

*A Common Core State Standards  
-Aligned Discussion/Project Guide  
for Grades PK-2*

# Scarlet's Magic Paintbrush

*ISBN: 9781946101679*

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Illustration by Sandie Sonke

Published by Clear Fork/Spork

*What would it be like to have a magic paintbrush?*

*Scarlet knows.*

*She paints perfect pictures . . . until her brush disappears.*

*Will she ever be  
able to create another  
masterpiece without it?*

Guide created by Debbie Gonzales, MFA



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## Pre-Reading Discussion

*Consider the illustration depicted on the cover:*

- List all of the objects and characters featured on the cover.
- Predict how the girl featured there is feeling. Identify clues in the illustration that reveal what her mood is like.
- Describe the action in the illustration. Notice how all the creatures are reacting to the activity the girl is engaged in.
- Identify the object her is holding in her hand. Is the object special, in some way? How so?
- The title of the book is SCARLET'S MAGIC PAINTBRUSH. Knowing this, tell the story this illustration is suggesting. What is going on in this illustration and why?

*Meet the Author–Melissa Stoller:*

- An author uses words to tell stories. Do you think that, sometimes, there is magic in the words that they choose? Explain your answer.
- Authors create characters and settings with their words. Discuss what you know about the concepts of character and setting.
- On her website, author Melissa Stoller says that, when she isn't writing, she can be found observing the stars. Consider how spending time quietly observing the stars might inspire someone to write a story about magic.
- Ms. Stoller was once a writing instructor. Discuss how being a teacher might help her to become a better writer.
- To learn more about Ms. Stoller and her remarkable projects access her website at [www.melissastoller.com](http://www.melissastoller.com).



*Meet the Illustrator–Sandie Sonke:*

- Study the illustration of the cover. Notice the the painting the girl is creating is lighter and brighter than the other objects featured there. Explain why you think this is so.
- An illustrator adds details to suggest mood and feelings in the illustrations. Identify details included on the book cover that reveal how the girl is feeling. What does her flowered headband suggest about her character? The blobs of paint on her skirt?
- The word *whimsy* means playful, peculiar, and fun. On her website, illustrator Sandie Sonke says that she loves to play with legos and draw with her children. Make a connection with her love of play and the feeling of *whimsy* she expresses in her illustration.
- On her website, Sandie Sonke features lots of her illustrations. Access [www.sandiesonkeillustration.com](http://www.sandiesonkeillustration.com) to enjoy them all!



## Post-Reading Discussion

*One day, Scarlet found a magic paintbrush and everything changed. She whispered that she wanted, and perfect fairies, unicorns, and princesses magically filled her canvases.*

- Consider why Scarlet happened to find the magic paintbrush on this particular day.
- Identify the *everything* that changed for Scarlet.
- Define the word *perfect*. What does the word mean to you.
- Explain why painting fairies, unicorns, and princesses need to be painted perfectly.
- Do you think that Scarlet found the magic paintbrush, or did the magic paintbrush find her?



*Everything was perfect.  
Until...*

- Predict how Scarlet must have felt when using the magic paintbrush.
- Describe what it might feel like to create perfect pictures without even trying.
- Is it important to create perfect pictures all the time? Explain your answer.
- Examine reasons why Scarlet is anxious when she loses the magic paintbrush. Tell why the paintings she created with a regular paint brush are disappointing to her now.



*“Not without my brush,” said Scarlet.  
“I’ll never be able to paint like before.”*

- Explain why Scarlet feels that she will “never be able to paint again.” Tell what happened to cause her to feel this way.
- Her father gave her a new brush, and yet Scarlet rejects it. Explain why this is so.
- In this illustration, Scarlet’s father and her dog are both standing beside a picture that she painted, and yet she feels that “she will never be able to paint again.” Discuss what she means in this statement.





*Still, she liked the strong lines leaping across the canvas.*

- Even though Scarlet wasn't completely pleased with the pictures she was producing by experimenting with different artistic techniques, discuss ways she was benefitting from the process.
- Observe the pictures featured in the illustration. Two of the pictures were painted by the magic paintbrush and one was completed by Scarlet. Discover ways that the pictures are similar and different.
- Describe Scarlet's posture in this illustration. Connect her posture with her feeling of pleasure with the strong lines in her painting.
- The word *confidence* means to have belief in yourself, to be bold, and to have courage. Talk about the effect losing the magic paintbrush had on Scarlet's artistic confidence.



*There it was!  
Stuck in her pillowcase!  
Then a strange thing happened.*

- Explain how the magic paintbrush became lost in Scarlet's pillowcase. Do you think there was some magic involved in Scarlet finding the magic paintbrush in this way? How so?
- Examine the "strange thing" that happened. Tell why Scarlet became disappointed in the pictures the magic paintbrush created.
- In the beginning of the story, Scarlet was pleased with the paintings the magic paintbrush created. Identify why Scarlet's feeling about the magic paintbrush's pictures changed. What happened to cause this change within her?



*She used strong lines, bold shapes,  
swirls, and whirls.  
They weren't perfect, but they were hers.*

- In the end, Scarlet regained confidence in her artistic skills. Discuss how her unique new creative style reflects her change in character.
- Which is more important, to be perfect or to be happy? Explain your answer.



## Cause & Effect Analysis

**Objective:** To identify how events (effect) are created as a result of other events (cause).

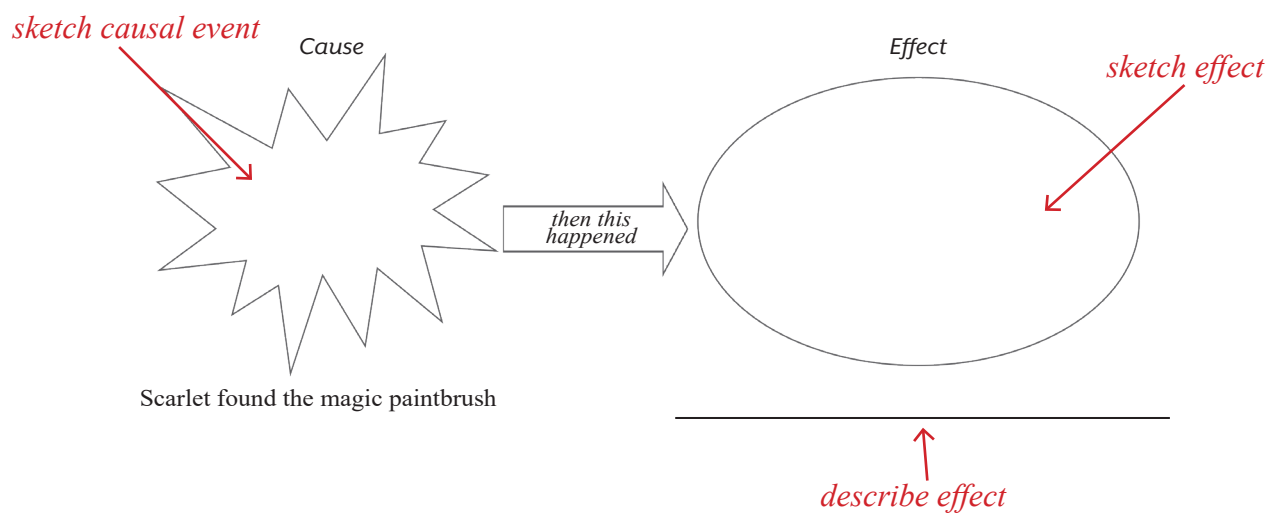
**Materials:**

- *Scarlet's Magic Paintbrush*, the book
- The Cause and Effect Analysis Template (Guide, pg. 7)
- Pencil
- Markers

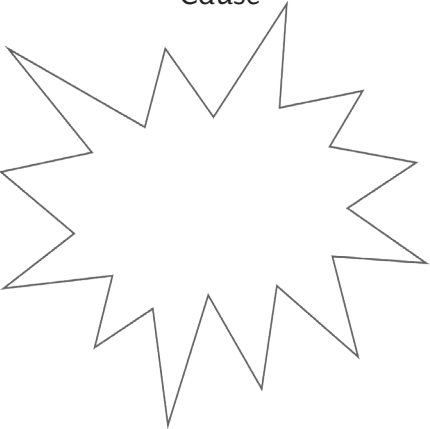

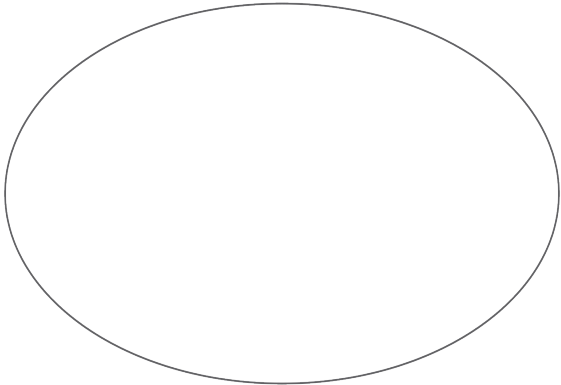
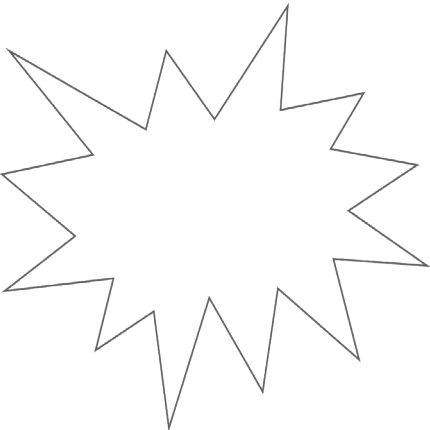

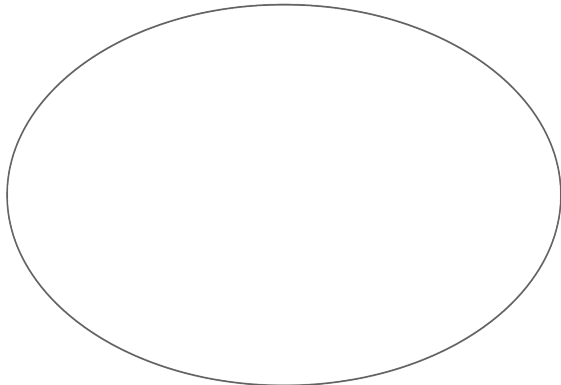
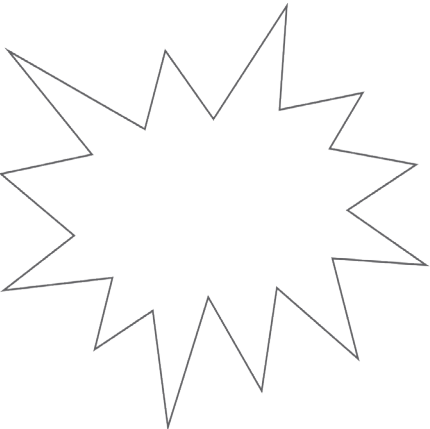

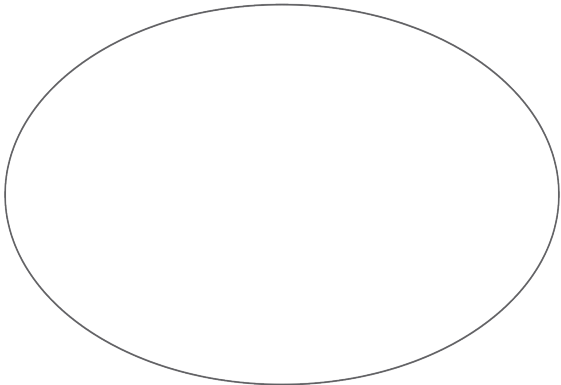
**Procedure:**

- Instruct students to consider the causal events listed on The Cause and Effect Analysis Template. Ask them to find the place where the listed events take place in the story. Have students sketch a drawing of the event in the space provided.
- Ask students to describe what happened as a result of the causal event. What sort of change took place in Scarlet as a result of the event? How was she effected? Instruct students to sketch a drawing of the effect and label it in the space provided.
- Once template is complete, tell students to choose one of the cause and effect events and write a short essay explaining the event connections. Encourage students to illustrate their work and share it with the class.

*SAMPLE*



## Cause &amp; Effect Analysis Template

Cause		Effect	
 Scarlet found the magic paintbrush		 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/>	
 Scarlet lost the magic paintbrush		 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/>	
 Scarlet found the magic paintbrush		 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/>	



## Scarlet's Crown of Flowers

### Materials:

- A collection of silk flowers
- Florist tape
- Wire clippers
- A piece of ribbon

### Procedure:

- Use wire clippers to cut silk flower stems to measure about 3 inches long.

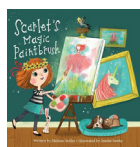
- Tear off about 3 inch strips of florist tape.
- Hold the stems of two flowers together. Wrap strip of florist tape around the stems.

- Build an extended chain of flower stems by wrapping a stem on top of the prior stem.

- Once silk flower chain is completed, use ribbon to tie ends together.



*Write and illustrate a story about Scarlet's flower crown. Explore what the flower crown says about her character. Explain how wearing a flower crown makes her feel? How would wearing a flower crown make you feel?*





## Story Retelling

**Objective:** To retell a story, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of the central message or lesson.

### Materials:

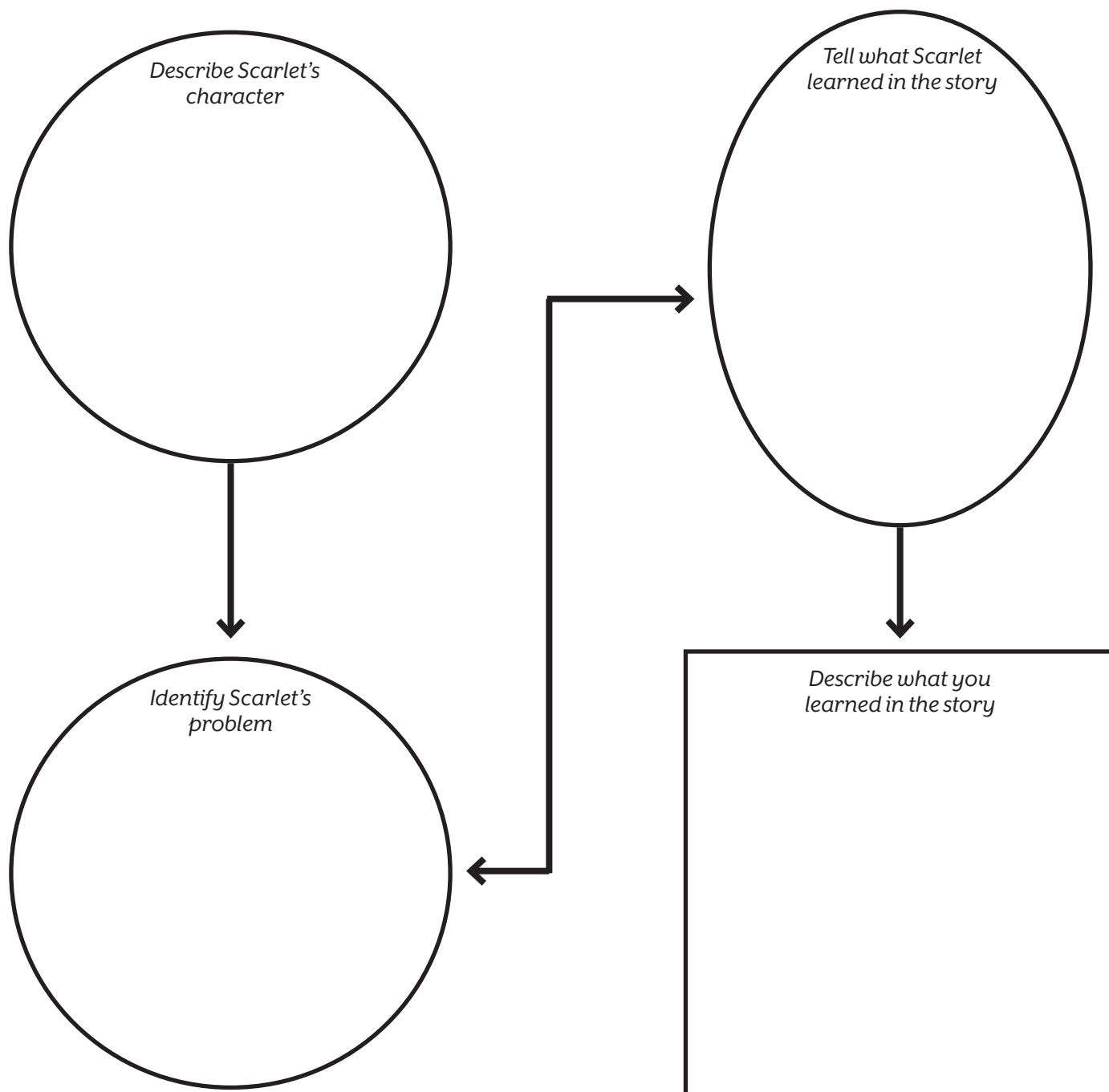
- *Scarlet's Magic Paintbrush*, the book
- Scarlet's Story Journey Template (Guide, pg. 10)
- Pencil
- Markers

### Procedure:

- Print the Scarlet's Story Journey Template. Identify each of the topics to explore. Use book as a reference to guide a discussion.
  - ~ Describe Scarlet's character: Who is Scarlet? What does she want? How do you know?
  - ~ Identify Scarlet's problem: What happened that caused her trouble? What is keeping her from getting what she wants?
  - ~ Tell what Scarlet learned in the story: Describe the change that took place in Scarlet's character as a result of the events that took place in the story.
  - ~ Describe what you learned in the story: Discuss with students what they learned about appreciation for their own artistic experience.
- Using the Scarlet's Story Journey Template as a structure, instruct students to write a short summary and/or illustrate a picture expressing each topic in the spaces provided.
- Encourage students to share their work with the class.



## Scarlet's Story Journey



## Common Core State Standards Alignment

		Discussion	Cause & Effect	Flower Crown	Retelling
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature</b>					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.1	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.2	With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.6	With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.7	With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.10	Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2	Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.	●			●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3	Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.7	Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.10	With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1	Ask and answer such questions as <i>who</i> , <i>what</i> , <i>where</i> , <i>when</i> , <i>why</i> , and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	●	●		●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7	Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.	●	●	●	●
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Writing</b>					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.2	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.		●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.3	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.		●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2	Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.		●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3	Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.		●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2	Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.		●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.3	Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.		●	●	●



		Discussion	Cause & Effect	Flower Crown	Retelling
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Foundational Skills</b>					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.1	Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.1	Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.2	Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.1.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.	•	•	•	•
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Speaking &amp; Listening</b>					
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>kindergarten topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.2	Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.3	Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.4	Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.5	Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.		•		•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.6	Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>grade 1 topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.4	Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.5	Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.		•		•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.6	Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>grade 2 topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2	Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.	•	•	•	•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.4	Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.		•		•
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.5	Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings		•		•

