

3–7 Grade ELA Lesson Plan

Dream Big by Shannon Hale

Grade Levels

3–7

Time

45–60 minutes

Common Core State Standards (CCSS ELA)

- **RL.3–7.1:** Ask and answer questions using evidence from the text.
 - **RL.3–7.2:** Determine the theme or central message.
 - **RL.3–7.3:** Describe how characters respond to challenges and how they change over time.
 - **RL.3–7.6:** Explain how a character's point of view influences the story.
 - **RL.3–7.7:** Analyze how illustrations contribute to the meaning, mood, and tone of the story.
 - **W.3–7.3:** Write narratives using descriptive details and clear event sequences.
 - **W.3–7.1:** Write opinion pieces supported with reasons and evidence.
 - **SL.3–7.1:** Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
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Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze Cassie's character development throughout the story.
 - Explore themes of courage, perseverance, friendship, and facing fears.
 - Use evidence from both the text and illustrations to support their ideas.
 - Reflect on personal experiences with bravery through narrative writing.
 - Examine how graphic novel illustrations communicate emotions and build suspense.
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Essential Questions

- What does it mean to be brave?
 - How can we face our fears even when we feel nervous?
 - How do friends and family encourage us to grow?
 - How do illustrations help readers understand a character's emotions?
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Materials

- *Dream Big* by Shannon Hale
 - Character Growth Graphic Organizer
 - Sticky Notes
 - Chart Paper
 - Writing Journals or Notebook Paper
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Vocabulary

- Courage
 - Fear
 - Confidence
 - Perseverance
 - Conflict
 - Resolution
 - Inference
 - Theme
 - Dialogue
 - Graphic Novel
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Before Reading (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students:

- Have you ever been afraid to try something new?
- What helps you feel brave?
- What would it be like to be in a movie?
- Can someone be brave even if they feel scared?

Students complete a **Think-Pair-Share**, followed by a class discussion.

During Reading (25 minutes)

Character Growth Tracker

Students follow Cassie's journey.

Event	Cassie's Feelings	Evidence (Words & Pictures)	What Cassie Learns
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Encourage students to notice:

- Facial expressions
- Dialogue
- Body language
- Changes in Cassie's confidence
- Background details
- Visual clues that create suspense or humor

Class Discussion

Discuss:

1. What challenges does Cassie face?
2. Why does Cassie decide to stay on the movie set even when she is afraid?
3. How do the illustrations show Cassie's emotions?
4. What role does friendship play in the story?
5. What lesson does Cassie learn about courage?

Mini-Lesson

Showing Emotions in Graphic Novels

Explain that graphic novels tell stories through both **words** and **illustrations**.

Readers should look for:

- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Panel size
- Color and mood
- Sound effects
- Dialogue
- Background details

Ask students to identify one panel where the artwork helps readers understand Cassie's fear without directly stating it.

Collaborative Activity (10–15 minutes)

Fear or Courage?

Read several scenarios aloud, such as:

- Speaking in front of the class
- Trying a new sport
- Meeting new classmates
- Auditioning for a play
- Riding a roller coaster

Students work in small groups to discuss:

- Why might someone feel nervous?
- What could help them feel brave?
- What advice would you give?

Groups share their ideas with the class.

Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Writing Prompt

Everyone feels afraid sometimes, but courage means facing those fears. Write about a time when you overcame a fear, or imagine you are Cassie acting in a scary movie. Describe what made you nervous, how you found the courage to keep going, and what you learned about yourself. Include descriptive details about your thoughts, feelings, actions, and the people who encouraged you.

Extension Activities

Grades 3–4

Comic Strip

Create a four-panel comic showing:

- A fear
- A challenge
- A brave decision
- A successful ending

Include speech bubbles, captions, and expressive illustrations.

Grades 5–7

Character Reflection Essay

Write an essay explaining how Cassie changes from the beginning to the end of the story.

Use evidence from both the text and illustrations to support your ideas.

Movie Poster Project

Design a movie poster for the film Cassie appears in.

Include:

- Title
 - Illustration
 - Tagline
 - Main characters
 - A short summary (without spoilers)
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Assessment

Formative

- Participation in discussions
 - Character Growth Organizer
 - Group collaboration
 - Reading observations
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Summative Writing Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Ideas	Detailed and thoughtful	Clear	Developing	Limited
Organization	Logical sequence	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow
Text Evidence	Strong support	Some support	Minimal support	No evidence

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Conventions	Few errors	Some errors	Frequent errors	Many errors

Exit Ticket

Students answer one question:

- What helped Cassie become brave?
- Which illustration best showed Cassie's emotions?
- What advice would you give Cassie before filming started?
- What lesson did Cassie learn about courage?

Differentiation

Support

- Sentence starters
- Graphic organizers
- Partner reading
- Teacher-guided discussions
- Visual vocabulary cards

Extension

- Compare Cassie's journey to another character who overcomes fear.
- Rewrite a scene from Vali's point of view.
- Create an alternate ending in comic format.

Cross-Curricular Connections

Drama: Explore the different roles involved in making a movie, such as actors, directors, camera operators, costume designers, and makeup artists. Discuss how teamwork contributes to a successful production.

Art: Design a storyboard with four to six panels showing an original movie scene and how illustrations build suspense or excitement.

SEL: Practice identifying emotions and discuss strategies for managing fear and building confidence.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Connection

Students reflect on:

- Courage
 - Self-confidence
 - Growth mindset
 - Friendship
 - Perseverance
 - Empathy
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Big Idea

Dream Big reminds readers that everyone experiences fear, but courage is choosing to move forward despite those fears. Cassie's journey shows that believing in yourself, accepting support from others, and trying new experiences can lead to growth, confidence, and exciting opportunities.