

Spider®

THEME

Explore with students the motivations behind the actions of story characters and real people using the selections in this month's issue of *Spider*. This Teacher Guide will help you teach language arts lessons and engage students in a variety of learning activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

Why do characters do what they do?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how and why individuals develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will read closely.
- Students will analyze cultural characteristics.
- Students will prepare for and conduct interviews.
- Students will retell a story in comic-strip form.



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.

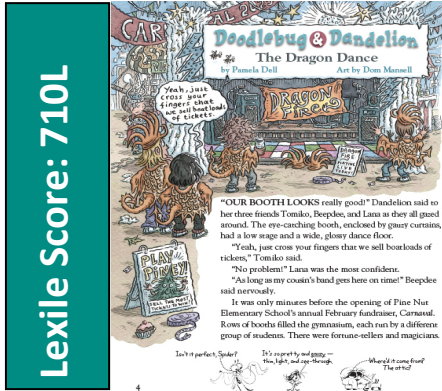
SELECTIONS

- **Doodlebug & Dandelion**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~710L
- **Everybody Dance!**
Interview, 730L
- **Sir Dance-A-Lot**
Fantasy, ~580L

Doodlebug & Dandelion

pp. 4–8, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Teach students to analyze character motivation using this story about the Pine Nut Elementary School *Carnaval*.



RESOURCES

- Character Motivation

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 analyze cultural characteristics.

KEY VOCABULARY

- eye-catching (p. 4)** very noticeable because of being unusual or attractive
- boatloads (p. 4)** very large amounts of something (figuratively—enough to fill a boat)
- jam-packed (p. 6)** filled completely

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why do characters do what they do?

Explain that story characters have reasons for behaving the way they do. These reasons might have to do with something the character wants or something the character feels. Display the sentences below. Discuss possible reasons why the character behaves the way he or she does in each scenario. Then tell students to think about what motivates the characters in the “Doodlebug & Dandelion” story.

- Antin stood up to the classmate who was bullying his friend.
- Rosa studied extra hard for the spelling test.
- Max ran into his room and slammed the door.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. 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.

- The play quickly sold out after students sold _____ of tickets.
- Ralph made a/an _____ poster to advertise the school play.
- The auditorium was _____ with families who came to see the play.

READ & DISCUSS

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

- Is the Pine Nut Elementary School *Carnaval* realistic? Explain.
- What is the prize for selling the most tickets?
- How are the Dragon Fire musicians and the Dragonettes dressed?
- Why do they dress the way they do?
- What other group sells a lot of tickets?
- How does Dandelion get more people to come to the booth?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Character Motivation

INSTRUCT: Explain that character motivation is the reason why a character thinks, feels, or acts in a certain way. Sometimes a writer directly tells readers about a character’s motivation. Often, readers need to make inferences about motivation. Readers can determine a character’s motivation by paying attention to his or her words, actions, and interactions with other characters. Discuss characters’ actions in familiar movies and books and the motivation for their actions.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Character Motivation* worksheet and have students work in pairs to complete it.

EXTEND

Social Studies Point out the word *Carnaval* on page 4. Explain that Carnival, or Carnival, is a festival that happens around the world in February or March. Have students work in small groups to learn about Carnival and how it is celebrated. Assign each group a different country to research. Have students create short presentations for the class.

Character Motivation

Read the questions in the first column and consider the character's motivation. Write your answers in the second column and support them with story details.

| Character's actions, words, thoughts | Character's motivation |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>Why do the Dragonettes wear neon-orange dresses with sleeves shaped like dragon wings, topped off with spiky dragon hats?</p> | |
| <p>Why does Dandelion shout, "COME ON, EVERYBODY! GET IN HERE, AND DO THE DRAGON DANCE!"</p> | |
| <p>Why does Dandelion burst out of the booth and dance in the gym?</p> | |
| <p>Why does Dandelion decide she will let Doodlebug play Piney just one time?</p> | |

Discuss: Does Dandelion's motivation change in the story? Explain your thinking.

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Everybody Dance!

pp. 20–24, Interview

Use this interview with two dancers from the AXIS Dance Company to help students practice reading and analyzing interview transcripts.



RESOURCES

- Reading an Interview

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze an interview.
- Students will read closely.
- Students will prepare for and conduct interviews.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **dance company** (p. 20) a group of dancers and the associated technical personnel that train together and put on performances
- **inclusive** (p. 20) open to everyone and not limited to certain people
- **tweaked** (p. 22) changed something slightly to improve it

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why do characters do what they do?

Point out that real people, like story characters, have reasons for doing, saying, and thinking the things they do. Model this by explaining your motivation for being a teacher. Next, have students share activities they do, such as play a sport, draw, play an instrument, volunteer, etc. Then have students work in small groups to discuss their motivation for doing their activities. Finally, tell students they will read an interview with two dancers and think about what motivates them to dance.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the sentences below. Have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Remind students to look for the words as they read.

1. I ___ my model volcano to make the fake lava shoot out faster.
2. The ___ wore bee costumes and danced around a giant hive.
3. The Friendship Club is ___ and welcomes anyone who wants to join.

READ & DISCUSS

Before students read the interview, read aloud the first paragraph. Have students note Louisa's and David's names throughout the interview. After students read the interview, use these questions for discussion:

1. In what ways is the AXIS Dance Company inclusive?
2. Who are Louisa Mann and David Calhoun?
3. Who is interviewing the dancers?
4. What does a choreographer do?
5. Why do you think this interview is titled "Let's Dance!"?

SKILL FOCUS: Reading an Interview

INSTRUCT: Explain that an interview is a conversation in which one person asks questions of another person in order to get information. Guide students to notice that in this interview, two people are asked questions. Remind students that in an interview, the words were originally spoken, not written. Have students work in pairs to look through the interview and to find two passages that sound like conversation, or spoken words. Have students share their examples. Then distribute the *Reading an Interview* worksheet and review the different sections.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to complete the worksheet. Then discuss responses as a class.

EXTEND

Speaking and Listening Have students interview a classmate. First, assign interview partners. Tell partners to think about what they would like to know about each other. Work with the class to brainstorm possible questions such as: *What do you like to do in your free time? What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten? What do you think you will be doing ten years from now?* Then have students ask their questions and record the answers.

Reading an Interview

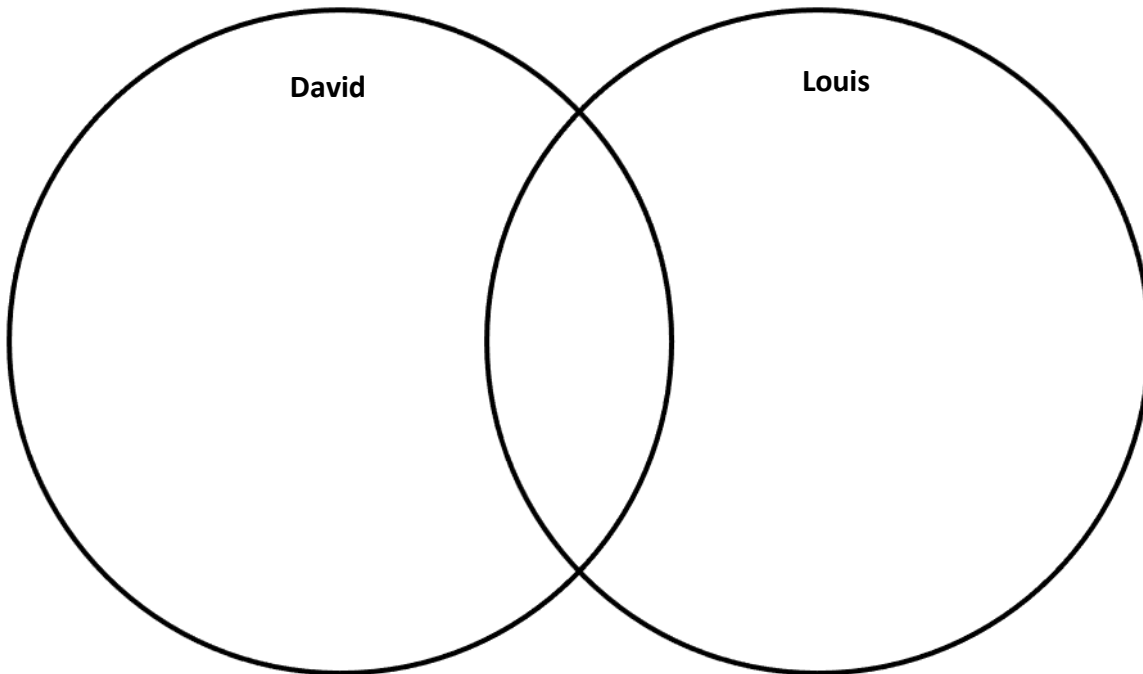
Read the characteristics in the box below. Then complete the activities on this page.

| Characteristics of an Interview |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An interview gives information.• An interview includes facts and opinions.• An interview helps you learn about a person’s ideas and experiences. |

1. Underline two facts stated in the interview.

2. Highlight two opinions stated in the interview.

3. How are David and Louisa similar? How are they different? Use information from the interview to compare the two dancers.

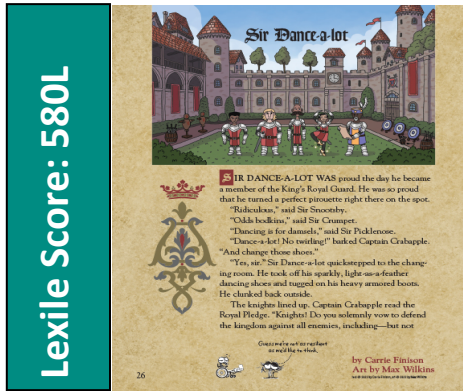


4. Choose one of the dancers to write about. Based on information in the interview, what is your impression of this dancer?

Sir Dance-A-Lot

pp. 20–24, Fantasy

Give students practice in analyzing the stages of plot using this fantasy story about a knight who would rather dance than fight.



RESOURCES

- Stages of Plot

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will retell a story in comic-strip form.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **quickstepped** (p. 26) marched quickly
- **rusty** (p. 27) not as good as usual or as in the past at something because you have not practiced in a long time
- **singed** (p. 29) burned something slightly

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why do characters do what they do?

Point out that in fairy tales, knights and dragons are often enemies who can't live together. Dragons attack villages and eat people while knights try to protect people and themselves by slaying dragons. Discuss what motivates dragons to attack and knights to slay (survival). Then explain that sometimes characters are motivated in unexpected ways. Tell students to consider what motivates the knight and dragon in this tale.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Have students work in groups of three to write sentences using the vocabulary words, with each group member responsible for a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. How is Sir Dance-A-Lot different from the other knights?
2. How does dancing help Sir Dance-A-Lot during training?
3. How do the other knights feel about Sir Dance-A-Lot's dancing?
4. What makes the captain change his mind about Sir Dance-A-Lot?
5. The dragon and Sir Dance-A-Lot choose not to fight. What motivates this decision?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Stages of Plot

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the series of events in a story is called the plot. Continue by reminding them that the events in a story focus on a character's problem and how the problem is solved. Work with students to create a list of the important events in this story. Have students work in pairs to decide if anything is missing from the list or if any events could be combined. Then distribute the *Stages of Plot* worksheet to all students and review the different plot stages. Have students fill in the conflict section. Then have pairs discuss which events to include in the Rising Action box. Discuss ideas as a class.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to continue to fill out the plot diagram. Then bring the class together to go over responses.

EXTEND

Art/Language Arts Have student retell the story, or a scene from the story, in comic-strip form. Remind students to use dialogue, captions, and pictures to convey the story. Students can begin by drawing rough sketches and drafting the dialogue and captions they will use in their strips. Post final comic strips in the classroom.

Stages of Plot

In the chart below, note events from “Sir Dance-A-Lot” to outline the story’s plot.

- **Conflict:** The main problem in the story.
- **Rising Action:** Story events make the conflict more complicated.
- **Climax:** A character makes an important choice or takes an action, and the outcome of the conflict is clear.
- **Resolution:** The final events at the end of the story tie up loose ends.

