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## Patricia Polacco Author Study [2nd grade]

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# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Patricia Polacco Author Study

Grade Level: 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

Subject/Topic Area(s): Reading and Writing

Designed By: Catherine Brackett

Time Frame: 16 days

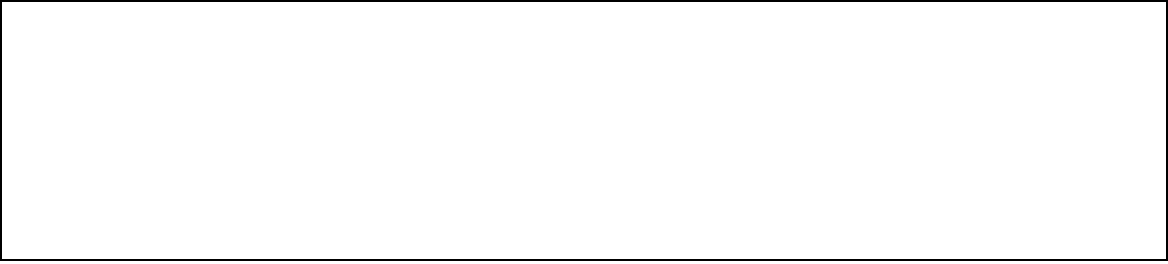
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### **Brief Summary of Unit**

Through the study of *Thank You, Mr. Falker*, *Firetalking*, *The Thinking Quilt*, *Thundercake*, *Ginger and Petunia*, *My Ol' Man*, and *The Limonade Club*, this unit will allow students to grow as writers by studying an Patricia Polacco. The students will also learn to apply lessons addressed in literature to their own lives. Most importantly, the students will learn how their words and actions can either build a person up or tear them down. In the end, they will be asked to apply what they have learned to create a story or play that will help a bullying situation in a younger grade.



**Unit: Patricia Polacco Author Study**

**Grade: 2**

**Stage 1: Desired Results**

**Understandings**

*Students will understand that...*

1. *Studying characters in stories can help us understand our own lives.*
2. *Authors use their lives and adventures to create stories others can learn from.*
3. *Our actions and words impact our friends and families (for good or bad).*

**Essential Questions**

1. How does an author’s own life shape what and how s/he writes?
2. How can studying one author influence our own writing or life experience?
3. How do my words and actions impact my friends and family for good or bad?

**Knowledge**

*Students will be familiar with...*

1. The background culture and stories of Patricia Polacco

*Students will know...*

1. They can use their life to create their stories other people will enjoy.
2. The components of a good story (characters, problem/solution, setting)

**Skills**

*Students will be able to...*

1. Interpret and discuss ideas in Polacco books
2. Apply life lessons learned in Polacco books to their own life

**TEKS: 2.2 (a,b) 2.9 (g) 2.10 (a-d) 2.13 (a,b) 2.14 (a)**

(2) Listening/speaking/culture. The student listens and speaks to gain knowledge of his/her own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements of cultures. The student is expected to:

(A) connect experiences and ideas with those of others through speaking and listening (K-3); and

(B) compare language and oral traditions (family stories) that reflect customs, regions, and cultures (K-3).

(9) Reading/comprehension. The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud and selections read independently. The student is expected to:

(G) identify similarities and differences across texts such as in topics, characters, and problems (1-2);

(10) Reading/literary response. The student responds to various texts. The student is expected to:

(A) respond to stories and poems in ways that reflect understanding and interpretation in discussion (speculating, questioning) in writing, and through movement, music, art, and drama (2-3);

(B) demonstrate understanding of informational text in various ways such as through writing, illustrating, developing demonstrations, and using available technology (2-3);

(C) support interpretations or conclusions with examples drawn from text (2-3); and

(D) connect ideas and themes across texts (1-3).

(13) Reading/culture. The student reads to increase knowledge of his/her own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements of culture. The student is expected to:

(A) connect life experiences with the life experiences, language, customs, and culture of others (K-3); and

(B) compare experiences of characters across cultures (K-3).

(14) Writing/purposes. The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes, and in various forms. The student is expected to:

(A) write to record ideas and reflections (K-3);

**Stage 2: Assessment Evidence**

**Performance Task:**

1. **A first grade class is having trouble accepting all of the classmates. Using your own life as a reference, create a story or a play that will help the first graders overcome their difficulties. Be sure to use all of the elements that help create wonderful literature.**

### Other evidence:

(quizzes, tests, academic prompts, self-assessments, etc.)

note – these are usually included where appropriate in Stage 3 as well)

- Research on Patricia Polacco (the class will write a biography together)
- Patricia Polacco Reflection Book
- Story Element Organizer

## Stage 3: Learning Activities

(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)

### 1. **Day 1:** How does an author's own life shape what and how s/he writes?

Explain that you are going to begin an author study. Have the books displayed across the white board so they can see the front covers. Explain that before you begin to read her stories, you want to know more about who she is as a person.

Go to Patricia Polacco's website and research the author as a class. Have the students take notes as you learn about the author. As you learn more about her, ask the students how they think this will affect her writing. Hopefully, they will be looking at the covers of the books to make predictions (there are farm animals, it looks like the same girl is in several books etc.)

Read the autobiography *Firetalking*

Have the students complete the prediction page.

### 2. **Day 2:** Based on what the class learned the day before, create a biography of Patricia Polacco together. Have each student, or group of students, write about and draw events from her life. When the book is finished, gather together and read it. Ask the class how they think her life is going to change the way she writes.

### 3. **Day 3:** Gather the class in a circle and discuss fears. What do fears feel like? What makes us feel better when we are scared? What are some common fears?

Read *Thundercake* discussing fears and solutions to common fears as you read. Is it possible to write about fears without having any?

Pass out the Patricia Polacco Reflection book. Make a page for each book you are going to read and then a blank cover sheet. Explain to the class that Patricia Polacco is a very powerful writer and sometimes we are able to think about things best by writing ourselves. We will be using the reflections throughout the study to help us think deeply about her stories. (It is wonderful if the teacher also has time to reflect in her/his own reflection book).

Pass out the Patricia Polacco Reflection book. Ask the students to write about a time they were very scared or a fear that they have. Did another person help them overcome their fear? Then have them create a recipe that they think would help them overcome their

fears.

- 4. Day 4:** Show the class memorabilia from your life. Talk about each thing and why it is important to you.

Then, read the story *The Keeping Quilt*. Is there anything in your family that has been passed down from generation to generation? Why do you think the quilt becomes so important to the family?

In the **Patricia Polacco Reflection book**, have the students write about something that they would take with them if they had to leave this country? What would help create a home away from home?

- 5. Day 5:** Explain that we are going to make a keeping quilt for the classroom. Show them the quilt. (To make the quilt, get at least 20 gallon size Ziplock bags. Line up the bags in a grid, 5X4. Make sure all of the Ziplock labels are facing the top. Tape the bags together with a bright color Duct Tape or electrical tape. The tape should then be an outline holding the bags together. Do not tape over the opening of the bags. When you pick the quilt up, the bags should be able to open from the back. You will slip each student's work into the back of the quilt. This is why the Ziplock label needs to be in the back, the student's work will cover the label. If it is in the front, the label will show over the work). <http://teachers.net/gazette/MAY03/images/bowland27.jpg>

Pass out a blank white piece of paper to each student. Have the students Think Pair Share on what they would want in their own Keeping Quilt. Then have them draw or write about what they want weaved into the class Keeping Quilt. When they have finished slide each quilt square into the quilt.

- 6. Day 6:** Begin by telling the class a powerful memory from your childhood. Ask them what they do when they are sad or miss something.

Read *My Ol' Man* to the class. Be sure to focus on storytelling and using the stories of others. Re-read the last page several times and ask the students what they think about this. Why are our memories a gift?

**In their reflection books**, have them tell about a memory that they see as a gift.

- 7. Day 7:** **How do my words and actions impact my friends and family for good or bad?**

Pass out different quotes from the book *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. Have the students discuss what they think the book is going to be about based on the quotations.

Read *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. Along the way discuss how sad the bullying makes you. Also discuss how good Trisha must have felt with the support of her grandparents and the teacher.

**Ask the students to reflect on the story.** They can either write about 1) Have you ever felt not smart in school? What made you feel better? 2) Write about an adult who has really

made you feel special? 3) Write about the story in some way.

8. **Day 8:** Reflect on ways Mr. Falker and Trisha's grandparents made her feel better in *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. Ask the students for ways other people have made them feel better in their lives. Discuss stories from your own past.

Read the *Limonade Club* together as a class. As you read pause to discuss how amazing it is that the class is so supportive during a scary time. Explain that it is our job to try to build people up and not to keep them down.

At the end of the reading, ask the **students to reflect** on ways to help others during common uncomfortable times: when you are a new student, when there is a sub, when someone is lost or doesn't know what to do, or when someone is just having a sad day.

After their reflections have a classroom meeting to see how the students feel the community supports them. Discuss what they can do better and what is working really well for them. Remind the students that we have the power to help make someone have a wonderful day or to create a sad day for someone. This is a very powerful thing and we have to be very careful at all times that we are trying to be builders and not destroyers. \*If there is time, have the students apply this knowledge world-wide. Have them choose a cause to work towards (perhaps they write letters to children in the hospital).

9. **Day 9:** Have a celebration!!! Allow the students to kick off their shoes and read their reflections they have written so far in the unit. Share some of your own reflections.

10. **Day 10: How can studying one author influence our own writing or life experience?**

Begin by asking the students what they have learned so far from Patricia Polacco. Record their answers on a poster titled "Thank You, Ms. Polacco." On a separate chart, ask the class what they think makes Polacco books so wonderful to read. Why are stories a gift? What makes her books a gift? Ask them to continue to think about this as you read another Polacco book that is different from the other books you have read so far.

Read *Ginger and Petunia* to the class. After the book, remind the students of story elements (character, problem, solution, and setting). Go back through the book and ask the students to help you take notes on the elements of this story. Create a giant chart of the Story Graphic Organizer. Fill out the organizer as a class based on *Ginger and Petunia*.

Next, with a partner or small group, have the students choose a Patricia Polacco book that has already been read to complete the **organizer** on their own. Discuss that wonderful authors have well developed story elements.

11. **Day 11:** Begin by reviewing all of the things you learned from Patricia Polacco. Expand on this and ask them to brainstorm ways they have learned to be a better author. Remind them of the element organizer they filled out previously. How would the story change if

one of those elements was not there?

Remind the students that authors often improve their writing or get ideas from other authors. If you have a story for this, share it (for example my poetry changed when I read Little Dog Poems by Kristine O'Connell George. I wanted my poetry to be more compact and I also started to write a series of poems about my dog). Ask the students how they can use Patricia Polacco to improve their writing. Makes notes as they think aloud.

**Give the students the prompt to the assessment.** Talk about it on the carpet and also show them the rubric. How do they think Patricia Polacco would handle this situation? Pass out the Story Thinking Sheet.

12. **Day 12, Day 13, Day 14, Day 15:** Give the students time and support as they finish their projects. Remind the students to frequently refer to the rubric to make sure they are on track.
13. **Day 16:** Final Celebration!!! Have the students present their stories or plays. Invite other people from around the school to celebrate with the class.





Name:

Polacco Reflection Page

Choose one Patricia Polacco book displayed at the front of the room and create a prediction on what you think the book will be about.

What book did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

Based on what you have learned about Patricia Polacco's life, what do you think this book will be about?

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Why do you think this?

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Name:

Polacco Reflection Page

Choose one Patricia Polacco book displayed at the front of the room and create a prediction on what you think the book will be about.

What book did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

Based on what you have learned about Patricia Polacco's life, what do you think this book will be about?

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Why do you think this?

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**Title and Author**

**Character:**

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**Setting:**

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**Problem:**

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**Solution:**

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Name:

Due Date:



### First Grade Problems Think Sheet

Last month, the first grades in Room Ten received a new student. At first, everyone loved the new student. However, they soon discovered that there are things this new student struggles with. The new student is not able to read as fast as the other students. Whenever there is a race, the new student is always the last one finished. Quickly, first graders began to say hurtful things to the new student and now the new student wants to leave school.

Using your past experiences and your newly gained knowledge of Patricia Polacco, create a story or play that will help the first graders overcome their problem. Use this page to help guide your thinking. Remember to refer to the rubric to make sure you are on the right page.

1. Have you ever had an experience like this before?  
If so, please tell.

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2. What can you use from your past to help the first graders realize they are making poor choices?

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3. What characters will you use in your story? Be sure to really describe them and create them.

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4. What is your problem?

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5. What is your solution?

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6. What setting will you use to help your story come to life?

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You are now ready to begin your rough draft. Good luck saving the first graders!







### First Grade Problems Rubric

	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Approaches Expectations</b>	<b>Does not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Use of Background Information</b>	The student's background plays a large role in the creation of the story.	The student's background helped shape the creation of the story.	The student mentions a moment from their background.	The student did not use background information to create the story or play	
<b>Use of Characters in the story</b>	The characters are well-rounded and linger on our minds. Their problems become the reader's problems.	The characters are well developed.	There are characters used in the story. They each have a name.	There are not characters in the story	
<b>Story Problems can Influence Readers</b>	The problem and the solution can help readers learn how to solve various problems.	The problem and the solution can help people learn how to solve one particular problem.	The solution is hard to find and might not be easy for first graders to apply to their lives.	Readers cannot learn from the story or there is not a problem or a solution	
<b>Presentation/ Organization</b>	The story or play has a professional look to it. The pictures or set show that time was taken and pride shines through the work.	The story or play is organized and neat. The pictures or set is helpful to the story.	Some of the pictures or parts of the set help the story come to life.	Readers or listeners are not able to understand the story or play	
<b>Punctuality</b>	Student paced themselves well throughout the project and turned in their work on time.	Student turned in work on time.	Student did not completely finish their story or play.	Student did not turn in work	

## Patricia Polacco Books

1. *Firetalking*
2. *Thank You, Mr. Falker*
3. *The Thinking Quilt*
4. *Thundercake*
5. *Ginger and Petunia*
6. *My Ol' Man*
7. *The Limonade Club*

## References

<http://www.patriciapolacco.com/> - Patricia Polacco's website

<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00001466.shtml> - Polacco Author study pages

[http://www.readinglady.com/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE\\_user\\_op=view\\_page&PAGE\\_id=27&MMN\\_position=17:13](http://www.readinglady.com/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=27&MMN_position=17:13) – Reading Lady author study

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collection.jsp?id=319> – Author Study

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collection.jsp?id=319> – Keeping Quilt Activity

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/polacco.html> - AMAZING ideas for Polacco

<http://teachers.net/gazette/MAY03/images/bowland27.jpg> - Picture of the quilt to insert their work in