

# Spider®

## THEME

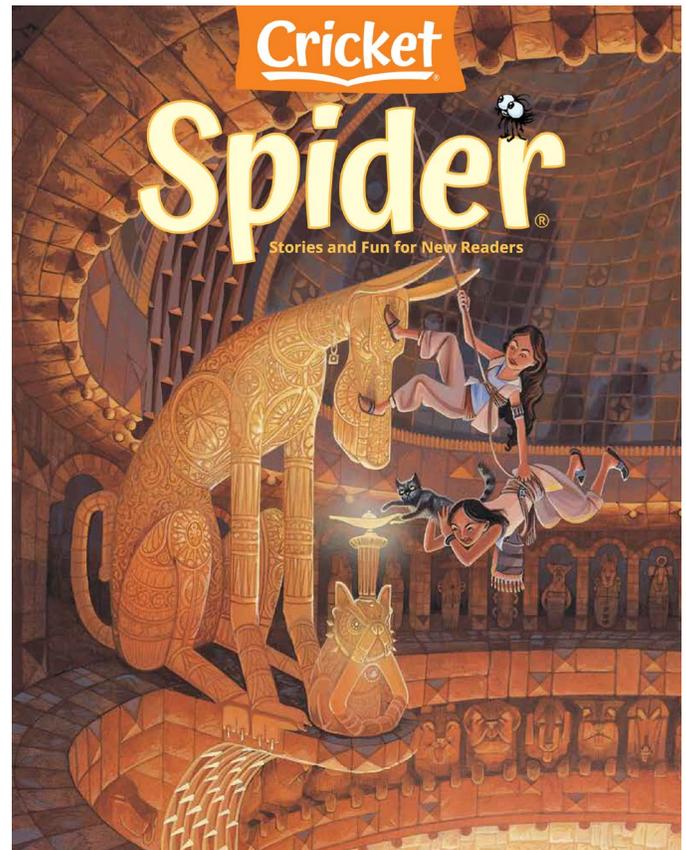
Our lives are filled with processes—from making breakfast in the morning to getting ready for bed at night. Use the articles, minilessons, and activities in this teacher guide to explore processes and how authors incorporate processes in their writing.

## CONVERSATION QUESTION

What is a process?

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will analyze how and why individuals develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will identify a main idea and supporting details.
- Students will design a Rube Goldberg device.
- Students will create and decode secret messages.
- Students will write a process essay.



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

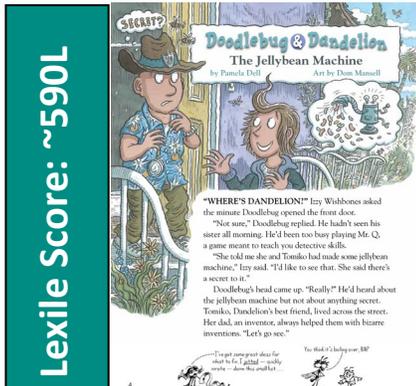
- **Doodlebug & Dandelion**  
Detective Story, ~590L
- **Letters from Leo**  
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~610L
- **One Week Wonder**  
Expository Nonfiction, ~870L

# Spider® Teacher Guide: July/August 2021

## Doodlebug & Dandelion

### pp. 4–8, Detective Story

Use this story about a young detective who tries to learn the secret behind his sister's jellybean machine to teach students about the characteristics of detective stories.



## RESOURCES

- Characteristics of a Detective Story

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will design a Rube Goldberg device.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **bizarre** (p. 4) very unusual or strange
- **clueless** (p. 8) unable to understand something
- **scarfed** (p. 8) ate something quickly

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What is a process?

Have students work in small groups to try to answer the Conversation Question. Then bring the class together to share ideas. Explain that a process is a series of actions that produce something or that lead to a particular result. Continue by explaining that a process can be as simple as making breakfast or as complex as building a spaceship. Have students work in pairs to outline a process they use regularly, such as a breakfast process, a room-cleaning process, or a get-ready-for-school process. Then tell students to notice the detective's process in this story.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students work in pairs to write sentences that use the words correctly. Invite partners to share their sentences with the class. Correct errors. Remind students to look for these words in the article.

## READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why does Doodlebug become interested in the jellybean machine?
2. What detective skills does Doodlebug use to figure out the secret of the jellybean machine?
3. Who is the better detective, Izzy or Doodlebug? Explain.
4. How is the work of a detective and an inventor similar?

## SKILL FOCUS: Characteristics of a Detective Story

**INSTRUCT:** Explain to students that a detective story is a form of fiction in which characters and readers are involved in trying to solve a problem. Discuss familiar detective stories and guide the students to identify elements in this genre of writing. Distribute the *Characteristics of a Detective Story* worksheet and review the directions, as well as the information in the chart.

**ASSESS:** Have students work in pairs to complete the worksheet. Then have them discuss the question at the bottom of the page.

## EXTEND

**Science** Explain to students that a Rube Goldberg device is a complicated contraption that does something very simple. Use the internet to show videos of different examples. Then have students design their own Rube Goldberg devices using these steps:

1. Choose the simple task your device will perform (for example, open a door, turn on a light, fill a pet's water bowl).
2. List the materials you will use to build your device. These should be recycled items or items you have on hand at home or school.
3. Draw one or more pictures to show how your device works.

## Characteristics of a Detective Story

Read the detective story characteristics below. Does the story “Doodlebug & Dandelion: The Jellybean Machine” include these characteristics? For each characteristic, explain how the story shows it or changes it in some way. Record your ideas in the chart.

Characteristics of a Detective Story	“Doodlebug & Dandelion: The Jellybean Machine”
The problem in the story is an important mystery or crime that needs to be solved.	
The detective is a memorable character who is very smart and unusually clever.	
The detective’s sidekick, or helper, is not as clever as the detective.	
The story presents clues that the detective uses to solve the mystery.	
The story includes a red herring—an unimportant clue or detail used to distract readers from noticing a real clue.	
At the end of the story, the detective solves the case and is treated like a hero.	

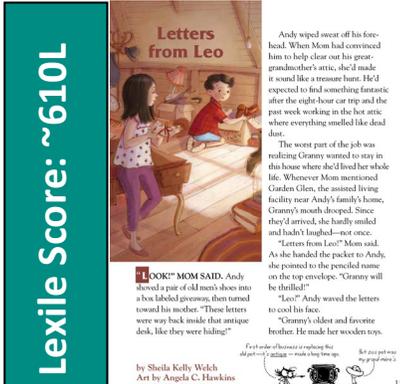
**Discuss:** Is this story a true example of a detective story? Explain your thinking.

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## Letters from Leo

pp. 11–17, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Teach students to analyze character motivation using this story about a boy who helps his great-grandmother solve a riddle.



## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What is a process?

Point out to students that people use processes to solve problems. Tell students to imagine they've lost something important, such as homework, a key, a shoe, or a library book. Have students work in small groups to choose the item they will focus on and then brainstorm and record a list of steps to follow in order to find the lost item. Then invite groups to share their lists. Finally, tell students to notice how characters in this story use a process to solve a problem or answer a question.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions and read them aloud. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

1. I didn't want to watch the movie, but my sister \_\_\_\_\_.
2. My cousin \_\_\_\_\_ me to go fishing with her.
3. My dog \_\_\_\_\_ to go outside in the pouring rain.

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how and why individuals develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will create and decode secret messages.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **convinced** (p. 11) caused someone to agree to do something
- **hesitated** (p. 12) stopped briefly before doing something
- **insisted** (p. 13) demanded that someone do something

## READ & DISCUSS

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

1. What are Andy and his family doing at the beginning of the story?
2. How does Granny feel about moving to Garden Glen?
3. Why does Mom call Leo's letters a "fistful of history"?
4. What happened to Leo?
5. How does Granny feel as she reads Leo's letter?
6. What homonyms does Andy notice?

## SKILL FOCUS: Identify Character Motives

**INSTRUCT:** Explain that the reason why a character thinks, feels, or acts in a certain way is called a motive. Tell students that sometimes a writer directly tells readers about a character's motive. Usually, readers need to make inferences about a character's motive. Remind students that they make inferences, or logical guesses, based on story details and their own knowledge. Discuss the motives of characters in popular movies and books. Then list these questions on the board: (1) What are Andy's motives for helping his mom clear out Granny's attic? (2) What were Leo's motives for locking the box and hiding the key? (3) What are Granny's motives for wanting to stay in her home?

**ASSESS:** Have students work in pairs to answer the questions and list the story details and personal knowledge that helped them infer motives.

## EXTEND

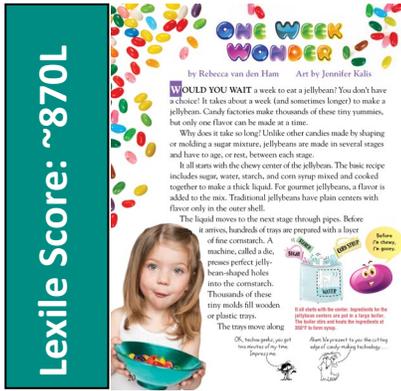
Use the internet to help students learn about writing codes, such as using numbers or symbols to stand for letters. Then have students use one of these codes (or create their own) to write a message to a partner for decoding.

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## One Week Wonder

pp. 20–23, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about a how jellybeans are made to teach students to identify key ideas and write headings for an article.



## OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will identify a main idea and supporting details.
- Students will write a process essay.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- **molding** (p. 20) forming or pressing something into a particular shape
- **gourmet** (p. 20) relating to food that requires expert or special preparation
- **savor** (p. 23) to enjoy the taste or smell of something for as long as possible

## ENGAGE

**Conversation Question:** What is a process?

Point out that cooking or preparing food is one type of process. Have students work in pairs to describe the steps in the process of preparing a simple food item, such as a sandwich or a scrambled egg. Invite students to share their ideas. Inform students that this article describes the process involved in making jellybeans. Invite students to predict what some of the steps in this process might be.

## INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Post the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

1. My sister eats ice cream cones quickly, but I like to \_\_\_\_\_ mine.
2. On the cooking show, kids were making \_\_\_\_\_ cupcakes.
3. I use a cup for \_\_\_\_\_ sand when I make a sandcastle at the beach.

## READ & DISCUSS

As a post-reading activity, use these questions for discussion:

1. What surprised you about how jellybeans are made?
2. What does a die machine do?
3. List the stages for making jellybeans.
4. Has the process for coating something with sugar changed very much since the 1600s? Explain.

## SKILL FOCUS: Headings and Key Ideas

**INSTRUCT:** Show students a simple nonfiction magazine article with section headings. Explain that headings help readers to understand what each section of an article will be about. Demonstrate this using one section in the article you found. Point out that “One Week Wonder” doesn’t have headings. Have students work in pairs to reread the article and identify different sections where headings could be inserted. Then discuss ideas and work with the class to agree on where sections begin.

**ASSESS:** Have partners write headings for the different sections. Remind students that headings should tell what each section is about. They can be clever and amusing, as well as informative. Headings can even be quotes from the article, such as “good things just take time.”

## EXTEND

**Cross-Curricular** Explain that a process essay is a piece of writing that gives detailed instructions for an activity so readers can perform that activity. A process essay includes a short introduction, a list of the materials needed, and the steps in the process. Brainstorm a list of possible topics. Then have students write a process essay on a topic of interest. Remind students to use transitions such as *first*, *next*, *finally*.