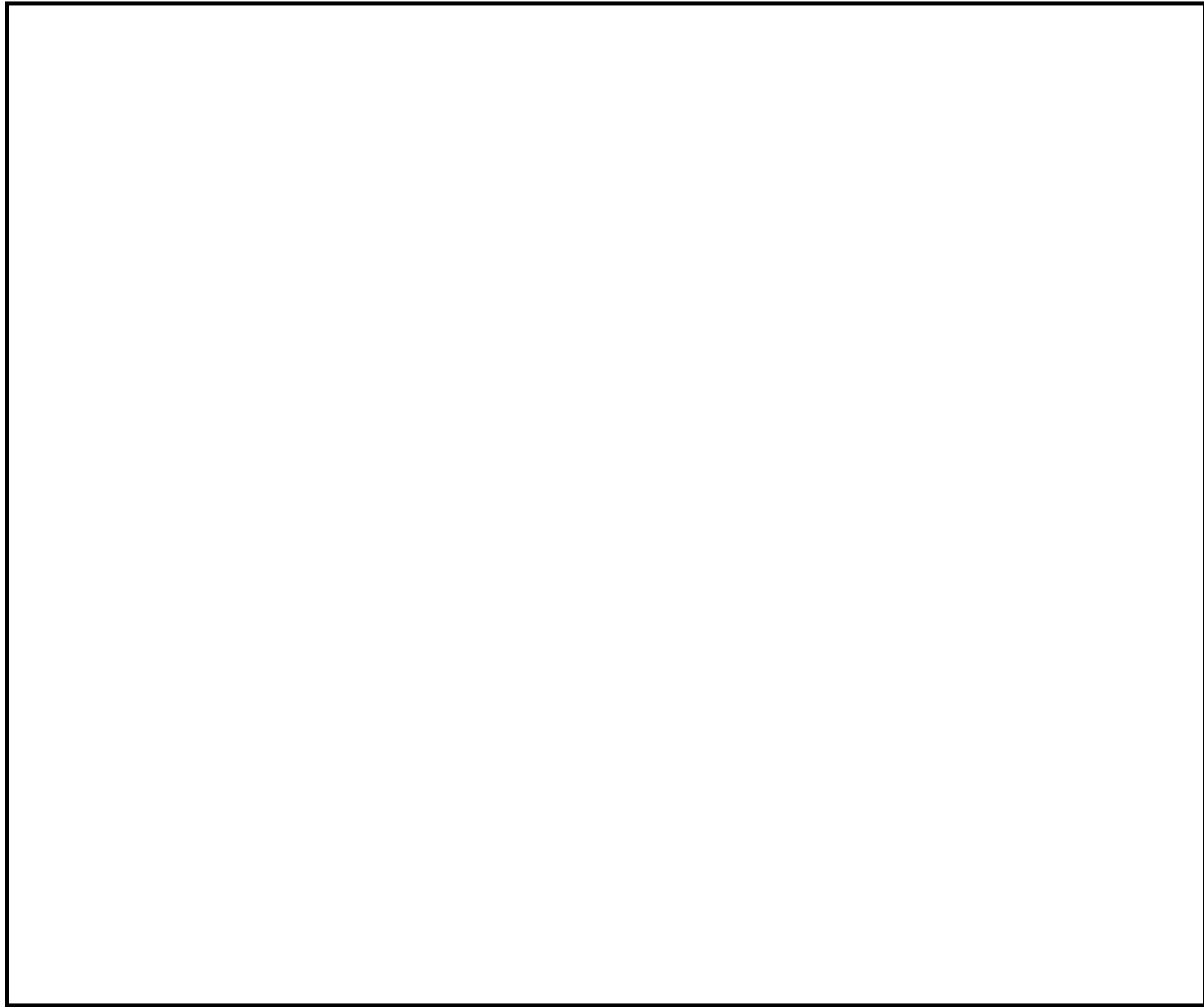


**TEXT TO SELF CONNECTION**

In GRANDMOTHER THORN by Katey Howes and illustrated by Rebecca Hahn, Grandmother is a lot like the thorny berry plant she tries to uproot. They are both persistent. They are both prickly. And in the end, we see that both can be sweet, for those who wait patiently.

**What type of plant are you most like? Draw a picture. What characteristics do you and your plant have in common?**



**I am like a \_\_\_\_\_ because**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## RL.K.4 ASK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT UNFAMILIAR WORDS IN A TEXT

GRANDMOTHER THORN by Katey Howes, illustrated by Rebecca Hahn (Ripple Grove Press, 2017) contains many words that may be unfamiliar to students, but can be decoded using the illustrations and context.

1. Read the book aloud once, showing students the pictures.
2. Read the book a second time, stopping at words that may be unfamiliar to students.

These might include:

- Painsstaking
- Precision
- Maintain
- Forbade
- Prevail
- Gravelly
- Mutter
- Disturb
- Disrupt
- Marvel
- Symmetry
- Dimple
- Grate
- Wither
- Drought
- Disrepair
- Conquer

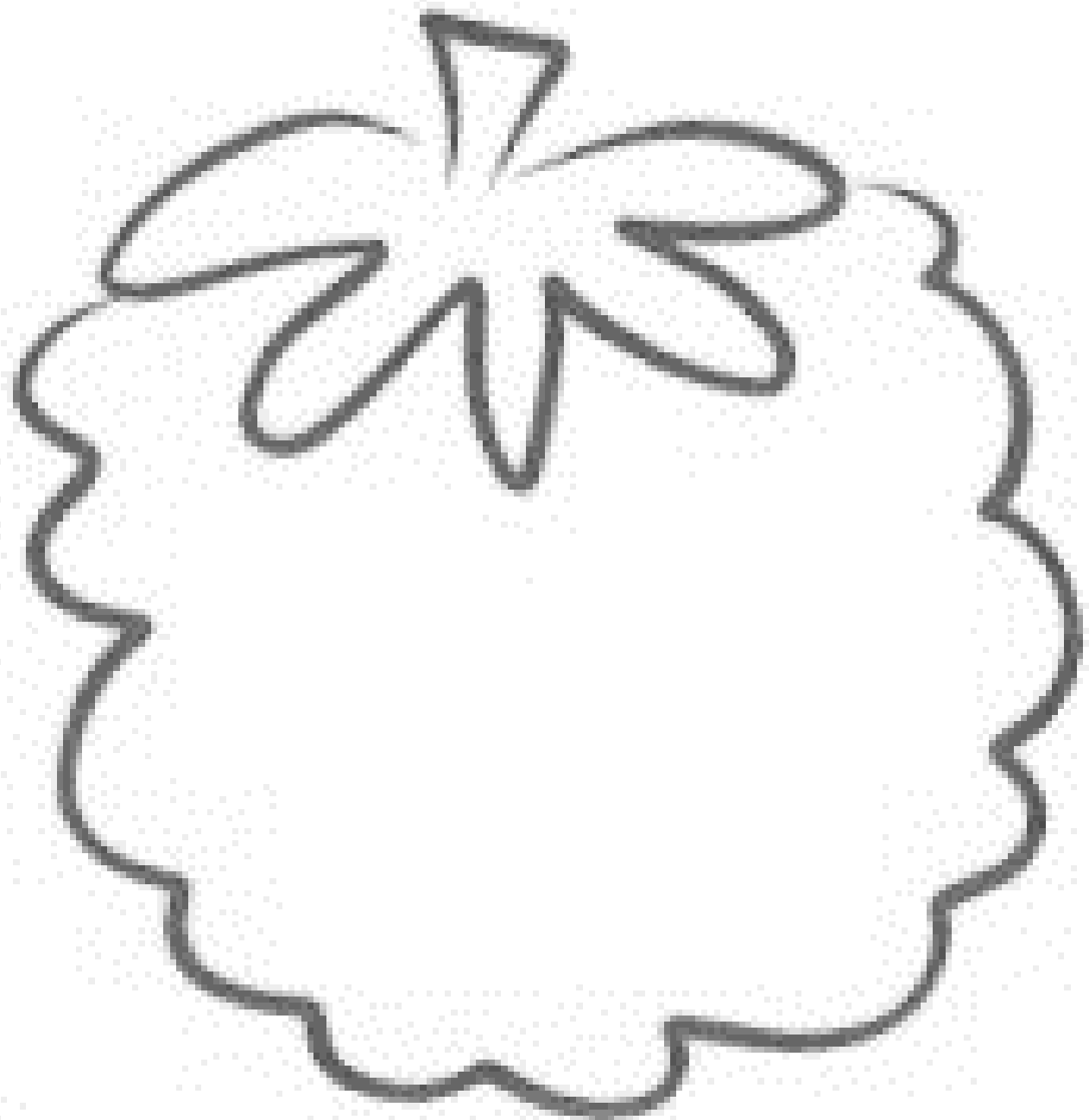
3. Make your own word vine! Draw a twisting vine on the board or make one from green yarn stapled/taped to a bulletin board or wall.
4. Have students write a word with a synonym, definition or picture showing the meaning on a berry. (see printable on page 3 of this document)

### **SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION: GLOBAL FOODS**

*Dorayaki* are a popular treat in Japan. They are similar to small sweet pancakes, sandwiched together around a filling of sweet bean paste. You can watch a video of how to make *dorayaki* here: <http://www.japanesecooking101.com/dorayaki-recipe/>. Then discuss favorite desserts and sweet treats from cultures around the world. Kids may know of traditional treats from their heritage, or you can investigate recipes in a book like *The Kids' Holiday Baking Book: 150 Favorite Dessert Recipes from Around the World* by Rosemary Black. <http://us.macmillan.com/thekidsholidaybakingbook/rosemaryblack/9781466857995/> Find more picture books featuring food around the world at <http://www.pragmaticmom.com/2015/05/top-10-multicultural-picture-books-food>

GRANDMOTHER THORN Berry Printable

Color, cut and add to a class word vine/figurative language vine!



## **RL 1.7 USE ILLUSTRATIONS AND DETAILS IN A STORY TO DESCRIBE ITS CHARACTERS, SETTING, OR EVENTS.**

In GRANDMOTHER THORN, the illustrator uses a 2-page spread broken into 4 panels to show the passage of time. Classes can study this series of panels to learn about ways illustration conveys information not found in the text. They can create their own four-panel illustration to show the passage of time. Other illustrations in the book provide clues about events and emotions. Children can identify how these elements contribute to their understanding of the words.

1. Read GRANDMOTHER THORN aloud to the class, pausing to show the pictures.
2. Return to the pages showing 4 scenes of Grandmother trying to uproot the plant.
3. Ask the class to describe what is happening in these pictures. You may cue students with questions like
  - What stays the same in each panel?
  - What differences do you see?
  - What do you think the illustrator was trying to show with these panels?
  - What does this series of images tell you about Grandmother Thorn? About Ojiisan? About the plant?
  - How much time do you think passes in these four panels? How can you tell?
4. Brainstorm ways an illustrator could indicate the passage of time other than the method used in the book. Some examples might be:
  - Physical changes as people grow/age
  - Movement of sun across the sky
  - Task being accomplished in sequential steps
5. Have each child fold a piece of paper three times, accordion-style, to create a four-panel template. Ask each child to draw a series of scenes that use one of these techniques, or one of their own imagining, to show the passage of time. You may ask them to create a fictional story, illustrate part of a familiar story, or illustrate an autobiographical experience.

### **SCIENCE CONNECTION: SEASONS**

The illustrated panels show four seasons of the year. But when she started writing GRANDMOTHER THORN, author Katey Howes didn't know if Japan experienced four seasons. She did research and discovered that most of Japan has a TEMPERATE climate, cycling through the four seasons of Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Do you live in a temperate climate?

On a globe or map, identify Japan and where you live. Then, choose other countries. Use research to find out whether they also have four seasons. Notice how countries closer to the equator and at the poles do not experience as much variation in temperature over the year, and therefore don't experience the same cycle of four seasons.

## RL 2.1 ASK AND ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS AS WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND HOW TO DETERMINE UNDERSTANDING OF KEY DETAILS IN A TEXT

GRANDMOTHER THORN by Katey Howes, illustrated by Rebecca Hahn, offers an opportunity to use key questions to deepen understanding of a text.

1. Read GRANDMOTHER THORN aloud to the group, or allow children to read copies independently.
2. Create a question chart on the board or large sheet of paper to answer the questions one at a time, or have each student complete their own chart.
3. Starting with **WHO**, each individual or the whole group can choose a character from the text.
4. Next answer **WHAT**, entering an action or plot point from the text.
5. Discussion of **WHERE** may include reference to outside resources that show where Japan is on a map, or photographs of the Japanese countryside. (see Social Studies Tie-In below for more) Discuss how this question helps establish the setting.
6. **WHEN** – the time period of GRANDMOTHER THORN is not specified, though students may speculate. Using comparative terms such as “before” or “after” to refer to other events in the story is also a valid way to answer this question. This question also helps to establish setting.
7. Students may have differing opinions on **WHY** and **HOW**. Allow for discussion and for multiple answers. What clues in the text or illustrations can students use to help them determine WHY and HOW?

### **ART CONNECTION:**

Author Katey Howes was inspired by traditional wood block prints by Japanese artist Ando Hiroshige when picturing the fictional Shizuku Village. Students can view Hiroshige’s famous series of prints, *The 53 Stations of the Tōkaidō*, here:

[http://www.hiroshige.org.uk/hiroshige/tokaido\\_hoeido/tokaido\\_hoeido.htm](http://www.hiroshige.org.uk/hiroshige/tokaido_hoeido/tokaido_hoeido.htm)

The series depicts life in Japan along one of five major trade routes during the Edo time period, roughly 1603-1868. Students may be able to find similarities and differences between the landscape, architecture, and people pictured in Hiroshige’s classic works and that depicted by modern artist/illustrator Rebecca Hahn in GRANDMOTHER THORN.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION: TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE**

Classes can also talk about the importance of trade routes both in Japan and elsewhere in the world, prior to the establishment of modern transportation such as railways and highways. An excellent companion book for this conversation is *A SINGLE PEBBLE: A STORY OF THE SILK ROAD* by Bonnie Christensen (Roaring Brook Press, 2013.)

### **RL.3.4 DETERMINE THE MEANING OF WORDS AND PHRASES AS THEY ARE USED IN A TEXT, DISTINGUISHING LITERAL FROM NONLITERAL LANGUAGE**

GRANDMOTHER THORN uses a lyrical, poetic voice and figurative language in addition to literal language.

1. Read GRANDMOTHER THORN aloud to the class, or allow children to read copies independently.
2. Discuss the differences between literal and figurative language. List types of figurative language, including simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole.
3. Read the book again, this time asking class to raise their hands/signal when encountering examples of figurative language.
4. Discuss why the author chose to use figurative language for that phrase. How does it make students feel? What does it add to the story? Do the illustrations support the words or meaning?
5. Make a Figurative Language Vine! Draw a twisting vine of tape/staple green yarn to a bulletin board to create a vine. Have each child write an example of figurative language on a Berry Printable (page 3 of this document) and add it to the vine.
6. Your class vine can grow all year long, as you add examples of figurative language from other books!

### **SCIENCE CONNECTION: PLANT GROWTH AND DEFENSES**

In Grandmother Thorn, a berry rolls into a dimple in the ground and sprouts into a thorny plant. Use this as a jumping-off point to research and discuss why plants have thorns, and what other defense mechanisms plants may have.

Find out more using The World of Plants book series by Ruth Owen (PowerKids, 2014), especially the title HOW DO PLANTS DEFEND THEMSELVES?

<https://www.amazon.com/How-Plants-Defend-Themselves-World/dp/1477771581>

Or watch this video to discover carnivorous plants!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6j8IFHaHYFY>

Classes can also compare plant growth. Plant a whole berry in one pot, and seeds removed from a berry in another. Observe and chart growth over time to see which grows fastest or tallest.