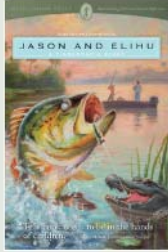


WILD ONION PRESS



# LESSON PLANS

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## Jason and Elihu *A Fisherman's Story*

As soon as Jason hears the legend of Elihu, he knows he must catch the great fish. But Old Snout, the gator, guards Elihu. Legend says, too, that whenever Elihu is hooked, the bass whispers a secret.

*Reading Level 4.3 Ages 8 and Up*

### Teaching Activities For Jason and Elihu

(Language Arts and Science Standards are addressed)

#### Grade Level: 4

Format: The following activities can be adapted for use as a whole class read-aloud activity, small literature group, or small guided reading group. Choose one or more activities from each section to support comprehension before, during, and after reading the book.

*Specific Sunshine State Standards are addressed and noted throughout activities. Florida's Sunshine State Standards are comparable to most other states' standards.*

Summary: This enchanting story is set near Cross Creek in Florida. The main character Jason is going through a hard time adjusting to his parents' separation. After he gets in trouble accidentally because he is a bit fidgety, his Grampy Luke moves down from Michigan to help Jason and his mother. He focuses Jason's attention on learning to bass fish. The other fishermen around Orange Lake quietly work together to help Jason learn the art of fishing, and soon Jason becomes "dream-bitten" to catch Elihu, the biggest, most elusive bass in the lake. There are many other charming characters woven throughout this tale, which help readers explore the power of dreams, family, and working to overcome challenges.

## Teaching Activities:

### Engage Students Before Reading:

You can share the summary above with students and explain that you will lead them through a few activities to get them ready to read the book.

*LA.4.2.1.5 The student will respond to, discuss, and reflect on various literary selections, connecting text-to- self, text-to-world, and text-to-text.*

1. Tell students that a major theme in the book is having dreams or goals and working hard to achieve them. Ask students to write and/or share about dreams they have or those of other characters in other books they have read. Ask students some of the following questions: How do you make a dream come true? Should you change your dream if you don't think it will come true? Can other people help you achieve your dream?

*LA.4.1.6.1 The student will use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly.*

*LA.4.1.6.4 The student will categorize key vocabulary and identify salient features.*

*LA.4.1.6.5 The student will relate new vocabulary to familiar words.*

2. There are many vocabulary words and terms throughout the text specific to fishing and bass fishing specifically.

For example: strike, line, jon boat, set the hook, rod, reel, slack, tackle, crappie, bait, jig, test line, sight-fishing, side-hooked

It would be valuable to ask the parents of your students if any of them knows about bass fishing and could come in to clarify these terms and share any other knowledge with the students before they read the book. If the guest speaker could bring a rod and reel to show and let students feel the “tic, tic, tic” of a fish nibbling the end of the line as they hold the rod, it would add so much sensory knowledge to the story. Students could make a dictionary of fishing terms, including definitions, synonyms, and illustrations.

If there is not a guest speaker available, there are a few websites you could share with students on a Smart Board to help them get a feel for bass fishing.

[www.bassresource.com/beginner/beginner.html](http://www.bassresource.com/beginner/beginner.html)

[www.aa-fishing.com/bass-fishing-videos.html](http://www.aa-fishing.com/bass-fishing-videos.html)

### Engage Students During Reading:

Below are one or more responses for each chapter of the text. The activities address different Sunshine State Standards listed below. You could display the prompts on the board for students to respond to in a Reader's Response Notebook.

*LA.4.1.7.3 The student will determine explicit ideas and information in grade-level text.*

LA.4.2.1.2 The student will identify and explain the elements of plot structure, including exposition, setting, character development, problem/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.

LA.4.2.1.5 The student will respond to, discuss, and reflect on various literary selections, connecting text-to-self, text-to-world, text-to-text.

LA.4.1.7.4 The student will identify cause-and-effect relationships in text.

LA.4.1.6.3 The student will use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words.

LA.4.2.1.7 The student will identify and explain an author's use of descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language (e.g., personification, similes, metaphors, symbolism), and examine how it is used to describe people, feelings, and objects.

LA.4.1.7.8 The student will use strategies to repair comprehension of grade appropriate text when self-monitoring indicates confusion, including but not limited to rereading, checking context clues, predicting, summarizing, questioning, and clarifying by checking other resources.

**Chapter 1:** This chapter offers a detailed description of Elihu. Make an illustration of the great bass based on the information in this chapter, including labels explaining some of Elihu's past experiences (e.g. one eye lost on a trot line)

**Chapter 2:** Start a character web for Jason to include all you learn about him. You will continue to add to this as you learn more throughout the novel.

All the men in the Tackle Box are helping Jason and Grampy Luke learn about bass fishing. Why? Do you have grown-ups who help you?

**Chapter 3:** Why did Grampy Luke move down from Michigan (two main reasons)? Why do you think he wanted to learn about Florida fishing?

**Chapter 4:** On page 22, Grampy Luke teaches Jason about using context clues while reading to help him learn the meaning of a new word. Make a chart like the one here and add to it throughout your reading of this book. Each time you encounter an unknown word, record it and try to use context clues to discover its meaning. If there are no context clues to help, consult another resource like a dictionary or friend.

Word	Page #	Context Clues?	Other source?	Meaning
Predatory	22	Yes, pauses like a cat stalking a mouse, then strikes		Preying, hunting

**Chapter 5:** The author uses an example of personification to add dimension to a description. Make a chart like the one here and add to it throughout your reading of the book.

Personification	Page #	Effect
The screen door whined shut	37	Helps the reader hear the sound

**Chapter 6:** On page 46 Grampy Luke explains to Jason why the boy at the dock was being so mean to him. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Chapter 7: You meet Jazel in this chapter and learn about her dream. You know about Jason's dream. On page 60, Jason's dad gives his opinion about dreams. Write your opinion about dreams and why you believe Jason's dad is right or wrong.

Chapter 8: Write about how Ronnie and Jason's relationship has changed. Why has it changed? Will the change last?

Chapter 9: Do you think it was all right for Ronnie to steal a boat to save Elihu? Do you think Jason was right to go with Ronnie knowing the boat was stolen? Do you see other options the boys should have considered?

Chapter 10: What do you think about how the Warden handled the situation? What do you think about Grampy Luke's punishment for Jason?

Chapter 11: Jason was so worried about Elihu that he wanted to sleep all the time to avoid thinking about it. Have you ever felt that way? Explain.

Chapter 12: Are you confused about why the Warden is going to put Ronnie and Bean in foster homes? Write down your questions and predictions. As you read the next chapter you will find the explanation on page 118.

Chapter 13: Write a list of rules for a bass fishing tournament that you learned in this chapter.

Chapter 14: Everyone keeps telling Jason that Elihu will whisper a secret, and now Denton Tiger tells Jason he will be faced with a great decision when he catches Elihu. Write a prediction about what the secret is and the decision Jason will have to make when he catches Elihu.

Chapter 15: In your own words retell how Abraham Lincoln avoided being killed as he rode the train to Washington D.C. Include information about his good friend Elihu Washburne.

Chapter 16: How has Mrs. Hasturn changed? Why? How do you know?

Chapter 17: On pages 158 and 159, Grampy Luke shares his ideas about grief regarding Jason's mom and dad and Mrs. Hasturn. Do you agree? Do you think different people can experience grief in different ways? Do you know anyone or any characters from other books who have experienced grief?

Chapter 18: Make a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting a king snake and a coral snake. Include information you learned in this chapter.

Chapter 19: Write the facts that you learned in this chapter about how bass reproduce.

Chapter 20: What was Elihu's secret? Looking back to Chapter 15, did the author foreshadow this secret? How?

Chapter 21: Describe how Jason's dad has changed from the beginning of the book. Why do you think Jason's dad changed?

Chapter 22: What do you think will happen to these characters after this last chapter?

### **Engage Students After Reading:**

*LA.4.2.1.4 The student will identify an author's theme and use details from the text to explain how the author developed that theme.*

1. Ask students to list the major themes explored in the novel (dreams, family, growing up, overcoming challenges, helping others in need). You could ask students to choose one to trace its development throughout the novel. Students could work in pairs or groups for support.

*LA.4.2.1.2 The student will identify and explain the elements of plot structure including exposition, setting, character development, problem/resolution, and theme in a variety of fiction.*

2. Ask students to choose one or more of the major characters of the novel to trace through the novel, comparing and contrasting the character at the beginning to how he/she is at the end. Students should explain why there are changes in characters from the beginning to the end. To add a creative element, students could make an animal-like illustration of the character at the beginning and a different one for the end to help explain the changes (for example Mrs. Hasturn may be a grumpy porcupine with an injury at the beginning, and a calm, steady older elephant at the end). Students should include a few paragraphs explaining the illustrations.

*LA.4.2.1.7 The student will identify and explain an author's use of descriptive, idiomatic, and figurative language (e.g., personification, similes, metaphors, symbolism), and examine how it is used to describe people, feelings, and objects.*

3. **Simile Hunt:** You could assign chapters to pairs of students to comb through those chapters to collect similes. Students should record the similes and explain how they affect the storytelling. Similes are fun to illustrate to emphasize their literal or figurative meanings.

*LA.4.4.3.1 The student will write persuasive text that establish and develop a controlling idea, supporting arguments for the validity of the proposed idea with detailed evidence.*

4. After completing the science research and activities that follow, students could write a persuasive text to lawmakers about protecting bodies of water and wildlife.

*LA.4.4.2.5 The student will write simple directions to familiar locations using cardinal directions, landmarks, and distances, and create an accompanying map.*

5. If you are located near Cross Creek, students may be inspired to learn how to drive out to Orange Lake and see some of the settings in the novel, like The Yearling Restaurant and the fish camp by Orange Lake. There are resources to help with this in atlases and on the

internet. You could ask students to write driving directions with a map from your school to Orange Lake at Cross Creek, Florida. [www.visitflorida.com/cross\\_creek](http://www.visitflorida.com/cross_creek)

### Science Activities:

#### Food Chain Activity:

*SC.4.L.17.2 The student will explain that animals, including humans, cannot make their own food and that when animals eat plants or other animals, the energy stored in the food source is passed to them.*

*SC.4.L.17.3 The student will trace the flow of energy from the Sun as it is transferred along the food chain through the producers to the consumers.*

Materials: cardboard or tag board, string or yarn, hole punch

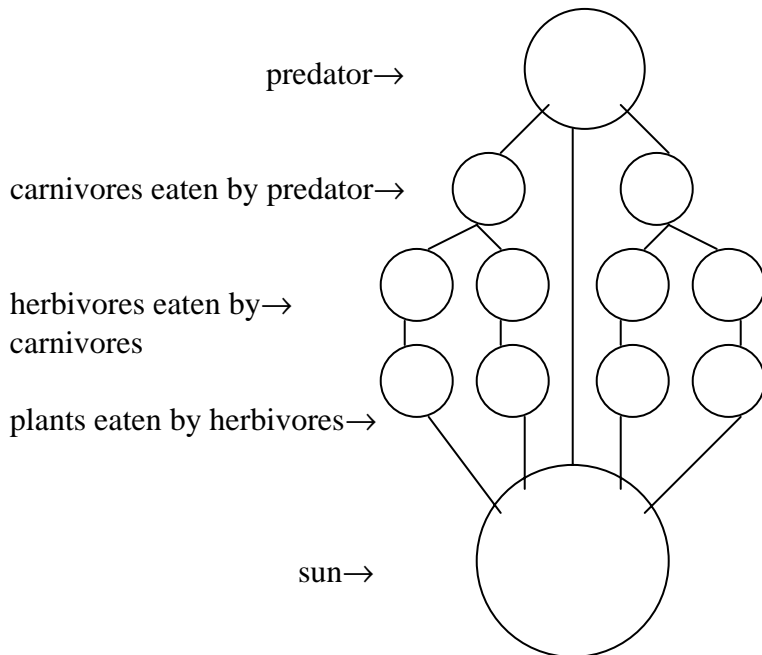
#### Procedure:

Draw or place pictures on board of a bass (Elihu), an alligator (Old Snout), and an eagle (Apache). Talk with students about what these animals eat. Clarify that each is a top predator. Help students trace the flow of energy from the sun to each predator. In each chain the energy begins with the sun to grow plants, which are eaten by herbivores, which are eaten by small carnivores, which are eaten by larger carnivores. Here are some examples:

sun—plant—beetle—frog—largemouth bass; sun—plant—tadpole—crappie—bald eagle;

sun—plant—minnow—egret—alligator.

Have students choose one of these predators to work with. Students should draw pictures (or you can provide pictures to glue onto tag board). Students should punch holes in paper to hang in mobile.



### Solar Still Activity:

*SC.4.P.8.2 The student will identify properties and common uses of water in each of its states.*

*SC.4.N.1.6 The student will keep records that describe observations made, carefully distinguishing actual observations from ideas and inferences about the observations.*

*SC.4.P.11.1 The student will recognize that heat flows from a hot object to a cold object and that heat flow may cause materials to change temperature.*

*SC.4.P.10.2 The student will investigate and describe that energy has the ability to cause motion or create change.*

Materials: large bowl, tub, or pan, plastic wrap, paper cups, masking tape, ice, small heavy object such as a rock or marble

Objective: The students will observe water pass through the three phases of matter.

Procedure: Tape down one cup in the center of the large tub. Tape down three other cups around the edges of the large tub. Place ice in the three outer cups (half full), leaving the cup in the center empty. Place plastic wrap over entire tub and loosely secure with rubber bands or tape. It must be sealed airtight. Place the small heavy object on the plastic above the empty cup in the middle of the tub and push it down so the plastic wrap is concave. Set in a warm, sunny place where it will not be disturbed. Predict and observe the results. Record times for ice to melt, then evaporate, then condense.

Possible Topics of Discussion After Completing this Activity:

- Global warming
- Sinkholes
- Water as a resource in Florida
- Hurricanes
- Water quality and how it is affected by humans
- Reflect on this quote from the novel, “In a sense, he was then part of water everywhere.” (page 45)

### Phases of the Moon Activity:

*SC.4.E.5.4 The student will relate that Earth (day and night) and apparent movements of the Sun, Moon, and stars are connected.*

*SC.4.N.1.7 The student will recognize and explain that scientists base their explanations on evidence.*

*SC.4.N.1.2 The student will compare the observations made by different groups using multiple tools and seek reasons to explain the differences across groups.*

*SC.4.N.1.4 The student will attempt reasonable answers to scientific questions and cite evidence in support.*

Materials: ball, paper, pencil, lamp with incandescent bulb and no shade

Procedure: Place the lamp in one corner of a darkened room. Hold ball up in the middle of the room. Ask students to make a drawing of the ball including the light and shadow on the ball and the location in the room. Discuss why drawings are different depending on where students are sitting in relation to the ball and lamp. Relocate ball and make another drawing. Discuss how this helps students understand the phases of the moon.

This activity could lead into a month-long study of the moon, during which time students keep a “Moon Journal” in which they record the phases of the moon each night. Bring in the newspaper to show the report of the moon’s phases.

On page 78 of the novel there is a reference to a three-quarter moon. Ask students if they know how the phases of the moon might affect people and animals.

#### Other Research Topics Inspired by the Novel:

*SC.4.L.1.7.4 The student will recognize ways plants and animals, including humans, can impact the environment.*

Students could research the history of the introduction of Hydrilla, its effects on plant and animal life and the ecosystem in Florida. Students could research other exotic species introduced to Florida.

*SC.4.E.6.6 The student will identify resources available in Florida (water, phosphate, oil, limestone, silicon, wind, and solar energy).*

Students could research aquaculture. Why is Florida suited for the production of fish? Students could research other industries suited to Florida’s natural resources.

*SC.4.L.16.3 The student will recognize that animal behaviors may be shaped by heredity and learning.*

*SC.4.L.16.2 The student will explain that although characteristics of plants and animals are inherited some characteristics can be affected by the environment.*

Students could research the behavior of one or all of the three major animal characters (bass, alligator, eagle). Students could look for the answers to the following questions: How are the animals shaped by heredity and learning? How are the animals affected by the environment?

*SC.4.L.17.1 The student will compare the seasonal changes in Florida plants and animals to those in other regions of the country.*

The students could research what happens to lakes in other parts of the country during the four seasons. The information could be compared and contrasted to lakes in Florida.