

Spider®

THEME

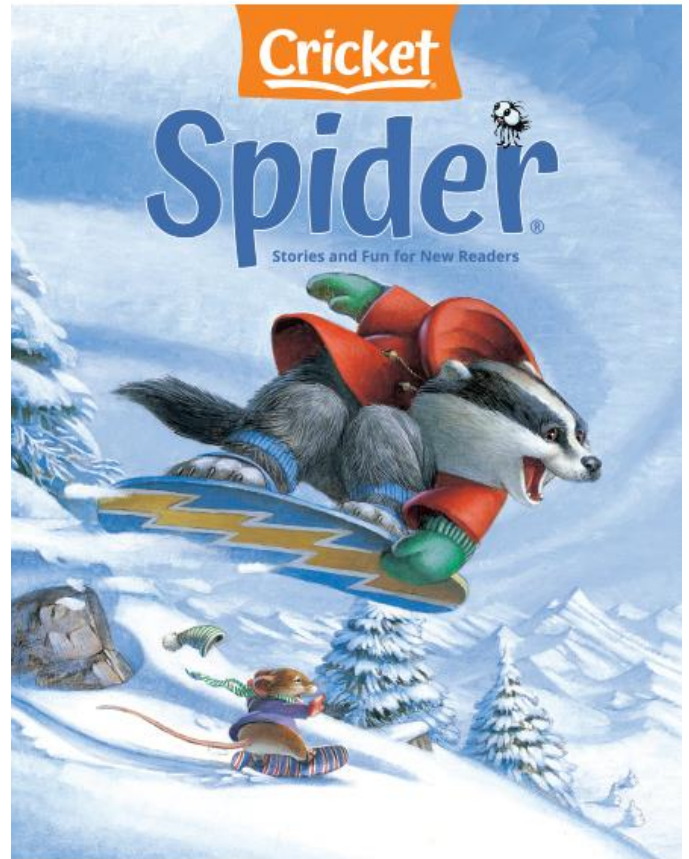
Many interesting things happen in winter stories. Characters learn lessons about kindness and greed, cheer up lonely friends, and invent a useful object. Use the mini lessons and activities in this teacher guide to reinforce language arts skills and engage students in a variety of learning activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What happens in winter stories?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze short stories.
- Students will determine themes of a text and analyze their development.
- Students will recognize key elements and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will analyze how individuals develop and interact.
- Students will use maps.
- Students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners.
- Students will conduct short research projects.



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

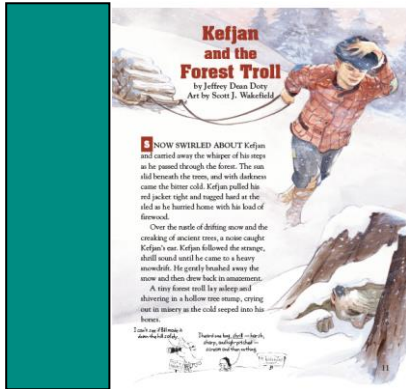
- **Kefjan and the Forest Troll**
Folktales
- **The Red Hat**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction
- **Chester's Frozen Ears**
Historical Fiction

Spider® Teacher Guide: November/December 2023

Kefjan and the Forest Troll

pp. 11–17, Folktale

Use this story about a troll who rewards kindness and punishes greed to help students identify theme.



RESOURCES

- Theme

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will determine themes of a text and analyze their development.
- Students will use maps.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **bitter** (p. 11) very cold
- **seeped** (p. 11) flowed or passed slowly through small openings in something
- **touched** (p. 12) emotionally affected because you are grateful or pleased by what someone has done or said
- **worn** (p. 13) damaged or too old

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What happens in winter stories?

Ask students to name books and movies with winter settings, such as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Polar Express*. Have students work in pairs to choose a familiar winter story and discuss how it might change if it was set in summer. Ask partners to share their ideas. Then tell students to think about how the snowy, cold setting in “Kefjan and the Forest Troll” is important to the story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them.

1. My jeans are so _____ they have holes at the knees.
2. The rain _____ through my jacket and soaked my clothes.
3. Wear thick gloves to keep your hands warm in the _____ cold.
4. Grandma’s kind and generous gift _____ me.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. How does Kefjan help the troll?
2. How does Kefjan discover that his jacket is magic?
3. Why does Ravenosk think Kefjan stole the coins?
4. Describe three actions Kefjan takes that show he is kind.
5. What does Ravenosk think when he first sees his black coat hanging on his shop’s doorknob?
6. How does the snowy, cold setting affect the characters in the story?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Theme

INSTRUCT: Explain that the theme of a story is a message about life that an author wants to share with readers. Give examples of common literary themes: “kindness is more important than popularity,” “families come in all shapes and sizes.” Continue by explaining that themes are not usually stated. They can be identified by thinking about information and events in a story, including how characters react to problems, important decisions characters make, how characters change and grow, and lessons characters learn. Discuss possible themes of familiar stories.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Theme* worksheet. Have students work in pairs to complete it. Discuss students’ themes and the details that revealed them.

EXTEND

Social Studies: Use the article (or YouTube clip) “It Came from the Trash!” (*Spider*, October 2020) to introduce students to Thomas Dambo, the Danish artist known for his giant troll sculptures made from recycled trash. Have students work in pairs to use Dambo’s online troll map to learn the location of five different troll sites. Then have them find these sites on a map or atlas. Which troll is closest to their hometown?

Spider® Teacher Guide: November/December 2023

Kefjan and the Forest Troll

Theme Answer the questions in the table below. Use your answers to help you identify one or more themes for “Kefjan and the Forest Troll.”

Kefjan

Ravenosk

How does the character help the troll?		
What motivates the character to help the troll?		
What character trait is shown by the character’s actions?		
What lesson does the troll teach the character?		

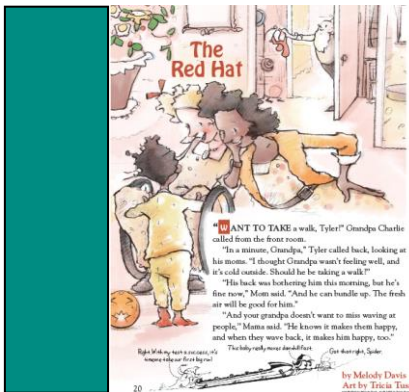
Identify Theme The theme of a story may be a lesson that a character learns. What do you think is the theme of “Kefjan and the Forest Troll”?

Spider® Teacher Guide: November/December 2023

The Red Hat

pp. 20–24, Contemporary
Realistic Fiction

Give students practice in identifying narrative elements using this story about a boy who uses his grandfather's red hat to help an elderly neighbor.



RESOURCES

- Story Map

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize key elements and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **bother** (p. 20) to make someone feel sick or uncomfortable
- **mummy** (p. 21) a dead body that has been wrapped in cloth for burial, in the manner of the ancient Egyptians
- **grumbled** (p. 21) complained quietly about something
- **appreciate** (p. 23) to be grateful for something

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What happens in winter stories?

Brainstorm with students to create a list of fun activities on snowy days. Jot responses on the board. Then have students write a very short story about a time they were in snow. Students who have never seen snow can write about what they would do the first time they see snow. Give students five minutes to write their stories. Invite volunteers to share their stories. Then tell students to notice how the characters in “The Red Hat” have fun in the cold.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Have students work in groups of four to write sentences using the vocabulary words, with each group member responsible for a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why does taking a walk make Grandpa happy?
2. Grandpa tells Tyler, “[Henry’s] wife died right after we lost your grandmother.” What do Grandpa and Henry have in common?
3. Grandpa and Henry both lost their wives. Do they both seem lonely? Explain.
4. What plan does Tyler come up with after Henry’s hat falls in the pond?
5. What could be an alternate title for this story?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Story Elements

INSTRUCT: Ask students to name the elements of a story. Then display a copy of the *Story Map* worksheet and go over these terms in the graphic organizer: *character, setting, problem/solution, story events*. Ask students to identify these elements in a familiar story. Record students’ responses, correcting them as needed.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Story Map* to students and have them work in pairs to identify and record the story elements in “The Red Hat.” Discuss responses as a class. Invite students to share themes or messages they find in the story, for example, “good things can come out of difficult situations.”

EXTEND

ESL/Speaking and Listening: Have students interview an older person they know, such as a relative, neighbor, or family friend. Brainstorm a set of questions they can use for the interview. (Type the phrase “interview an older person” into a search engine to find interview videos and sample questions.) Then create a handout of the questions for students to take with them to the interview. Have students record the interview—in writing or electronically—and then share interviews with the class.

Story Map

Use the organizer below to record information from “The Red Hat.”

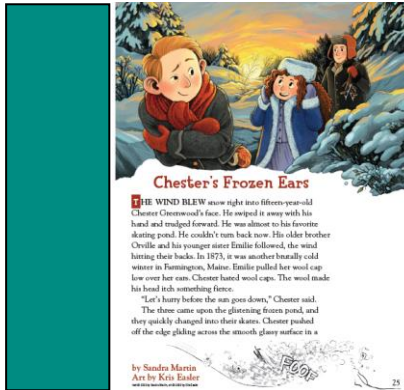
Characters	Setting
What is the problem?	
List the story events that lead to the problem.	
How is the problem solved?	
List the story events that lead to the solution.	

Spider® Teacher Guide: November/December 2023

Chester's Frozen Ears

pp. 20–24, Historical Fiction

Give students practice in recognizing character traits using this fictionalized story about the invention of earmuffs.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals develop and interact.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **glassy** (p. 25) smooth and shiny like glass
- **pelted** (p. 26) repeatedly hit someone or something with things thrown from a distance
- **ensued** (p. 26) happened as a result

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What happens in winter stories?

Have students look at the story illustrations in “Chester’s Frozen Ears” and pay attention to what the characters are doing. Discuss illustration details that indicate the story is set in winter. Then have students use the illustrations to write predictions about what will happen in the story. Invite volunteers to share their predictions. Then remind students to check their predictions after they read the story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them.

1. A snow day was announced and shouts of happiness ____.
2. At the playground, the kids ____ each other with snowballs.
3. The frozen pond had a ____ surface.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. How would you describe Chester’s relationship with his siblings?
2. Why doesn’t Chester wear a hat?
3. What problem does Chester want to solve?
4. How did Chester make the first ear protectors?
5. Why did Chester look like he had two squirrels stuck to his ears?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Character Traits

INSTRUCT: Remind students that characters have personality traits, or qualities, just like real people. For example, a character might be *shy*, *selfish*, or *trustworthy*. Explain that readers can learn about a character’s traits by paying attention to these story details: (1) the character’s own words, thoughts, actions, and feelings; (2) other characters’ thoughts, words, and actions/reactions; (3) the narrator’s statements about the character. Read aloud the first four sentences on page 25. Ask students which word best describes Chester: *strong-minded*, *creative*, *forgetful*. Discuss the types of details used in this excerpt.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to highlight story details that show characters’ traits and note the traits next to the details. Have students discuss the types of details that reveal the traits.

EXTEND

Social Studies: Read aloud the text box at the end of the story. Then use the internet to share information about Chester Greenwood Day, celebrated annually in Farmington, Maine, Greenwood’s hometown. Have students choose an inventor/invention and create a day to celebrate him or her. Examples: Momofuku Ando/Cup of Noodles; Lonnie Johnson/Super Soaker; Vesta Stoudt/duct tape. Students should make a poster that tells about the inventor/invention, the location and date of the celebration, and the events that will occur there.