

When Things Pass Away

Unit Title: Understanding Change, Loss, and Growth Through Storytelling

Grade Level: K-5

Duration: 3 Weeks (15 Days)

Theme: *Exploring how change affects individuals and communities and how we can respond with resilience and understanding.*

Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean when things “pass away”?
2. How do people and nature experience and respond to change?
3. How can storytelling, music, and art help us express emotions about change and loss?
4. What can we learn from history and science about growth and renewal?

Common Core Standards Addressed:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- **RL.K-5.1:** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.K-5.2:** Identify themes and central messages in literature.
- **W.K-5.3:** Write narratives that include events, thoughts, and feelings.
- **SL.K-5.1:** Engage in collaborative discussions with peers and adults.

Science

- **K-PS3-1:** Understand how sunlight affects plant and animal life.
- **2-LS2-1:** Identify what plants and living things need to survive.
- **4-ESS2-1:** Explain how weathering and natural processes create change over time.

Social Studies

- **D2.Civ.2.K-2:** Discuss how individuals contribute to and help their communities.
- **D2.His.1.3-5:** Analyze historical events that brought change to communities.

Arts & Music

- **Anchor Standard 2:** Organize artistic ideas and work.
 - **MU:Cr1.1.K-5:** Generate and conceptualize artistic musical ideas.
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Week 1: Understanding Change Through Storytelling

Day 1: Story Introduction & Discussion (ELA, Social Studies)

Objective: Introduce students to *When Things Pass Away* and help them identify themes.

1. **Read Aloud or Independent Reading:** Read *When Things Pass Away* aloud or provide copies for older students.
 2. **Guided Discussion:**
 - What changes happen in the story?
 - How do the characters feel about these changes?
 - Have you ever experienced change like this?
 3. **Small Group Activity:** Students draw or write about a time they experienced change (moving, losing something, etc.).
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Day 2: Exploring Emotions Through Art (Art, SEL)

Objective: Create visual representations of emotions related to change.

1. **Introduce Color Theory:** Discuss how different colors can represent emotions.
 2. **Activity:**
 - **K-2:** "Feelings Collages" using magazine cutouts or drawings.
 - **3-5:** Painting or drawing a scene representing a personal experience with change.
 3. **Sharing:** Students explain their artwork in small groups.
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Day 3: Empathy Writing (ELA, SEL)

Objective: Students write an empathy poem expressing emotions about change.

1. **Introduce Empathy Poems:** Poems that express how another person or thing might feel.
2. **Model Writing:** “I am a tree losing my leaves. I feel cold, but I know new leaves will grow.”
3. **Student Writing:**
 - **K-2:** Dictate or illustrate their poem.
 - **3-5:** Independently write and revise their poem.
4. **Sharing:** Students read their poems aloud or record them using a tablet.

Day 4: Science Experiment – Change in Nature (Science, STEM)

Objective: Explore how plants adapt to change.

1. **Prediction:** What happens when a plant loses leaves?
2. **Experiment:**
 - Place cut celery stalks in colored water to observe absorption.
 - Discuss how plants recover after storms or seasonal changes.
3. **Observation & Discussion:**
 - **K-2:** Draw what they see.
 - **3-5:** Write about how plants and people adapt after loss.

Day 5: Exploring Change in Communities (Social Studies, ELA)

Objective: Learn about a historical event where a community faced change.

1. **Choose a Story:** Examples like New Orleans rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina.
2. **Group Discussion:**
 - **K-2:** Look at pictures and discuss rebuilding efforts.
 - **3-5:** Create a timeline of recovery.
3. **Reflection:** Compare the historical event to *When Things Pass Away*.

Week 2: Adapting to Change & Growth

Day 6: Musical Interpretation of Change (Music, Technology)

Objective: Use music to explore emotions related to change.

1. **Listen to Music:** Slow vs. upbeat pieces.

2. **Discussion:** How does music express emotions?
 3. **Technology Extension:**
 - **K-2:** Use Chrome Music Lab to create a “feelings melody.”
 - **3-5:** Create digital soundscapes for parts of the book.
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Day 7: Creating a Class Book (ELA, Art, Technology)

Objective: Make a collaborative book about change.

1. **Students Create Pages:**
 - **K-2:** Draw and dictate a sentence.
 - **3-5:** Write a short story or poem.
 2. **Compile the Book:** Use Google Slides or Book Creator.
 3. **Present to Class.**
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Day 8: Role-Playing Scenarios (SEL, ELA)

Objective: Simulate real-life situations related to change.

1. **Scenario 1:** A student loses a pet – how do friends and teachers support them?
 2. **Scenario 2:** A town recovers from a natural disaster – how can the community help?
 3. **Group Discussions:** What are the best ways to respond?
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Day 9: Science Exploration – Animal Adaptation (Science, STEM)

Objective: Learn how animals respond to change.

1. **Read About Migration & Hibernation.**
 2. **Hands-On Activity:** Create a model showing how animals adapt.
 3. **Discussion:** How do these ideas relate to *When Things Pass Away*?
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Day 10: Reflection & Letter Writing (ELA, SEL)

Objective: Write letters to people experiencing change.

1. **Choose an Audience:** Nursing home residents, disaster survivors, etc.
2. **Write and Decorate Letters.**

Week 3: Technology & Creative Expression

Day 11-12: Coding & Storytelling

1. Use Scratch Jr. to create digital retellings of the book.
2. Showcase Projects.

Day 13-14: Photography & Writing

1. Take Photos of Nature Changing.
2. Write Reflections on Change.

Day 15: Final Reflection & Sharing

1. Host a Class Showcase.
2. Discuss What They Learned About Change.

Assessment:

- **K-2:** Artwork, observations, and participation.
- **3-5:** Written responses, discussions, and projects.

