

# “Difficult Choices: Molly and the Environment”

## **Brief Description:**

Let us introduce you to Molly: a good-hearted, shy young girl who is about to be introduced to a whole new side of her community. As our story begins, Molly is excitedly waiting for her big sister Sarah to come home from college for the weekend while, at the same time, Molly’s whole school community is excitedly awaiting the construction of a new, larger school. When big sister Sarah arrives, Molly gets the opportunity to travel with her to the university-run environmental research station where Sarah works. There, Molly learns all kinds of new, interesting facts about the natural environment and about humankind’s impact on it. This turns out to be particularly relevant to Molly, as she learns that the construction of her new school will force a small wetland to be destroyed. Upon returning to her hometown, Molly is forced to stand up for what she has learned by speaking in front of her community in an attempt to convince them to find an alternative to destroying the wetland. Throughout this module, students will be asked to think about who Molly is, what she is learning along the way, and how difficult (but important) it can be to stand up for what you believe in and to work together with others to find solutions to problems.

## **Major Themes:**

- Being shy: how it feels to be shy and how to cope with it.
- Science: the excitement of science, especially research, and how we can use what it teaches us to benefit and preserve our communities.
- Nature: the excitement of the outdoors and the importance of appreciating and preserving its beauty.
- Activism: standing up for yourself, and getting involved in a cause you believe in even if doing so may be hard.
- Compromises: learning how to respectfully discuss and come to resolutions on important issues.
- Community: the importance of contributing to and belonging to a community, from your family to your larger community.

## **GLECS (based on fourth and fifth grade GLECS):**

### **ELA Standards**

**R.WS.04.02** use structural, syntactic, and semantic cues including letter-sound, rimes, base words, affixes, and syllabication to automatically read frequently encountered words, decode unknown words, and decide meanings including multiple meaning words.

**R.WS.04.05** acquire and apply strategies to identify unknown words or word parts; self-monitor, and construct meaning by engaging actively in reading a variety of genre, self-correcting, and using a thesaurus.

**R.WS.04.07** in context, determine the meaning of words and phrases including similes, metaphors, content vocabulary, and literary terms using strategies and resources including context clues, semantic feature analysis, and a thesaurus.

**R.WS.04.06** fluently read beginning grade-level text and increasingly demanding text as the year proceeds.

**R.NT.04.03** analyze characters' thoughts and motivation through dialogue, various character roles, and functions including hero, anti-hero, or narrator; know first person point of view and identify conflict and resolution.

**R.CM.04.01** connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses.

**W.GR.04.01** in the context of writing, correctly use simple and compound sentences; direct and indirect objects; prepositional phrases; adjectives; common and proper nouns as subjects and objects; pronouns as antecedents; regular and irregular verbs; hyphens between syllables; apostrophes in contractions; and commas in salutations to set off words; phrases and dialogue; quotation marks or italics to identify titles or names.

**W.SP.04.01** in the context of writing, correctly spell frequently encountered words (e.g., roots, inflections, prefixes, suffixes, multi-syllabic); for less frequently encountered words, use structural cues (e.g., letter/sound, rimes, morphemic) and environmental sources (e.g., word walls, word lists, dictionaries, spell checkers).

**W.AT.04.01** be enthusiastic about writing and learning to write.

### **Science Standards**

**L.OL.E.1** Life Requirements- Organisms have basic needs. Animals and plants need air, water, and food. Plants also require light. Plants and animals use food as a source of energy and as a source of building material for growth and repair.

**S.IA.04.12** Share ideas about science through purposeful conversation in collaborative groups.

**S.IA.04.14** Develop research strategies and skills for information gathering and problem solving.

**S.RS.04.11** Demonstrate scientific concepts through various illustrations, performances, models, exhibits, and activities.

**S.RS.04.14** Use data/samples as evidence to separate fact from opinion.

**S.RS.04.15** Use evidence when communicating scientific ideas.

**S.RS.04.17** Identify current problems that may be solved through the use of technology.

**S.RS.04.18** Describe the effect humans and other organisms have on the balance of the natural world.

**S.RS.04.19** Describe how people have contributed to science throughout history and across cultures.

### **Social Studies Standards**

**4 – H3.0.8** Describe past and current threats to Michigan's natural resources; describe how Michigan worked in the past and continues to work today to protect its natural resources. (G, C, E)

**4 – G5.0.1** Assess the positive and negative effects of human activities on the physical environment of the United States.

**4 – P3.1.1** Identify public issues in the United States that influence the daily lives of its citizens.

**4 – P4.2.1** Develop and implement an action plan and know how, when, and where to address or inform others about a public issue.

### **Main Characters:**

**Molly**-Our heroine; a shy fourth grade student who, after a visit to a university research station, finds the courage to stand up for her local community.

**Sarah**-Molly's older sister; a college student majoring in science who takes Molly for a weekend visit to her university's research station.

**Anna**-Molly's best friend and fellow fourth grade student who supports her activist efforts.

**Ms. Sanchez**-Molly's fourth grade teacher who also supports and encourages Molly's activist efforts.

**Mr. Brown**-Molly's principal who plays an important role in Molly's speech to her community.

**Mr. Seitz**-The farmer who owns the land behind the school; he eventually joins Molly's community in supporting her "brilliant idea".