Title: Sahara Special Level:\_\_\_S\_\_\_ISBN:\_\_\_\_\_978-07861611-8\_\_\_\_Publisher:\_\_\_\_Hyperion

Assignment: Chapters 1-2

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

**Book Overview**: Sahara Jones is repeating 5th grade. Her mother and the school thinks she is slow and needs to be in special ed. Sahara gets a teacher who believes in her and gives her the courage to try hard at school. She shows the world that she is going to be a writer and is indeed very smart!

**Chapter 1-2:** Sahara is mad at herself for writing letters to her father, who is not around or involved in her life. Because of these letters the school thinks she belongs in the special education program, because she writes letters all day no and will not complete any of her classroom work. Her mom finds out there is a very rude, angry boy who is working with her in a small group in the hall during class time. Mom wants her in the classroom and out of the program. Sahara is released from the program and is relieved. The reader also finds out about Sahara’s best friend, her cousin Rachel. They have similar home lives, where father is not around.

 Words/Text Layout:

 \*New or important words (V) Pg. 4 vital- important

 Pg. 11 repercussions- consequences

 Pg. 16 fortunes- to tell the future

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers make and revise predictions as they learn about new events in the text. Make a prediction about what you think will happen next in the following chapters? Remember to use evidence from the text to help support your answer.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. How do you think Sahara’s mom feels when she is in the principal’s office? Why?

2. Why doesn’t Sahara want to try anymore at school?

3. Why do you think Sahara hides her love for writing?

4. On pg. 12 Sahara says, “When my mother smiled at me, I could see I was enough for her too. At least, for that moment.” What do you think she means by that? Why do you think that?

5. Describe Rachel. Would you want to be friends with Rachel? Why or why not?

6. What do you think about Sahara’s home life? How is your life similar and different from Sahara’s?

Writing Connection (optional):

Write about a time when your whole body heard mean words like Sahara describes on page 5. (reread page 5 before writing about your experience)

Title: Sahara Special Level:\_\_\_S\_\_\_ISBN:\_\_\_\_\_978-07861611-8\_\_\_\_Publisher:\_\_\_\_Hyperion

Assignment: Chapters 3-4

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

Chapter 3-4: Sahara’s mom tries to get shifts at the diner on Saturday mornings because the tips are great. She drops Sahara off at the library while she works. Sahara loves the library and getting lost in the books. She tells us she’s write a story about her life in hiding it behind her favorite section of books in the library. She meets a girl named Paris who also comes in every Saturday. When school starts the reader discovers that Sahara has been held back and is now in the same class as her cousin. The class soon realizes they will have a new teacher this year.

 Words/Text Layout:

 \*New or important words (V) Pg. 26 pigtails- hair pulled back into 2 pony tails

 Pg. 28 rehearse- practice

 Pg. 33 fleetingly-passing swiftly

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers go beyond the text to interpret characters’ thoughts and feelings. We learn a lot about Sahara in these few chapters. In your reader’s notebooks write down the different thoughts and feelings these characters have and what causes those feelings. Remember to use evidence from the text to support your answers.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. Why do you think Sahara likes going to the library?

2. Who is Paris? What do you think Sahara thinks of her so far?

3. Sahara’s mom starts thinking of the beginning of Sahara’s school year. Why does she start to get upset? What is she thinking about that upsets her?

4. What does Sahara do when she realizes her mom is upset with her?

Writing Connection (optional):

What do you think their new teacher will be like? Why? Remember to use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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Assignment: Chapter 5

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

Chapter 5: In chapter 5 the students in Sahara’s class meet their new teacher Miss Pointy. They quickly realize she is smart and sassy. She handles everything the rowdy boys can throw at her. She gives the students each their own journal, which she paid for with her own money. She asked them to write something in their journals telling her something about themselves. Sahara writes, “I’m a writer” and Miss Pointy responds with “I believe you.”

 Words/Text Layout:

 \*New or important words (V) Pg. 40 nape: back of the neck

 Pg. 40 decaying- rotting

 Pg. 44 bureaucrats: an official who works by fixed routine without exercising intelligent judgment

Pg. 49 mandated: command

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers make and revise predictions as they learn about new events in the text. Make a prediction about what you think will happen next in the following chapters? Remember to use evidence from the text to help support your answer.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. What did the students think of their new teacher?

2. Describe what their new teacher looked like?

3. Draw a picture you had in your head while reading chapter 5.

4. How did Miss Pointy handle the rowdy boys in their class?

5. Why did the students each owe Miss Pointy 2 dollars?

6. What were they asked to write about in their new journals?

7. What did Sahara write in her journal? How did Miss Pointy respond?

Writing Connection (optional):

In Sahara’s journal she writes “I’m a writer” and Miss Pointy responds, “I believe you”. How do you think Sahara felt when she read these words? Do you think these words will start to change her? Why or why not? Have you ever had someone believe in you when no one else did? Write about it.

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Assignment: Chapters 6-7

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

Chapter 6-7: The start of chapter 6 Sahara is reflecting on why Miss Pointy always tells so many stories. She is telling her class stories from Aesop Fables. Every time she finishes a story they are asked to think about the meaning or lesson of the story. During class Darrell’s mother comes in and is very upset with Miss Pointy. She asked her why she called her son a jackass (language in chapter 7, mark out or at least warn your students). Miss Pointy’s class comes to her rescue and tells Darrell’s mom that he is the one who calls Miss Pointy names, and she has never called him a name. Sahara continues to write in her journal, slowing showing Miss Pointy what she is learning from the fables she’s telling.

Words/Text Layout:

 \*New or important words (V) Pg 57: auditioning- try out for a part

 Pg. 70: accountability- liable

 Pg. 74: whacked- hit

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers visualize their story as they read. In your reader’s notebook you are going to draw a picture of the picture you saw in your mind during these two chapters. Then write a paragraph describing your picture. Be ready to share your picture and describing paragraph with your group.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. Why do you think Darrell is angry at everyone?

2. Why do you think Miss Pointy tell so many stories to her class?

3. When Sahara raised her hand, why do you think Miss Pointy did not call on her?

4. What was the interruption that occurred during the classroom instruction?

5. What are you learning about Darrell and Sahara through reading their journals?

Writing Connection (optional):

“Our troubles are invisible to the eye, but they are heavy.” Think about these words and what you think they mean to the students walking through the classroom doors every morning.

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Assignment: Chapters 8

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

Chapter 8: Sahara tries to write down all the fancy words she hears Miss Pointy say. She hasn’t written a journal entry in the last 4 days. However, Miss Pointy continues to write to hear in her journal. Giving her tips on how to make a great story and reminding her that a writer writes. Miss Pointy asks Leon to pass out the journals to their owners and he passes them back to the wrong people. Sahara gets Luz’s, a Spanish speaking child who has earned a lot of gold stickers from Miss Pointy. Sahara steals a sticky from her notebook. Paris sees and let’s Sahara know she saw her take the sticker.

 Words/Text Layout:

\*New or important words (V) Pg 79 shanties- hut or shabby hut

 Pg. 79 filigrees- delicate ornamental work of fine silver

 Pg. 79 spires- small pyramid roof

 Pg. 88 confiscate- take

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers make and revise predictions as they learn about new events in the text. Make a prediction about what you think will happen next in the following chapters? Remember to use evidence from the text to help support your answer.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. Why do you think Sahara writes down the unique words Miss Pointy uses?

2. Why is Sahara jealous of some of her classmates?

3. Even though Sahara hasn’t written a journal entry in four days, what does Miss Pointy continue to do?

4. Why do you think Paris let Sahara read her journal?

5. Why did Sahara do when she had Luz’s journal?

6. Why do you think Paris didn’t tell Luz that Sahara took her sticker?

Writing Connection (optional):

Write about a time when you made a bad choice like Sahara. What did you do? How did you feel afterwards? Who else was involved? What lesson did you learn?

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Assignment: Chapters 9-10

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

Chapter 9-10: Rachel and Sahara both get sick from Rachel’s baby brother. Miss Poitier comes to Sahara’s house to drop off her homework. Sahara pretends to be asleep. While pretending to be asleep she over hears her mother’s conversation with Miss Poitier. Sahara knows that she has never read her file and doesn’t plan to. She also realizes she is letting herself down, and begins to write in her journal. Miss Poitier gives Sahara a sticker for her journal writing, and Sahara gives it to Paris, who gives it to Luz’s since she stole her sticker. It seems like Sahara is starting to turn her life around.

 Words/Text Layout

 \*New or important words (V) Pg 95 resist- withstand

 Pg 95 nauseate- to feel sick

 Pg 96 pungent- awful smell

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers make comparisons during their reading. During your reading Compare Sahara in the beginning of the book to now. How has she changed? Remember to use evidence form the text to help support your answer.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. Why do you think Sahara pretended to be asleep when Miss Poitier came to drop off her homework?

2. Why do you think Sahara starting writing in her journal?

3. Why do you think Miss Poitier really kept Sahara in class while the other students went outside?

4. How does Sahara feel when Darrell explodes in class? Why do you think this?

Writing Connection (optional):

Sahara is starting to change. Make a prediction about what you believe will happen in the coming chapters?

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Assignment: Chapters 11-13

Before Reading: (5-7 min.)

\*Summarize plot (M) \*Discuss pictures (M)

\*Unfamiliar book language/character names (S) \*Draw upon students’ experiences (M)

Chapter 11-13: Miss Pointy tells the class her dream explaining why teachers get apples. The class then has an assignment to write what they wish for in their journals. Sahara wishes she had her school folder. Miss Pointy tells Sahara in her journal that she likes to give students gifts. She ends up giving Sahara her school folder. Sahara shreds the folder and in her head writes her dad one last note. She still loves him, but she is no longer going to hold on to the hope of him or him returning.

 Words/Text Layout

 \*New or important words (V) Pg 129 idyllic- charming

 Pg 154 jutted- project or protrude

 Pg 155 coaxed- convince

 \*Unusual aspect of text layout (V)

Suggested Teaching Point (Behaviors to Notice and Support) or focus on a Comprehension Strategy:

 ***connections, questions, inferences, visualizing, summarizing, synthesizing, determining importance***

Good readers make comparisons during their reading. During your reading Compare Sahara and her mother from the beginning of the book to now. How has their relationship changed? Remember to use evidence form the text to help support your answer.

During Reading: (10-15 min.)

Students silently read the text. You may choose to listen to a few students whisper read the text, if reading fluency is a concern. While students are silently reading, you can start another group or conference with students who are independently reading.

After Reading: (8-10 min.)

 \*Discuss the story

 -clarify confusion, revisiting parts of the text that posed problems for readers

 -acknowledge partially correct responses, seeking to understand students’ perspectives

 \*Connect discussion to the teaching point and/or a comprehension strategy (see above)

1. What do you think the theme of Miss Pointy’s dream is? Why do you think that?

2. What did Miss Pointy mean when told Sahara she was leaking?

3. What happened after Sahara read her story to the class?

4. Does Sahara’s wish come true?

5. What does Sahara do with her file?

6. How does Sahara feel about her dad leaving at the end of the book compared to the beginning of the book?

Writing Connection (optional):

Pretend you were hired to write the last chapter of the book? How does the story end? Remember to add lots of details. Be prepared to share your chapter with your group.