



Fiction Readers

Lessons and Activities

Advanced Plus

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Reading Instruction Best Practices (4 pages)

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Implementation Guide

Fiction **Readers**

**Advanced/
Advanced Plus**

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Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction begins with a simple 20-minute guided reading lesson.

► Introduce the Text

Quickly and efficiently introduce the book and prepare students to read. In just five minutes, present the elements of the book cover, identify the genre and/or establish a purpose for reading, and review reading behaviors.

► Read the Text

Students read the passage aloud independently. Observe as students explore the story, experience appropriate struggle, and apply strategies to draw meaning from the text. After the passage has been read once, prompt students to share their initial understandings of the selection and their experiences with the act of reading. Respond with praise and problem-solving support. Lastly, guide the group through a targeted reread under teacher guidance.

► Discuss the Text

For the last five minutes of the lesson, use targeted questions and prompts to lead students to consider the text again and build a more complete understanding of what they have read.

Cottonmouth Creek

Guided Reading Lesson

1 Introduce the Text

1. Display the front cover of the book. Read the title, author name, and illustrator name.
2. Let students know that this book is a story about surviving in the wilderness.
3. Remind students that good readers look at the cover and table of contents; review the images from page to page; and think, talk, and ask questions about what they read.

2 Read the Text

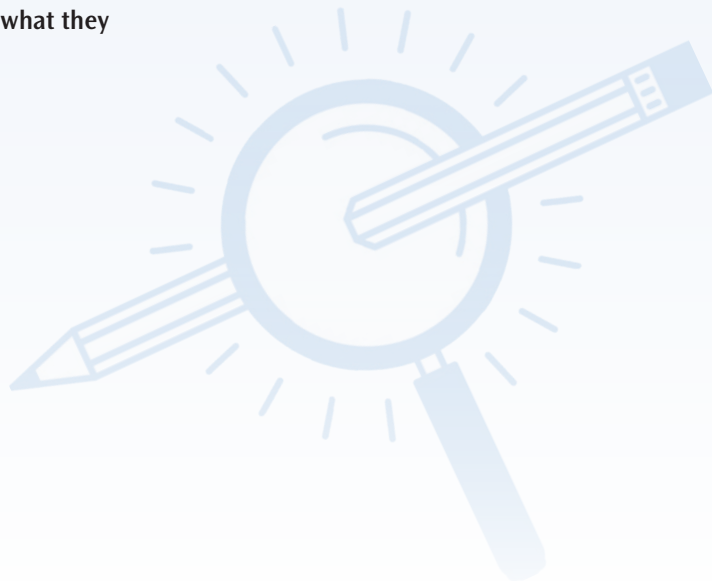
1. Have each student read pages 5–7 aloud independently. Direct students to whisper read. As they read, observe each student's reading successes, struggles, and strategies.
2. Ask students to tell you about the story. Encourage them to refer to the chapter titles, words, and illustrations as they retell the story.
3. Ask students to tell you specifically about the words in the story. Acknowledge the words or word parts students were able to recognize accurately. You may want to use the following ideas to address words that caused struggle or inaccuracies.
 - **DODGING**—Say, "On page 6, Samantha is dodging the trees as she runs after Hickory. She is swerving and avoiding running into them. This word has a *d* and *g* in the middle of it. I know the sounds that these letters make individually. But in this word, they are blended to make a */j/* sound. Let's think of other words with these two letters that make the blended sound (lodging, gadget, budget).

3 Discuss the Text

Use the following prompts to discuss the words and pictures that tell the story:

- *Where does the book begin?* (setting)
(less support) Describe the opening setting.
(more support) Describe where and when the book begins.
- *What happens at the end of pages 5–7?* (rising action)
(less support) How does the author start to build suspense?
(more support) What happens to Samantha on page 7? What does she see?

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Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes a simple 20-minute comprehension strategy lesson:

► Introduce the Strategy

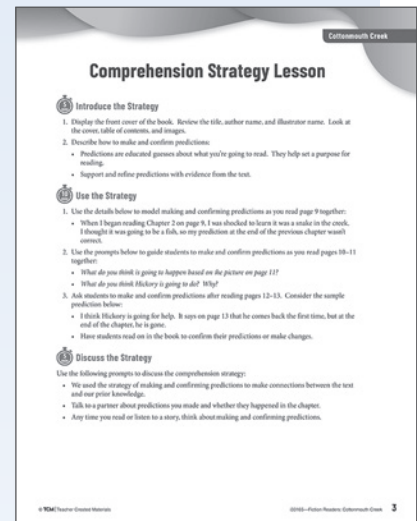
Quickly and efficiently, review the book and introduce a key comprehension strategy. In just five minutes, define the strategy and its purpose.

► Use the Strategy

Return to the story to model using the strategy to better understand the story. Students follow the model to use the strategy, with support, as they continue to reread the story.

► Discuss the Strategy

For the last five minutes of the lesson, guide students to restate the strategy and to identify when and how they will use the strategy with other books and reading tasks.



Fiction Readers instruction includes a simple 15-minute close reading lesson:

► Set a Purpose for Rereading

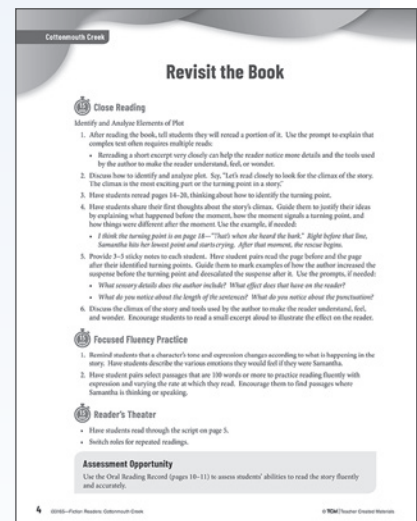
The teacher guides students to think about story elements, word choice, language, or author's craft as they prepare to reread.

► Reread an Excerpt

Students reread a rich, complex passage from the book. As they read, they look for layers of meaning and tools used by the author to communicate meaning.

► Annotate and Discuss Specific Tools Used by the Author

Students find and explore specific examples to support and expand their ideas about the text and the author.



Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes three options for fluency instruction and practice:

► Focused Fluency Practice

Define and model one aspect of expressive reading that fits well with the story. You may highlight the best way to read dialogue or how a reader's cadence changes when reading long sentences. Students then read the book with strong expression to a partner or group.

► Reader's Theater

Students work together to prepare a performance of the story. They read a script of the story several times, concluding in a performative read aloud. Teachers may choose to assign roles or allow students to choose them. Each script includes roles for advanced, on-grade level, and striving readers.

► Fluency Model

Students listen to the professional recording of the story.

Reader's Theater

Cottonmouth Creek

Samantha: After I was bit by a cottonmouth, I thought it would be smart to have Dr. Asper come talk. He's an expert on snakes.

Timothy: Welcome to the neighborhood, Dr. Asper! He'll be teaching all of us how to be safe outside.

Dr. Asper: I am excited to share what I know about snakes. Does anyone have a question for me?

Friend: I do! How can we tell the difference between a cottonmouth and a harmless water snake?

Dr. Asper: Great question! First, a cottonmouth has a thick heavy body, and a water snake is long and slender.

Timothy: I never knew that! Do they always attack humans?

Dr. Asper: No, snakes normally try not to bite humans. They only do so if they feel threatened.

Samantha: So, what are some of the ways to be safe from snakes out here?

Dr. Asper: First, when you are hiking, always watch your step.

Friend: Something else we can do is wear jeans and boots when walking through tall grass.

Samantha: Yes, or if you're wading in the creek.

Timothy: I know what else we can do: leave any snake we see alone!

Samantha: Yes! I learned that lesson the hard and will definitely be wearing the right clothes from now on. Thank you, Dr. Asper, for coming today to speak to us.

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Research to Practice

Fiction Readers instruction includes four options for extending each lesson:

► Word Study

Lessons focus on a word pattern that is found in the story and can be widely generalized to other texts students will encounter. In the lower levels of the program, instruction includes phonemic awareness, phonics, and basic decoding. In the upper levels, more sophisticated aspects of decoding are taught along with morphemes and vocabulary strategies. Each lesson includes a brief mini-lesson and student activity page.

► Fluency Model

Students listen to the professional recording of the story. They can listen to the audio alone as they follow along in the print book or listen to the audio embedded in the read-along eBook.

► Writing about Reading

The writing activity prompts students to write about what they have read. They are encouraged to draw upon the story and the discussions around the text to complete the activity. A reproducible activity page is included.

► Content-Area Connection

The content-area connection links the topic and vocabulary from the story to mathematics, science, social studies, or the arts and movement. Most activities can be completed independently. A reproducible activity page is included.

Extension Options

Word Study
Prefixes *un-* and *dis-*

- Explain that a prefix is added to the beginning of a root word to change its meaning.
 - The prefixes *un-* and *dis-* both mean “not” or “opposite of.”
 - Have students look at the word *unpacked* on page 6. Ask them to define the word using the root word and the meaning of the prefix (e.g., *unpacked* = the opposite of packed).
 - Repeat with the word *disappear* on page 7.
 - Explain that words like *uncle* and *discuss* start with the same letters, but do not function as prefixes. They do not change the meaning of a root word.
- Have students search for other *un-* and *dis-* words in the book.
 - Record the words on a chart.
 - Have students define the words using the root word and meaning of the prefix.
- Use the activity on page 7 to practice sorting the prefixes *un-* and *dis-*. If needed, provide a list of base words for students to make words using the two prefixes.

Fluency Model

- Have students listen to the professional recording of the reader’s theater script (provided in the Digital Resources).

Writing about Reading
Letter to a Friend

- Review the elements of plot in *Cottonmouth Creek* with students.
- Have students retell the story in the form of a letter to a friend as either Samantha or Timothy (page 8).
- In the letter, they will describe Samantha’s ordeal, including the story elements (setting, rising action, climax, resolution), from the point of view of the characters they have chosen.
- If time allows, have students share their letters with their classmates.

Science Connection
Snake Trading Card

- Prepare a list of snakes from which students can choose.
- Have each student research one snake and create a trading card about it (page 9).
- If time allows, have students share their cards with their classmates.

Assessment Opportunity
Use the Comprehension Assessment (page 12) to assess students’ abilities to understand the story.

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Kit Components

Book Trios

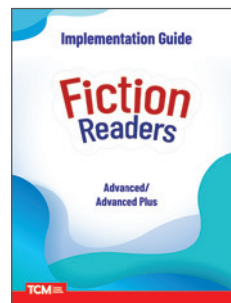
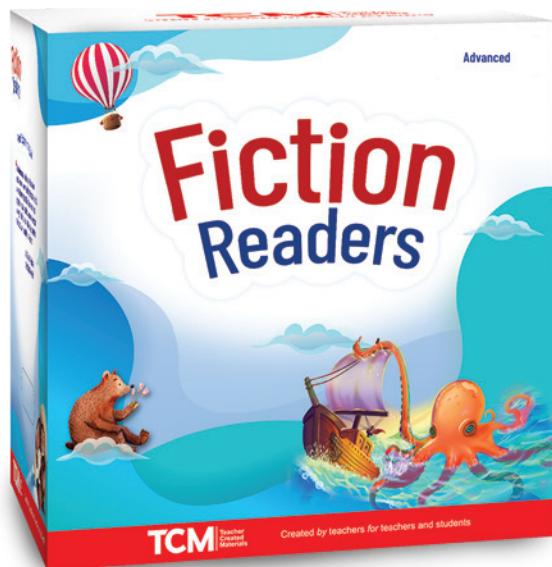
Each trio of full-color books offers different stories based on a common theme.



Advanced

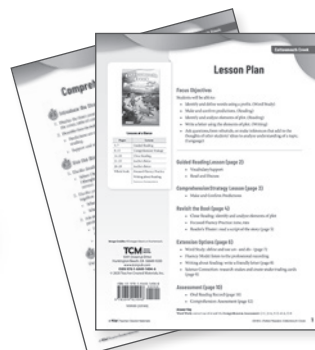


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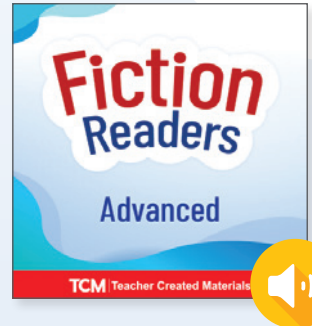
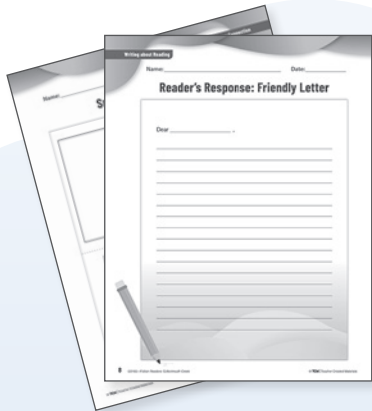
Implementation Guide

This teacher resource supports best practices for literacy instruction.



Lesson Plan

The 12-page Lesson Plan provides a consistent lesson format for every book. Plans include the lesson, assessments, extension options, and student activity pages.



Digital Resources

The following digital resources are available via digital download:

Books

- Audiobooks
- eBooks
- read-along eBooks

Teacher Resources

- lesson plans with student pages
- additional resources
- Family Tips booklet
- Scope and Sequence
- Reader's Theater Script Cover

Assessment Options

Informal Assessments

Every lesson includes opportunities for teachers to observe students' reading behaviors. With every book, students read aloud, discuss their reading and thinking, and complete activity pages that require them to return to the ideas they read.

Diagnostic and Summative Assessments

The **Diagnostic Assessment** can be used to prioritize instruction for specific student groups by documenting their successful use of comprehension strategies. The **Summative Assessment** can be used to document increased successes after instruction. These also provide practice with standardized test formats. After completion, they can be stored in students' portfolios if desired. See pages 39–40 for details on administering the tests.

Formative Assessments

An **Oral Reading Record** form is included in the lesson for each book. This assessment documents students' reading behaviors as they read a text aloud. It can be used before students are introduced to the book (a cold read) to measure students' performance, or it can be used after students have become familiar with the book to measure the effectiveness of the lesson. You will not likely administer the oral reading records for each book but will choose points at which you need data to make instructional decisions for specific students. See pages 41–44 and 46 and 48 for data charts and details about administering the assessment.

A **comprehension assessment** is included in the lesson for each book. This assessment measures students' comprehension of the story and use of comprehension strategies. It can be used as a formal formative assessment or as a guided activity. Depending on the instructional needs, you may not have students complete every assessment. Details about administering the assessment are included in each lesson. See pages 45 and 47 for data charts.

Oral Reading Record

Name: _____ Date: _____

Cottonmouth Creek

Total Word Count		Codes						
113		E = errors	SC = self-corrections	M = missing	S = structure	V = vocal		
Word Count	Text	Cues Used						
		E	SC	S	SC			
9	Looking to Tim had silver all-over orange.			M	S	M	S	V
17	Samantha closed her eyes. She heard Tim tell			M	S	M	S	V
26	Hickory to stay with her and then the sound			M	S	M	S	V
34	of her brother roaring away. The dog far			M	S	M	S	V
42	over to the rich girl. Samantha reached out			M	S	M	S	V
49	her arms and wrapped it around Hickory's			M	S	M	S	V
52	ears, embracing him.			M	S	M	S	V
59	What happened next was a blur. Samantha			M	S	M	S	V
66	remembered being filled by her father and			M	S	M	S	V
73	castled home. An ambulance was waiting in			M	S	M	S	V
75	her driveway.			M	S	M	S	V
83	At the hospital, she was rushed into an			M	S	M	S	V
90	operating room. A team of doctors and			M	S	M	S	V
96	nurses gathered around her. Sometimes, she			M	S	M	S	V
104	could see her mom or dad from behind			M	S	M	S	V
113	the medical team. Then, she fell into a long,			M	S	M	S	V
113	deep sleep.			M	S	M	S	V

Error Rate: Self-Correction Rate: Accuracy Percentage: Time:

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Comprehension Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Cottonmouth Creek

Directions: Read each question and choose the best answer.

- Which sentence helps the reader predict that Hickory goes to get help?
 - Hickory "was jumping up and down, spinning in circles, and rolling around."
 - "Hickory liked being part of the family."
 - "Hickory was really gone this time."
 - Hickory "kept going back and forth, whining."
- Which best describes the setting of the book?
 - present-day, rural area
 - long ago, rural area
 - present-day, urban area
 - long ago, urban area
- To which base word can you add both prefixes: un- and dis-?
 - own
 - wrap
 - taste
 - able
- Which is the best summary of when they return to the creek in Chapter 6?
 - Samantha is fully recovered and knows how to make sure that it doesn't happen again.
 - Samantha stays by the shore until everyone is ready to leave.
 - Tim and Hickory run ahead. Samantha gets upset, so they go home.
 - Samantha is too scared to go and tells Tim she'll go tomorrow.
- The author includes Dr. Asper in the book most likely to _____.
 - tell people to stay away from Cottonmouth Creek.
 - explain the snake's behavior
 - describe a cottonmouth snake
 - share information about snakes

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Using the Oral Reading Record

Administering the Assessment

Timing

Teachers may choose to use the records at the first reading and/or after students are familiar with the book. There are two schools of thought regarding oral reading records. Some say that they should be used only with books that students have never read. Others say that they are best used with books with which students are familiar. Use your discretion to determine the best use for students.

Frequency

Oral reading records may be used with any or all of the books in this kit. Traditional use suggests a selection of one book from each reading level to use as a marker for that level as a whole. Reading records are most commonly used every two to six weeks. Of course, teachers may use them when and how they feel will best serve their classroom needs.

The left image shows the text of the book "Cottonmouth Creek". The right image shows the Oral Reading Record form, which includes a coding chart and a recording table.

Word Count	Text	Class Used			
		K	1C	2	3C
1	Talking to Tim had taken all of her energy. Samantha closed her eyes. She				
2	heard Tim tell Hickory to stay with her and then the sound of her brother				
3	running away. The dog lay next to the sick girl. Samantha reached out her arm				
4	and wrapped it around Hickory's waist, comforting body.				
5	What happened next was a blur. Samantha remembered being lifted by her				
6	father and carried home. An ambulance was waiting in her driveway.				
7	At the hospital, she was rushed into an operating room. A team of doctors and				
8	nurses gathered around her. Sometimes, she could see her mom or dad's faces				
9	behind the medical team. Then, she fell into a long, deep sleep.				
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Administration Tips

When taking an oral reading record, it may be useful to employ some or all of the following tips:

- Position yourself next to the student in such a way that you can hear the student easily, see the text clearly, and watch the student's eye and finger movements while he or she is reading.
- As the student reads, mark the oral reading record form with the conventions on the included coding chart on page 43.
- Use a stopwatch that is easy to read and reset to time the student.
- If the student begins to read too quickly for you to follow, simply ask him or her to pause for a moment while you catch up with the record.
- Interrupt and intervene as needed to create the truest record of reading behaviors.
- Wait several seconds when a student gets stuck before reading a word aloud for the student.
- If a student misreads a word, be sure to write the word he or she said above the correct word on the record form.



Using the Oral Reading Record *(cont.)*

► **Meaning, Structure, and Visual Cues**

- **Meaning:** When the reader uses background knowledge and the context to identify words, he or she is using meaning (or semantic) cues. On the Oral Reading Record, mark these cues with an *M*.
- **Structure:** When the reader applies knowledge of language structure in order to identify words, he or she is using structure (or syntax) cues. On the Oral Reading Record, mark these cues with an *S*.
- **Visual:** When the reader applies knowledge of letter and sound correspondence, including the look of the letter, letters, and the word itself, he or she is using visual (or graphophonic) cues. On the Oral Reading Record, mark these cues with a *V*.

Scoring an Oral Reading Record

Use the information gathered while observing the student and marking the record in order to calculate rates of accuracy, error, and self-correction.

After or while marking the oral reading record, tally errors and self-corrections in the columns to the right of the text. Then, circle whether those errors and self-corrections are in the area of meaning (*M*), structure (*S*), or visual (*V*) cues.

Use any of the following data calculations as appropriate:

- Calculate the rate of error. Add the total number of words read. Divide the number of errors made by that number. (**Note:** When the reader self-corrects, the original error is not scored as an error.)
For example, if the text has 96 words and 8 errors were made, the ratio is 1:12 (one error for every 12 words read).
- Calculate the rate of self-correction. Add both the number of errors and self-corrections. Then, divide the number of self-corrections by that number.
For example, 8 errors and 6 self-corrections make 14 total. Divide the number of self-corrections (6) by 14. This gives a ratio of 1:2.3 or, rounded, 1:2. This is interpreted as one self-correction for every two errors.
- Calculate a percentage for accuracy. Convert the error rate to judge the difficulty of the text. Use the information in the chart below to inform text selections for students.
For example, in a 1:12 error rate, divide 1 by 12 to get 0.08 (round to the nearest hundredth) or 8%. Subtract 8% from 100% to get 92%. This is the accuracy percentage.

Use the information below to determine test difficulty.

Accuracy Percentage	Difficulty of Text for Student
96% or higher	Easy
91%–95%	Instructional Level
90% or lower	Challenging

Note: If you do not wish to assess with this level of detail, simply calculate the percentage of words read correctly and the number of words read correctly per minute.

Marking Conventions Chart

Behavior	Marking Convention	Example
Accurate reading	checkmark above each word read	✓ ✓ ✓ This is big.
Substitution	word read above actual word	✓ ✓ -bag This is big.
Omission	— (long dash)	✓ — ✓ This is big.
Insertion	^ and the inserted word	very This is ^ big.
Repetition of word (no error)	R (one repetition) R2 (two repetitions)	R This is big.
Repetition of phrase (no error)	R with line and arrow at point where reader returned	→ R This is big.
Self-correction (no error)	SC after error	bag/SC This is big.
Appeal (Student appeals for help, either verbally or nonverbally.)	A over word where appeal occurred	A This is big.
Told (Student is asked to try again but ultimately must be told the word.)	T over word student was told	T This is big.
Beginning sound read separately and then word read correctly	beginning sound above word, followed by mark for correct	b/✓ This is big.

Balanced-Reading Program Elements

Learning Centers and Independent Practice

One of the challenges of a guided reading program is making sure students who are not in the small instructional group you are currently working with are constructively engaged. Each lesson provides suggestions for extension and writing activities that can be completed in centers with adult assistance.

Additional suggestions for using the books and lesson content to create centers are listed below:

- Make a “wanted” poster for a villain or troublemaker from the story. Include the characteristics of the character that are pertinent.
- Create a job application for a character.
- Work with a group to create a poster or mural of the story’s theme.
- Make a time line of the events of the book using Google Docs or Tiki-Toki.
- Create a comic strip for your favorite part of the story.
- Write a blog post or tweet a review about the book.
- Add yourself to the story. Write, act out, or make an audio or video recording of a passage from the book with you as a new character.
- Create a bookmark for the story. Use your own illustrations, the title of the book, and important words or a short summary of the book.



Balanced-Reading Program Elements *(cont.)*

Writing

The lesson plan for each book includes a specific writing activity. Additionally, writing is integrated into each of the activity sheets. Depending on the level of the kit, the writing activities vary from students completing sentence frames or writing simple sentences to writing short stories or letters as a way to apply the new skills they learn to show comprehension of the story.

Additional suggestions for using the books and lesson content to prompt writing follow:

- Create “copycat books.” Students copy the features, topics, or styles of the books as they create their own books.
- Write a sequel to a story.
- Write notes to a character from the story or to the author of the story.
- Plan a vacation for a character. Write the itinerary for the trip, and make a packing list.
- Create a resume for a character.
- Plan a birthday party for a character. Make guest, food, and gifts lists.

Independent Reading

The books from *Fiction Readers* provide quality, high-interest, easy-to-read content. As such, they can be added to classroom libraries for use as independent reading selections. Read-along eBooks can be made available to students via classroom devices. Many readers will want to return to previously studied books on their own.





Lessons at a Glance

Time	Activity
20 min.	Guided Reading Lesson
20 min.	Comprehension Strategy Lesson
15 min.	Close Reading Activity
15 min.	Focused Fluency Activity
15 min.	Reader's Theater Activity

Lesson Plan

Focus Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Decode and spell multisyllabic words with final stable syllables. (Word Study)
- Make inferences. (Reading)
- Compare and contrast characters' journeys. (Reading)
- Write a brochure using ideas from the story and background knowledge. (Writing)
- Ask questions, form rebuttals, or make inferences that add to the thoughts of other students' ideas to analyze understanding of a topic. (Language)

Activity Sequence

Guided Reading Lesson (page 2)

- Vocabulary Support
- Read and Discuss

Comprehension Strategy Lesson (page 3)

- Make Inferences

Revisit the Book (page 4)

- Close Reading Activity: compare and contrast characters' journeys
- Focused Fluency Activity: accuracy, tone
- Reader's Theater Activity: read a script of the story

Extension Options (page 6)

- Word Study: decode and spell multisyllabic words with *-le*
- Fluency Model: listen to the professional recording
- Writing about Reading: write an anti-bullying brochure
- Social Studies Connection: conduct a social survey

Assessment (page 10)

- Oral Reading Record
- Comprehension Assessment

Answer Key

Word Study: spell words ending in *-le*; **Comprehension Assessment:** 1) C, 2) B, 3) B, 4) C, 5) D

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Guided Reading Lesson



Introduce the Text

1. Display the front cover of the book. Read the title, author name, and illustrator name.
2. Let students know that this book is a story about how an old friendship can be affected by new influences.
3. Remind students that readers look at the cover and table of contents; review the images from page to page; and think, talk, and ask questions about what they read.



Read the Text

1. Have each student read aloud pages 5–6 independently. Direct students to whisper read. As they read, observe each student’s reading successes, struggles, and strategies.
2. Ask students to tell you about the passage. Encourage them to refer to the chapter titles, words, and illustrations.
3. Ask students to tell you specifically about the words in the story. Acknowledge the words or word parts students were able to recognize accurately. Use one or more of the following ideas to address words that caused struggle or inaccuracies:
 - **INSEPARABLE**—Say, “The word *inseparable* begins with the prefix *in-* and ends with the suffix *-able*. The prefix *in-* means ‘in, on, or not.’ The suffix *-able* means ‘capable of or tending to.’ When we add these affixes to the base *separate*, the word means ‘not able to separate.’”
 - **LAZILY**—Say, “The word *lazily* is an example of an adverb, or a word that tells how an action is done. Many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to the end of a descriptive word. However, the word *lazy* ends with a *y*. For words like *lazy*, we remove the *y* and add *-ily* to form the adverb instead.”



Discuss the Text

Use the following prompts to discuss the characters found in the story:

- *How does Jayden and Mia’s relationship develop in Chapter One?*
(less support) *Describe Jayden and Mia’s relationship.*
(more support) *What is Jayden and Mia’s relationship like before fifth grade? How does it change as they reach the end of elementary school?*
- *How do Mia’s new friends affect her? How do they affect Jayden?*
(less support) *How do Mia’s new friends change her friendship with Jayden?*
(more support) *How do Mia’s new friends react to Jayden on page 7? How do Mia and Jayden each feel about the situation?*

Note: Have students complete the book before teaching the Comprehension Strategy Lesson.

Comprehension Strategy Lesson



Introduce the Strategy

1. Display the front cover of the book. You may wish to review the title, author name, and illustrator name. Look at the cover, table of contents, and images.
2. Describe how to make inferences:
 - Inferences are conclusions that are made using details from the text to support conclusions.
 - Inferences can also be made using reasoning and one's own prior knowledge.



Use the Strategy

1. Use the details below to model making inferences as you read pages 21–22 together:
 - When I read that Mia used to stick up for Jayden when others picked on him, I can infer that she is acting differently because of her new friends. That explains why Jayden, who has known her for so long, is surprised by her behavior.
2. Use the prompts below to guide students to make inferences as you read pages 23–24 together:
 - *How do you think Jayden feels about Hallie's behavior? Why do you think he stays silent?*
 - *Why do you think Mia smiles at Jayden?*
3. Ask students to make inferences after reading page 24. Consider the sample inference below:
 - Jayden doesn't like Hallie's behavior, but he is afraid to speak up. He is afraid he will lose his friend Mia or become a target for bullying, like Joshua.
 - Then, have students read on in the book to see whether they find further evidence to support the inferences they made.



Discuss the Strategy

Use the following prompts to discuss the comprehension strategy:

- We used the strategy of making inferences using evidence from the text and prior knowledge.
- Talk to a partner about inferences you made about the text and how your knowledge about bullies affected your inferences.
- Any time you read or listen to a story, think about finding evidence in the text that supports inferences you make.

Revisit the Book



Close Reading Activity

Compare and Contrast Characters' Journeys

1. After reading the book, tell students they will reread a portion of it. Use the prompt below to explain that complex text often requires multiple reads:
 - Rereading a short excerpt very closely can help the reader notice more details and tools the author used to make the reader understand, feel, or wonder.
2. Discuss comparing and contrasting characters' journeys. Say, "Today, we're going to read closely to see how different characters change as a result of events in the story."
3. Have students reread pages 12–19, thinking about how to identify change.
4. Have students share their first thoughts about how Mia and Jayden are changing. Guide students to justify their ideas by explaining how the characters' thoughts, actions, or words are different from earlier in the story. Use the following example, if needed:
 - I notice a change in Mia on page 19. Before, she went along with her friends' bullying tactics.
5. Provide three to five small sticky notes to each student. Direct students to work in pairs to find and mark on pages 15–17 specific examples of Jayden's thoughts and actions. Use the following prompts, if needed:
 - *What does Jayden think when he first gets his seat assignment?*
 - *What event changes Jayden's thoughts about Joshua and the seat assignment?*
6. Discuss the characters' journeys and the tools the author used to make the reader understand, feel, or wonder. Encourage students to read small excerpts aloud to illustrate how a character is changing.



Focused Fluency Activity

1. Remind students to vary their tones of voice when they read dialogue aloud, depending on the character's emotions.
2. Have student pairs select passages that are 100 or more words to practice reading accurately and varying their tones. Encourage them to find passages where both Jayden and Mia have speaking parts.



Reader's Theater Activity

- Have students read through the script on page 5.
- Switch roles for repeated readings.

Assessment Opportunity

The Oral Reading Record (pages 10–11) assesses students' abilities to read fluently and accurately.

The Clique

Jayden: You need to know that those girls are about to pull a mean prank on you. I don't want it to happen, so I'm here to warn you and to try to stop them.

Joshua: What are you talking about?

Jayden: They're coming to hide a dead bird in your backpack. They think it'll be funny when you get upset about it.

Mia (runs in suddenly): I'm sorry I've been hanging out with them. They're terrible to you!

Steph: Aha! It looks like the birdbrain is being protected by the tattletale again!

Mia: Stop it, Steph! That's enough!

Steph: I guess the birdbrain now has two protectors! So long, Mia. It's been nice.

Mia: Leave us alone.

Joshua: Thank you both.

Jayden: Don't thank us. It's something we should've done a long time ago.

Mia: Yes, it is. They're bullies who have nothing better to do than pick on others.

Joshua: They've been doing it for months. I've tried to ignore them, but it has been hard sometimes.

Jayden: Let's sit together at lunch from now on. Safety in numbers!

Extension Options

Word Study

Final Stable Syllables: Consonant + *le*

1. Explain that some words end with syllables called *final stable syllables*. Final stable syllables are spelled and pronounced the same way consistently. Often, they end with a consonant + *le*.
 - Have students look at the word *castles* on page 6 in the book. Write the word *castle* where students can see it, and underline the *-tle*. Pronounce the word. Then, pronounce just the final syllable.
 - Repeat with the word *giggled* on page 7. Write and pronounce *giggle*.
 - Have students say *castle* and *giggle* aloud.
2. Have students search for other words that end with a consonant + *le* pattern in the rest of the book.
3. Use the activity on page 7 to collect and sort words with final stable syllables that use the consonant + *le* pattern.

Fluency Model

- Have students listen to the professional recording of the book (provided in the Digital Resources).

Writing about Reading

Anti-Bullying Brochure

1. Review with students the elements of character development in *The Clique*.
2. Have each student revisit the key moments in the story when bullying occurs.
3. Have them use page 8 to create brochures that identify the elements of bullying portrayed in the story, other forms of bullying that they have learned about, how bullying can be avoided, and how to help a bullied friend.
4. If time allows, have students share their brochures with their classmates.

Social Studies Connection

Conduct a Social Survey

1. Explain that people called *sociologists* study society and how people act. Tell students that today, they will act as sociologists.
2. Have students work in small groups to plan a survey about human behavior. Encourage them to think about friendships and discuss what they would like to know more about.
3. Have each group use the survey sheet on page 9 to develop three questions they would like the class to answer anonymously that might help them learn something about friendships. Make copies of each group's survey, and have the class fill them out without adding names. Give each group time to review their results and draw one or more conclusions.
4. If time allows, have students discuss their findings with their classmates.

Assessment Opportunity

Use the Comprehension Assessment (page 12) to assess students' abilities to understand the story.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Final Stable Syllables: Consonant + *le*

Directions: Cut out the three rectangles along the outside solid lines. Fold them in half along the dotted lines. Identify three different final stable syllables that use the consonant +*le* pattern. Open your booklets and write as many consonant +*le* words as you can that share a final stable syllable.

	_____ +le
	_____ +le
	_____ +le

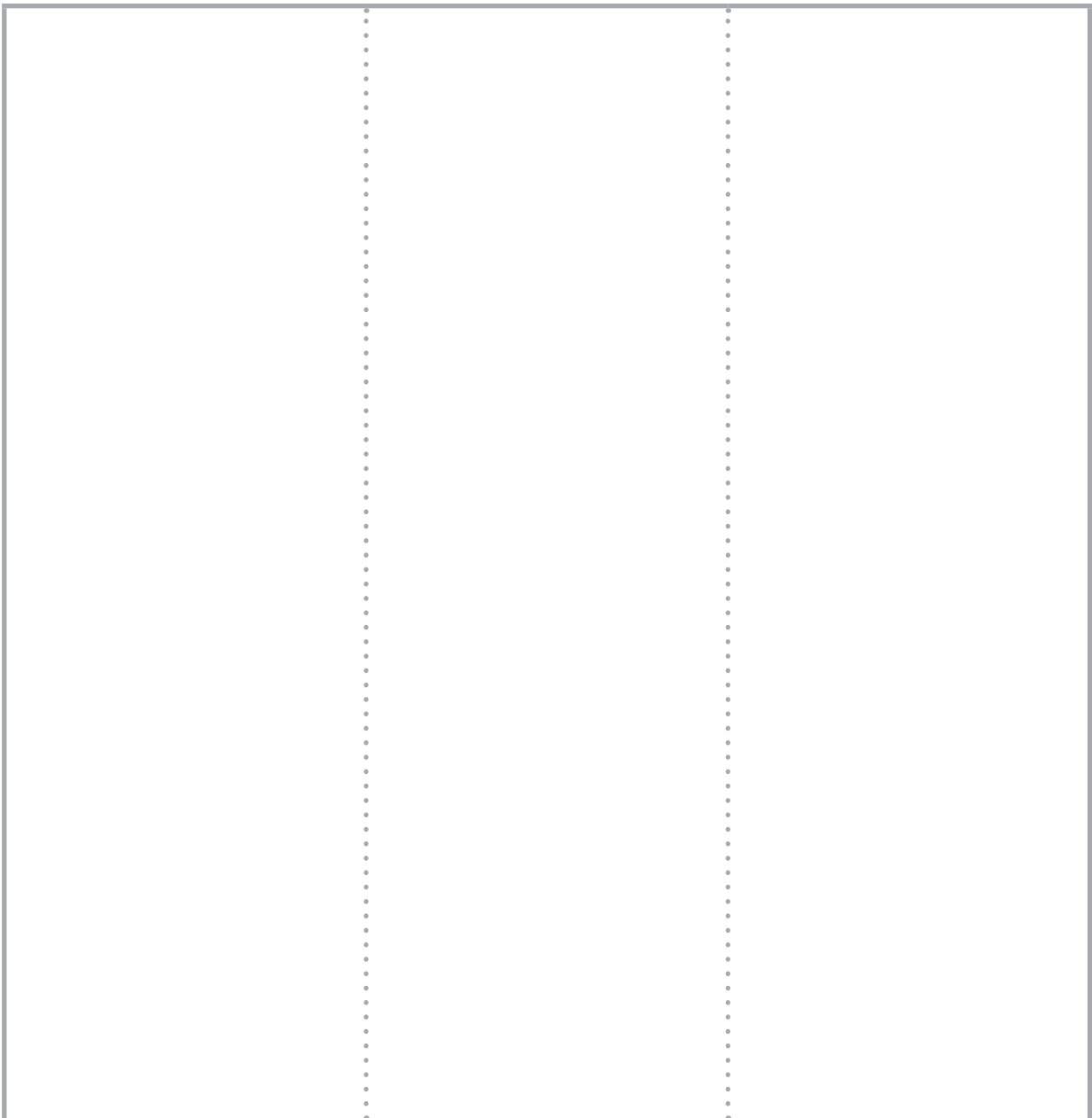
Name: _____

Date: _____

Anti-Bullying Brochure

Directions: Cut out the rectangle along the outside solid lines. Fold it in thirds vertically along the dotted lines. Create a brochure that tells about bullying and explains how bullying can be avoided. Remember to think about the events from the story as you work.

STOP BULLYING NOW!



Name: _____

Date: _____

Conduct a Social Survey

Directions: Choose three questions about friendship you would like the whole class to answer. Write them, and then have your classmates answer. Take notes or tally their answers on the back. Then, draw a few conclusions about what your classmates think about friendship.

My Social Survey

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Conclusion _____

The Clique

Jayden knew Joshua wasn't the most popular, but they had always been friendly to each other at school. Joshua and his parents were leaving the animated movie Hallie had made fun of the other day. His eyes widened when he noticed Jayden and the girls, and the color seemed to drain from his face.

Steph spotted Joshua. "Well, look who it is," she scoffed, steering the group toward him. "Little Joshy came to the movies with his mommy and daddy. Did you see a good movie, Baby Joshy? How did you like when the little birds talked?"

Jayden had never heard Steph talk in this cruel way before, and he wasn't sure what he should do about it. Joshua looked like he wanted to disappear.



This passage was taken from pages 10–12 in the book.

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Clique

Total Word Count	Codes				
125	E = errors	SC = self-corrections	M = meaning	S = structure	V = visual

Word Count	Text	E	SC	Cues Used	
				E	SC
7	Jayden knew Joshua wasn't the most popular,			M S V	M S V
15	but they had always been friendly to each			M S V	M S V
23	other at school. Joshua and his parents were			M S V	M S V
30	leaving the animated movie Hallie had made			M S V	M S V
39	fun of the other day. His eyes widened when			M S V	M S V
48	he noticed Jayden and the girls, and the color			M S V	M S V
54	seemed to drain from his face.			M S V	M S V
61	Steph spotted Joshua. "Well, look who it			M S V	M S V
68	is," she scoffed, steering the group toward			M S V	M S V
76	him. "Little Joshy came to the movies with			M S V	M S V
85	his mommy and daddy. Did you see a good			M S V	M S V
93	movie, Baby Joshy? How did you like when			M S V	M S V
97	the little birds talked?"			M S V	M S V
105	Jayden had never heard Steph talk in this			M S V	M S V
113	cruel way before, and he wasn't sure what			M S V	M S V
122	he should do about it. Joshua looked like he			M S V	M S V
125	wanted to disappear.			M S V	M S V

Error Rate:
Self-Correction Rate:
Accuracy Percentage:
Time:

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Clique

Directions: Read each question, and choose the best answer.

1. What is the first sign of trouble in Jayden and Mia's friendship?
 - A. Jayden couldn't remember the first time he met Mia.
 - B. They all had matching long, shiny hair and rainbow backpacks.
 - C. Jayden didn't see what was funny about helping his mother around the house on weekends.
 - D. Jayden's mom had to take his three sisters to a birthday party on Saturday.
2. How are Jayden's and Mia's reactions to Steph and Hallie similar or different?
 - A. Jayden doesn't realize at first that they are bullies.
 - B. Mia doesn't realize at first that they are bullies.
 - C. Jayden and Mia both try to confront them about bullying.
 - D. Jayden and Mia both try to ignore their bullying.
3. Which of the following words has a final stable syllable?
 - A. thorough
 - B. table
 - C. present
 - D. produce
4. Which best states a theme of the story?
 - A. Judge others based on first impressions.
 - B. Everyone deserves a second chance.
 - C. Friends can have a negative influence.
 - D. Popular people make better friends.
5. The author includes Jayden's mother in the story to _____.
 - A. show what Mia and Jayden were like as young children
 - B. illustrate what Jayden's life at school was like
 - C. describe how Jayden's parents were different from Mia's
 - D. provide another character to influence Jayden's journey

THE CLIQUE



By Heather Price-Wright
Illustrated by Kevin Fales

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CHAPTER ONE



The New Group

Jayden couldn't remember the first time he met Mia. Their mothers had been best friends since before they were born. They used to go to the park together, his mother told him. They played on the swings and the merry-go-round while their moms talked. They dug in the sandbox and

built castles together. They had been friends ever since.

Every day at lunch, they ate their matching peanut butter sandwiches and carrots next to each other and made funny faces together during quiet reading time in class.

But things changed as they grew up. Now, Jayden and Mia were in fifth grade. It was the last year of elementary school. Over the summer, Mia had made new friends at the community pool. Now she was inseparable from Hallie and Steph.

They all had matching long, shiny hair and rainbow backpacks. Jayden was pretty sure he would not fit in with these new friends.

One Friday at lunch, Jayden sat with Mia. Hallie and Steph joined them. The three girls discussed their weekend plans.

“So, my dad is driving us to the movie,” Hallie chirped, “and just so

you know, I told him we’re seeing that cartoon one, the dumb one about the family of birds, you know? But we’ll go to the superhero one instead. He’s going to give me money for tickets and the mall after, so make sure you guys bring money too.”

“You’re coming, right, Jayden?” Mia turned to him lazily. “My mom can drive you.”

“Oh my gosh, Mia, you’re inviting a *boy!*” screeched Steph, and she and Hallie put their heads together and giggled.

“Um, I can’t go, anyway,” Jayden admitted. “I have to help my mom on Saturdays, remember?”

He felt embarrassed. He and Mia were friends. Why did they always have to make a big deal that he was a boy and she was a girl?

“It’s so funny that you still do that!” said Mia. The comment stung, as Jayden didn’t see what was funny about

helping his mother around the house on weekends. With three younger siblings, Jayden knew that his mother needed all the help she could get.



CHAPTER TWO



Birds of a Feather

As it turned out, Jayden’s mom had to take his three sisters to a birthday party on Saturday.

“Why don’t you see what Mia is up to?” she asked him. “You don’t see her nearly enough these days, and I know I ask a lot of you around the house. Go and have fun, and give Mia our love!”

Jayden wasn't sure he wanted to spend the day with the girls, but he didn't want to tell his mom that. So he called Mia. She seemed pleased that he could come. He wondered whether she really liked Hallie and Steph that much.

Steph was tall and looked the oldest, so she collected everyone's money and went to buy the tickets. All the girls had brought more money than Jayden and decided to get popcorn, candy, and slushies. With a smile, Mia handed Jayden a packet of Reese's Cups—his favorite since they were little. Maybe today wouldn't be so bad after all.

As they walked toward their theater, Jayden caught sight of Joshua, another boy in fifth grade. He was small, with white-blond hair that made his eyebrows and eyelashes almost invisible. Jayden knew Joshua wasn't the most popular, but they had always been friendly to each other at school. Joshua and his parents were leaving the animated movie Hallie had made fun of



the other day. His eyes widened when he noticed Jayden and the girls, and the color seemed to drain from his face.

Steph spotted Joshua. “Well, look who it is,” she scoffed, steering the group toward him. “Little Joshy came to the movies with his mommy and daddy. Did you see a good movie, Baby Joshy? How did you like it when the little birds talked?”

Jayden had never heard Steph talk in this cruel way before, and he wasn't sure what he should do about it. Joshua looked like he wanted to disappear. He ducked his head and sped up to catch his parents. Steph laughed meanly and made a screech like a bird as he hurried away. Even Mia smiled a little, which made Jayden sad.

CHAPTER THREE



A Mother's Wisdom

Jayden was quiet at dinner that night, thinking not about the noisy superhero extravaganza he'd seen but about Joshua's face when Steph had mocked him. His mother was watching him, and he could tell she would ask him what was wrong; she always sensed these things. She was a good mom that

way, even if it sometimes annoyed him to have to talk about everything.

She came in as he was getting ready for bed and asked gently, “How was your day with Mia?” Jayden was embarrassed by the sudden feeling that he might cry.

“She has these two new friends this year, Steph and Hallie, and they’re popular and stuff, so I guess that’s why Mia wants to hang out with them. But I don’t think I like them very much. We saw this kid Joshua, who people kind of tease at school, and they were really mean to him. I didn’t know what I was supposed to do.”

“You do the right thing,” his mother said. “New friends don’t change what’s right and wrong, and you know it’s wrong to be unkind to people. Mia knows that too. You might have to remind her though.”

CHAPTER FOUR



Fast Friends

On Monday, the fifth graders came to class to find they had new assigned seats. Jayden had made a point to sit next to Mia since he was little, but today he was placed across the room from her. He groaned, dropped his backpack on the floor, and flung himself into his new seat. Why did teachers always think

they had to “mix things up” this way?

His mood grew more sour when he noticed Joshua moving toward the desk next to his. It wasn't that he disliked Joshua. But after last weekend, sitting next to him seemed like too much trouble. Plus, he was embarrassed by how Steph and Hallie had acted. Even Mia hadn't been very nice. How would he explain to Joshua that he hadn't wanted to be mean?

But Joshua didn't mention the weekend. He sat down quietly and pulled out his planner and homework. Jayden noticed that the planner pages were covered with doodles. No, these were better than doodles. They were amazingly realistic drawings of all sorts of animals, but especially birds.

“Wow,” he said to Joshua. “You're a great artist!” Joshua smiled shyly.

“I like to draw too,” said Jayden, pulling out his sketchbook. He carried it with him everywhere. He wanted to be an artist when he grew up, and his

mom told him good artists spent time practicing every day. “Want to see?” he asked.

Joshua nodded eagerly and scooted his desk toward Jayden, who opened to a page covered in sketches of imagined spaceships and planets.

“Space stuff is my favorite thing to draw,” Jayden said. He turned the page to show Joshua his favorite scene, one of a showdown between two aliens. One had a long, pointy head and buggy eyes. The other was covered in tentacles. “I'm writing a story for this one,” he said. “I think it would be cool to write my own books and illustrate them.”

“That is cool,” Joshua said, smiling. “I like their lasers.” Just then, their teacher hushed the class and began moving down the rows, checking homework. Jayden grinned at Joshua and thought about how amazing his pictures were. *Steph and Hallie have no idea he's a great artist; they're missing out*, he thought.

Mia and the other girls were already sitting down and opening their lunch boxes when Jayden joined them. He didn't really feel like sitting with them today, but he wasn't sure where else he'd go to eat lunch. Joshua usually ate alone, and he didn't know what others would think if he went and sat next to him. Would they laugh at him?

Mia stood up when she saw him, shutting her lunch box. "I need to talk to you," she said haughtily. She didn't used to talk to him that way. "Can we go somewhere?" They walked to the far corner of the cafeteria. Then, Mia spun on her heels and frowned at him.

"I saw you talking to Joshua this morning and laughing, probably at something idiotic," she said, "and you should know we can't be friends with him." Jayden was shocked—he had never heard Mia say something so unkind.

"He's nice, and he draws these great animals," Jayden protested. "I

like him."

"Don't talk to him anymore," Mia said seriously, "or you and I can't be friends." Then, she marched back to her table.





CHAPTER FIVE



The Cold Shoulder

Jayden didn't sleep well that night. He tossed and turned, remembering Mia's face and tone of voice as she demanded that he stop talking to Joshua. He and Mia had been friends for such a long time, and she had always had his back. When bigger kids would knock over their sandcastles or steal

their swings, Mia never failed to help chase them off. She was small, but fierce, and a great friend. He never wanted to hurt her feelings or do anything she didn't like.

But there was no reason to stop talking to Joshua! No reason, that is, except Steph and Hallie and their mean comments and jokes. He couldn't believe Mia wanted to spend all her time with them these days. They were popular, he knew, but that had never been important to Mia before. Things were changing, faster than he wanted them to, and he didn't know what to do.

Jayden was tired the next morning, and he definitely didn't feel like going to school.

"I think I'm sick," he moaned to his mom. She felt his forehead and pronounced him just fine.

As she dropped him off at school, she turned to him with a small smile. "It's going to be okay," she promised him. "Whatever it is, just do the

right thing."

Easy for you to say, he thought to himself.

Mia met him at the classroom door, scowling just like yesterday. "Remember what I told you," she whispered.

He groaned inwardly and made his way slowly to his desk. Joshua was already seated, nose inches from his planner, where he was sketching a magnificent peacock with its tail feathers spread. Jayden thought the drawing was amazing, especially how Joshua could capture the color of the feathers with nothing but blue and green ballpoint pens. But he said nothing.

Jayden didn't notice that Steph and Hallie had come over until he heard the same loud, birdlike screech Steph had made at the movie theater.

"How's it going, birdbrain?" she asked, as Hallie laughed.

Joshua turned red but didn't look up.

“Why are you so obsessed with birds, anyway?” Hallie sneered. “It’s so weird. Hey, Joshy, I said, ‘Why are you so obsessed with birds?’ Look at me!”

She smacked his hand, causing the pen to draw an ugly slash through the peacock. He still didn’t raise his head. Jayden felt awful watching it happen, but he didn’t say anything. He looked straight ahead, willing Joshua not to try to catch his eye.

Mia came toward the group then, laughing, and said sarcastically, “Wow, amazing drawing, birdbrain.”

Jayden swallowed hard. He couldn’t believe Mia was actually participating. Still, he said nothing, but turned his head so he couldn’t see Joshua’s face, even out of the corner of his eye. He just wanted it to be over.

“Let’s sit down now, everyone, please,” the teacher called. The girls went back to their desks, but on her way, Mia gave Jayden a small smile.

CHAPTER SIX



The Prank

“I just can’t stand the sight of his weird, bald little face,” Steph said with disgust.

They were talking about Joshua. It was making Jayden more uncomfortable than he could ever remember feeling before.

“We need to teach him a lesson,” Hallie chimed in.

Mia was quiet, Jayden noticed. Neither of them spoke up as the two girls discussed ways they could bully Joshua.

“What about tearing up all his dumb drawings?” Hallie suggested.

But Steph shot the idea down. “Wait, I have a better idea.” She jumped up. “Follow me,” she demanded. “I noticed it on the playground yesterday.”

Jayden reluctantly followed, out of depressing curiosity more than anything else. In the corner of the playground, Steph stood triumphantly, pointing at a small bird. Its wings were bent uncomfortably, its eyes closed. It was definitely dead. Jayden had never seen anything so sad.

“Ew ew ew ew ew, oh my gosh, EW!” Hallie screeched as they used sticks to try and scoop the bird into an empty paper bag. “I can’t believe you’re making us do this!”

“Wait and see though,” said Steph. “It’ll be so funny when he finds this in



his backpack. I promise you he's going to absolutely freak out."

Jayden felt sick to his stomach and tried to catch Mia's eye, hoping to tell her silently that this was a bad idea that he wanted no part of. He pictured Joshua's face when he found the bird. He might cry, which Jayden knew Hallie and Steph would love more than anything. He couldn't stand it anymore.

"No," he said loudly.

"What are you talking about?" Steph asked. "You have a problem with something?"

"Just be quiet, Jayden," Mia pleaded, still refusing to look at him. "Just go along with it."

"I won't," insisted Jayden. "It's mean, and awful, and I'm telling him." With that, he rushed ahead of them back into the cafeteria, looking for Joshua, with Mia close behind.

CHAPTER SEVEN



New Beginnings

A week later, Mia, Joshua, and Jayden sat together in the cafeteria, as they had for several days, talking and laughing. It turned out Joshua had a great sense of humor. Jayden felt like the old Mia was back as he watched her smile at Joshua. When Jayden had told Joshua about the dead bird prank, Mia

had burst into tears and run out. Hallie and Steph had been livid. They taunted Jayden, calling him a tattletale, but he didn't care.

“Look,” he said. “I drew some new aliens.” He opened his sketchbook to show them two tall, shiny-haired aliens. Their faces were familiar, but they had several more arms and fewer legs than the real Steph and Hallie.

Joshua and Mia laughed, but then a



guilty look came over Mia's face.

“You're funny, Jayden,” she said quietly. “But I don't want to become bullies like them.”

Jayden thought about that and realized she was right. He didn't ever want to act toward anyone the way the girls had, not even if he felt they deserved it.

“I'll throw it away,” he promised, wadding it up.



About Us

The Author

Heather Price-Wright is a writer and editor. While she grew up in Arizona, she now lives in New York City with her husband. She loves to walk through the city parks spotting birds. Her favorite are red-breasted robins, which always remind her that spring is coming.

The Illustrator

When Kevin Fales was six, he drew a soaring eagle carrying a snake in its talons. His teacher liked it so much that she took him around to show his drawing to all the other classrooms. He was terribly embarrassed, until they told him how much they liked it. From then on, he never stopped drawing. Now, he makes his living creating fun, colorful illustrations for amazing children's books just like this one.

Book Club Questions

1. How would the story change if it were told by Joshua or Mia?
2. After the incident at the movies, Jayden's mom says, "New friends don't change what's right and wrong." Explain why you agree or disagree with her.
3. Do you think Steph and Hallie view themselves as bullies? Why or why not?
4. Explain the main message the author is trying to express.
5. How do you think Mia feels about participating in bullying Joshua?
6. What would you have done in this situation if you were Jayden?