



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text
- Students will analyze the structure of texts
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events or developments
- Students will recognize the genre and key elements of literary texts
- Students will ask questions and carry out investigations

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.

ISSUE THEME

Unique opportunities can result from difficult situations.

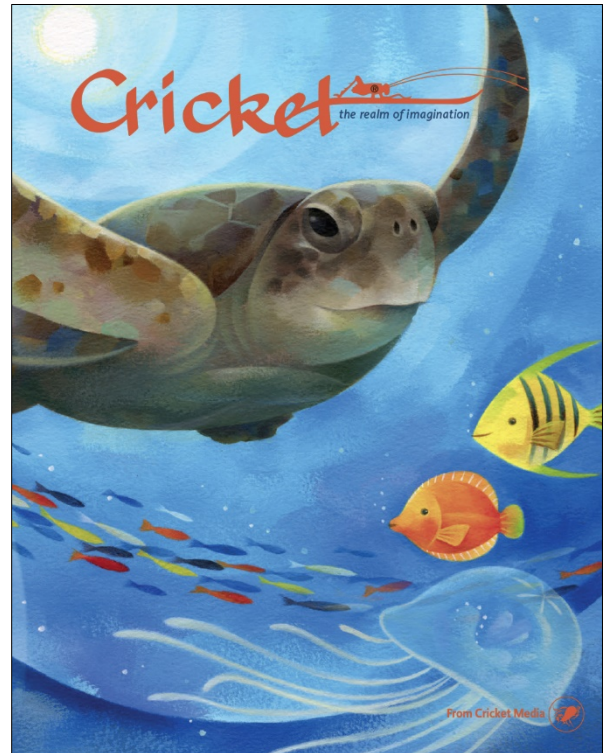
CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do you handle challenges?

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SELECTIONS

- **Swim Buddies**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~850L
- **The Man Who Built a Better Leg**
Biography, ~850L
- **Boo**
Science Fiction, ~850L

CONNECTING CURIOUS MINDS

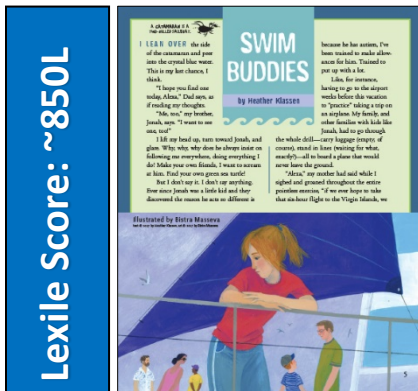
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Swim Buddies

pp. 5–10, Contemporary Realistic Fiction



THE STORY

Use this story about a young girl and her autistic brother to help students learn how to analyze and compare characters.

RESOURCES

- **Analyze Characters Worksheet**

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text

KEY VOCABULARY

- **autism (p. 5)** a condition that begins in childhood and causes problems in forming relationships and in communicating with others
- **to make allowances (p. 5)** to treat unacceptable behavior as less serious because of some special situation or condition
- **solitary (p. 8)** tending to live or spend time alone

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do you handle challenges?

Invite volunteers to describe their relationships with siblings: Do they get along with their brothers and sisters? Do they ever disagree or argue? Ask students to describe different ways that sibling relationships can be both positive and challenging. Then discuss how they deal with the challenging aspects of their relationships. Finally, tell students to notice how the girl in the story deals with her brother.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Finally, invite students to make up sentences using these words.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story independently, use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Why does Alexa resent Jonah? Is it fair for her to feel this way about him?
- What do Alexa, Jonah, and the turtle all have in common?
- Alexa says, “Maybe Jonah and I will never be the best of friends, or even good friends.” What does she mean?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyzing Character

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that when they read stories they can learn about a character by paying attention to:

- important relationships
- conflicts or problems
- words
- actions

Next, use the list above to briefly discuss Jonah. Then distribute the **Analyze Characters Worksheet** to students and have them work in pairs to add details about Jonah to the chart. Discuss these details as a group.

ASSESS: Have students work independently to complete the activities on the **Analyze Characters Worksheet**.

EXTEND

Science Invite students to learn more about autism by conducting online and library research on the topic of symptoms and treatment of autism. Then, invite students to give a short presentation of their findings.

Name _____

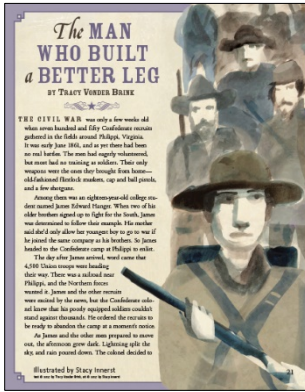
Analyze Characters Worksheet

	Jonah	Alexa
important relationships		
conflict or problems		
words		
actions		

The Man Who Built a Better Leg

pp. 21–24, Biography

Lexile Score: ~850L



THE ARTICLE

Teach students how to analyze causes and effects using this biographical article about the first amputee of the Civil War.

RESOURCES

- **Causes and Effects Worksheet**

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a biographical article
- Students will analyze the structure of texts
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events or developments

KEY VOCABULARY

- **enlist (p. 21)** to sign up for duty in the army, navy, etc.
- **ecstatic (p. 23)** very happy or excited
- **catastrophe (p. 24)** a terrible disaster
- **despair (p. 24)** the feeling of no longer having any hope
- **fate (p. 24)** a power that is believed to control what happens in the future

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do you handle challenges?

Discuss the challenges of war for both soldiers and civilians, for example injury, loss of life, being apart from friends and family, and the stress of being in constant danger. Tell students that during the Civil War, many soldiers lost one or more limbs due to infection or injury. Discuss the difficulty of dealing with such a challenge. Then tell students to read to find out how James Edward Hanger handled this challenge.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Finally, invite students to make up sentences using these words.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story independently, use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Why did James Edward Hanger want to enlist?
- What lesson might the colonel have learned?
- Compare James's reaction to coming home with those of his mother and sisters. Why were the reactions so different?
- How does this biography reflect the idea that unique opportunities can result from difficult situations?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Causes and Effects

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that biographies may focus on the causes and effects of important events in a person's life. Invite volunteers to describe an important event on the first page of this biography and its causes and effects.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the **Causes and Effects Worksheet** to all students and have them work independently to complete it. Discuss answers as a class.

EXTEND

Health & Technology Have students use the library and Internet to find out more about battlefield medicine. Ask students to create a visual display depicting at least two battlefield medical technologies, procedures, or scenarios.

Name _____

Causes and Effects Worksheet

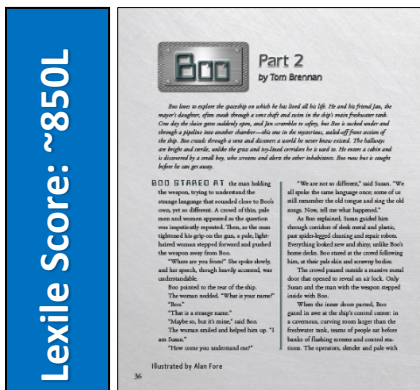
Event in James Edward Hanger's Life	
Causes	Effects

Event in James Edward Hanger's Life	
Causes	Effects

Event in James Edward Hanger's Life	
Causes	Effects

Boo

pp. 36–44, Science Fiction



THE STORY

Teach students to recognize the elements of science fiction using this story set on a spaceship.

RESOURCES

- **Science Fiction Worksheet**

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will recognize the genre and key elements of literary texts
- Students will ask questions and carry out investigations

KEY VOCABULARY

- **accented (p. 37)** spoken with a foreign accent
- **self-sufficient (p. 39)** able to live or function without help or support from others
- **fore (p. 39)** the front part of a ship, boat, or airplane
- **aft (p. 39)** the back part of a ship, boat, or airplane
- **chronicles (p. 40)** descriptions of events in the order that they happened
- **essential (p. 40)** extremely important and necessary

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do you handle challenges?

Ask students to name their favorite science fiction stories, movies, and TV shows. Discuss the unique challenges characters face in these narratives—alien invasions, dwindling natural resources, government overreach, the rise of a robot class—and the solutions they develop. Then tell students to note how the main characters in these science fiction stories handle the challenges they encounter.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Finally, invite students to make up sentences using these words.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story independently, use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Find three examples of vivid language the author uses to describe characters, places, and events.
- What are some similarities and differences between the people living in the aft and the people living in the fore of the spaceship? Who has a better life?
- Do you think the two groups will be able to live together peacefully on their new planet? Explain your ideas.

SKILLS FOCUS: Analyze Science Fiction

INSTRUCT: Challenge students to identify some characteristics of science fiction. Then display and go over the following list:

- The **setting** is often (not always!) in the future—on Earth, another planet, or outer space.
- The **characters** may be a mix of humans, animals, aliens, robots, spirits, and mutant or futuristic beings.
- The **plot** usually incorporates real or imaginary scientific developments and their effects on humans.

Invite students to give examples of these elements from the story or from other science fiction narratives they know.

ASSESS: Distribute the **Science Fiction Worksheet** and have students work independently to complete it.

EXTEND

Science Have students conduct research on a story detail to discover whether it is real or made-up science. Choices include manufactured protein, 47 Ursae Majoris, and microwave radiation curtains.

Name _____

Science Fiction Worksheet

Elements of Science Fiction	Examples found in "Boo"
<p>The setting is often (not always!) in the future—on Earth, another planet, or outer space.</p>	
<p>The characters may be a mix of humans, animals, aliens, robots, spirits, and mutant or futuristic beings.</p>	
<p>The plot usually incorporates real or imaginary scientific developments and their effects on humans.</p>	
<p>The conflict is usually connected to the effect of scientific developments on human beings.</p>	