

The Heart of a Story: Characters, Setting and Events

1st–2nd Grade

Objectives

- Using illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting or events
- Using information from illustrations and words to demonstrate understanding of characters, setting or plot

Materials Needed

- *Nate the Great and the Mushy Valentine* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- Story Elements chart
- Chart paper, chalkboard or document camera
- Marker or chalk
- Story Elements spinner
- Story Elements story and questions
- Pencils
- Paper clips



Introduction

Read aloud *Nate the Great and the Mushy Valentine* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat.

Procedure

1. After reading the story, explain to students that they will be taking a closer look at the story elements to see how the story is constructed and to better understand what they've read.
2. Give each student a copy of the Story Elements chart, and copy the chart onto chart paper or a chalkboard for students to see (or use a document camera to post it on a screen).
3. Begin by defining the terms of the story elements. Then offer scaffolding sentences to demonstrate and encourage students. For example:
 - "The setting is where and when the story takes place. What are some clues in the story that tell us or show us the setting? The setting is..."
 - "A problem is defined as..." and "The problem in the story is..."
4. Revisit the text and have students help you fill in each part of the chart by looking for answers in the text and supporting their responses by recording the pages/page numbers where the answers are found. For example, "The title of the story, *Nate the Great and the Mushy Valentine*, can be found on the cover page, inside cover and title page." When identifying the story elements together, demonstrate how to organize and record those elements on the class chart. Have students write the answers on their own charts as well. Discuss the story elements (characters, setting, problem and solution/conclusion) as common features of most chapter books. (Students can also work in groups or pairs to search the text closely for answers.)
5. Encourage volunteers to provide examples from the book or offer specific details from the story that give clues to support their answers.

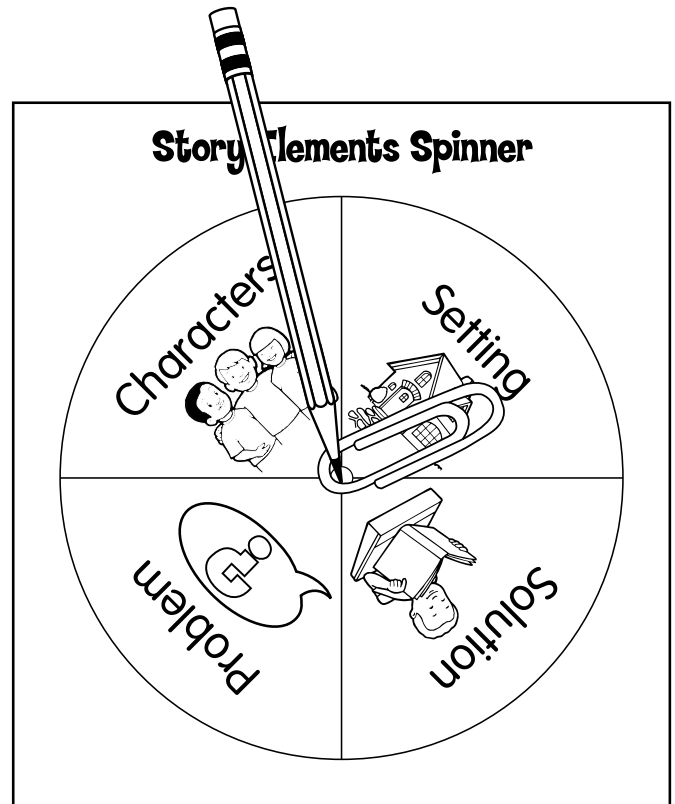
6. Once the class chart is completed, review the information to be sure that students understand the concept behind each story element and how to identify each element in a given story.

Independent Practice

1. Provide each student with a copy of the Story Elements story and questions.
2. Challenge students to read the story and complete the activity that helps them identify each story element.

Learning Extension

1. Place a Story Elements spinner and several copies of the Story Elements chart in a classroom learning center.
2. When students finish reading a story, encourage them to visit the learning center to complete a Story Elements chart on their own.
3. Give students a spinner, a paper clip and a pencil. Show students how to use the paper clip as the arrow for the spinner: Take the paper clip and slide it onto the pencil. Then hold the pencil upright with the tip in the center of the spinner. Flick the paper clip to make it spin around the pencil.
4. Ask students to spin the spinner and fill in the information from their story in the corresponding space on the chart. Remind students that the "Solution" section of the spinner corresponds to the "Solution/Conclusion" space on the chart. (Alternatively, you may want to have students read a passage or story with a partner and complete the center activity together as a game, taking turns to spin the spinner and fill in responses on their charts until each student has completed a chart.)



Story Elements

Characters

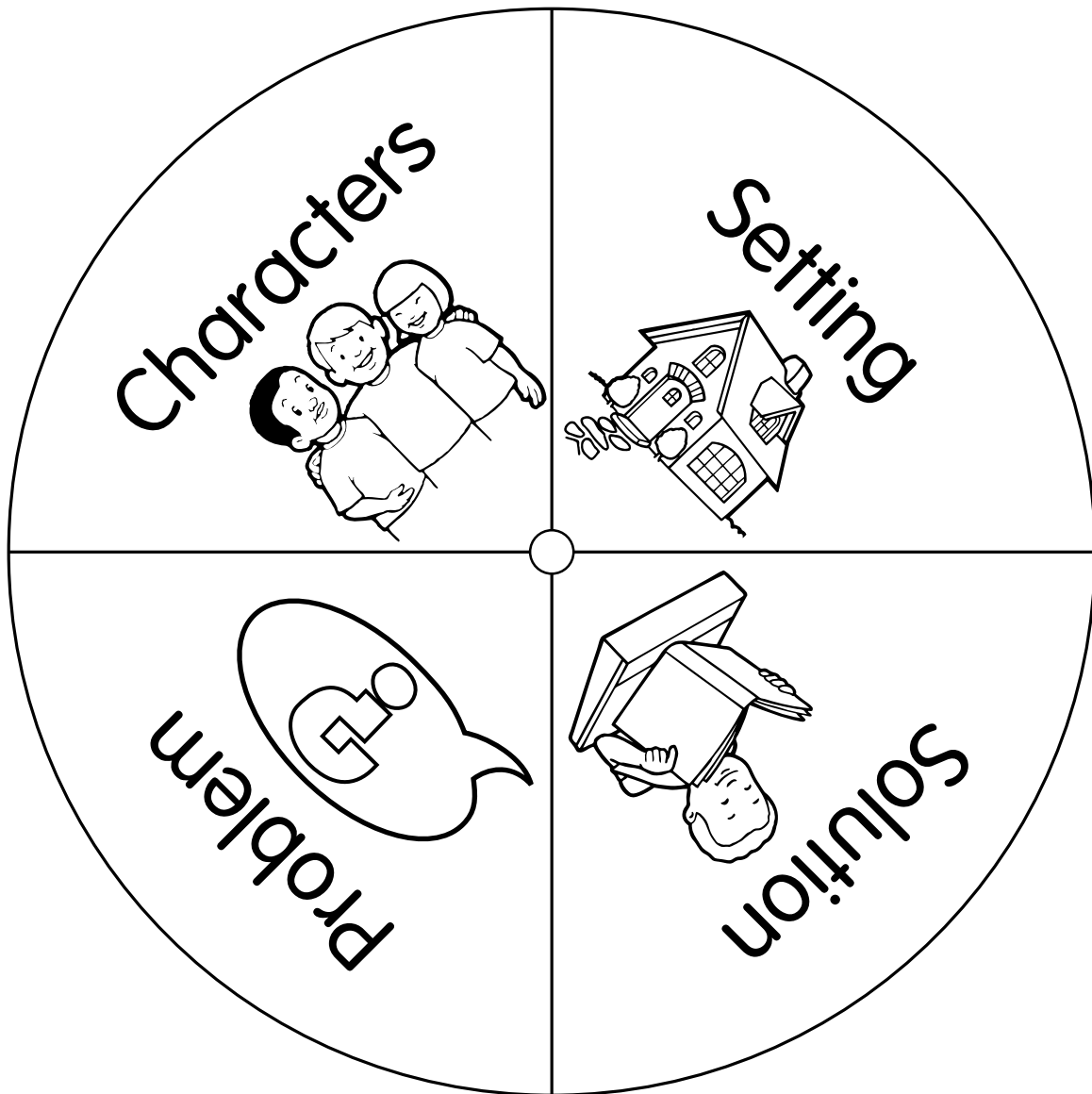
Setting

Title:

Problem

Solution/Conclusion

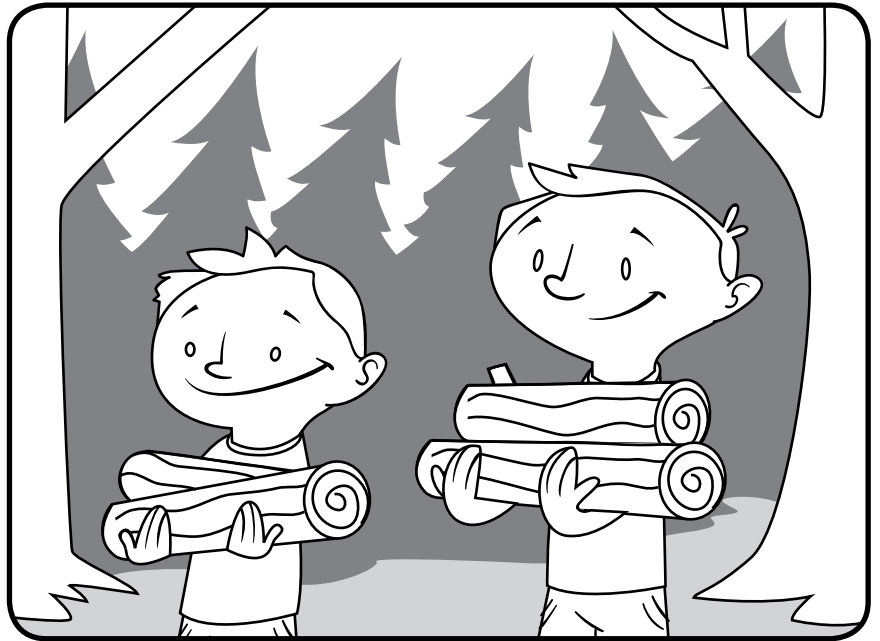
Story Elements Spinner



A Happy Ending

Jack took his younger brother camping. It was Seth's first time sleeping out in the woods.

Seth helped Jack find wood for the fire. Then they went to the river and caught a fish for dinner. Jack showed Seth how to cook the fish over the fire. Seth was having a great time!



After dinner, it got dark quickly. Jack and Seth sat by the fire. Jack told a scary story about monsters. Then the boys got out their sleeping bags.



Seth lay in his sleeping bag. He could not stop thinking about monsters. He told Jack he would never be able to sleep.

Jack was sorry that he had told the story. He wanted to make Seth feel better. So Jack quickly thought of a new ending.

"I forgot to tell you something," Jack said. "If you have a lucky stone, the monsters will not bother you. I brought one for you."

Jack gave Seth a smooth stone. Seth was not scared anymore. Soon they were both fast asleep.



Name _____

Date _____

Who? What? Where?



Record the story's characters, setting, problem, and solution.

Characters _____

Setting _____

Problem _____

Solution _____

