



Pear Deck was founded and built by educators, and we believe that a better world starts in the classroom. We also know how much hard work teachers put in every single day, often without recognition, so we want to celebrate you! We've created The Peary Awards to recognize outstanding achievements of educators and schools who embody Pear Deck's values and create opportunities for every student to engage with teachers, classmates, and new ideas, every day.

PEARY AWARD WINNER – Excavate & Expand: Jessica Parks, Red Hill Lutheran School // Tustin, CA

Jessica Parks is a First Grade Teacher at Red Hill Lutheran School. Every week, Mrs. Jessica Parks creates a Pear Deck lesson to help her first graders with the story for the week. This lesson is intended to ultimately enhance students' comprehension of the story. But it is in this lesson that Mrs. Parks helps students make connections to other texts, to themselves and to the world around them. She starts with asking students to predict what the story is about using clues from the title page and title itself. From there, she guides students to identify the genre of the story, which students will be able to provide evidence for after reading the story. She has embedded the story into the lesson itself, so students are able to read the story of the week in their Pear Deck lesson. Throughout the pages of the story, Mrs. Parks uses varying questions to incorporate the weekly grammar focus and brings phonemic awareness to the story. She consistently checks for understanding at various points in the story, building upon previously taught comprehension strategies. Mrs. Parks asks students to connect each text to themselves, often times identifying real world problems and solutions. What makes Mrs. Parks particularly exceptional is how she utilizes GATE strategies throughout the lesson. It is through these higher levels of questioning that challenge students to think critically and creatively, far beyond recall information. She also integrates Biblical tenets into every lesson, causing students to think about Biblical perspective for themselves by connecting the Bible with their own lives. It is through this integration of faith that allows students to increase critical thinking and biblical perspective development. Mrs. Parks expands and excavates students' thinking and learning with such rigor and enthusiasm.