

Spider®

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text
- Students will recognize the genre and elements of literary texts
- Students will analyze forces and interactions
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events

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

The choices we make can have important and lasting consequences.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What influences the choices we make?

ABOUT SPIDER® MAGAZINE

SPIDER® is designed to fascinate children at that critical time when they begin to read, think, and learn independently. Age-appropriate songs, games, and stories introduce important concepts that will enhance any lesson plan; young readers also encounter riddles, puzzles, activity pages, and challenging games.



SELECTIONS

- **Doodlebug & Dandelion**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~650L
- **The Path to Kindness**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~750L
- **The Last Bicycle**
Historical Fiction, ~650L

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Doodlebug & Dandelion

pp. 4–8, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Lexile Score: ~650L



THE STORY

Dandelion and Tomiko are decorating bikes for a race. At first, Dandelion doesn't think she's doing a good job, but she decides not to give up. Use this story to teach students to analyze 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: analyze characters
- Students will analyze forces and interactions

KEY VOCABULARY

- **obstacle (p. 4)** an object that you must go around or over
- **gadgets (p. 5)** small, useful devices
- **mechanical (p. 5)** of or relating to machinery
- **utter (p. 6)** to say something
- **patience (p. 8)** the ability to remain calm and not become annoyed when dealing with problems

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What influences the choices we make?

Display these sentences: “I give up!” “It’s too hard!” Ask students to describe times when they have wanted to give up on something—making an art project, learning to play a musical instrument, or figuring out a math problem. Discuss the feelings students have when they want to give up. Then ask what might make someone choose not to give up when something is difficult. Ask if it would feel better to give up or keep working at something. Then tell students to read to find out if Dandelion chooses to give up.

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

Have students read along silently as you read the story aloud. Then have students reread the story independently. Use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Why are Tomiko and Dandelion decorating bicycles?
- Why is Dandelion frustrated?
- Why doesn't Dandelion give up? What keeps her from quitting?
- What themes or messages does this story convey?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Characters

INSTRUCT: Tell students that when they come across details about a character's thoughts, words, or actions, they should ask themselves, “What do these details tell me about the character?” Read aloud the text on page 4. Then ask students what they learn about the girls from the details on this page. (*Both girls are creative and ambitious. Dandelion is insecure and Tomiko is a supportive friend.*) Have students point out story details that reveal this information.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the **Analyze Characters Worksheet**. Have students work independently to complete the activities on this page.

EXTEND

Physics Have students choose one element of a bicycle and research the science behind it. Students might choose the frame, the gears, the brakes, the tires, the pedals, biking clothing, or the forces at work when riding a bike. Students should research and report on their element.

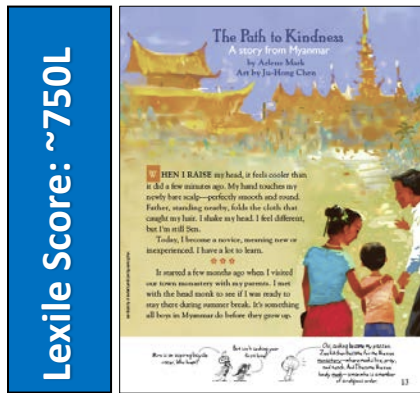
Name _____

Analyze Characters Worksheet

Character details from the story	What the details tell me about the character

Answer these questions on the lines below: Which character changed in the story? How did this character change?

The Path to Kindness pp. 13–19, Contemporary Realistic Fiction



THE STORY

Use this story about a young boy's experiences as a novice in a Buddhist monastery to teach students to compare settings.

RESOURCES

- **Compare Settings 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: compare settings
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events

KEY VOCABULARY

- **responsible (p. 16)** able to be trusted to do what is right
- **respect (p. 17)** to feel admiration for someone
- **focus (p. 15)** to direct your attention or effort at something specific
- **drifting (p. 15)** moving smoothly or easily in a way that is not planned

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What influences the choices we make?

Tell students that the things people value often influence the choices they make. For example, a person who values nature might choose to spend a lot of time outdoors. Invite students to name things they value and how this influences their actions and choices. Then tell students to think about what the boy in this story values and how this influences the choices he makes.

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

Have students read along silently as you read the story aloud. Then have students reread the story independently. Use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Why is Sen becoming a novice?
- How does Sen feel about becoming a novice?
- Summarize the Shinbyu ceremony.
- How is life different for Sen in the monastery?
- How do you think Sen will change after staying at the monastery?

SKILL FOCUS: Compare Settings

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the setting of a story is the time and place in which the events in a story happen. Explain that setting details can include information about the way people dress and act, and what they eat. Ask students to identify the two settings where events take place in this story (*outside the monastery and inside the monastery*). Then ask a few volunteers to describe the settings, based on story details.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the **Compare Settings Worksheet** to each student. Have students work independently to complete the activities on this page.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students conduct research to learn more about Buddhism and the Buddha in order to write a biography of the Buddha. Have students answer this question in their biographies: How did personal experiences influence the Buddha?

Name _____

Compare Settings Worksheet

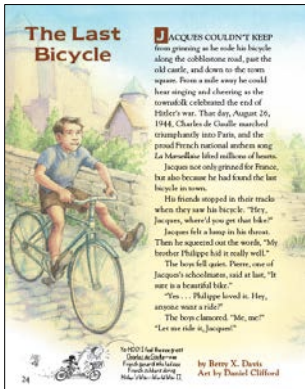
	outside the monastery	inside the monastery
clothing		
hair style		
meals		
activities		
other details you noticed		

Draw a Venn diagram on the back of this paper and use it to compare Sen’s life inside and outside the monastery.

The Last Bicycle

pp. 24–30, Historical Fiction

Lexile Score: ~650L



THE STORY

Teach students to recognize the elements of historical fiction using this story set in France at the end of WWII.

RESOURCES

- **Analyze Historical Fiction Worksheet**

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will recognize the genre and elements of literary texts: Analyze Historical Fiction
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events

KEY VOCABULARY

- **clamor** (p. 24) a loud demand for something by many people
- **torched** (p. 25) set fire to something
- **liberate** (p. 28) to free someone or something from being controlled by another person, group, etc.
- **claim** (p. 29) to take something that belongs to you or that you deserve

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What influences the choices we make?

Tell students that making choices—small or important ones—can be difficult. Offer these examples and have students identify them as small or important choices: choosing the right snack to eat and deciding what to do when a friend asks you to do something wrong. Invite students to share choices they have made. Then discuss why the choices seem small or important. Finally, tell students to think about the choice that Jacques makes in this story.

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

Have students read along silently as you read the story aloud. Then have students reread the story independently. Use the questions below to discuss the story:

- Why is the bicycle important to Jacques?
- Why did Jacques choose to give his bike to the soldier?
- What influenced Jacques's choice?
- What would you have done if you were Jacques?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Historical Fiction

INSTRUCT: Explain that historical fiction contains a mix of facts and made-up details that allow readers to imagine what it was like to live during a time in the past. Authors of historical fiction combine facts about time, place, and real people with made-up characters, events, problems, and dialogue.

Reread the first page of the story and ask students to explain where and when this story takes place. Then have students identify facts and made-up details that helped them imagine the setting. Finally, ask students what they notice about the effect the war had on Jacques and the other characters.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the **Analyze Historical Fiction Worksheet** to each student. Have students work independently to complete the activities.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students use the library and the Internet to learn more about the time period described in this story. Tell students to use at least two different sources and to create a short presentation to share what they learn.

Name _____

Historical Fiction Worksheet

Facts and Real Information	Made-Up Details

Answer this question on the lines below: What effect did the war have on people and families living in France at that time?
