

Spider®

ISSUE THEME

Creativity is powerful and comes in many forms. It can bring people together, open minds, and help us connect to our passions.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What does creativity look like?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text
- Students will analyze and interpret data
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events or developments



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, ~650L
- **Pinky Lovett's New Neighbor**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~650L
- **The Picture-Takin' Man**
Biography, ~1050L

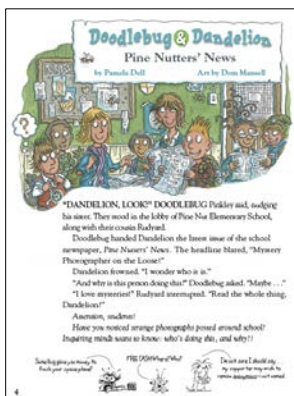
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Doodlebug & Dandelion

pp. 4–9, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about strange goings-on at Pine Nut Elementary School to teach your students the elements of a mystery.

Lexile Score: ~650L



RESOURCES

- Mystery Elements Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts
- Students will analyze and interpret data

KEY VOCABULARY

- **inquiring** (p. 4) wanting to know more
- **coded** (p. 5) put a message into the form of a code so that it can be kept secret
- **mystery** (p. 5) something that is not known
- **weird** (p. 6) unusual or strange
- **shadowy** (p. 7) dark and mysterious

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What does creativity look like?

Ask what it means to be creative. Explain that being creative means being able to think of new ideas or make new things. Discuss examples of creativity. Then ask why creativity is important. Invite students to share examples of their own creativity. Finally, tell students to think about how the characters in this story are creative thinkers.

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, have students work in groups to make predictions about the story based on the vocabulary words.

READ & DISCUSS

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

- What does Dandelion know at the beginning of the story that no one else knows?
- On page 7, why does Dandelion suggest that Doodlebug and Rudyard should look in the empty classrooms?
- Where does Dandelion go when she disappears?
- Is Dandelion creative? Tell why or why not.

SKILL FOCUS: Elements of a Mystery

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that a mystery is a form of fiction in which characters and readers are involved in trying to solve a problem. Discuss familiar mystery movies and books. Then ask students to name some elements of mystery stories. Next, display this list below and invite students to identify examples of these elements in the story.

- a puzzle that needs to be solved
- clues that help characters and readers solve the mystery
- secret information that some characters know but others don't
- red herrings—distractions that lead people astray

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

EXTEND

Science Explain that codes are not just for mystery stories or spies. Creating codes to hide information is more important than ever because of data stored in computers. Have students conduct research to learn more about the codes that have been used throughout history. Then have them use one of these codes to encrypt this message: *The ship sails at midnight.*

Name _____

Mystery Elements

Fill in the chart using details from “Doodlebug & Dandelion.” Then get together with a partner to complete the activity below.

Mystery Elements	Examples from the Story
a puzzle that needs to be solved	
secret information that some characters know about and others don't	
clues that help solve the mystery	
distractions that keep characters from thinking about or noticing something	

Paired Activity: Note the important events that happen in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Beginning	Middle	End

Spider® Teacher Guide: February 2018

Pinky Lovett's New Neighbor

pp. 20–24, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about two creative neighbors to teach students how to compare characters.



RESOURCES

- Compare 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
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information

KEY VOCABULARY

- **vibrant (p. 20)** having or showing great life, activity, and energy
- **dreary (p. 20)** not warm or cheerful
- **bleak (p. 20)** not warm, friendly, or cheerful
- **trimmed (p. 23)** decorated something, especially around the edges
- **colorful (p. 24)** interesting and exciting
- **adorned (p. 20)** decorated

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What does creativity look like?

Tell students that the way people decorate their homes usually says something about them. For example, it might show what colors a person likes or the hobbies and activities she enjoys. Ask volunteers to describe their bedrooms—the wall colors, bedspread, rug, pictures, and other any things in it that make it special to them. Then ask what their rooms say about them. Finally, explain that the next story tells about two people who decorate their homes in very different ways.

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. Next, have students work in pairs to find synonym and antonym pairs in the Key Vocabulary. Ask students to predict what the two characters in the next story will be like.

READ & DISCUSS

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

- What are Pinky Lovett's character traits?
- In what ways is Simon different from Pinky?
- Is Pinky a helpful neighbor or a pushy neighbor?
- How would the story be different if Simon was just like Pinky? Would they get along?
- What is the message or theme of this story?

SKILL FOCUS: Compare Characters

INSTRUCT: Explain that one way to analyze story characters is by comparing and contrasting them, or thinking about how they are alike and different. Point out that although Pinky and Simon seem very different, they are alike in some ways too. Display and discuss this list of details for comparison: appearance, words and actions, interactions, likes and dislikes, décor. Next, display a Venn diagram. Work as a class to briefly compare the characters, noting a few similarities and differences in the Venn diagram.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Compare Characters* worksheet to all students and have them work in pairs to complete it. Then have students use the details in their worksheets to help them write an answer to this prompt: Compare and contrast Pinky and Simon. Tell how they are alike and different.

EXTEND

Science Have students use the internet and the library to answer the question, "What is color?" Students should work in pairs to conduct research and then create a colorful diagram to show the answer.

Name _____

Compare Characters

Use the diagram to compare Pinky and Simon. How are these characters similar? How are they different?

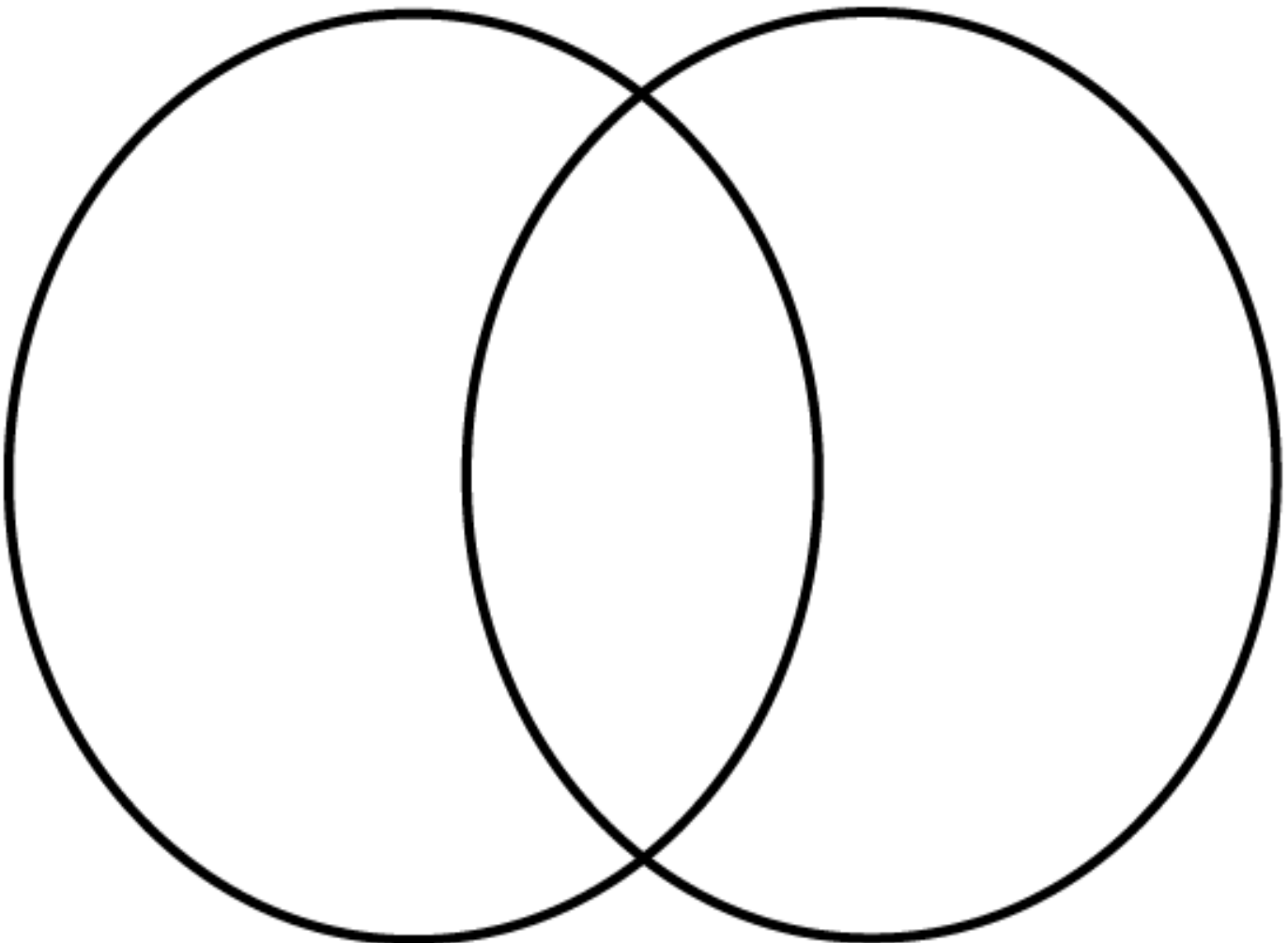
Think about:

- the way they look and dress
- their words and actions
- their interactions
- the things they like and dislike
- the way they decorate their houses

Pinky

BOTH

Simon



The Picture-Takin' Man

p. 26, Biography

Use this brief biography of James VanDerZee to teach students about characteristics of biography.

Lexile Score: ~1050L



The Picture-Takin' Man

JAMES VANDERZEE WAS interested in all sorts of things when he was growing up—microscopes, printing, music, and early movies. But after winning a black-and-white camera in a school contest and snapping his first photos, he was hooked.

James was one of the first people in his hometown to own a camera. He became the school photographer in fifth grade and took pictures of students. James earned his business degree from a night school to develop the film, and even sold photos for ten cents a piece to save for a better camera.

In 1916, James opened his own photography business in Harlem, New York. He beautifully snapped such photos, arranging the background, lighting, props, and the model's position and clothing. Sometimes he only had time to take four photos a day!

The next time you snap a photo, take some tips from James VanDerZee. Look at a subject from a new angle, arrange objects, use what pleases your eye, and remember: try the black-and-white setting! ✪

by Justice Ware

RESOURCES

- Characteristics of Biography Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a biography
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts
- Students will interpret historical context to understand relationships among historical events or developments

KEY VOCABULARY

- dark room (p. 25)** a room that is used for making photographs and is lit with a special kind of red light
- stage (p. 25)** arrange ahead of time
- props (p. 25)** objects that are used to create a desired effect in a scene
- subject (p. 25)** someone or something that is shown in a photograph or painting
- angle (p. 25)** the position from which something is looked at

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What does creativity look like?

Ask students what device they use to take photographs. Then ask what inspires them to take photos—a pretty sunset, friends making funny faces, a pet? Invite students to share their ideas. Then explain that this selection is about one photographer's beginnings and his inspiration.

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. Next, display the phrases “before taking the photo,” “while taking the photo,” “after taking the photo.” Discuss with the class which stages the vocabulary words relate to.

READ & DISCUSS

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

- How did winning a camera influence James VanDerZee's life?
- What career might he have had if he had not won the camera?
- Why did James only have time to take four photos a day?
- What are James's character traits?

SKILL FOCUS: Characteristics of Biography

INSTRUCT: Remind students that this article is a biography, or the life story of a real person. Ask students to identify the subject of the biography and share some of the things they learned about him. Then explain that the events in a biography are usually described in chronological order, or time order. Draw a short timeline on the board to show three events from your life. Then have students draw and share timelines that show three events from their lives. Next, distribute copies of the *Characteristics of Biography* worksheet and have students fill in the first event. Discuss responses.

ASSESS: Have students complete the timeline and answer the question on the worksheet. Then have students work in groups to go over their responses.

EXTEND


Social Studies James VanDerZee took many photographs of African American New Yorkers during the Harlem Renaissance (c. 1918–1935). Have students learn more about the great literary, musical, and artistic achievements of this period. Students should work in groups to research different elements of the renaissance and create a classroom exhibit.

Name _____

Characteristics of Biography Worksheet

The events in a biography are usually described in chronological order, or time order. In the timeline below, write four events from James VanDerZee's life.

1		3	
	2		4



Biographers may include information about an event that influenced the person they are writing about. How did winning a camera influence James VanDerZee's life? Write your answer on the back of this sheet.