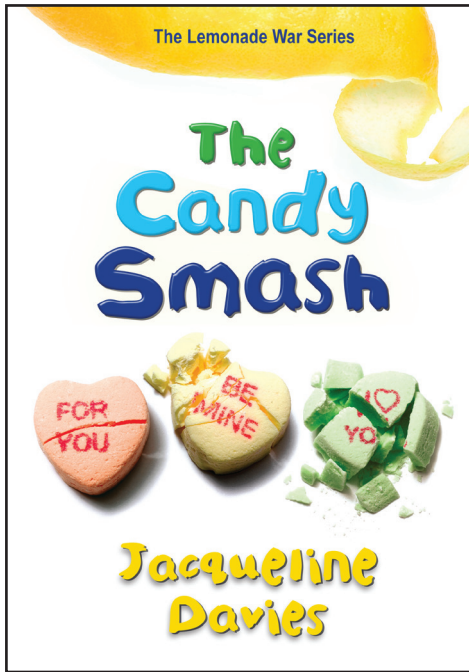


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO The Candy Smash

BY JACQUELINE DAVIES



In *The Candy Smash*, Jacqueline Davies's fourth novel about the Treski siblings, it is close to Valentine's Day, and lots of the children in Evan and Jessie's fourth grade class are thinking about love. Part of the reason for that is that their teacher has been sharing poems about love with them; part of the reason is that candy hearts have mysteriously shown up in everyone's desk; and, of course, part of it is that fourth grade is often when boys and girls begin to think about each other differently—and much conversation and speculation is focused on who likes whom.

The Candy Smash, like Jacqueline Davies's previous novels, has plenty of kid appeal, with relatable characters, an involving plot, and a genuine sense of the real lives of its readers. What Davies's novels also have are well-integrated curriculum strands giving you creative ways to approach a wide range of subjects—personal entrances to topics on your classroom agenda. From social studies lessons on business (*The Lemonade War*) to law and courtroom procedures (*The Lemonade Crime*) to bullying (*The Bell Bandit*) students learn right along with the characters in the books.

In *The Candy Smash*, you'll find whole units to build in the Language Arts, as well as in Ethics and Citizenship and many other individual topics to explore with your students.

About the Author

Jacqueline Davies is the talented writer of several novels and picture books, including the Lemonade War series and *The Boy Who Drew Birds*. Ms. Davies lives in Needham, Massachusetts, with her family. Visit her website at www.jacquelinedavies.net.

Activities and Discussions

Pre-Reading

There are two mysteries in *The Candy Smash* that Jessie Treski sets out to solve. Your students will want to solve them along with her. First, who is placing boxes of candy hearts in the students' desks, and second, who wrote a love message in a stall in the girl's bathroom? The clues are there to be found. As your students read through the novel have them keep track of the clues and develop their theories as to who the culprits are. Each student should write down his/her suspects. When they finish the novel, tally up how many students guessed correctly.

Life Skills – Working with Others

A personal message is printed on the candy hearts given to each kid. For example Tessa’s reads “GREAT VOICE,” since she has the best singing voice in the class. Christopher’s says, “MASTERPIECE” because he is a good artist, and he is always drawing things. And Salley’s is “BEST LUNCH.” Her mom owns a restaurant, and her lunchbox always has the best food. Have each student decide what his or her message would be. Then see how they view their classmates. Place the class names in a box. Each student should draw out a name then write a candy heart type message for that student. Remind them that the message should be a positive attribute.

Language Arts – Character

As your class reads *The Candy Smash*, they will learn more and more about the character traits of Evan and Jessie. Your students should create character profiles of each.

Language Arts/Poetry

Mrs. Overton immerses Class 4-O in poetry, giving them a new poem to study every day. She emphasizes two defining aspects of poetry: its sound and its sense. As her students are introduced to an assortment of poems and poets, they learn to take their time with a poem—to read it several times and to think about it, and only then begin to talk about it. Over the course of this novel, we see that many of the students become astute poetry readers and good poetry writers.

You can use Mrs. Overton’s methods in your own classroom. Select a month for your class to jump into poetry. April is National Poetry Month and might be a good time for you. But any month will be brightened by poetry study.

Brainstorm with the class for possible subjects. Then they should vote which they’d like the poems they read to cover. Suggest some choices: for example, nature, animals, sports,

friendship, or, as is the case for Class 4-O, love.

The next step is to find a dozen or so poems that explore the topic. Copy each on a separate sheet of paper and make enough copies for each student. Be sure to include the title and the poet’s name. Select one poem to begin. Read it aloud to your class. Then hand it out and have the students read it to themselves, several times. Have a volunteer read it aloud.

See if your students can identify any of the poetic techniques they have read about in *The Candy Smash*. (You can make a list of these on the board; they are the words defined at the start of odd-numbered chapters beginning with chapter 1.) Ask if they hear any assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, or consonance. Are there any similes or metaphors. Is there a strong rhythm or rhyme pattern?

Then talk about the meaning of the poem. What does the poet want us to notice, think about, or see differently? How does he or she express that meaning to us? What does each student think or feel about the meaning of the poem?

A couple of days, later introduce a second poem to your class. In addition to the questions you asked previously, have your students compare and contrast the two poems. They are both about the same subject—the subject your class selected—but the visions and voices of the two poets are different. How?

After you’ve studied several poems, it’s time to get your students writing poetry, and Mrs. Overton’s and Evan’s Post-it notes method is a good way to get started. Each student should decide on the subject of his/her poem, just as Evan did.

Evan stared at the wall and thought about his grandmother. Well, first of all, she was old. So old that her knees made creaking noises when she stood up. [Page 33-34]

Evan wrote single words on Post-it notes—words about his grandmother and words about trees. He moved the notes around, throwing some away, and building others into a poem. He listened to the way the words sounded together and made sure they added up to the meaning he wanted to convey. Inspired by an E.E. Cummings poem that the class had read in school, he fashioned his format to imitate Cummings' style.

Your students should try manipulating the words they choose until they have something that meets their own definition of a poem.

Ask your students to be mindful of the writing techniques they've been looking for in the poems you've studied, trying to include one or two of them in their own work.

Keep the children writing poems as you go through the rest of your poetry study. You should have a good collection to put together as a class poetry anthology. Be sure to include your own poems.

As a final poetry activity, just as Grandma did when she was a child, ask each student to select a poem they like and memorize it. It can be one of the poems you covered in class or another that they found on their own. Set aside an afternoon to conclude your poetry unit. Each student should recite her/his chosen poem. Then hand out the class's poetry book so each child will have a keepsake of this memorable month.

Art

After you distribute the class' poetry anthology collection, each student should design a cover for his/her collection that reflects the sentiment of the anthology.

Language Arts/Newspaper

With a little encouragement from you, some students might be inspired by Jessie Treski's Class 4-O newspaper. To get going, ask your

students to bring in a copy of the newspaper their family reads at home. (You may well have to bring in some extra copies of papers yourself, since many families now read their news online.) Go through the paper to identify its parts and organization. Find examples of the words defined in the chapter openings of even-numbered chapters (beginning with chapter 4). Look for primary sources (interviews or articles in which participants in the event being covered are quoted, for example); identify breaking news items or articles that are based on tips; look for there any surveys or reports on surveys; describe the front-page layout.

Look at bylines, the editorial page, and the masthead to identify the roles newspaper people have. Then set up your staff. You'll need:

- a publisher—that's you!
- an editor-in-chief
- reporters
- columnists
- proofreaders
- artists and photographers
- designers to layout the pages

When all of the jobs filled, your students are ready to get started on their first issue. At a newspaper staff meeting, they can begin with brainstorming. What do they want to cover regularly? Possible topics can include classroom and school news and events, coverage of school sports teams and actions, birthdays, weather, op-ed or opinion pieces, articles on interesting local personalities. They can even create advertisements for imaginary products. What issues are on their classmate's minds that deserve first-page treatment?

With a list of topics at hand, they can use Jessie's method to get organized.

[Jessie] tore out four pages from her reporter's notebook and spread them on the desk. She picked up her pencil and wrote a list of the articles that would appear on pages two and three. Those

pages were easy to fill because they contained the newspaper's regular features. [Page 16-17]

The editor-in-chief should ask for volunteers to write the various columns and report on the current issues, assign deadlines, and keep track of progress.

The “Survey on Love” that Jessie takes for her classroom paper is a great idea, although your students might pick another subject to survey. Some examples might be food favorites, best movies, cool music, worst television shows, or fashion trends. The survey is a great way to build anticipation for the newspaper. Kids not working on the staff will want to see that their opinions count, and everyone will be interested in the results the paper reports.

The staff should work together to develop the survey questions and to tally the results. They'll have to decide if classmates should sign their responses or leave them anonymous. Have your students discuss how the signed survey that Jessie did in *The Candy Smash* was a kind of invasion of privacy. Are they concerned that their survey might be as well? Why or why not?

(You can tie some math lessons in when you tally the results of the questionnaire.)

“All the News That's Fit to Print” appears on the masthead of the *New York Times*. Discuss with the class the meaning and implications of the phrase. When the paper is ready to go to press, you and the staff should look it over to be sure it meets that standard. Then print the paper and distribute it to all your students.

Social Studies – Ethics/Citizenship

While Jessie is looking for a blockbuster story for the class newspaper, she finds her subject when boxes of candy hearts mysteriously appear in the kids' desks. Following in the footsteps of her father, as an investigative

reporter she goes to great lengths to expose the source of the candy. In her quest for the big reveal, the story becomes more important to her than the consequences that might occur. Have your students keep track of her efforts and the methods Jessie uses to get to the bottom of the story. Do her actions meet the standard of good journalism? How has the pressure to publish clouded her judgment? Discuss with the class the legality and the ethics of some of her actions.

Newspapers and reporters are faced with these issues every day. Discuss the responsibilities of the press in the gathering and dissemination of news. How does that relate to the newspaper that Jessie is putting together?

As an investigative reporter, Jessie's dad broke rules to uncover a story because he believed it would make the world a better place. Is making the classroom a better place her motivation in for uncovering the story? [Page 18]

Social Studies – Understanding Oneself and Others

Evan shows his mother the poem he wrote about his grandmother. He admits to her he likes poetry. He is not a good student but he found something he likes. What subjects do your students like? Have each student write about the one subject he/she likes the most in a three-paragraph essay that names the subject, why they like it, and describes how it makes them feel. [Page 96]

Paraphrasing his teacher, Evan says, “*You can love a song or a forest or a friend or a—you know—a person, a person you're 'in love' with.*” [Page 95]

How do your students view love? Have the class extend Mrs. O's list of things you can love. Each student should create a chart titled, “What I Love.” A sample chart follows.

What I Love

Category	Entry	Why I Love it
Song		
Friend		
Book		
Movie		
Animal		

Quick Questions

- *You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs... It means if you want to achieve something important, you might have to make a mess along the way. Ruffle some feathers. Kick up some dust.* [Page 21]
- This message that Jessie's grandmother imparted confused Jessie. After all Jessie was a stickler about breaking rules. What do your students think? Did her grandmother give her good advice? Did Jessie take it as permission to break some rules? The children should be specific in the discussion.
- The students in class 4-O react quite strongly to the confiscation of the candy found in their desks. Mrs. O. explains that they can't have it because it comes from an unknown source. What is she afraid of? Have your students create guidelines that address the issue of food safety. They can make posters to hang up around the school, and perhaps make a "public service" video that can be shown in younger classrooms.
- While snooping in Evan's room, Jessie finds a poem he'd written in the wastebasket. The poem "Pony Girl" intrigues her. Although she thinks she might be doing something wrong, she takes it anyway. Is it stealing if the paper is in the trash? She reasons that it isn't. What do your students think? Have a debate about the expectation of privacy and ownership for something that has been thrown out? [Pages 101-103]
- Evan questioned his mother about the relationship between her and his father.

"How can you be in love and then not in love anymore?" . . . "All the poems make it sound like love is forever. It's bigger than anything and the most important thing in the world. But if it can just go like that...just disappear..." [Page 94]
- Have the class discuss what Evan's mother tells him. Do your students think he understands her? Why? Why not? Do they understand her answer?
- Evan and Megan have always been friends. But in the course of the novel their relationship changes. Have the class talk about the things they say and do, and how their feelings about each other are developing.
- Jessie is a year younger than the other children in the class. How does this manifest itself in the way she reacts to the events in the novel?

Common Core Connections

Reading Literature:

Key Ideas and Details

- Grade 3 – RL.3.1-3
- Grade 4 – RL.4.1-3
- Grade 5 – RL.5.1-3
- Grade 6 – RL.6.1-3
- Grade 7 – RL.7.1-3

Craft and Structure

- Grade 3 – RL.3.4-6
- Grade 4 – RL.4.4-6
- Grade 5 – RL.5.4-6
- Grade 6 – RL.6.4-6
- Grade 7 – RL.7.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Grade 4 – RL.4.7, 9
- Grade 5 – RL.5.9
- Grade 6 – RL.6.9
- Grade 7 – RL.7.9

Range of Reading Level of Text Complexity

- Grade 3 – RL.3.10
- Grade 4 – RL.4.10
- Grade 5 – RL.5.10

Writing:

Text Types and Purposes

- Grade 3 – W.3.1-3a
- Grade 4 – W.4.1-3e
- Grade 5 – W.5.1-3e
- Grade 6 – W.6.1-3.e
- Grade 7 – W.7.1-1c, 2-2d, 3-3e

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Grade 3 – W.3.4-6
- Grade 4 – W.4.4-6
- Grade 5 – W.5.4-6
- Grade 6 – W.6.4-5
- Grade 7 – W.7.4-6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Grade 3 – W.3.7-8
- Grade 4 – W.4.7-9b
- Grade 5 – W.5.7-9b
- Grade 6 – W.6.7-9
- Grade 7 – W.7.7-9a

Speaking and Listening

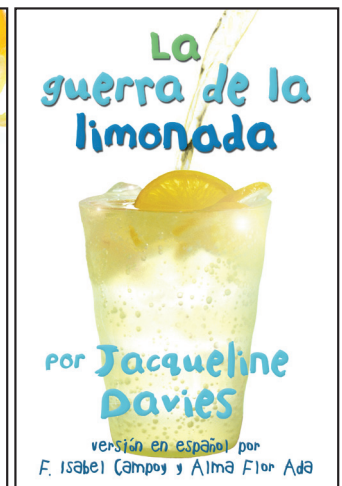
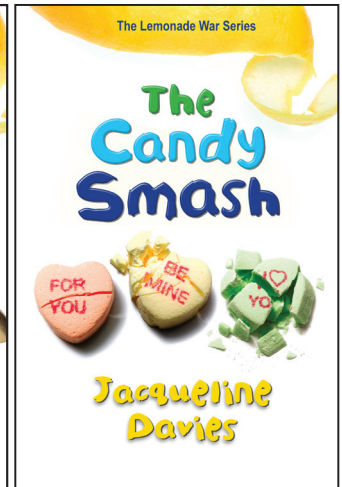
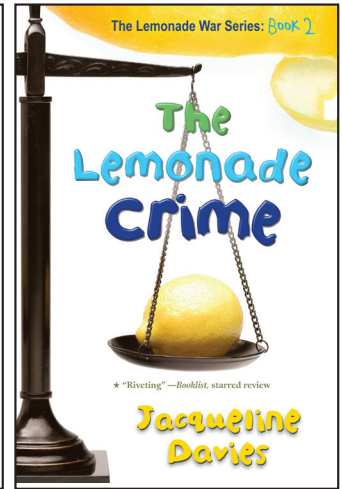
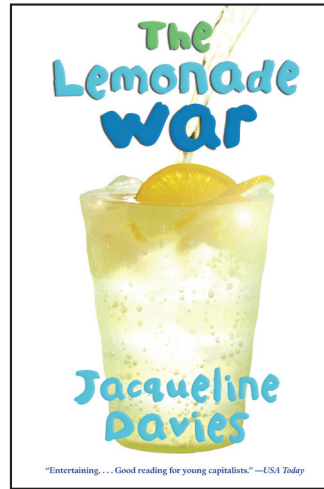
Comprehension and Collaboration

- Grade 3 – SL.3.1, 2, 3-5
- Grade 4 – SL.4.1-2
- Grade 5 – SL.5.1-1d
- Grade 6 – SL.6.1-2
- Grade 7 – SL.7.1

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- Grade 4 – SL.4.4, 6
- Grade 5 – SL.5.4
- Grade 6 – SL.6.4
- Grade 7 – SL.7.4

The Lemonade War Series



*This guide was created by Clifford Wohl,
educational consultant*