

Lesson 2 (Student Book pages 41–44)

Identifying Characters

Required Read Alouds: B (*The Art Lesson*); C (*Chrysanthemum*)

Lesson Objectives

- Recognize that characters are the people or animals that a story is about.
- Identify the characters in a story.
- Use word and picture evidence to tell more about characters in a story.
- Understand that asking questions about characters can help readers better understand a story.

The Learning Progression

- **Prior to K:** Children should have a basic understanding of who is in a story as well as who says and does things. Children should also be able to ask and answer *who* questions about stories.
- **Grade K expects children to identify characters in a story with prompting and support.**
- **Grade 1** further develops the standard by having children not only identify characters but also use details from the story to describe them.

Tap Children's Prior Knowledge

- Gather a few storybooks you have read with children. If possible, choose books that have clear illustrations of the characters. Display the cover of one book and quickly recall the story together.
- Tell children you are going to ask a *who* question about this story. Remind them that they answer a *who* question with a name.
- Ask: *Who is in this story?* For additional support, point to each character in the illustration and ask: *Who is this?*
- Repeat this process with books that span a variety of character types, including humans, animals, and anthropomorphic objects like Thomas the Tank Engine. Also include books that have many characters and books that have only a few characters.
- After reviewing several books, help children see that when they answer the question *Who is in the story?*, they are naming the characters in the story.
- Tell children that in this lesson, they will name the characters in a story and learn to ask questions about them. Answering the questions will help them understand more about the characters.

Ready Teacher Toolbox

Teacher-Toolbox.com

	Prerequisite Skills	On-Level Skills
Ready Lessons		✓
Tools for Instruction		✓ ✓
Interactive Tutorials		✓



Step by Step

- **Introduce the standard.** Tell children they will name the characters in a story and learn some questions they can ask to find out more about them. Explain that learning more about the characters helps readers better understand a story.
- Ask children to listen carefully as you read aloud the following story:

Emily was so excited to see the lions at the zoo. She pulled her friend Carlos by the hand. "Come on, let's hurry to the front so we can see!" she said. But Carlos stood still. "I think I will stay here," he said. He didn't want to tell Emily that he was scared.

- Remind children that a *character* is a person in a story. Ask: *Who is in this story?* (Emily; Carlos)
Then say:

When we read a story, the first thing we notice is the characters, or who is in the story. We know this story is about Emily and Carlos. Next, we ask questions to learn more about the characters. We think about what the characters say, what they do, and how they feel.

Tip: Briefly review with children words they can use to describe the way someone feels. Make a list of children's suggestions to use throughout the lesson.

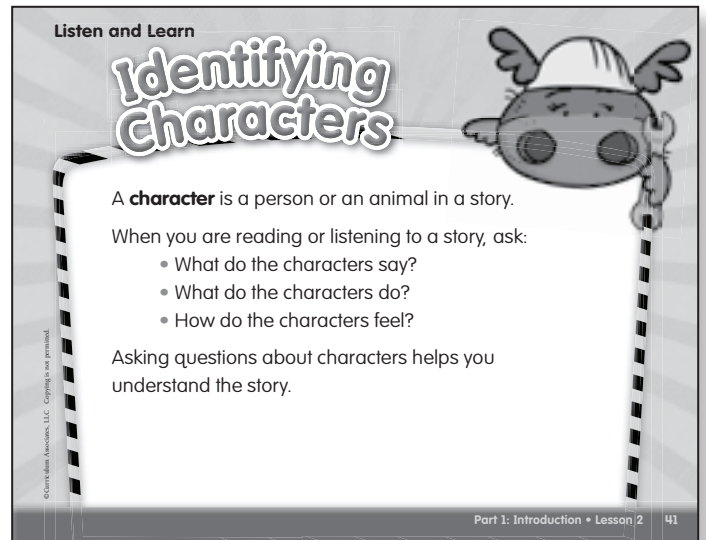
- Tell children to listen closely for details about Emily as you reread the story. Then ask:

What does Emily say to Carlos? ("Come on, let's hurry to the front so we can see!")

What does Emily do? (She pulls on Carlos' hand.)

How does Emily feel? (excited)

- Explain that asking these questions about Emily helps you learn important details about her.
- Tell children that in their Student Books, they will learn questions they can ask to find out more about characters in a story.



- **Read aloud the Student Book page.** Have children turn to Student Book page 41. Read aloud the page as children listen and follow along.
- Point to the first bullet, and briefly review what Emily says. Invite children to repeat what Emily does and how she feels as you reread the remaining questions.
- Tell children they will practice answering the same questions about Carlos. Have them listen closely as you reread the story. Then ask:

What does Carlos say to Emily? ("I think I will stay here.")

What does Carlos do? (He stands still.)

How does Carlos feel? (scared)

- Invite children to tell about the characters in their own words. Discuss how knowing what the characters say and do and how they feel can help readers understand what is happening in the story.
- **Have children demonstrate understanding.** Ask volunteers to share what they have learned so far about identifying story characters and asking questions to learn more about them. Encourage children to tell about characters they know from familiar classroom read-alouds.



Step by Step

- **Review Part 1.** Remind children that a *character* is a person or animal in a story. Review the questions they can ask to learn more about characters.
- **Revisit the story.** Display *The Art Lesson*. Page through the book, using the pictures as prompts to have children recall the story.
- **Model identifying characters.** Explain that you will model identifying and finding out more about the characters in a story. Display and read aloud page 3. Then think aloud:

First I ask *Who is in this story?* The words tell me that it is Tommy. He must be the boy here in this picture. Now I will try to learn more about him from the details in the story.

What does the character say? Tommy doesn't say anything here, so I'll move on. What does the character do? I see in the picture that Tommy is drawing. The words say "He drew pictures everywhere he went." This goes along with the detail that he wants to be an artist. I can tell that drawing is important to Tommy.

- Reread the last sentence, and ask:

How does Tommy feel about drawing? (*happy; it is his favorite thing to do*)

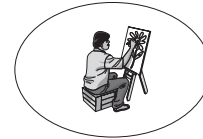
- Explain that authors do not always explicitly say how a character feels. Sometimes readers must interpret this based on the details in the story. Point to Tommy's smile and the words "It was his favorite thing to do" as evidence that shows how he feels about drawing.
- Use the Close Reading activity to look for additional clues about the character's feelings.
- Tell children you will model how to complete the Student Book page by identifying and learning more about the character in this part of *The Art Lesson*.
- **Model completing the Student Book page.** Have children turn to Student Book page 42. For the first item, ask: *Who is this story mostly about?* Point to and name each picture (*a girl; a boy; a baby*). Demonstrate circling the correct answer. Continue with the second item. Ask: *What does Tommy want to be when he grows up?* (*a baker; an artist; a baseball player*)

Practice Together Identifying Characters

Circle.



Circle.



Model completing the page. For the first item, ask: *Who is this story mostly about?* Point to and name each picture (*a girl; a boy; a baby*). Demonstrate circling the correct answer. Continue with the second item. Ask: *What does Tommy want to be when he grows up?* (*a baker; an artist; a baseball player*)

Turn: What does Tommy do to show he wants to be an artist?
Talk: Ask and answer this question with your partner.

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Tip: Clarify for children that the images in the top row are not the exact characters from the story. Prior to circling the correct answer, model asking yourself *Is Tommy a girl, a boy, or a baby?*

- **Have children demonstrate understanding.** Display page 3. Read aloud the Turn and Talk activity. Model what a conversation with a partner should sound like by asking and answering the following question.

What does Tommy do to show he wants to be an artist? Ask and answer this question with your partner. (*He draws everywhere. He calls drawing his favorite thing to do. He puts his pictures up for sale.*)

Close Reading

- Remind children to use picture clues to find out how a character feels. Display page 3, and have children look closely at the illustration. Ask:

Why does the picture of the juggler have a 5¢ note above it? (*The picture is for sale.*)

Tommy thinks his drawings are good enough for someone to buy. What word might tell how he feels about his drawings? (*proud*)

What is all over the sidewalk? (*drawings*)

Do the drawings on the sidewalk tell us that Tommy is proud of his drawings, too? (*yes*)
Explain why. (*He wants everyone to see them.*)



Step by Step

- **Review learning from Parts 1–2.** Remind children that they can ask questions about what a character says, does, and feels to learn about the character. Display page 3 of *The Art Lesson*. Ask children to review what Tommy does and how he feels about drawing.
- **Revisit the story.** Display *Chrysanthemum*. Page through the book, using the pictures as prompts to have children recall the story.
- **Guide children to identify characters.** Tell children to listen for a character's name as you read. Display and read aloud pages 5–7, including the text in the illustrations. Ask:

Who is in this story? (*Chrysanthemum*)

Look at the pictures. Is Chrysanthemum a person? (*No. She is a mouse.*)

- Review that in many stories, animals or other non-human things can act just like people. Readers use their imaginations to pretend the characters are people.
- Remind children that they can ask and answer questions to learn more about characters. Have them listen as you read again for what Chrysanthemum does and how she feels.

What does Chrysanthemum do? (*grows up; listens to her name; says her name; writes her name*)

How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name? (*She loves it.*)

- Explain to children that you will work together to complete the Student Book page by identifying and learning more about the character in *Chrysanthemum*.
- **Guide children to complete the Student Book page.** Have children turn to Student Book page 43. For the first item, ask: *Who is the character in this story?* Point to and name each picture (*a mouse; an elephant; a penguin*). Have a volunteer tell which picture to circle. Continue with the second item. Ask: *How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name in this part of the story?* (*sad; surprised; happy*)
- Discuss the answers to the Student Book page. Help children point to evidence in the story that supports the correct answers.
- Use the Close Reading activity to provide additional practice in identifying a character's feelings.

Practice Together

Identifying Characters

Guide children to complete the page. For the first item, ask: *Who is the character in this story?* Point to and name each picture (*a mouse; an elephant; a penguin*). Have a volunteer tell which picture to circle. Continue with the second item. Ask: *How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name in this part of the story?* (*sad; surprised; happy*)

Turn. With your partner, ask and answer a question about Chrysanthemum. Talk. For example, ask: *What does Chrysanthemum do to show how she feels about her name?*

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Part 3: Guided Practice • Lesson 2 43

- **Have children demonstrate understanding.** Display pages 5–7 of *Chrysanthemum*. Read aloud the Turn and Talk activity.

With your partner, ask and answer a question about Chrysanthemum. For example, ask:
What does Chrysanthemum do to show how she feels about her name? (*She whispers her name to herself. She draws hearts when she writes her name.*)

- Invite partners to share their questions with the class. Discuss the answers and help children find evidence in the story to support them.

Close Reading

- Guide children to use picture clues to find out how a character feels. Display page 7 and focus on the first picture. Ask:

What face is Chrysanthemum making in the top picture? (*She is smiling.*)

What is Chrysanthemum doing with her hands in the second picture? (*holding her heart*)

What is drawn around Chrysanthemum's name in the bottom picture? (*hearts*)

- Discuss with children what they do to show they love something. Compare their answers with what Chrysanthemum is doing in the pictures.



Part 4: Independent Practice

Step by Step

- **Review learning from Parts 1–3.** Remind children that identifying characters and asking questions about them can help readers understand a story. Ask children to tell what they have already learned about Chrysanthemum from the beginning of the story.
- **Have children identify characters.** Display pages 18–19 of *Chrysanthemum*. Tell children to listen as you read to find out who is in this part of the story. (Victoria; Mrs. Chud; Chrysanthemum)
- Reread page 18 and display the picture. Ask:

What is Chrysanthemum named after? (*a flower*)

(Point to the picture.) **What is Chrysanthemum doing?** (*frowning and covering her ears*)

Why is she doing this? (*Victoria is teasing her.*)

- Reread page 19 and display the illustration. Ask:

How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name now? (*She feels sad.*)

Tip: Model figuring out the meaning of *miserably* by rereading the text and looking at how unhappy Chrysanthemum looks in the picture. Help children define it in their own words and use it independently.

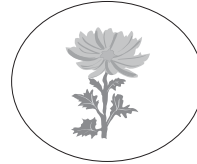
- Use the Close Reading activity to help children notice when a character's feelings change.
- Tell children that they will complete the Student Book page independently by identifying details about the character in this part of *Chrysanthemum*.
- **Have children complete the Student Book page independently.** Have children turn to page 44. For the first item, ask: *What is Chrysanthemum named after?* Point to and name each picture (*a dress; a flower; sneakers*). Have children circle their answers. Continue with the second item. Ask: *How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name in this part of the story?* (*happy; sad; surprised*)
- Discuss the answers to the Student Book page. Help children point to evidence in the story that supports the correct answers.
- **Have children demonstrate understanding.** Display pages 18–19 of *Chrysanthemum*. Read aloud the Turn and Talk activity.

Practice by Myself

Identifying Characters



Circle.



Circle.



Have children complete the page independently. For the first item, ask: *What is Chrysanthemum named after?* Point to and name each picture (*a dress; a flower; sneakers*). Have children circle their answers. Continue with the second item. Ask: *How does Chrysanthemum feel about her name in this part of the story?* (*happy; sad; surprised*)

Turn Talk: How does Victoria feel about Chrysanthemum's name? What does Victoria say that makes you think that? Ask and answer these questions with your partner.

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How does Victoria feel about Chrysanthemum's name? What does Victoria say that makes you think that? Ask and answer these questions with your partner. (*Victoria cannot believe Chrysanthemum's name. She says it is a flower that lives in a garden with worms and dirty things.*)

- Invite children to share their ideas with the class. Help them find evidence in the story to support their answers.
- **Have children reflect on their learning.** Invite children to tell what a *character* is and name the questions they can ask to learn more about them. Discuss how readers can use words and picture clues to learn what characters say, do, and feel.

Close Reading

- Tell children that characters can change the way they feel throughout a story. Reread page 19. Ask:

What face is Chrysanthemum making? (*She is frowning.*)

What clues in the words tell us how Chrysanthemum feels? (*the words "thought Chrysanthemum miserably"*)

Why is Chrysanthemum sad now when she was happy before? (*Victoria keeps teasing her and making her feel bad about her name.*)

- Emphasize that it is important to notice when characters' feelings change in a story.



Assessment and Remediation

If you observe . . .	Then try . . .
Difficulty identifying characters in a story	Retelling a familiar story with just one character, such as <i>The Fox and the Grapes</i> . Ask: <i>Who is the character in the story?</i> Before children respond, remind them that the answer to a <i>who</i> question is the name of a person or an animal that acts like a person. As children become more comfortable, challenge them with stories that have multiple characters.
Difficulty identifying what characters do and say	Acting out the role of a familiar story character, such as Hare in <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> . Say: <i>I can beat you in a race, Tortoise.</i> Jog a few laps, and then act out taking a nap. Ask: <i>What does Hare say?</i> (<i>"I can beat you in a race, Tortoise."</i>) <i>What does Hare do?</i> (<i>runs and takes a nap</i>) Repeat for the character of Tortoise.
Difficulty identifying how characters feel	Explaining that sometimes authors show how characters feel instead of telling it. Demonstrate various feelings through facial expressions and body language. For example, put on a big smile and jump up and down. Say: <i>This is awesome!</i> Ask children to tell how you feel. (<i>happy; excited</i>) Repeat with other feelings, such as <i>sad, mad, scared, and worried</i> . Have children join in pantomiming and identifying each other's feelings. Then help children practice identifying a character's feelings by looking at words and actions.

Connections

Throughout the grades, students explore the concept of characters as central to a story's framework. As they progress through the grades, students will be required to go beyond simply identifying characters' actions and emotions to analyzing their motivations and the impact of their actions on story events. As students examine characters individually and in relation to other characters, they may ask questions such as these: *How do the characters react to challenges and obstacles? How do the characters' actions move the story in a particular direction? How would the story have changed if the characters had acted differently? How do the characters interact with each other? What effect does this have on the story?* Use the following activities to help children begin this transition.

- Read aloud pages 7–11 of *The Art Lesson*. Ask: *How does Tommy's family feel about his love of drawing? What makes you think that?* Then have children imagine that Tommy's family tells him to put away his crayons and stop drawing. Discuss how the story might have had a different ending if that had happened.
- Read aloud page 17 of *Chrysanthemum*. Ask children to tell what Chrysanthemum's classmates think of her name. Talk about how that makes her feel. Then read aloud page 30. Discuss how the classmates' attitude toward Chrysanthemum's name has changed and the reason why. Talk about how this change affects the way Chrysanthemum feels at the end of the story.