**Starring Steven Spielberg: The Making of a Young Filmmaker**

**By Gene Barretta**

Lesson Plan by Gene Barretta

**Common Core State Standards-English Language Arts-Literacy, Reading Informational Text Grade 3**

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/1/) Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/2/) Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/3/) Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/7/) Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/8/) Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

**Focus**

Critical thinkers actively and skillfully interpret, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information

**Activation**

Introduce author Gene Barretta to students and share information about his website [www.genebarretta.com](http://www.genebarretta.com/). Explain we will be reading a book written by Gene and talk about a very scientist/agriculturalist that you may have read about before.

**Pre Reading Conversation:**

* Who has heard of Steven Spielberg?
* Where and when did he live?
* What else made him famous?
* Have you seen any of his films?

**Post Reading Conversation:**

* What do you think it was like for Steven Spielberg to grow up being bullied as a young man? What helped him survive the antisemitism around him?
* Did his filmmaking help him feel good about himself?
* What made him persevere?
* What tells you that he was passionate about his craft?

**Mini-Lesson**

* This unit can be as elaborate or simple as you want, incorporate information literacy skills in throughout the lesson: note-taking, fact vs. fiction exploration, online searching, script writing, performing. Use this idea as a starting point.
* Begin the unit explaining that students (working in pairs) will be creating an interview with Steven Spielberg.
* One person will ask questions as an interviewer the other will be Steven Spielberg.
* Read the book again and find five facts that you want to turn into an interview question. Students may use other resources to find facts on Steven Spielberg, such as PebbleGo, WorldBookOnline.
* Once they find five facts they like, they must turn those facts into a question and answer, for example:
  + Fact-Steven Spielberg created his own special effects for his films because he couldn’t afford professional ones - turned into a question and answer could look like this:
    - Interviewer: Steven Spielberg. Thank you for joining me. How did you make it look like your actors were flying real planes from a long time ago?
    - MA: I first filmed a close-up of the actor in the cockpit, and then edited that together with old footage of real airplanes flying.
* Once the five questions and introduction have been created, video the students conducting the interview. Remind them about voice-inflection, animation, excitement. Merge videos together to create a movie to share with whole class.

**Extended Lesson**

For students who finish quickly, have them find another person to research, Gene has other books that discuss the lives of Thomas Edison (*Timeless Thomas: How Thomas Edison Changed Our Lives)*, Leonardo da Vinci (*Neo Leo: the Ageless Ideas of Leonardo da Vinci)*, Ben Franklin (*Now & Ben: the Modern Inventions of Benjamin Franklin), Muhammad Ali (Muhammad Ali: A Champion is Born), George Washington Carver (The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver), Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy (Lincoln and Kennedy: A Pair to Compare).*