### You Will Need
- Lois Ehlert: Mess to Masterpiece, Level K
- pocket chart

Visit fp.pub/resources to download
online resources to support this lesson, including:
- Word Cards
- Recording Form

### Goals
Think about the readers and the behaviors and understandings to notice, teach for, and support at Level K in The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum. Select goals that match the needs of your students. The following may be appropriate.

**Reading**
- Use organizational tools to search for information (sidebars).
- Monitor fluent, phrased reading.
- Understand word meanings (masterpiece, collage).
- Notice a writer’s use of figurative language (come to life).
- Talk about the important information in organized summary form after reading.
- Understand that a biography is the story of a person’s life and is usually told in chronological order.
- Understand that imagination and creativity can help you make something beautiful.

**Phonics/Letter and Word Work**
- Recognize and use short vowel sounds in the middle of words (CVC).
- Read and write high-frequency words: just, kept, that.
- Write a sentence with decodable or high-frequency words.

**Writing About Reading**
- Identify a biography subject’s message.

### Analysis of Book Characteristics  Lois Ehlert: Mess to Masterpiece, Level K

**How the Book Works** This biography describes how author and illustrator Lois Ehlert learned at an early age to create art from messes, eventually producing masterpieces. The book includes photographs of Lois and her art. Sidebars and captions provide additional information.

**Genre/Form**
- Nonfiction
- Biography

**Text Structure**
- Underlying structural patterns (chronological sequence, description)

**Content**
- Content interesting to and relevant for readers (art, children’s books)

**Themes and Ideas**
- Concrete theme close to children’s experience (imagination)
- Idea close to children’s experience (self-expression)

**Language and Literary Features**
- Descriptive language (Out of that mess grow orange and purple berries.)
- Language that speaks directly to the reader [Don’t worry if you make a mess.]

**Sentence Complexity**
- Some longer sentences with more than fifteen words
- Sentences with clauses or phrases [Now that Lois is a famous artist, she still makes a mess when she works.]
- Sentence with nouns in a series, divided by commas [They put colored paper, scraps of cloth, scissors, and paste on the table.]

**Vocabulary**
- Many adjectives describing people, places, and things (bright, little, special)

**Words**
- Wide range of contractions and possessives (Lois’s, girl’s, that’s, don’t)
- Full range of compound words (butterfly, popcorn, masterpiece)

**Illustrations**
- Illustrations (photographs) with details that add interest

**Book and Print Features**
- Variety in font size
- Many lines of print on a page
- Print placed in sidebars and graphics that provide important information
- Italics used for book titles and captions
- Periods, commas, exclamation marks, and a colon

---

**Book** Lois Ehlert: Mess to Masterpiece  
**Level** K  
**Author** Anne Miranda  
**Genre** Nonfiction/Biography

---

© 2024 by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell from Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. All rights reserved.
Warm-Up: Phonics

Help students recognize and use short vowel sounds in the middle of words (CVC) using examples of words from the book.

- Write the word cut on a whiteboard. Run your finger under the word as you read it. Did you hear the sound in the middle of the word? Let's say the word together and listen for the middle sound. Say cut.
- Guide students to notice the middle sound is /u/. Which letter stands for the sound /u/ in cut?
- Some words have one vowel between two consonants. The sound of the vowel is short.
- Repeat with the words big, cat.

Introducing the Text

Consider the strengths and needs of your readers and the demands of the text as you craft the introduction. The following bulleted items provide an example of one way to introduce the book. The introduction should be interactive and should allow time for students to respond (indicated by *).

- Have you ever heard of Lois Ehlert? * Lois Ehlert: Mess to Masterpiece is a biography of this famous artist and author. You can see her photograph on the front cover of the book. What do you think about the subtitle, Mess to Masterpiece? * A masterpiece is a great work of art.
- Turn to pages 2 and 3. What do you notice? * Look at the caption on page 3. Lois Ehlert wrote the stories and created the pictures for each of these books. If students have read any of the books, have them share what they are about.
- Turn the page to see how Lois got started making art. Lois made art on a table like this one when she was a little girl. Who is in the photograph on page 5? * That's Lois when she was a little girl.
- Turn to pages 6 and 7. The writer includes a sidebar on page 6 to give more information about how Lois creates pictures. She uses scraps of paper and other materials in an art style called collage. Find the word collage in the sidebar. * Be sure to read each sidebar when you read the book.
- Turn to pages 10 and 11. The writer says that birds come to life from bits of paper and cloth. What do you think that means? * The phrase come to life means “look real.” Do you think the birds look real? Take a look at pages 12 and 13. What are you thinking? * Sometimes Lois uses real objects to make art. What real things do you see in this art?
- Turn to pages 14 and 15. What do you see in the photographs on page 14? * Lois has workshops where kids can be messy and make art.
- Now go back to the beginning of the book. Read to find out how Lois Ehlert became a famous artist.

Reading the Text

Students will be reading silently, but you may want to sample the oral reading of a particular student or students.

- If a student needs help using known words and word parts to solve new words, demonstrate how to use a pointer finger to mask part of the word and show a known word part. Look at this part. It says ____. Prompt with Look for a part you know.
- To support monitoring of fluent, phrased reading, tell the student they need to make their reading sound like talking. Listen to how I make my reading sound like talking. Demonstrate and then prompt with Listen to how your reading sounds. Did it sound like talking?
Discussing and Revisiting the Text

Engage all group members in sharing their responses to the book. Encourage them to listen and respond to each other's thinking during the discussion.

- Invite students to share their thinking about Lois Ehlert: Mess to Masterpiece.
- To encourage discussion, you may want to select the following questions/prompts:
  - Lois Ehlert is a famous artist and author. Talk about how Lois's parents helped her when she was young.
  - Lois Ehlert's style of art is collage. Can you describe collage? You can look back at pages 6 and 7 to help you remember.
  - Look at page 16. What advice does Lois Ehlert give to young artists? Do you think it's good advice? Why or why not?
  - This book about artist Lois Ehlert is a biography. If you have been teaching minilessons on biography, ask the students to talk about what a biography is.
- Continue the discussion, guiding students toward the key understandings and the main message of the text. Some key understandings students may express:

Thinking Within the Text
- Lois Ehlert began making art at a young age. She made a big mess as she developed her collage style. She eventually went to art school.
- Lois still makes a mess but has become an award-winning author and illustrator of children's books.
- She holds workshops for young artists.
- Her advice to young artists is to make art even if it is messy because it may become a masterpiece.

Thinking Beyond the Text
- Lois Ehlert's parents were important to her career as an artist. They encouraged her to create art and let her make a mess.
- Lois is very creative, having written and illustrated a number of children's books.
- Her creativity is also evident in her style of incorporating real objects in her collages.
- She wants to inspire kids to make art, too.

Thinking About the Text
- The writer begins with Lois Ehlert's early life experiences.
- The writer describes Lois Ehlert's inspiration and technique for making art.
- On the last page, the writer includes Lois Ehlert's advice to readers for making art. The book title is appropriate because she tells readers not to worry if they make a mess when they create art.

MESSAGE
You may need the freedom to make a mess in order to make something beautiful.

Teaching Point
Select a teaching point that will be most helpful to your group of readers. If it's appropriate, use the suggestion below, which supports thinking within the text.

Maintaining Fluency: Adjust Reading for Sentence Variety
- To make their writing sound interesting, writers use different types of sentences. Some are short. Others are long. It's important to read at a steady rate, but sometimes you need to change your pace.
- Turn to pages 6 and 7. First I read the information in the main column. Listen and notice when I change the pace. Read page 6 at a steady rate, but read the last sentence more quickly than the others.
- What did you notice? • When did I speed up my reading? • Confirm with students where you sped up your reading. The last sentence is a short sentence, which is easier to follow, so you can read it a little faster.
- Turn to page 16. Take turns reading page 16 with a partner. Read at a mostly steady rate, but slow down when you read a long or difficult sentence or speed up a little when you read a short sentence.
Phonics/Letter and Word Work

Help students become more flexible working with letter-sound relationships.

Instructional Routine: Word Sorting

1. Tell students they are going to learn more about short vowel sounds and the letters that represent them. Create categories by placing the word cards cat, bit, top across the top of three columns in the pocket chart, and point under each word as you say it. Ask students to say each word and listen for and identify the short vowel sound.

2. Say sad and think about the short vowel sound. Which word in the pocket chart has the same vowel sound? In some words, the letter a stands for the vowel sound heard in the middle of cat and that. Place the word sad under the word cat in the pocket chart. Repeat the routine with the words job, lid, nap, pop, tip. Reinforce the principle: Some words have one vowel between two consonants. The sound of the vowel is short.

If time permits, have students read and write high-frequency words: just, kept, that.

Dictate-Write-Read: Say the sentence She kept making a mess, and out of that came beautiful art. Have students say the sentence. As you dictate one word at a time, have students write the sentence, reread it, and illustrate it if time allows.

Writing About Reading (Optional)

If you choose to have the students write about what they have read, the following is an option.

Shared Writing: Short Write

- Discuss with students what they learned about Lois Ehlert. What lessons did Lois Ehlert learn from her parents about making art? What does she want you to learn?
- Work together to write about Lois Ehlert’s messages to readers. As students suggest sentences, write them on chart paper.
- Have students reread the sentences.

You can be messy when you make art. You can make anything you want. Your art might be a masterpiece.

Assessment

Refer to the goals stated on page 1 of this lesson guide and make notes of behavioral evidence, demonstrating that these goals were achieved.

- Refer to Level K in The Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum and note the behaviors and understandings the readers in the group control or need to control. Make notes about what the readers learned how to do and what they need to learn how to do next.
- Use the Recording Form to take a reading record and assess an individual’s processing on yesterday’s new book. You may want to select a student before or after the lesson, or at some other point in the day, to code the record. After coding the reading, select an immediate teaching point that will be helpful to the particular reader.