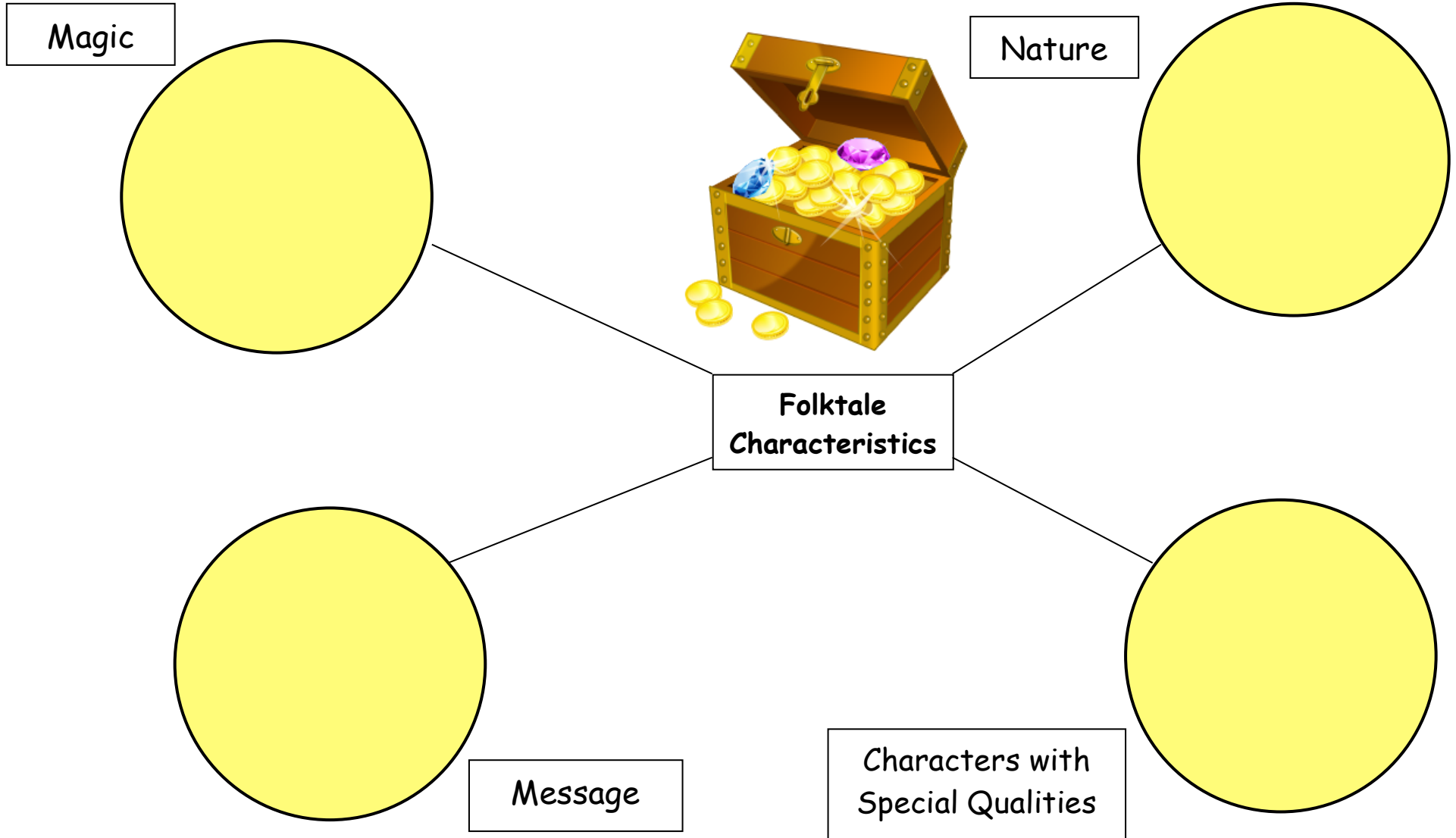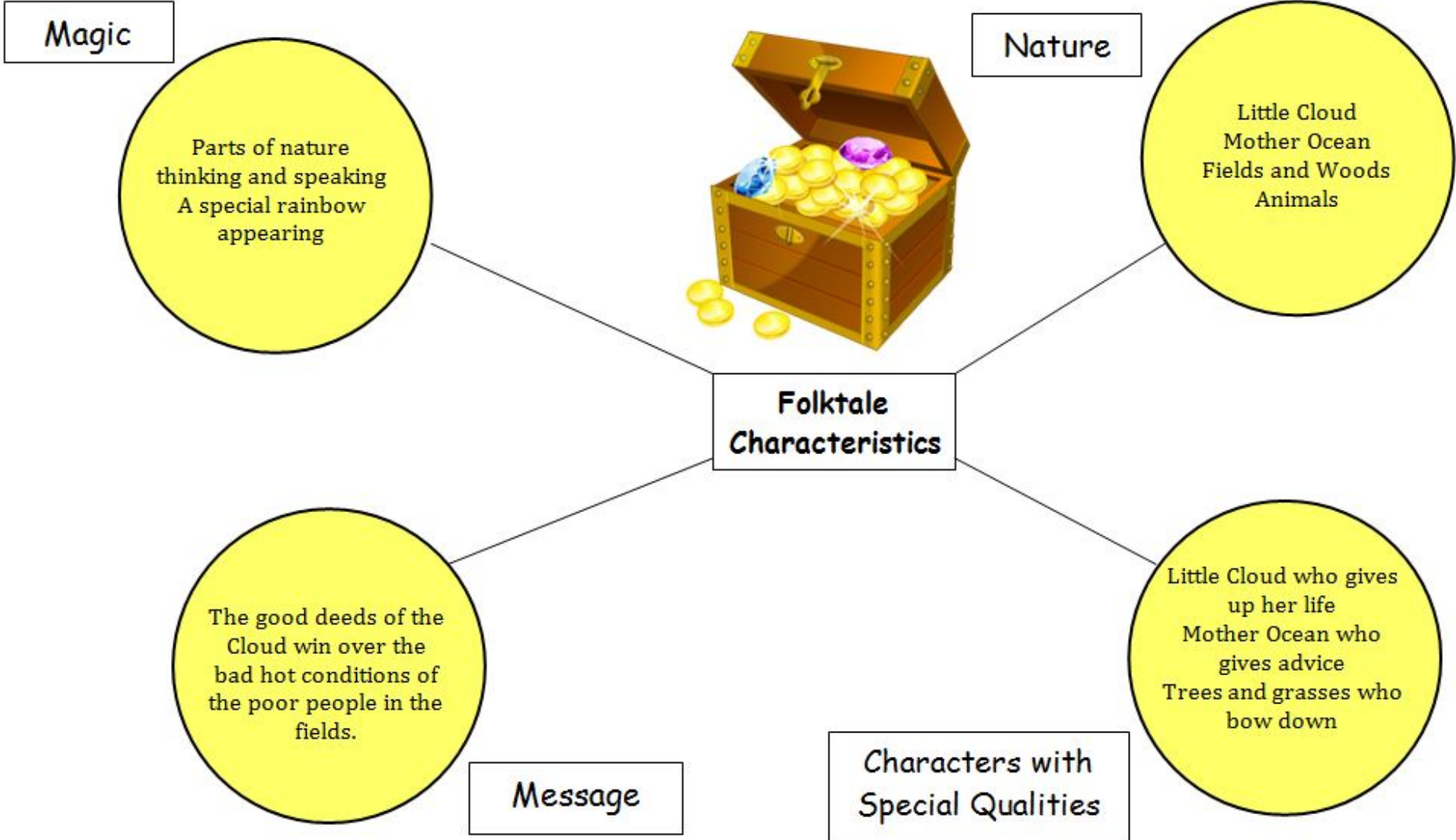| For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to any prose or drama to distinguish it from other types of prose.	See more examples of how to teach major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text. (4.5)
In this lesson you will learn to distinguish a particular type of prose from other types of prose by finding features of a genre within the text. 1. Determine what you know about a particular genre. 2. Ask yourself, "What specific evidence in the text matches the characteristics of the genre?" 3. Examine how this genre might be different from another genre.	Explain how a playwright tells a story by examining structural elements of a drama: https://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/544 Genre Study: A Collaborative Approach: http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/genre-study-collaborative-approach-270.html

FOLKTALE TREASURE HUNT

Find examples of the following characteristics of a folktale in "The Cloud."

Magic

Nature

Folktale Characteristics

Message

Characters with Special Qualities

FOLKTALE TREASURE HUNT

Find examples of the following characteristics of a folktale in "The Cloud."

Magic

Parts of nature thinking and speaking
A special rainbow appearing

Nature

Little Cloud
Mother Ocean
Fields and Woods
Animals

Folktale Characteristics

Message

The good deeds of the Cloud win over the bad hot conditions of the poor people in the fields.

Characters with Special Qualities

Little Cloud who gives up her life
Mother Ocean who gives advice
Trees and grasses who bow down

Question 4

Question #4	In the story, the author uses the phrase, "an angel of blessing" to describe the Cloud. Based on clues from the story and your own background knowledge, what do you think "an angel of blessing" means? Do you agree with this description of the Cloud? Use evidence to explain why or why not.
Standard(s) covered:	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
In the story, the author used "an angel of blessing" to describe the Cloud. An angel is special being who is selfless and kind and who does good things. A blessing is also something good that is given to someone in need. I agree with this description of the Cloud because she is special and does something good like an angel would. She gives up her life to offer the poor suffering people of the earth the rain when they need it. The rain is definitely a blessing, or something good, that she has given to the people. Because the Cloud is kind, gave up her life for the people, and does something good like an angel would, angel is the perfect word to describe how special she is. Because she also gave something good that was a blessing to the people who needed it so badly, I agree with the description of the Cloud as an "angel of blessing."	• At least one reason why the Cloud may be called an angel • At least one reason why her gift to the people may be called a blessing • A description of what "angel of blessing" means • A statement agreeing or disagreeing with the description that tells why

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:

Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to determine the meaning of words and phrases by looking at clues within the text that relate to the word or phrase.
Prior knowledge to review	RL 3.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.
Steps to achieve objective	**Think aloud for direct instruction**

1) Determine what you already know about the unknown word or phrase.	• As I reread the phrase, "angel of blessing," I need to think about what those words mean. • Hmmm…if I'm not exactly sure what an angel is, I can look up the word in the dictionary or online. But I have heard about angels before, like guardian angels who watch over people and take care of them. I think an angel is like a heavenly being who does good things for people. • Now, I need to look at the word blessing because it says, "an angel of blessing." I hear the word "bless" in blessing. When someone sneezes, I say, "Bless you," and I know that means I'm wishing good things for them. I also know that when someone gets a blessing it's definitely something good. • So an "angel of blessing" must be someone very special who gives or does something good.
2) Ask yourself, what clues in the story might relate to the word or phrase?	• Based on what I know about angels and what they are like, I'm thinking that the Cloud is definitely an angel. • Angels take care of people by doing good things, and that's exactly what the Cloud did! She gave up her life to give rain to the poor suffering people of the earth! • The Cloud even lives in the sky like an angel would too. • When I think about the blessing part as being something good given to another person, I think about that rain. The people hadn't had it for so long, that when it came it was totally a blessing for them.
3) Determine what the word or phrase means and how it is important to the story.	• So "angel of blessing" means the Cloud is the angel who gave the blessing of rain. • This is the perfect phrase to describe the Cloud and the gift she gave. • Because she had to give up her life to do it, using such spiritual words like "angel" and "blessing" to describe her and the gift she gave, makes what she did seem that much more important than just saying, "the Cloud gave the people some rain." • By calling her an "angel of blessing," the reader knows that she is not just any cloud, but a very special cloud who is selfless in giving something important to the people. • So when I write my response, I'm going to restate the question first. • Then I'm going to describe what angel means and what blessing means. After that, I'll give the examples that show how the Cloud is an angel and how her gift was a blessing. Then I'll wrap it up with the reasons why that phrase describes the Cloud perfectly.

Extension and practice
• If students are having trouble determining the meanings of words and phrases within text using details from the text, give them additional practice with short stories from http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2010/07/folklore_definitions.html . Use a graphic organizer to have them list words that are unfamiliar in one column, and words from the text that might be clues to the meaning in another column. In the next column have them predict the meaning of the word. In the last column, have them write the actual definition from an online dictionary to check with their prediction. • For an additional challenge, have students illustrate the meanings of words and phrases from additional genres, including historical fiction and poetry passages that may be found on readworks.org.

What next?	
For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to other prose, poetry or drama to determine the determine the meaning of words and phrases by looking at clues within the text that relate to the word or phrase.	See more examples of how to teach how to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).
In this lesson you will learn how to determine the meaning of words and phrases by looking at clues within the text that relate to the word or phrase. 1. Determine what you already know about the unknown word or phrase. 2. Ask yourself, what clues in the story might relate to the word or phrase? 3. Determine what the word or phrase means and how it is important to the story.	Using context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words: https://learnzillion.com/lessons/1626-use-context-clues-to-determine-the-meaning-of-unknown-words Vocabulary in Context: http://www.readworks.org/lessons/grade4/vocabulary-context/lesson-1

Vocabulary in Context

Unknown Word or Phrase	Clues	Possible Definition	Actual Definition

Question 5	
Question #5	Based on what you know about the Cloud and her actions, what do you think the theme of this story might be? Use evidence from the text to defend your thinking.
Standard(s) covered:	RL 4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

Example response that meets standard	Look-fors
Based on what I know about the Cloud and her actions, I think the theme of this story might be "Sacrifice." In the story, the Cloud gave up her life for others after starting off as little and carefree. When she saw the people of the earth suffering in the heat without any rain, she developed a strong wish in her heart to do something good for the poor people in the fields. She thought about her mother's warning about dying if she went too close to the earth, but she chose to help them anyway. She grew "marvelously big, strong, and powerful" as she filled up with rain and love and a strong desire to help the people. Finally, the Cloud told the people, "Yes, I will help you…I will give my life for you!" Her final action of giving up her life in a "blessed, healing shower of rain" was the final ending to all her other thoughts and actions throughout this story. For these reasons, I think the author is trying to communicate the theme of "Sacrifice" in this story.	• A clearly stated theme • Evidence based on the Cloud's actions and the most important part of the story that supports the theme

If students are struggling to answer the text-dependent question, use this follow-up plan for modeling and practice:	
Objective	In this lesson you will learn how to determine the theme by reflecting on the most important part of the story.
Prior knowledge to review	RL 3.2: Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
Steps to achieve objective	**Think aloud for direct instruction**

1) Determine the most important part of the story.	• So in order to figure out the theme of the story, I need to think about what the word "theme" actually means. Based on other stories I've read that have had a theme, I remember it being the central message of a story. In order to figure out the central message, I need to really think about the most important part first. • When I think about the important part of the story, I think about the major problem in the story and how it was solved. • I also need to think about the main character in the story and how the actions of that character contributed to the story. • Hmmm….The problem in the story was that the poor people of the fields were suffering terribly in the heat. They were troubled and desperate for rain. • This problem was solved when the Cloud, who started out as little and carefree, decided to give up her life and shower her rain down upon the people. • She grew into a big Cloud and was described by the author as an "angel of blessing" when she offered the gift of her rain. • At one point she even said, "Men of earth, I will help you, come what may!" She knew from her Mother's warning that if she went too close to the earth she would die. But she did it anyway. • The actions of the Cloud throughout this story and how she helped solve the problem were probably the most important parts.
2) Ask yourself, "What words and phrases could I use to describe theme?"	• Now that I've figured out the most important part, I need to think about possible themes. • Hmmm…I know that the theme of any story is the basic idea the author is trying to get across based on the actions of the characters. • Let me see…what are some common themes I've read about before in stories? I know friendship can be a common theme in children's books, as well as good vs. evil, courage, fear, love, sacrifice…. • Keeping in mind that this is a folktale, the theme is probably a fairly simple one connected to the actions of the Cloud.
3) Determine how the most important part of the story matches a chosen theme.	• So when I think again about the Cloud and her actions in this story, I keep coming back to her selfless act of giving up her life to give rain to the people. • She started out as a small, carefree Cloud and grew to become strong and "an angel of blessing." • She became great and majestic and cried to the people, "Yes, I will help you….I will give my life for you!" • In focusing on the selfless actions of this somewhat magical character who took on human qualities in this folktale, I'm thinking that the author is trying to convey the theme of "Sacrifice" which means giving up something for someone else. • She gave up her life willingly to help others. • In writing my response, I'll begin by restating the question and telling what I believe the theme might be. • Then I'll talk about the important actions of the Cloud with evidence from the story that back up the theme. • Finally, I'll focus my response on her most important action, and wrap it up again with the conclusion that the theme is "Sacrifice."

Extension and practice
• If students are having trouble determining the theme of a story, give them a potential list of themes to choose from. Go to: http://www.slideshare.net/thalialongoria/finding-themes-in-literature-ppt for a description of theme, and a list of theme ideas. • For an additional challenge, have students choose a theme and write their own folktale around it. Have them share their folktales with a partner to see if they can identify the theme.

What next?	
For additional practice, with students or for students' independent work, apply this learning objective and set of steps to prose, poetry or drama to determine the theme.	See more examples of how to teach identifying a theme (4.2)
In this lesson you will learn how to determine the theme by reflecting on the most important part of the story. 1. Determine the most important part of the story. 2. Ask yourself, "What words and phrases could I use to describe theme?" 3. Determine how the most important part of the story matches a chosen theme.	Determine the theme of a drama: Close Reading Drama: Little Red Riding Hood: https://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/544 Determine the theme of a story: Close reading literature: "The Story of Dr. Dolittle: Chapters 1-2": https://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/372 Determine the theme of a story: Reading Literature: A Dog's Tale (Fiction) https://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/259 Determine the theme of a poem: Close Reading Poetry: "The Land of Nod" https://learnzillion.com/lessonsets/488