

3–7 Grade ELA Lesson Plan

Speed Reader by Matthew Cody

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 contribute to the meaning, action, and mood 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 Zander's character growth throughout the story.
 - Explore themes of responsibility, perseverance, friendship, and using talents wisely.
 - Use evidence from both the text and illustrations to support their thinking.
 - Examine how superhero stories use conflict and character choices to build suspense.
 - Write an original superhero narrative that explores responsibility and problem-solving.
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Essential Questions

- How should we use our talents and abilities?
 - What responsibilities come with having special gifts?
 - Why are good friends important during difficult challenges?
 - How do illustrations strengthen action and emotion in graphic novels?
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Materials

- *Speed Reader* by Matthew Cody
 - Character Growth Graphic Organizer
 - Sticky Notes
 - Chart Paper
 - Writing Journals or Notebook Paper
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Vocabulary

- Responsibility
 - Perseverance
 - Hero
 - Villain
 - Conflict
 - Resolution
 - Inference
 - Theme
 - Superpower
 - Graphic Novel
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Before Reading (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students:

- If you could have one superpower, what would you choose and why?
- Would having a superpower always make life easier?
- What responsibilities come with special abilities?
- What qualities make someone a true hero?

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

During Reading (25 minutes)

Character Growth Tracker

Students follow Zander's journey.

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

- Facial expressions
- Action scenes
- Dialogue
- Body language
- Uncle Merv's stories
- Visual clues about character growth
- Friendship moments

Class Discussion

Discuss:

1. How does Zander change after receiving his new abilities?
2. What problems come with having super speed?
3. How do Tanya May and Spike help Zander?
4. What role does Uncle Merv play in the story?
5. What lesson does Zander learn about responsibility?

Mini-Lesson

What Makes a Hero?

Discuss how heroes are defined not just by their powers, but by their choices.

Create a class anchor chart:

Heroes...

- Help others
- Make responsible choices
- Learn from mistakes
- Work with others
- Show courage
- Use their abilities wisely

Compare these qualities to Zander's actions throughout the story.

Collaborative Activity (10–15 minutes)

Hero Training Academy

Divide students into small groups.

Each group creates a training guide for new superheroes.

Include:

- Three superhero rules
- Three important character traits
- One example of using powers responsibly
- One example of poor decision-making and its consequences

Groups present their "Hero Handbook" to the class.

Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Writing Prompt

Imagine you suddenly wake up with an incredible superpower. At first it seems exciting, but you quickly discover that every special ability comes with new responsibilities. Write a story describing your new power, the challenges it creates, the friends who help you, and how you learn to use your abilities to help others instead of yourself. Include descriptive details, dialogue, action, and a satisfying conclusion.

Extension Activities

Grades 3–4

Design Your Superhero

Create your own superhero.

Include:

- Hero name
- Superpower
- Costume
- Sidekick
- Villain

- Mission statement
 - Illustration
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Grades 5–7

Character Analysis

Write an essay explaining how Zander changes throughout the story.

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

Comic Book Activity

Create a six-panel superhero comic showing:

- Discovering a power
 - Making a mistake
 - Learning a lesson
 - Solving a problem
 - Helping others
 - Becoming a true hero
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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	Creative and detailed	Clear	Developing	Limited
Organization	Well organized	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow

Criteria	4	3	2	1
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 makes Zander a hero?
- What responsibility comes with having special abilities?
- How did Zander change by the end of the story?
- What advice would you give Zander after he received his powers?

Differentiation

Support

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

Extension

- Compare Zander to another superhero from literature or comics, focusing on how each character learns responsibility.
- Rewrite a scene from Tanya May's or Spike's point of view.
- Create a newspaper article reporting on one of Zander's heroic adventures, including interviews and eyewitness accounts.

Cross-Curricular Connections

Science: Explore the science of speed by discussing motion, reaction time, and how forces affect movement. Students can compare fictional super speed to real-world physics.

Art: Design a superhero comic cover that captures the action, mood, and themes of responsibility found in the story.

SEL: Discuss how personal strengths and talents come with responsibility, and brainstorm ways students can use their own abilities to positively impact their classroom or community.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Connection

Students reflect on:

- Responsibility
 - Self-control
 - Perseverance
 - Friendship
 - Problem-solving
 - Ethical decision-making
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Big Idea

Speed Reader reminds readers that true heroes are not defined by extraordinary powers but by the choices they make. Zander's journey demonstrates that talents are most meaningful when used with responsibility, humility, and compassion. With the support of friends and family, students learn that everyone has the ability to make a positive difference, whether or not they have superpowers.