

Ruby's Wish

3 lessons, each with a full and a short version

3 lessons

1. Whole-Book Plan

Full lesson

TIME

32 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Read the whole book and explain what Ruby wants, what is in her way, and how she gets it.

STUDENT PRODUCT

A chart of the wish, the obstacle and the ending

FOCUS

A true story about somebody's grandmother

Essential question

Essential question

How does a girl in this house end up at university?

Materials

The book Pages 7, 11, 12, 18, 22 and 24, found before the lesson One chart each

Text to mark before teaching

Passage 7 — the garden classroom, seen from above through a lattice Passage 11 — one lit window in a dark house Passage 12 — writing with a brush on a long scroll Passage 18 — the grandfather at his desk with the poem Passage 22 — New Year's Day, and a house full of family Passage 24 — a hinged red frame: a painted girl, and a photograph

Lesson sequence

1	Before reading · 5 min
Focus:	A poem that could get her into trouble
Teacher direction:	Read the poem Ruby writes and stop. Ask the class what they think will happen to a girl who hands that in, in a house where she is one of over a hundred grandchildren.
Prepared text:	Passage 12
2	Teacher model · 7 min
Teacher model:	I read the classroom page and look at how it is drawn. We are above the garden, looking down through a window lattice at the children

at their desks. That is not just a nice angle - the words on that page say the grandfather's office windows opened onto the garden and that he would get up to watch. So the picture has put me where he stands, and it does that before he has done anything.

Prepared text:	Passage 7
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3 What Ruby wants and what stands in the way · 10 min

Focus:	Lessons at a cost, and one plain sentence
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Teacher direction:	Using Passages 11 and 18, write what Ruby wants and what makes it difficult.
Expected answer:	Ruby wants to go to university. She says so plainly when her grandfather asks - the boys will go to university and the girls will be married, and she would much rather go. What stands in the way is that girls in the house are not expected to keep studying: one by one the other girls stopped going to the classes and only Ruby carried on, catching up on her embroidery at night so that her candle was still burning long after everyone else had gone to bed. So she is doing both jobs to keep the lessons.
Student product:	Two boxes: what she wants, what is in the way
Prepared text:	Passage 11, Passage 18

4 How she gets it · 10 min

Focus:	A red packet with no money in it
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 22 and 24, write what happens on New Year's Day.
Expected answer:	Ruby dresses in red velvet shoes and red ribbons and goes round the family wishing everyone a happy new year, working up through the married cousins, her parents, her aunts and uncles, and getting a red packet of lucky money from each of them. Her grandfather is last, and he gives her a very fat red packet. Inside it is not money at all: it is a letter from a university saying they would be proud to accept her as one of their first

university saying they would be proud to accept her as one of their first female students. And the person telling us the story adds that it is true, because Ruby is her grandmother.

Prepared text:	Passage 22, Passage 24
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Teacher guidance

Why this text works: Read the poem out and let the class sit with it, because a Grade 3 class will expect Ruby to be in trouble for it and she is not - she is asked a question. The illustrations are worth showing throughout: red is on nearly every page because Ruby insisted on it, one page is a single lit window in a dark house, and the last page is a photograph frame rather than a picture.

Save that last page. When the class hears that it is a true story, the frame beside the words is the reason to believe it, and they will want to look.

Expected answer:

In an enormous house built by a man who came back rich from a gold rush, over a hundred children are growing up. One of them is called Ruby because she insists on wearing red every day. Her grandfather has hired a teacher for any grandchild who wants to learn, which was unusual when most girls were never taught to read. Ruby does as well as her boy cousins, but has to work far harder: the boys are free when lessons end and the girls must learn cooking and housekeeping, so one by one the girls drop out and only Ruby keeps going, doing her embroidery at night. Asked to write a poem, she writes that it is bad luck to be born a girl and worse luck to be born into a house where only boys are cared for. Her grandfather reads it and sends for her - and instead of punishing her he asks her how the boys are better looked after, and keeps asking until she says the real answer: the boys will go to university and the girls will be married. On New Year's Day, his red packet holds a letter of acceptance from a university.

Model: I notice that Ruby offers her grandfather two small complaints before the real one - the yolk in the moon cake, the plain lantern - and the book says she was trying to think of a small, unimportant thing. She did not want to say the big one. He waits until she does.

Support and extension

Above: Ruby tries to give her grandfather small answers first. Explain why, and what it tells you about how she expected him to react.

Below: Fill the two boxes, then write what happens on New Year's Day.

Assessment**Look for:**

Says Ruby wanted to go to university.

Says the other girls stopped going to lessons.

Says Ruby worked at night to keep up.

Says she wrote a poem about only boys being cared for.

Says her grandfather gave her a letter from a university.

Short version

TIME

16 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Read the whole book and explain what Ruby wants, what is in her way, and how she gets it.

STUDENT PRODUCT

A chart of the wish, the obstacle and the ending

FOCUS

A true story about somebody's grandmother

Essential question

How does a girl in this house end up at university?

Materials

The book Pages 7, 11, 12, 18, 22 and 24, found before the lesson One chart each

Text to mark before teaching

Passage 7 — the garden classroom, seen from above through a lattice Passage 11 — one lit window in a dark house Passage 12 — writing with a brush on a long scroll Passage 18 — the grandfather at his desk with the poem Passage 22 — New Year's Day, and a house full of family Passage 24 — a hinged red frame: a painted girl, and a photograph

Lesson sequence

1	Before reading · 3 min
Focus:	A poem that could get her into trouble
Teacher direction:	Read the poem Ruby writes and stop. Ask the class what they think will happen to a girl who hands that in, in a house where she is one of over a hundred grandchildren.
Prepared text:	Passage 12
2	Teacher model · 5 min
Teacher model:	I read the classroom page and look at how it is drawn. We are above the garden, looking down through a window lattice at the children at their desks. That is not just a nice angle - the words on that page say the

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Prepared text:	Passage 7
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3 What Ruby wants and what stands in the way · 8 min

Focus:	Lessons at a cost, and one plain sentence
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 11 and 18, write what Ruby wants and what makes it difficult.
Expected answer:	Ruby wants to go to university. She says so plainly when her grandfather asks - the boys will go to university and the girls will be married, and she would much rather go. What stands in the way is that girls in the house are not expected to keep studying: one by one the other girls stopped going to the classes and only Ruby carried on, catching up on her embroidery at night so that her candle was still burning long after everyone else had gone to bed. So she is doing both jobs to keep the lessons.
Student product:	Two boxes: what she wants, what is in the way
Prepared text:	Passage 11, Passage 18

Teacher guidance

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