

# Spider®

## ISSUE THEME

The characters in this issue respond to challenges in amusing and surprising ways, but do they get what they deserve? Use these stories to discuss the concept of fairness with your students.

## CONVERSATION QUESTION

What does it mean to be fair?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will describe and analyze setting
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact
- Students will determine central ideas or themes
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information
- Students will analyze places, including their physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics
- Students will identify patterns in nature



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

## SELECTIONS

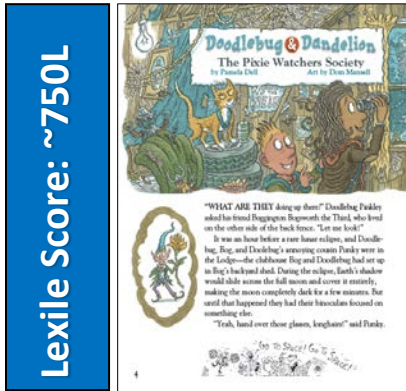
- **Doodlebug & Dandelion**  
Fantasy, ~750L
- **Sweet Dreams, Pixie Littlings!**  
Folktale, ~550L
- **Ava the Big**  
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~550L

# Spider® Teacher Guide: March 2018

## Doodlebug & Dandelion

pp. 4–8, Fantasy

Use this comical fantasy about friends preparing to view a lunar eclipse to teach students about analyzing setting.



## RESOURCES

- Analyze Setting Worksheet

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a fantasy story
- Students will describe and analyze setting
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information

## KEY VOCABULARY

- lunar eclipse (p. 4)** an occasion when the moon looks like it is completely or partially covered with a dark circle because the Earth's shadow is on it
- in unison (p. 6)** doing something together at the same time
- smug (p. 7)** having the annoying quality of people who feel very pleased with their abilities
- jig (p. 7)** a lively dance
- awe (p. 8)** a strong feeling of wonder

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What does it mean to be fair?

Ask students to answer the conversation question, using examples and experiences from their own lives. Then ask students to judge the following scenarios as fair or unfair: *Your sister makes fun of what you're wearing, so you mess up her room. Your seventh-grade brother gets to stay up later than you do. Your father tells you to set the table, so you make your little brother help you.* Finally, tell students to judge whether Doodlebug, Punky, and Bog get what they deserve in this story.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Have students work in groups to come up with sentences that use these words and then make a prediction about what will happen in the story. Invite students to share their sentences and predictions. Remind them to review predictions after they read.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, have them check the accuracy of their predictions. Then use the questions below to prompt discussion:

- Where are the two groups of friends and what are they doing?
- What do the boys think about what the girls are doing?
- What do the girls think about being spied on by the boys?
- How do the boys annoy the girls?
- Are the girls fair to the boys?

## SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Setting

**INSTRUCT:** Review setting (the time and place of a story). Ask students to describe the time of this story (nighttime, during a lunar eclipse). Have students identify the different settings (boys' lodge, girls' treehouse, backyard). Then ask how they can tell when the setting changes. Point out that the pictographs create a break in the story and indicate a change in setting, and story details can help them visualize each setting. Ask students to identify the setting in the first section and the story details that help them picture it. Then ask them to identify the characters in this setting and describe what the characters are doing.

**ASSESS:** Distribute the *Analyze Setting* worksheet to all students and have them work in pairs to complete it.

## EXTEND

**Science** Have students conduct research to find out when the next lunar eclipse will occur. Then have them create posters to advertise this eclipse. Tell them to include words and pictures to describe the eclipse and make people want to view it. Invite students to share their posters.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Analyze Setting** Record story details about each setting and important events that happen in each setting.

### Setting: the boys' clubhouse

Details About the Setting	Story Events

### Setting: the girls' treehouse

Details About the Setting	Story Events

### Setting: the backyard

Details About the Setting	Story Events

# Spider® Teacher Guide: March 2018

## Sweet Dreams, Pixie Littlings!

pp. 18–23, Folktale

To teach students to identify plot and conflict, use this folktale about a farmer who tries to help the pixies on his farm.



## RESOURCES

- Story Map Worksheet

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact
- Students will analyze places, using physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **vanished** (p. 20) disappeared entirely without explanation
- **appeared** (p. 20) became visible
- **cellar** (p. 21) the part of a building that is below ground
- **brindled** (p. 22) having faint dark streaks or spots on a gray or light brown background
- **slumber** (p. 22) sleep
- **ceiling** (p. 23) the surface at the top of a room

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What does it mean to be fair?

Ask students if borrowing things such as books, clothing, or toys is fair. Then ask how long people should keep the things they borrow. Is it fair to keep things for a long time? Ask volunteers to explain why or why not. Then tell students to think about the behavior in this story and decide if characters are being fair or unfair.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Next, have students work in pairs to sort the words into groups. Then have partners turn and talk to other pairs to share and explain their word groups. Discuss any words that did not fit into a group. Finally, tell students to look for vocabulary words as they read.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. Why did the farmer and his wife want to help the pixies?
2. How would this story be different without the pixies in it?
3. Where would the story end if the farmer and his wife didn't want to repay the pixies?
4. Did the pixies take advantage of the couple? Explain.
5. What's your favorite pixie word or phrase?

## SKILL FOCUS: Story Sequence

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that most stories are made up of a series of events that tell about a problem and how it is solved. Invite students to describe the events, problem, and solution in a familiar tale, such as the Three Little Pigs. Then read aloud the first section of the story (pages 18–19). Ask students to identify the characters and the setting and write these on the board. Next, ask students to tell the important events in this section. List and number these, using the words *first*, *next*, and *finally* where appropriate. Help students identify the problem (the farmer got sick and couldn't thresh the wheat) and solution (the pixies thresh the wheat). Next, discuss the pixies' problem in the next part of the story.

**ASSESS:** Distribute a copy of the *Story Map* worksheet to each student. Have students work in pairs or groups to complete it.

## EXTEND

**Social Studies** Explain that this Cornish folktale originally came from Cornwall, England. Display a map of England and point out Cornwall. Have students conduct research to learn about Cornwall and Cornish culture. Have students create a brief presentation to share.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Story Sequence

Write what happens in “Sweet Dreams, Pixie Littlings!” Use the back of this sheet if you need more room to write.

<b>Characters</b>	<b>Setting</b>
<b>What is the problem?</b>	
<b>How do characters try to solve the problem? List these events.</b> 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6.	
<b>How is the problem solved?</b>	

**Extra:** Make a glossary of pixie words from the story by listing the words in alphabetical order and writing definitions. Then try to use the words in a story you write.

# Spider® Teacher Guide: March 2018

## Ava the Big

pp. 25–30, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about two girls named Ava to teach students to identify theme.



## RESOURCES

- Identify and Support Theme Worksheet

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will determine central ideas or themes
- Students will identify patterns in nature

## KEY VOCABULARY

- balance** (p. 25) to make or become equal or even
- lopsided** (p. 26) uneven or unequal

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What does it mean to be fair?

Ask students to name times at school and at home when they might say or hear these words: “Hey! That’s not fair!” Then tell students to think about whether the characters in the next story are treated fairly.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them and their definitions aloud. Next, have students work in pairs to figure out the relationship between the two words and come up with at least one example for each word.

## READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

- Why does Ava’s life become lopsided? What makes it feel balanced again?
- Why did Little Ava get the fairy role and Big Ava get the giant role?
- Do you think the teacher assigned the roles fairly? Explain.
- What does Big Ava mean when she says, “We’re not alike, but together we balance”?

## SKILL FOCUS: Identify Theme

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that the theme of a story is a message or lesson about life that an author wants to share with readers. Give examples of common literary themes, such as “don’t give up on your dreams,” and “actions speak louder than words.” Point out that themes often sound like good advice. Continue by explaining that themes are not always stated but can be identified by thinking about information and events in a story, including:

- characters’ problems and how they react to them
- important decisions characters make
- ways characters change and grow
- lessons characters learn

Discuss possible themes of popular books and movies.

**ASSESS:** Distribute the *Identify and Support Theme* worksheet and have students work in pairs or groups to complete it.

## EXTEND

**Science/Math** Show cut-out shapes of a diamond and a lightning bolt. Fold each in half and ask students which one has two sides that are equal or the same. Explain that this kind of balance is called symmetry: two halves of a shape or object are exactly the same. Have students take a walk outside to find symmetrical and asymmetrical objects in nature.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Identify and Support Theme

Fill in the chart with information from “Ava the Big.” Then use the information to help you determine the theme of this story.

<b>1. What challenges do the characters face?</b>
<b>2. How do the characters react to these challenges?</b>
<b>3. What important decisions do the characters make?</b>
<b>4. In what ways do the characters grow or change?</b>
<b>5. What lessons do the characters learn?</b>

The theme of this story is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On the back of this sheet, list the details from the story that helped you determine this theme.