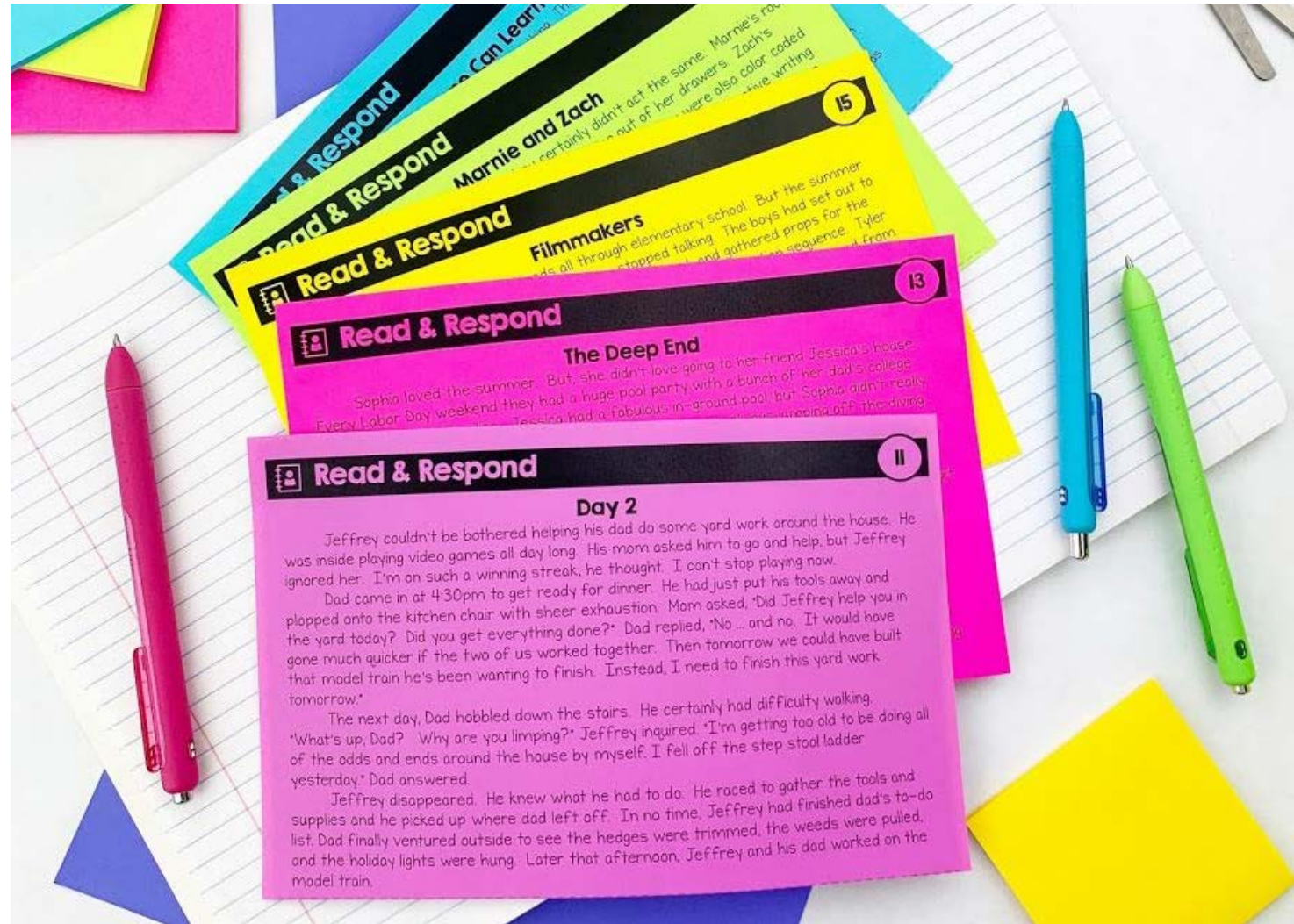


# UNDERSTANDING CHARACTERS

## READ & RESPOND TASK CARDS



# WHAT'S INCLUDED?

This resource includes 20 reading task cards that contain short fiction passages that will help you teach, practice, and reinforce how to understand characters in a story.

**Task cards can be printed in three different ways.**



Option #1 - Just the text



Option #2 - Text and Graphic Organizer Template



Option #3 - Text and Response Questions

**\*Digital versions are included for all three sets of task cards.\***

# Option #1 - Just the Text

One of the printing options for the task cards is to print JUST the text. Each task card has a short fiction reading passages (takes up half a page). The passages lend themselves to understanding characters, but you really could use them to teach any fiction skill.



- This set of task cards is ideal if you want to use them in the “traditional” task card way.
- I suggest printing them on cardstock and either putting them all on a book ring or in a photo box.
- There are 3 options of reading response sheets included so students can read the passages and respond on a separate page.

# Option #2 - Passage & Graphic Organizer

One of the printing options includes the passage and a graphic organizer template. These task cards can be printed front and back and work great in a center, as part of your small group instruction, or even for guided practice.

- On the front of each task card is a short reading passage (the same numbers and titles as option #1).
- The bottom of each task card includes a few questions to prompt students thinking about the characters.
- On the back, there is a graphic organizer template that will help students think about the characters in the story.



**\*Digital versions are included for all three sets of task cards.\***

# Option #3 - Passage & Response Questions

One of the printing options includes the passage and reading response questions. These task cards can be printed front and back and work great in a center, as part of your small group instruction, or even for guided practice.



- On the front of each task card is a short reading passage (the same numbers and titles as option #1).
- The bottom of each task card includes a few questions to prompt students thinking about the characters.
- On the back, there is space for a sticky note so students can jot down their thinking about the text. There are also two text-based comprehension questions.

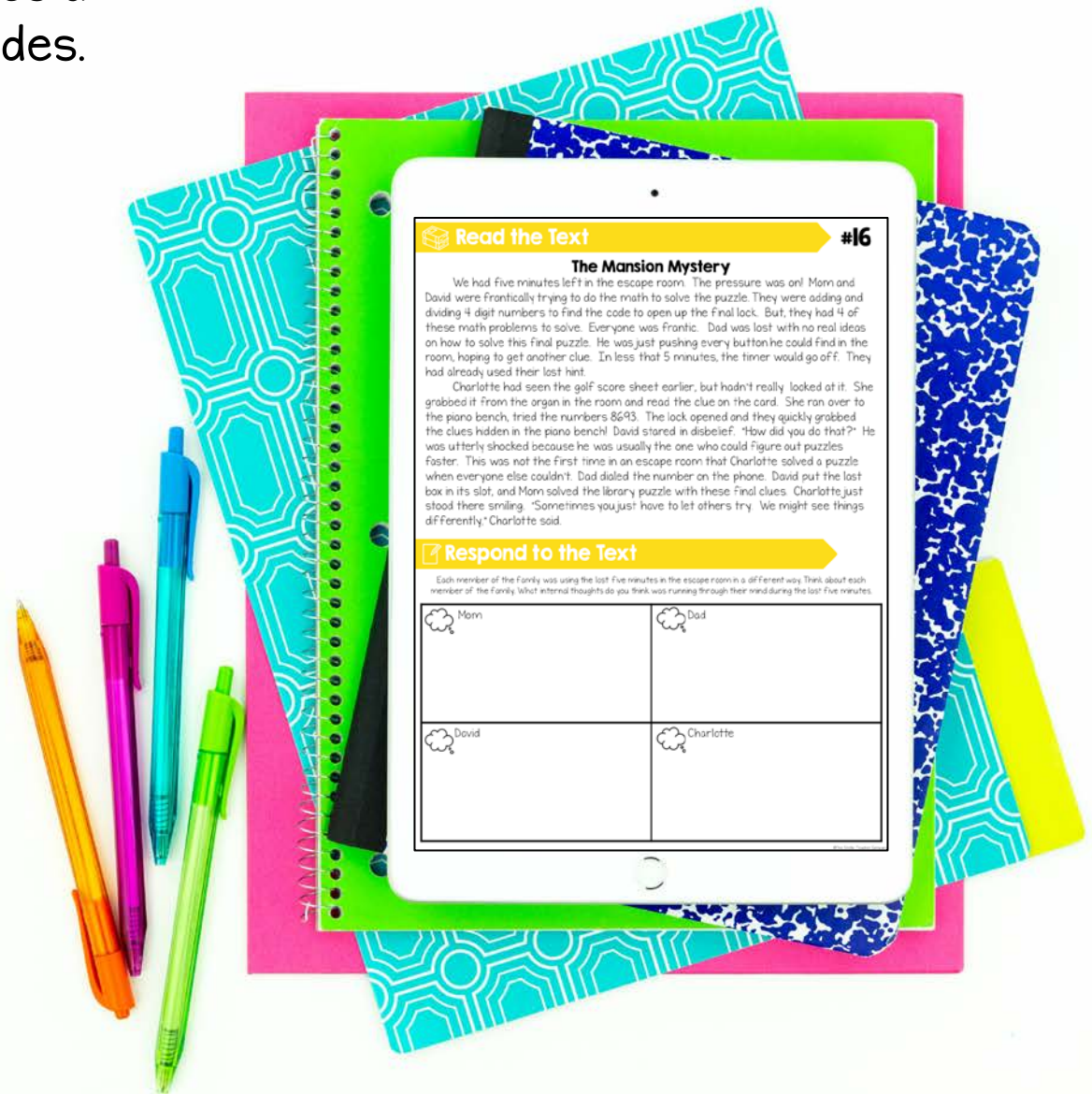
**\*Digital versions are included for all three sets of task cards.\***

# Includes Digital Versions

I love to provide both print and digital options in my resources. This resource includes a digital version created using Google Slides.

There are three different digital versions included (to match the three different printing options).

- **Option 1:** The text with a generic space for student response.
- **Option 2:** The text with the graphic organizer at the bottom (this one is pictured to the right)
- **Option 3:** The text with the text-based comprehension questions on the bottom.



# A LOOK INSIDE...(option 1)

## Read & Respond 1

### The Noisy Morning

The alarm was ringing. It buzzed for nine minutes. Emily never budged. Finally, mom came in to wake her up. "Emily! You're going to be late for school! Get moving!" Emily jumped out of bed and ran to the bathroom. She scrambled back into her room seven minutes later, dripping water all over the floor. She threw her towel on the bed, got dressed, and quickly combed her hair. Her mom shouted, "Don't forget your backpack!" just as Emily grabbed it. The cuckoo clock was chirping as the strap of her backpack got stuck on the railing, jerking her backwards. "Emily! You need to move. I can hear the bus coming down the road." Emily unhooked the strap, leaped down the stairs, and snatched the bagel wrapped in a paper towel. The bus honked. She jolted out the front door, racing to the bus.

At school, Emily felt rushed and frazzled. The homeroom bell rang and she realized that she forgot to grab her lunch bag on the kitchen island. She couldn't call her mom. This was the third day in a row that she missed her alarm and overslept. Emily sat there in a daze, tears welling up in her eyes, when the bell rang again. Her teacher, Miss Jones, approached her quietly letting her know that she should have been in her next class by now. How did she miss that sound, too?

## Read & Respond 2

### The Distraction Game

Michael ran to the garage to put the recyclables in the bin, like his dad had asked. He was supposed to do it two hours ago, but he was distracted with his Rubik's cube. Now, everyone else in his family was swimming in the pool, but he had to finish some

chores before he could go to the door. He tore up the inside. But, the door was locked when he went to tell him that he usually let him in. He was thinking of how to get that yell blocking the way? He stood there, then he gathered some screws and screwdrivers. He laid them out on the table. He spent an hour in the garage

## Read & Respond 7

### Silver Coins

Jason rode his bike to his friend's house down the street. They were going to play some video games together. Marc's basement was so cool with LED strap lights, fun gaming signs on the wall, and the coolest light changing design he'd ever seen. Jason didn't have any neat decorations, nor did he have a gaming system at his house.

The boys went downstairs to play. Mom brought down some freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. "Thanks, Mrs. S!" The boys chatted while munching on their snack. Jason noticed a unique little chest in the corner of the room on the bookshelf. "What's that?" he asked Marc. "I just keep some stuff in there that I don't want to lose," said Marc.

The boys got their gear and the sounds of Mario Kart filled the room. After a couple of hours of laughter and games, Marc went upstairs for something. Jason tiptoed to the chest to snoop and see what was inside. Underneath a wad of money was a pile of silver dollars. Jason took a small handful and put them in his pocket. He'll never notice, he thought. When the boys resume gameplay, they were jumping up and down with excitement. But the coins clanged in Jason's pocket. "Whatcha got there?" Marc asked. Jason looked down. The boys sat in silence for an hour. Eventually, Jason confessed and returned the money. "I'm sorry."

## Read & Respond 8

### The Test

The teacher asked Karl to stay after class. He sheepishly walked to her desk, eyes on the floor. "How do you think you did on the test this time?" she asked. Karl said, "I did good... I think." Mrs. Gage replied, "I don't think you did this test on your own, Karl. It looks like you copied your neighbors. Your answers are exactly the same, and these replies should be very different than everyone else. I'm going to have to call your parents to discuss this." Karl hung his head in shame as he left the room. My mom is going to be MAD, he thought. He didn't study for the test. He was fooling around watching YouTube videos and playing video games all week long. Now, mom will know.

Mom and dad were NOT happy after the meeting with the teacher. Karl lost all phone privileges and even screen time. Since his mom couldn't trust him to do the work on his own properly, she supervised his homework now. She printed everything out so he didn't have to use any electronics, tablets, computers, and phones. "Mom, why can't I just use the computer?" Karl argued. "Because you didn't study for your test properly last week," mom replied. Karl worked with paper and pencil for the next month, much to his dismay.

## Read & Respond 3

### Preoccupied

"10 minutes and we're leaving for class!" Mom announced. "Grab your water bottles and your dance bag so you're ready!" James paused for a brief moment and continued with his original wolf that he was busy making. His wise older sister said, "James, put that down and get your stuff so we're not late to class." James continued folding paper into odd shapes. Makayla took her bag and bounded down the stairs. She chatted with mom for a minute about how excited she was to be back in dance class again. They both got in the car - and waited for James. Again. They were always waiting for James. He was never the first one in the car. And he was never the first out of the car either. All they ever did was wait for him to show up!

James heard the car horn. He ran downstairs and got in the car without his bag. Mom drove the kids to dance class. Upon getting out of the car, James realized he had forgotten his water bottle and dance bag. Even though he pleaded for mom to go back home and get them, she firmly said, "No. You need to learn some responsibility, James. We already told you to grab your stuff. You were too preoccupied to do the right thing. Let's brainstorm some ideas so that you can remember next time." James was completely embarrassed to arrive unprepared, but mom knew that he had to learn this lesson on his own.

## Read & Respond 4

### The Basketball

The new family was moving in across the street. Paul bounced his basketball in the driveway as he intently watched the movers carry heavy furniture inside. He didn't want them here. He missed his best friend Eric, who moved from that very house two weeks ago. The movers got out of the house and Paul was left with his basketball.

## Read & Respond 9

### I Want What He Has ... I Want What She Has

Billy walked into school with confidence, giving high-fives to his friends and teachers. Courtney stared in amazement. How could she ever be so outgoing and friendly? She just wanted to have the same attitude, but she was always so nervous and unsure of herself.

In science class, Billy and Courtney were assigned to be partners. Maybe she could talk to him. Probably not. But what if she tried?

As they were coming up with their hypothesis, Billy marveled at how Courtney was throwing out ideas. She was super smart, he thought. Finally, he said, "How do you know so much about science? I don't even know where to begin and you're over here designing an experiment." Courtney stopped in her tracks. She replied, "It's logical. I think it through. Plus, I love reading and I've read a lot of science books. It's fascinating to me." "Hmmm," thought Billy. Maybe I can borrow one of your books sometime? "Sure!" Courtney said. "I have a bunch of them that I was going to donate." There was a slight pause. Courtney spoke up again. "I have a question for you. How do you have so much confidence in life? I wish I had a fraction of that." Billy replied, "I'll help you! When you're friendly with people, it makes things easier."

## Read & Respond 10

### Hannah and the Bees

Everyone was always excited for Parent Appreciation Day. Parents would come in and talk about their careers or hobbies. This year, Brian's dad was coming in to talk about bees. Hannah HATED bees. She has a severe allergy to bee stings. Hmmm. Maybe she could be sick that day. Her mom wouldn't let that happen, though.

Parent Appreciation Day had arrived. Hannah went to school. Brian's dad did his bee presentation last. Hannah was sweaty. Her hands were clammy and shaking. Her heart was racing a mile a minute. Mr. Donn asked if anybody wanted to come up to see the bees. Everybody's hands shot up into the air, except Hannah's. Mr. Donn said, "Hannah, I'll let you come up last if you feel comfortable with it. No big deal if you don't want to." She really didn't want to be the only one who didn't see the bees up close. People would think she was a wimp. Hannah watched all the other kids take their turns inspecting the hive and looking for the queen. Nobody was stung. In fact, it seemed safe enough. Finally, it was her turn. She held her friend's hand as she cautiously walked toward Mr. Donn. She got about halfway to the front of the room and stopped. Mr. Donn was very gentle and kind and explained how the bees were enclosed and couldn't get out. Hannah continued to the front of the class to find the queen bee.

## Read & Respond 5

### The New Kid

Peter sat by himself at the lunch table. He was the new kid in school and nobody wanted to talk to him or sit by him. He munched on some carrots, took a bite of his sandwich, and dug a book out of his backpack.

The boys at the other table stared at him. Then one of them got up, walked over to Peter's table, pretended to trip, and bumped into Peter. Peter's milk spilled all over his book. He got tears in his eyes. Many of the boys laughed. But, one of the boys named Josh ran to get paper towels. He rushed to Peter's side to help him wipe up the mess.

"Thank you," Peter said quietly with tears in his eyes. Together they cleaned up the spilled milk. Josh said, "It's okay, Peter. We cleaned it all up." Peter replied, "I know. But this was the last book my dad gave me before he passed away. Now it's ruined."

The next day Josh sat down right next to Peter at the lunch table. Then, the rest of the boys that were laughing yesterday joined them for lunch. The kid who "tripped" yesterday handed Peter a package wrapped in a brown paper bag and string. He said, "Open it!" Peter ripped open the paper to find the same book his dad got him. "I'm sorry, Peter. I didn't realize how special that book was to you. I hope you can forgive me. I'd like to try and be your friend."

## Read & Respond 6

### Star Player

Jenna always dreamed of playing on the soccer team with her best friend, Marcy. Marcy was a terrific athlete. Jenna was not. She tripped over her own two feet constantly. She didn't have any experience in sports. She usually spent her time studying, playing chess, and building

## Read & Respond 11

### Day 2

Jeffrey couldn't be bothered helping his dad do some yard work around the house. He was inside playing video games all day long. His mom asked him to go and help, but Jeffrey ignored her. I'm on such a winning streak, he thought. I can't stop playing now.

Dad came in at 4:30pm to get ready for dinner. He had just put his tools away and plopped onto the kitchen chair with sheer exhaustion. Mom asked, "Did Jeffrey help you in the yard today? Did you get everything done?" Dad replied, "No... and no. It would have gone much quicker if the two of us worked together. Then tomorrow we could have built that model train he's been wanting to finish. Instead, I need to finish this yard work tomorrow."

The next day, Dad hobbled down the stairs. He certainly had difficulty walking. "What's up, Dad? Why are you limping?" Jeffrey inquired. "I'm getting too old to be doing all of the odds and ends around the house by myself. I fell off the step stool ladder yesterday," Dad answered.

Jeffrey disappeared. He knew what he had to do. He raced to gather the tools and supplies and he picked up where dad left off. In no time, Jeffrey had finished dad's to-do list. Dad finally ventured outside to see the hedges were trimmed, the weeds were pulled, and the holiday lights were hung. Later that afternoon, Jeffrey and his dad worked on the model train.

## Read & Respond 12

### Oops!

Mom and Dad were out running errands so the kids were home alone. They had been given a long warning about misbehaving, arguing, and fighting. They resolved to try to do something fun together. "Quick! Grab all the blankets!" Ashley shouted. Everyone came scrambling back with blankets for their blanket fort. They decided to build the fort in the boys room because they had bunk beds. The began draping the various blankets all over the place to create nooks to hide in. Ashley was directing the project since she was the oldest. "We need something heavy over here to hold this blanket down," she said. The trio stood back and looked at their masterpiece. There were a lot of great spots to curl up with a good book. They also designed a mini obstacle course inside the blanket fort, just in case they got bored. Everyone settled in and began reading quietly. After a bit of time had passed, Eddie decided to sneak up on his brother to scare him. Now the fun really began. The trio started racing through the obstacle course when suddenly there was a loud bang. Mom's new side table sunk in the middle because someone jumped from the top bunk to the table. The kids frantically put all of the blankets away. They carefully placed some items strategically on top of the broken table. They vowed to not tell on each other and keep it a little secret.

# A LOOK INSIDE...(option 2)

**Read & Respond - Characters** 1

### The Noisy Morning

The alarm was ringing. It buzzed for nine minutes. Emily never budged. Finally, mom came in to wake her up. "Emily! You're going to be late for school! Get moving!" Emily jumped out of bed and ran to the bathroom. She scrambled back into her room seven minutes later, dripping water all over the floor. She threw her towel on the bed, got dressed, and quickly combed her hair. Her mom shouted, "Don't forget your backpack!" just as Emily grabbed it. The cuckoo clock was chirping as the strap of her backpack got stuck on the railing, jerking her backwards. "Emily! You need to move. I can hear the bus coming down the road." Emily unhooked the strap, leaped down the stairs, and snatched the bagel wrapped in a paper towel. The bus honked. She jolted out the front door, racing to the bus.

At school, Emily felt rushed and frazzled. The homeroom bell rang and she realized that she forgot to grab her lunch bag on the kitchen island. She couldn't call her mom. This was the third day in a row that she missed her alarm and overslept. Emily sat there in a daze, tears welling up in her eyes, when the bell rang again. Her teacher, Miss Jones, approached her quietly letting her know that she should have been in her next class by now. How did she miss that sound, too?

**THINK:**

- How would you describe each character's feelings? traits? actions? motivations?
- How does each character's personality impact the events in the story?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 2

### The Distraction Game

Michael ran to the garage to put the recyclables in the bin, like his dad had asked. He was supposed to do it two hours ago, but he was distracted with his Rubik's cube. Now, everyone else in his family was swimming in the pool, but he had to finish some chores before he could join them. On his way to the garage, he absent-mindedly shut the door. He tore up the cardboard boxes, layered them in the driveway, and even thought about checking to see if the car was even there. He usually checked, but he was so focused on his birthday. How could he have gotten so distracted? He gathered some things to put on the garage floor. He laid them out on the garage floor. He was so focused on his birthday that he was locked in the garage. They all had a good laugh.

**THINK:**

- How would you describe each character's feelings? traits? actions? motivations?
- How does each character's personality impact the events in the story?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 1

### The Noisy Morning

Think about the main character in the story. Use the text to think about and identify their traits, feelings, actions, and thoughts.

traits	Feelings
<b>Emily</b>	
actions	thoughts

**Read & Respond - Characters** 2

### The Distraction Game

Think about some of the main character's personality traits. How did their traits impact their actions?

Key Personality Traits	Significant Actions
<b>Michael</b>	

**Read & Respond - Characters** 5

### The New Kid

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The boys at the other table stared at him. Then one of them got up, walked over to Peter's table, pretended to trip, and bumped into Peter. Peter's milk spilled all over his book. He got tears in his eyes. Many of the boys laughed. But, one of the boys named Josh ran to get paper towels. He rushed to Peter's side to help him wipe up the mess.

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**THINK:**

- How would you describe each character's feelings? traits? actions? motivations?
- How does each character's personality impact the events in the story?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 6

### Star Player

Jenna always dreamed of playing on the soccer team with her best friend, Marcy. Marcy was a terrific athlete. Jenna was not. She tripped over her own two feet constantly. She didn't have any experience in sports. She usually spent her time studying, playing chess, and building things. But, she really wanted to join the team.

**THINK:**

- How would you describe each character's feelings? traits? actions? motivations?
- How does each character's personality impact the events in the story?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 5

### The New Kid

Character's feelings can change throughout the story. Think about Peter and the kid who tripped. How did they feel at the beginning and how might they have felt at the end?

The Beginning	The End
Describe how Peter felt in the beginning?	Describe how Peter felt at the end?
Describe how the kid who tripped felt in the beginning?	Describe how the kid who tripped felt at the end?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 6

### Star Player

What are three traits you could use to describe the main character. Find evidence from the text to support your thinking about why you selected each trait.

TRAIT			
EVIDENCE			

**Read & Respond - Characters** 19

### Everyone Can Learn

"Who's the new girl in class? She can't really do anything. The owner of the dance studio has to come in here every week and help her out." Melanie and Clair whispered to each other while waiting for their turn to leap across the dance floor. It was their turn. Oops. They did the combination wrong. They tried a second time and made the same mistakes. "Why don't you guys go practice that on the sidelines for a minute before you go across the floor again." Their teacher, Miss Michelle, suggested.

"Meghan, if you put your foot down like this, then think of doing a huge jump over the puddle, you'll get the idea," said Miss Michelle to the new girl. "You don't need to go very fast. Walk and go very slowly." Meghan did exactly what the teacher said. She was becoming. "Now, if you practice it slowly over and over again, you will be able to do it without thinking about it."

Meghan thought to herself, "This teacher is really nice. My last dance teacher didn't have time to explain anything to me at all." Meghan practiced every single day when she got home from school. She knew she wasn't coordinated or talented. She just really wanted to learn to move better to help with her physical disability. She didn't look like she had anything wrong with her, but her muscles didn't work normally anymore.

The following week in dance class, not only did Meghan do the leaps correctly, but she was able to add the leaps to a combination. Melanie and Clair watched in amazement. Maybe they should have practiced more. They still weren't able to do the combination correctly.

**THINK:**

- How would you describe each character's feelings? traits? actions? motivations?
- How does each character's personality impact the events in the story?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 20

### Who Ate the Cookies?

"Who ate the cookies?" Mom yelled. "There were 12 perfectly decorated cookies in the box! I bought them for Popo's 80th birthday party tomorrow. All of a sudden there are only 4 left! I told you to leave them alone!" Mom was on a rant today. "We had spent all morning cleaning and room was not in a good mood. She didn't like having to constantly yell at us kids to help her clean the house."

**THINK:**

- How would you describe each character's feelings? traits? actions? motivations?
- How does each character's personality impact the events in the story?

**Read & Respond - Characters** 19

### Everyone Can Learn

Think about each character in the story. If you were the author what is one word you would use to describe each character. Jot that down and make sure you include evidence to support your thinking.

	Melanie & Clair	Meghan	Miss Michelle
TRAIT			
EVIDENCE			

**Read & Respond - Characters** 20

### Who Ate the Cookies?

Think about how mom and the narrator of the story had different perspectives in the story. Think about how each of their perspectives contributed to their thoughts, feelings, actions.

Mom	The Narrator

Perspective  
Thoughts  
Feelings  
Actions





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