

3–7 Grade ELA Lesson Plan

Mixed-Up by Kami Garcia

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 change over time.
 - **RL.3–7.6:** Explain how a character's point of view influences events.
 - **RL.3–7.7:** Analyze how illustrations, text features, and formatting contribute to the meaning of the story.
 - **W.3–7.3:** Write narratives using descriptive details and clear event sequences.
 - **W.3–7.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts.
 - **SL.3–7.1:** Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
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Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze Stella's character development throughout the story.
 - Explore themes of perseverance, self-advocacy, friendship, and embracing differences.
 - Understand how dyslexia affects learning and recognize that everyone learns differently.
 - Use evidence from the text, illustrations, and graphic design to support their thinking.
 - Reflect on personal strengths and challenges through narrative writing.
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Essential Questions

- What does it mean to learn differently?
- How can understanding and support help people succeed?
- Why is it important to ask for help when you need it?
- How do illustrations and text formatting help tell Stella's story?

Materials

- *Mixed-Up* by Kami Garcia
 - Character Growth Graphic Organizer
 - Sticky Notes
 - Chart Paper
 - Writing Journals or Notebook Paper
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Vocabulary

- Dyslexia
 - Neurodiversity
 - Perseverance
 - Self-advocacy
 - Empathy
 - Perspective
 - Theme
 - Inference
 - Dialogue
 - Graphic Novel
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Before Reading (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students:

- Have you ever worked really hard at something that seemed easy for someone else?
- What are some ways people learn differently?
- Why is asking for help sometimes difficult?
- What are some of your personal strengths?

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

Teacher Note: Encourage respectful discussion. Remind students that everyone has different strengths, challenges, and learning styles. Avoid asking students to share personal learning differences unless they choose to do so.

During Reading (25 minutes)

Character Growth Tracker

Students follow Stella's journey.

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

- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Dialogue
- Text formatting and visual design
- Support from teachers, friends, and family
- Changes in Stella's confidence

Class Discussion

Discuss:

1. What challenges does Stella face at school?
2. How do her teachers and family help her?
3. How do the illustrations and page design help readers understand Stella's experience?
4. How does Stella change after learning about dyslexia?
5. What message does the story share about learning differences?

Mini-Lesson

Reading Beyond the Words

Explain that *Mixed-Up* uses more than dialogue and illustrations to tell its story. The book also uses **page layout, lettering, spacing, and visual design** to help readers understand Stella's experiences.

Readers should notice:

- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Speech and thought bubbles

- Panel sequence
- Changes in lettering and text placement
- Visual representations of Stella's reading challenges

Discuss how these features help readers better understand what Stella is experiencing.

Collaborative Activity (10–15 minutes)

Everyone Learns Differently

In small groups, students discuss:

- What are different ways people learn?
- How can classmates support one another?
- What classroom tools help students succeed?
- Why is kindness important when someone is struggling?

Groups create a classroom poster titled:

"Ways We Can Help Everyone Learn"

Examples may include:

- Be patient.
 - Encourage others.
 - Respect different learning styles.
 - Offer help when asked.
 - Celebrate everyone's strengths.
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Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Writing Prompt

Everyone has strengths and challenges. Write about a time when learning something was difficult for you, or imagine you are Stella discovering that you learn differently. Describe the challenges you face, the people who support you, and what you learn about yourself. Explain how perseverance, self-confidence, and asking for help can make a difference. Include details about your thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Extension Activities

Grades 3–4

My Super Strength

Create a one-page comic showing:

- Something you find challenging
 - Someone who helps you
 - One of your strengths
 - A lesson you learned
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Grades 5–7

Informative Writing

Research dyslexia or another learning difference using age-appropriate, reliable sources.

Write a short informational article explaining:

- What it is
 - Common misconceptions
 - Ways schools can provide support
 - Why understanding learning differences matters
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Classroom Kindness Campaign

Design a poster encouraging classmates to celebrate different strengths and learning styles.

Include:

- A slogan
 - An illustration
 - Three positive actions students can take
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Assessment

Formative

- Class discussions
- Character Growth Organizer
- Group collaboration

- Reading observations

Summative Writing Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Ideas	Thoughtful and detailed	Clear	Developing	Limited
Organization	Well organized	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow
Text Evidence	Strong support	Some support	Minimal support	No evidence
Conventions	Few errors	Some errors	Frequent errors	Many errors

Exit Ticket

Students answer one question:

- What helped Stella become more confident?
 - How did Stella's teachers and family support her?
 - Which page or illustration best helped you understand Stella's experience?
 - What is one way you can help create an inclusive classroom?
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Differentiation

Support

- Partner reading
- Graphic organizers
- Sentence starters
- Visual vocabulary cards
- Teacher-guided discussion
- Audiobook or read-aloud option, if available

Extension

- Compare Stella's journey with another character who overcomes a challenge.
- Rewrite a scene from Emiko's or Latasha's point of view.

- Create a guide for new students called "**Everyone Learns Differently**" with tips for building an inclusive classroom.
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Cross-Curricular Connections

Science/Health: Learn about how the brain processes information differently and discuss the concept of neurodiversity in age-appropriate ways.

Art: Create a graphic novel page that uses color, layout, and lettering to show a character's emotions or experiences.

SEL: Practice empathy by discussing how to support classmates with different strengths, interests, or learning needs.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Connection

Students reflect on:

- Self-awareness
 - Empathy
 - Perseverance
 - Self-advocacy
 - Respect for differences
 - Growth mindset
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Big Idea

Mixed-Up celebrates the idea that there is no single "right" way to learn. Stella's journey reminds readers that understanding our own strengths, asking for support when needed, and embracing differences can lead to confidence, success, and a more inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.