



Text:

Amazing Grace

By Mary Hoffman



Plot: (to support the teaching sequence)	Grace is a young girl with a wonderfully creative imagination. She loves to read stories and make believe that she is the characters. Grace often will act out the parts of her favorite characters from these stories with her friends, her family, and even while all alone. When Grace finds out that her class will be putting on the play Peter Pan she decides that she wants to play the part of Peter. However, Grace's classmates tease her that she cannot be Peter because she is a girl and she is black. Grace is very disheartened by their comments but continues to prepare for the auditions with the encouragement of her family that she can be anything that she wants to be. Grace ends up getting the part of Peter and the encouragement of her classmates after they see how perfect Grace is at playing the part of Peter.		
Genre:	Realistic fiction – the story is a fictional tale that features events and characters that could plausibly exist in the real world. Picture book – the format includes illustrations by Caroline Binch that are central to telling the story.	Tense:	Like most traditional narrative fiction, it uses past tense verbs to tell the story of Grace's dream, the challenges she faces, and her ultimate success. For example, the text uses phrases like "Grace loved stories," "she took out a book," and "her grandmother said" to describe the events as having already happened. This is a standard narrative technique for telling a story that has a definite beginning, middle and end. This allows the reader to follow Grace's journey from her initial dream to its triumphant conclusion.
Structure:	Amazing Grace follows a straightforward narrative structure, typical of a children's picture book, that can be mapped onto a classic story arc. It progresses through key plot points: an initial state of joy and creativity, the introduction of conflict, a turning point where the protagonist receives guidance, and finally, the resolution where the protagonist succeeds. <u>Exposition: Grace's world</u> The story begins by introducing the central character, Grace, and establishing her character. The opening pages show Grace's vivid imagination and her love for stories. She acts out stories from all kinds of sources, playing many different roles from figures like Joan of Arc to Mowgli. The warm and supportive family environment with her mother and grandmother (Nana) is also established. <u>Inciting incident: A dream is challenged</u> The central conflict is introduced when Grace's school announces they will be putting on a production of Peter Pan. Grace's heart is set on playing the main character, Peter Pan. However, when she shares her ambition, some of her classmates challenge her, saying she can't be Peter Pan because she is a girl and because she is Black. <u>Rising action: A journey to self-belief</u> This part of the story shows Grace's journey to regain her confidence after her peers' hurtful comments. Grace is discouraged and doubts herself after her classmates' remarks. Her mother and Nana provide key encouragement, reminding her she can be anything she sets her mind to. Nana takes Grace to a ballet to see a Black ballerina perform, giving her a powerful real-world example of a Black woman succeeding in a prominent role. <u>Climax: The audition</u>		Theme/s: Perseverance and self-belief – this is a central theme to the story, as Grace does not give up on her dream despite the discouragement from her peers. When her classmates tell her she cannot be Peter Pan, Grace is temporarily disheartened, but her belief in herself is renewed with the encouragement from her peers. She works hard to get the part, showing a positive mindset and determination to achieve her goal. Grace's success proves that with hard work and belief in oneself, anything is possible. The story encourages readers to believe in themselves and to pursue their dreams with courage and conviction. Overcoming prejudice – the book tackles issues of gender and racial prejudice in a way that children can understand. Grace's classmates tell her that she can't be Peter Pan because the character is a boy and because she is Black. These comments reflect the "insidious harm" of prejudice passed down through generations. The story provides a positive example of how to address and overcome these attitudes through confidence and strong family support. Diversity and inclusion – The book promotes acceptance and celebrates diversity by showing how Grace's unique qualities make her a compelling candidate for Peter Pan. When her nana takes her to the ballet to see a Black ballerina perform in a ballet, this proves to Grace that successful performers can come from different racial backgrounds. It serves as a "mirror book" for Black children,

	<p>The rising action leads to the climax, where Grace must put her courage and newfound conviction to the test.</p> <p>Grace auditions for the role of Peter Pan in front of her classmates.</p> <p>She gives an excellent performance, embodying the character she had dreamed of playing.</p> <p>Her impressive audition silences the previous doubt and wins over her peers.</p> <p>Resolution: Triumphant success</p> <p>The story concludes with a resolution that celebrates Grace's achievement and the power of believing in oneself.</p> <p>Grace is chosen for the role of Peter Pan, and the play is a huge success.</p> <p>The ending shows Grace feeling like she could truly fly, illustrating her triumphant spirit and newfound confidence.</p> <p>The final scene reinforces the story's core message: that with support and determination, you can overcome obstacles and accomplish your dreams.</p>		<p>reflecting their experiences and making them feel seen and valued by society. The story invites conversations about diversity, helping children learn that everyone, regardless of their gender or race deserves a chance to pursue their dreams.</p> <p>The importance of family support – Grace's family, particularly her mother and grandmother (Nana), play a crucial role in nurturing her self-esteem and confidence. When Grace is upset by her classmates' comments, her family provides emotional support and encouragement, and Nana's visit to the ballet with Grace provides an important real-world example that empowers Grace to believe in herself. The loving relationships shown within the family provide a foundation for Grace to stand up against adversity and pursue her ambition.</p>
Familiarity of content:	<p>The loving and supportive family environment that offers Grace the encouragement and wisdom, and the emotional tools to deal with adversity.</p> <p>Experience of school performances and loving acting out stories will be familiar to many children.</p> <p>To fully appreciate the central conflict in the story which revolves around Grace wanting to play Peter Pan in her school play, readers need background knowledge on the original Peter Pan story and an awareness of common stereotypes related to race and gender.</p> <p>The meaning of "amazing grace": The story's title evokes the famous hymn of the same name, which tells of salvation and redemption, as well as referring directly to the main character's name and her resilience and triumph.</p> <p>An understanding of how school plays and selection by audition works.</p>	Perspective :	<p>Told from a third-person narrative perspective, which follows the protagonist, Grace. This perspective allows the reader to observe Grace's actions, hear the dialogue of her family and classmates, and understand her emotions as she faces prejudice, receives encouragement from her loving and supportive family, and overcomes obstacles. Her inner thoughts and feelings are accessible to the reader, but the story is not limited to her personal point of view.</p>
Other language choices:	<p>The language choices create an inspirational, accessible, and warm-hearted tone. It is a narrative told in clear, simple English, making it suitable for young readers to follow. This clarity helps reinforce the story's powerful message about overcoming prejudice and pursuing one's dreams.</p> <p>Simple and accessible language: The vocabulary is straightforward and easy for children to understand the story's core themes of self-belief and overcoming obstacles.</p> <p>Focus on dialogue: The conversations between Grace and her family members—particularly her mother and grandmother (Nana)—are central to the book. Their encouraging words build Grace's confidence and form the emotional heart of the story. For example, Nana's powerful and memorable phrase, "you can be anything you want to be," is a turning point that directly influences Grace's actions.</p> <p>Descriptive but simple prose: The narrative prose uses concise but evocative descriptions. This style complements the vivid illustrations and helps younger readers visualize the scenes, from Grace's imaginative play to her interactions at school.</p> <p>Narrative style for character development: The story begins by describing Grace as a character, immediately establishing her passion and personality. This allows the reader to connect with Grace's hopes and motivations, making her eventual success feel earned and inspiring.</p> <p>Cultural and social awareness: The language is carefully chosen to introduce important conversations about race and gender equality in a context children can grasp.</p>	Background Knowledge:	<p>Adventure – a story about exciting or dangerous events</p> <p>Audition – a short performance to show the talents of someone who is trying out for a role in a play or band</p> <p>Ballerina – a ballet dancer</p> <p>Ballet – a form of dance performed on stage with music, costumes and scenery to tell a story</p> <p>Companion – a person or animal you spend time with or enjoy being with</p> <p>Considerate – being thoughtful about others</p> <p>Determined – when you don't easily give up on something</p> <p>Fairy-tales – traditional stories often read to or by children</p> <p>Grace – smoothness/elegance of movement or good will (also a girl's name)</p> <p>Part – the character played by an actor or dancer</p> <p>Play – a performance on a stage that tells a story through characters</p> <p>Peter Pan – the main character from a classic children's story</p> <p>Tutu - short skirt made of many layers of material and worn by a ballerina</p>
Tier 2 & 3 Vocabulary:	<p>Adventure, auditions, ballerina, ballet, companion, considerate, determined, fairy-tales, grace, part, Peter Pan, play, talented, tutu</p>	Diversity:	<p>Grace is a young African-American school-aged girl with dreams and ambition.</p>
Media & other links:	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n145-J8ejg&t=5s</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xv4F9Gg7JrE&t=25s</p>	Links to previous texts:	<p>Y1 - Ivy and the Lonely raincloud</p> <p>Y2 – Look Up</p>