

Spider®

ISSUE THEME

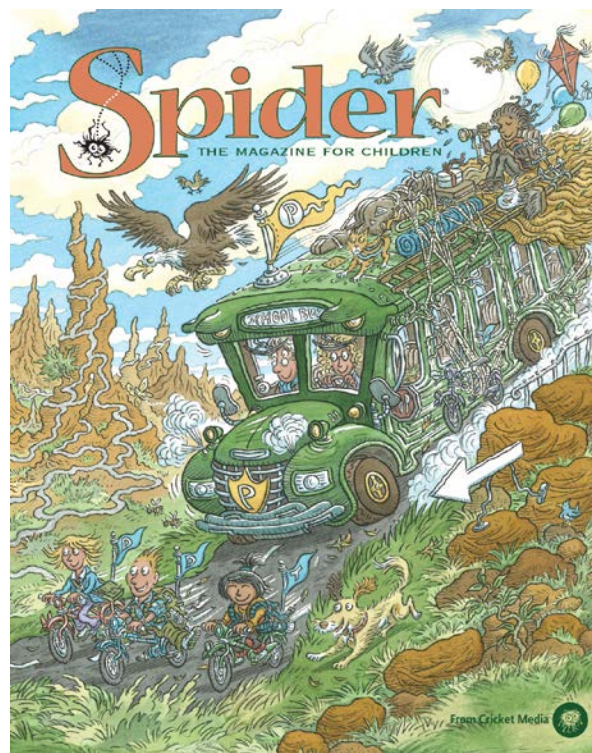
Sometimes we find ourselves having experiences that we wish we weren't having. What can be done about it? Students will enjoy reading about different story characters and how their bad situations get better.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How can you make a bad situation better?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will determine theme and summarize ideas
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact
- Students will analyze the physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics of different places
- Students will construct and use maps



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

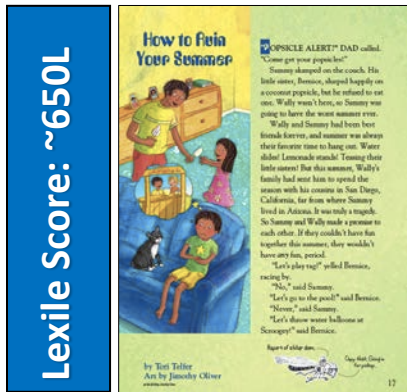
- **How to Ruin Your Summer**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~650L
- **Whitewater Rosie**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~850L
- **Liza Jean and the No-Good, No-Count, Stinky Breath Gang**
Tall Tale, ~550L

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How to Ruin Your Summer

pp. 17–20, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Have students create a comic strip that summarizes this story about a boy who misses his best friend.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will determine theme and summarize ideas
- Students will analyze the physical, cultural, and environmental characteristics of different places

KEY VOCABULARY

- **slumped** (p. 17) sat down or fell down suddenly and heavily
- **awful** (p. 18) extremely bad or unpleasant
- **dreary** (p. 18) causing unhappiness or sad feelings
- **droned** (p. 19) spoke for a long time in a dull voice without saying anything interesting

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How can you make a bad situation better?

Tell students that you are going to read aloud a letter asking for advice, and that you want them to listen and think about what advice they would give to the letter-writer. *Dear Problem-Solver, My best friend went away on a summer vacation for two months and I don't know what to do. Nothing is fun without him. Should I just sit and wait for my friend to come home? This is the worst summer ever. Signed, Miserable Me.* Invite volunteers to share their advice. Instruct students to read to find out how the main character in this story deals with a bad situation.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Next, have students work in pairs to decide how the word meanings are connected. Then have them use the following frame to create a label for the words based on how they are connected: *Words You Can Use to Talk About _____*. Invite students to share their labels. Have students look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why did Sammy and Wally promise not to have any fun?
2. Was this a good way to make a bad situation better? Explain.
3. What does Sammy do to avoid having fun?
4. List the things Sammy enjoys and doesn't enjoy on the road trip.
5. Imagine the conversation Sammy's parents and Wally's parents probably had before the road trip. What do you think they said?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme/Summarize

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the theme of a story is a message about life that an author wants to share with readers. Explain to the students that they can figure out themes by thinking about details and events in a story, such as characters' problems and how they react to them and solve them. Direct students to work in pairs to determine themes for this story. Ask volunteers to share their themes with the class.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to compare their themes and cooperatively choose a single theme for the story. Then have pairs create a six- to eight-panel comic strip that summarizes the story and depicts this theme. Invite students to share their comic strips.

EXTEND

Geography Have students create an Arizona travel poster. It must include a map of Arizona showing the capital, the flag of Arizona, and three to five interesting places to visit in the state, with pictures.

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Whitewater Rosie

pp. 22–26, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a blind cow that falls into a river to teach students how to recognize suspense.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact
- Students will construct and use maps

KEY VOCABULARY

- **dozing (p. 22)** sleeping lightly
- **bank (p. 23)** the higher ground that is along the edge of a river or stream
- **sand bar (p. 23)** a raised area of sand with a top that is near or just above the surface of the water in an ocean, lake, or river
- **gorge (p. 24)** a deep, narrow area between hills or mountains, often with a river running through it
- **basking (p. 26)** relaxing happily in a warm place

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How can you make a bad situation better?

Invite students to share strategies that they have used to make bad situations better for themselves, for others, or for animals. Explain that the next story is about a cow's bad situation.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Have students work in pairs to sort the words into groups. Invite volunteers to share and explain their groupings of words. Direct the students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Where does the story take place?
2. How did Rosie end up in the river?
3. Why does the author state that it was good that Rosie could not see what was happening to her?
4. On page 24, find two details that made you think something terrible would happen to Rosie.
5. How was Rosie rescued?

SKILL FOCUS: Understand Suspense

INSTRUCT: Ask students to share what they know about suspense.

Explain that in stories, suspense is the tension readers feel that makes them want to know what will happen next. Display and discuss the elements that create suspense below and ask students to describe examples of suspense in popular books or movies.

- A character is in a dangerous situation.
- Something terrible is about to happen.
- Events happen quickly.

Ask a volunteer to identify an episode in “Whitewater Rosie” and explain how it creates suspense.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to identify four other episodes in “Whitewater Rosie” and explain how they create suspense. Then have students share and compare their responses with another pair. Have each group of four choose the most suspenseful moment in the story and share their opinion with the class.

EXTEND

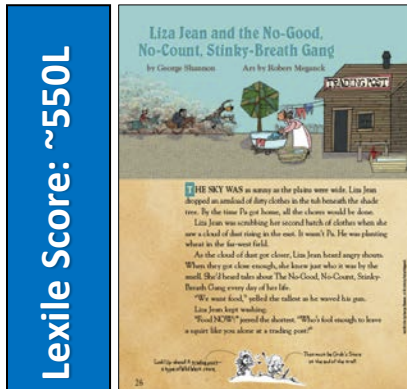
Geography Have students locate British Columbia and the Fraser River on a map. Then have them create an imaginary map showing Rosie's trip. Maps should include labeled pictures of the farm where Rosie lived, the river, the sand bar, and other details mentioned in the story.

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Liza Jean and the No-Good, No-Count, Stinky Breath Gang

pp. 28–31, Tall Tale

Teach your students to analyze characters and identify traits by using this story that features a girl who outsmarts a gang of bandits.



RESOURCES

- Character Traits Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a tall tale
- Students will analyze how characters develop
- Students will analyze places

KEY VOCABULARY

- **plains** (p. 28) a large area of flat land without trees
- **smirked** (p. 29) smiled in an unpleasant way
- **filthy** (p. 29) very dirty
- **broke** (p. 31) not having any money
- **smarts** (p. 31) intelligence

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How can you make a bad situation better?

Preview the story title and illustrations with students. Then have students work in pairs to predict what the bad situation is in this story and how it will get better. Invite students to share their predictions.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions and read them aloud. Have students work in pairs to write sentences that use these words and show their meanings. Invite partners to share their sentences by reading them aloud without the vocabulary words to another pair. Other pairs should guess which vocabulary words belong in the sentences. Remind students to review predictions after they read.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. What is the setting of this story?
2. What creates the cloud of dust?
3. Why do you think Liza Jean agreed to cook for the gang?
4. What did Liza Jean do while the gang ate stew and biscuits?
5. When did Liza Jean probably put the gold in the tub?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Character Traits

INSTRUCT: Explain that characters, like real people, have traits or qualities that can be positive or negative. For example, a character might be generous, considerate, stubborn, loyal, or lazy. Tell students that authors don't directly tell readers about a character's traits. Instead, readers draw inferences about traits by considering the character's words, actions, and feelings. Use a short picture book to teach character traits. First, display a three-column chart with the headings "Character," "Trait," and "Evidence from the Story." Read the book aloud. Ask students to identify one of the character's traits and the information that revealed it. Record responses in the chart.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Character Traits* worksheet and have students work independently to record the traits of the characters in "Liza Jean and the No-Good, No-Count, Stinky Breath Gang." Then have students share their responses with the class.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students conduct research to learn when trading posts were common in the U.S. and what sorts of goods they sold. Instruct students to use what they learn to help them draw a picture of the inside of a trading post. Tell students to create an informational caption for their drawing.

Name _____

Character Traits Worksheet

In the chart below, write the traits exhibited by characters in “Liza Jean and the No-Good, No-Count, Stinky Breath Gang.”
Note evidence from the story that shows each trait.

Character's Name	Trait	Evidence from the Story