Grade Level	Content Area	Course Title *(9-12 Samples Only)*	Unit Title
1st Grade	**Reading**	**N/A**	**Common, Proper, Collective…Oh, My! *(Author Study)***

Length of Unit	Time of Year Taught	Expected Prior Knowledge
Presentations are 20-25 minutes Other lessons (Author Study) 20-40 minutes	All year—9 parts of speech in 1st level—study one per month.	✓ Reading level is not a criteria—student can be at lower reading level—for studying the construction of language. A 2nd level study comes later (2nd-3rd grade) ✓ Ability to sit in presentation or shared reading experience for 20-30 minutes without disturbing others

Unit Description

Reading is the primary tool with which students access our rich Montessori cultural curriculum. Just as the standards establish "a *staircase* of increasing complexity in what students must be able to read so that all students are ready for the demands of college- and career-level reading no later than the end of high school", the Montessori approach incorporates the *use of concrete reading and writing structures* (e.g., the 3-part card material mentioned in the writing samples) from the earliest grade levels to ensure students continue to develop and strengthen their language skills in these areas. As also illustrated in the standards, the Montessori methods used to teach reading are focused on "a progressive development of reading comprehension" with more advanced levels of textual structures introduced and practiced, so that "each student advances through higher levels of learning and gains the most from what they read". Through effective reading skills students are expected to build their knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective. The rich Montessori cultural curriculum (*"Cosmic Education"—see A.3 Program of Instruction*) serves as a great motivator and platform for students to practice and gain mastery in all language areas, especially the core content area of reading.

This unit is organized under the curricular area of Grammar Studies. The selected *Author Study* provides a wonderful platform for studying the craft and structure of writing, as well as specific lessons and experiences in grammar. Students are exposed to and become aware of different genres and text structures, as well as parts of speech and their function in language. They use pictures and graphics as a way of predicting what the book will be about, or will teach. Author studies provide many types of opportunities for modeling and demonstrating reading and thinking strategies that aid in deeper comprehension. Through concrete organizers such as 3-part cards, K-W-L charts, Picture Walks, etc., students gain models they can use to organize and share their thoughts and discoveries. Author studies provide an easy connection to the cultural subjects, which in turn, facilitates more student generated reading and research in a variety of areas. This curricular sample illustrates one way to make language come alive for students, and that's by connecting it to authentic literature. Many other literacy skills and strategies are also modeled within this study. No two years of this unit are ever the same.

Ruth Heller's books are about concrete topics ("parts of speech") which are easy to identify. Her illustrations are vivid and dynamic—great fodder for building vocabulary and concrete models for the parts of speech ("function of words"). One of the reasons we paired this author study with the grammar curriculum is because the study of grammar should be interesting and fun, not dry and boring—Ruth Heller's rich text and vibrant artwork fits the bill.

Ruth Heller has been drawing since she was a girl. Her remarkable illustrations and creative style of writing sets her apart. She is consistently very "crafty" in her colorful, fun-filled books. The artwork, alone, provides endless possibilities for learning extensions in other curricular, for example, grammar, botany, zoology, and geometry. Although drawing makes her books exciting to look at, this is only one of her crafts. This author has many ways of pulling readers into her books.

Some of the elements of Ruth Heller's Writing Style—*"Craft & Structure"*—students will be exposed to are:

- ✓ Rhymes and rhyming patterns
- ✓ Imaginative and well written patterns of language
- ✓ Concrete use of text to convey meaning and structure
- ✓ Her minimal use of text provides opportunities to experiment with her structure and add more detail
- ✓ She uses bold lettering to demonstrate main ideas which aids in comprehension

Due to the limited space for this curricular sample, we've included only one sample of a grammar presentation—the noun—in order to illustrate our integrated curriculum. Grammar remains a central element in the Montessori language curriculum. It is part of our 'holistic' approach to the teaching of language and literacy. We think of grammar studies as more appropriate for older students, but Dr. Montessori insisted that students be given the fundamentals of grammar from an early age. There are two principal series of presentations, "Function of Words" (Parts of Speech) and "Sentence Analysis" (Diagramming Sentences). Grammar must not be isolated from the rest of language studies, but instead integrated as much as possible with the rest of the curriculum. Studying a part of speech, for example, could be done in the context of shared reading, or Read Aloud time. Sentences for analysis can easily come from the books we read in class, as well as our personal experiences.

The construction of our language should be as intriguing and exciting to children as a study of the way vertebrates are put together, or the study of the Sun and Earth. A command of the language we read and write in is one of the most valuable gifts we can give our students for life.

Standards:	**Strand:** Reading Standards for Informational Text **Cluster:** Craft and Structure ***Standard #6:*** Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
Summative Assessment	**Student progress data and observation notes entered into MRX (student data system)** **Objective for summative assessment of the required standard:** Completed *Picture Walk* chart for at least 3 informational texts (can include books from the author study collection) *Using a graphic organizer, such as a Picture Walk chart, the student will distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text for an illustrated informational book chosen from the classroom library and/or from the author study collection of books. They will use drawings and writing to compose details for each column of the chart—"Before Reading—picture clues" & "After Reading--information from the text" columns.*

Sample of student Picture Walk graphic organizer:

My Picture Walk	
Name:	Date:
Book Title:	
Author:	
Illustrator:	
***Before Reading*—"Picture Clues"**	***After Reading*—Additional information I learned from the words**
I think this book will be about…	Some information I learned after reading…

Sample Picture Walk Rubric:

1st Grade
Picture Walk Rubric

Student:	**Date:**
Reading Text Structure: Informational & Explanatory	**Reading Standard Cluster:** Craft & Structure

BOOK TITLE:

Reading Standard: *the student will distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text for an illustrated informational book chosen from the classroom library and/or from the author study collection of books. They will use drawings and writing to compose details for each column of the chart—"Before Reading—picture clues" & "After Reading--information from the text" columns.*
Criteria for Mastery = 7/8 points (80%) per book/minimum 3 books assessed

TOTAL POINTS	**0-1 Points** ***Need more practice***	**2 Points** ***Mastered***	**3 Points** ***Exceeds Expectations***
Includes 1-2 related details/ "picture clues" in the *Before Reading* column of the Picture Walk chart.			
Makes a logical prediction about what the book will be about or what it will teach based on the "picture clues" selected.			
Includes 1-2 separate, but related textual details in *After Reading* column of the Picture Walk chart.			
Identifies the main topic of the book selected & compares to prediction made.			

Additional Comments:

Scoring for Summative Assessment

Criteria for mastery: 7/8 points (80%) per book/minimum 3 books assessed
Scoring Scale: 1 = Approaching Standard, 2 = Meets Standard, 3 = Exceeds Standard

- ✓ Includes 1-2 related details/ "picture clues" in the *Before Reading* column of the Picture Walk chart.
- ✓ Makes a logical prediction about what the book will be about or what it will teach based on the "picture clues" selected.
- ✓ Includes 1-2 separate, but related textual details in *After Reading* column of the Picture Walk chart.
- ✓ Identifies the main topic of the book selected & compares to prediction made.

Materials/ Resources Needed

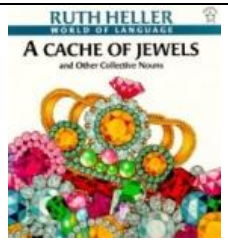
Author Study
Set of Ruth Heller *parts of speech* books for Read Aloud:

- ✓ Merry-Go-Round (Nouns)
- ✓ Cache of Jewels (Collective Nouns)
- ✓ *Kites Sail High (Verbs)*
- ✓ *Fantastic! Wow! And Unreal! (Interjections & Conjunctions)*
- ✓ *Mine, All Mine (Pronouns)*

Grammar--Function of Words—(Noun presentation for this lesson sample)

- ✓ Blank labels and/or prepared labels for objects, people and places in the classroom environment
- ✓ A large black pyramid (Montessori or handmade)
- ✓ The box of flat grammar symbols and the large black triangle (from geometry cabinet)

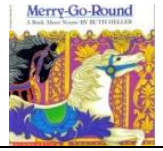
	✓ *Behind the Mask (Prepositions)* ✓ *Many Luscious Lollipops (Adjectives)* ✓ *Up, Up and Away (Adverbs)* Any books from the *Designs for Coloring Series* Any books from her *How to Hide series* *Color* (a guide to how art goes through the four-color printing process) Heller also illustrated five books by other authors and a Merriam-Webster dictionary for very young children. ✓ *The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo* ✓ *King of the Birds by Shirley Climo* ✓ *King Solomon and the Bee by Dalia Hardof Renberg* ✓ *The Korean Cinderella by Shirley Climo* ✓ *Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes by Rosalind Creasy* ✓ *Merriam-Webster's Primary Dictionary* ✓ *Merriam-Webster's Alphabet Book*	✓ Grammar symbol template ✓ Collection of similar objects, such as three colored pencils ✓ The small, light blue pyramid ✓ The small, light blue triangle

	Lesson 1--Book **Lions & Tigers & Bears…Oh, My!**	**Lesson 2--Grammar** **Parts of Speech--*The Noun***	**Lesson 3--Book** **A Cache of Jewels and Other Collective Nouns**	**Lesson 4-18** ***Remaining grammar lessons/9 Heller books***
Instruction and Timeline	Read Aloud—1st book *Merry-Go-Round* **Preview Activity:** Show the cover of the book and have the children predict what it is about. Read the title, author, and illustrator. Note that this author is also the illustrator. Record the information on the Picture Map chart. Before you read the text just preview the pictures. Model and record comments and observations made by the students in the "Before reading" column of the chart. **Read Aloud** Suggest students focus on discovering why Ruth Heller wrote this book (Author's	Aims for the "Function of Words" Lessons: ✓ To give a strong impression of each function or part of speech ✓ To understand the relationships between them Give children who are only able to write their names blank labels and ask them to write their name on the label. Give those who can write simple words blank labels to write NAMES of objects in the environment as you point them out to them—e.g., pen, door, wall, etc. If some can write the names of places then let them do so. For those who can't write, give them prepared labels with more difficult words already printed on them and tell what they name.	 **Aims**: ✓ To appreciate the craft & structure of the author & illustrator, Ruth Heller ✓ To build vocabulary & understanding of nouns *Read Aloud as in Lesson 1.* The purpose for this reading is to listen to how many words are in the text—a lot, a few, just enough?	*Continue series of lessons and read alouds as described in Lessons 1-3.*

	purpose) and to think about how the illustrations add to/take away from the text. **Post-reading** Teacher facilitates group discussion--Identify the information added by the text. Did we know the book would be about nouns just by looking at the pictures? Add noted observations in the "After Reading" column of the Picture Walk chart. Call attention to the illustrations and how they are used to illustrate Ruth Heller's words. Note the use of vibrant colors. Talk about the variety of nouns. Find out **how many nouns the children** remember—invite them to illustrate them and place them on the *Function of Words* chart ("word wall"). Are there more nouns represented in the pictures, or in the text? Notice the detail of the images—they almost look real.	Say: *All of the words on these labels are names of people, places, or things. These words are called NOUNS.* Review the etymology by recording on the whiteboard. Then take the black pyramid in your hands and begin to tell the story of the noun: For example: Tell the children about how nouns were the first words used by our ancestors, the first humans. When people who lived in caves first learned to speak, they probable started by naming things around them. We can see an example of this in our own lives when a baby learns to talk. What's their first word? Mama or papa—those are nouns. Because nouns are the most ancient words in any language, Dr. Montessori (a very wise woman) chose a black pyramid as its symbol. [show children the pyramid and explain further] It reminds us of the great pyramids in Egypt, which have been around for thousands of years. And the color black gives us an impression of something really solid, like coal from the earth (one of the oldest minerals). That's what nouns are like. At this point, show the children the box of paper grammar symbols. Explain that you can't put the black pyramid on a piece of paper to trace, so we use the paper triangle to take its place when we are	After reading the book, add to the Function of Words chart as in Lesson 1, and discuss Ruth Heller's writing style. Uses very few words—why do you think that is? Do you know any patterns of sound? ["An fleet of ships with purple sails" or "A coven of withes as scary as these"]	

		working on a flat surface—using the face of the pyramid. Or we can draw a black pyramid using our grammar template (show the template). Demonstrate how to use the paper symbol and template for nouns they will write in their grammar notebooks.		

	Group Activity throughout duration of Unit
Student Activities and Timeline	***SAMPLE: Group generated Author Study Chart*****—**displayed and added to throughout the unit. For the purpose of this reading standard, students will be assessed by their samples of *Picture Walks* for informational books chosen outside of the author study. Group lessons and activities lead up to and provide an opportunity to assess student progress and mastery not only for the required standard, but for all of the standards listed in the required 1st Grade Reading strand & cluster.

Visiting Author & Illustrator Ruth Heller	Author's Purpose *(Topic)*	Grammar Symbol & Definition *(Topic)*	"Function of Words" *(Sample title based on details from the book)*	
			From the Illustrations *(Words & drawings—can be taken from Picture Walk sheets)*	*From the Text* *(Words & drawings—can be taken from Picture Walk sheets)*
Book 1: *Merry-Go-Round* 	*(Record after Picture Walk & read aloud)*	▲ "Noun" *(Select a student volunteer)*	*(Student contributions pasted/recorded here)*	*(Student contributions pasted/recorded here)*
Book 2/Title				
Book 3/Title				
Book 4/Title				
Book 5/Title				

	After Lesson 1	After Lesson 1 or 2	After Lesson 3 and onward
	Individual: Choose an informational book with illustrations from the classroom library and, using materials provided on the shelf, complete your own "Picture Walk". Use words and/or drawings. Review your completed chart with your teacher. *(NOTE: This follow up activity/assignment is an expectation throughout the unit. Students are expected to choose a total of 3-5 books to Picture Walk)* **Partner Work:** *Noun Hunts* with a buddy ▪ Record them in your grammar notebooks with the symbol next to the noun. ▪ Select one, or more to add to the Author Study chart	**Individual:** Pick a noun from the book, or choose one of your own. Make a noun page, like in the book, and illustrate it beautifully and with care. Think about how your illustrations add to your words. We will collect these and make another noun book to add to our collection. **Partner Work:** *Noun Hunts* with a buddy ▪ Record them in your grammar notebooks with the symbol next to the noun. Select one, or more to add to the Author Study chart	*Same as lessons 1-2, except students collect "collective nouns"* *This pattern of activities is followed throughout the unit and covers the most common parts of speech.*