

Lesson Plan: The Bug's-Eye View

Subject: Literature, Art, and Social-Emotional Learning

Topic: Exploring Themes from Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*

Recommended Age: 8 years old

Time Allotment: 60-75 minutes

Materials Needed:

- A short, age-appropriate summary of *The Metamorphosis* (provided below)
 - Large sheet of paper or a shoebox for a diorama
 - Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
 - Modeling clay or Play-Doh (various colors)
 - A small piece of paper for a letter
 - Pencil
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1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Define "metamorphosis" and provide both a real-world example (butterfly) and a fictional one (Gregor).
 - Create an artistic representation of a scene from a character's unique point of view.
 - Discuss the importance of empathy and kindness towards those who are going through difficult changes.
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2. Lesson Procedure

Part 1: The Big Change (10-15 minutes)

1. **Hook/Introduction:** Start with a fun question. "Imagine you woke up this morning, but instead of being you, you were a tiny beetle! What would be the first thing you'd notice? What would be super easy? What would be really hard to do?" Discuss the practical challenges (opening a door, talking to family) and the strange new perspective (a crumb looks like a boulder!).
 2. **Introduce the Concept:** Explain the word "metamorphosis." Break it down: "It's a big word for a big change." Connect it to a familiar example. "A caterpillar goes through metamorphosis to become a butterfly. It changes its whole body and its whole way of life."
 3. **Introduce the Story:** Say, "Today, we're going to explore a famous story about a man who goes through a very strange metamorphosis. It's a little sad, but it helps us think about big feelings like being lonely and how important it is to be kind."
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Part 2: Story Time - The Story of Gregor (10 minutes)

Read the following simplified summary of *The Metamorphosis* aloud. Pause to ask questions like, "How do you think he felt when he saw himself?" or "Why do you think his family was so scared?"

A Simplified Summary: The Sad Story of Gregor Samsa

Once there was a man named Gregor who worked very hard to take care of his family. One morning, he woke up and something was terribly wrong. He had gone through a metamorphosis! He was no longer a man; he was a giant, hard-shelled bug.

He tried to get out of bed, but his many little legs just wiggled in the air. He couldn't turn the doorknob. When his family finally saw him, they screamed. They didn't understand what had happened. They were scared of him and locked him in his room.

At first, his sister, Grete, felt sorry for him. She would bring him leftover food and clean his room while he hid under the sofa, embarrassed. Gregor loved when she did this, as it was his only connection to his family. He couldn't talk anymore, so he would listen through the wall as his family whispered about their money problems now that he couldn't work.

As time went on, his family grew tired of dealing with a giant bug in the house. His room got messy, and they started to forget about him. One day, Grete declared, "We have to get rid of it! This thing is not our Gregor anymore." This broke Gregor's heart. Feeling unwanted and lonely, he quietly went back to his room and, soon after, he died.

Part 3: Creative Exploration (30-40 minutes)

This is where we apply the story's ideas through hands-on activities. The student can choose one or do both.

Activity A: Gregor's Bug-Sized World (Art & Perspective-Taking)

- **Instructions:** "Let's build or draw Gregor's room from his new perspective as a bug. Remember our chat from the beginning? A human bed would look like a mountain! The door handle would be impossible to reach. What would the world look like from the floor?"
- **Task:** Using the large paper or shoebox, have the student create Gregor's room. Encourage them to use Play-Doh to sculpt giant furniture (from a bug's view), a tiny Gregor, and maybe the food his sister leaves for him.
- **Guiding Questions:** "What would make Gregor feel comfortable in this room? If you were him, would you want to crawl on the walls and ceiling? What would you add to the room to make it feel more like a home for a bug?"

Activity B: A Letter from Grete (Writing & Empathy)

- **Instructions:** "Gregor's sister, Grete, had very mixed-up feelings. At first, she was kind, but then she got tired and frustrated. Let's think from her point of view."
- **Task:** Ask the student to write a very short letter or draw a picture with a caption from Grete's perspective. They can choose to write it from the **beginning** of the story (e.g., "Dear Diary, I'm so scared for my brother, I don't know how to help him...") or from the **end** (e.g., "Dear Diary, I miss my brother, but I'm just so tired and scared of the bug...").
- **Goal:** The goal isn't perfect writing, but to think about why someone might act in a way that

seems mean, and to understand the feelings behind their actions (like fear, frustration, or sadness).

3. Assessment and Reflection

Part 4: Wrap-Up Discussion (10 minutes)

Look at the student's creations together and discuss the following questions:

- In your drawing/sculpture, what is the biggest challenge for Gregor in his room?
- Why do you think it was so hard for Gregor's family to still love him? Was it his fault he changed?
- The story is sad, but what does it teach us about how we should treat people (or animals) who are different or going through a hard time?
- What is one small, kind thing we can do for someone who feels lonely or misunderstood?

Assessment: Listen for the student's ability to take on the perspective of the characters. Observe the thoughtfulness in their creative work—did they consider the change in scale and emotion? Their understanding will be demonstrated through their creative choices and their answers in the final discussion, not through a formal test.

4. Extension Activity (Optional)

If the student is still engaged, compare Gregor's metamorphosis to a more positive one, like *The Ugly Duckling*. Discuss how both characters were misunderstood because of their appearance, but how the community around them reacted differently, leading to very different endings. This reinforces the core lesson on empathy and acceptance.