

Cricket®

THEME

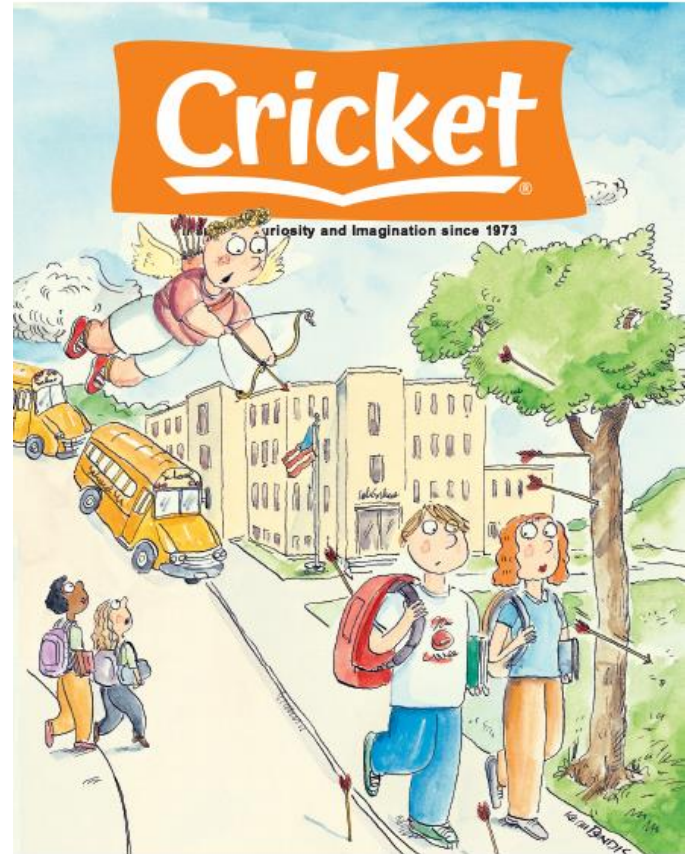
The growth of characters is often a central theme in literature. This issue of CRICKET magazine explores the ways that writers express both physical and emotional growth.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do authors portray growth?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how friendships change over time.
- Students will learn about the early growth of newborn kittens through poetry.
- Students will learn the folklore associated with Scotch Broom.
- Students will develop connections to the text.
- Students will interpret words and phrases.
- Students will demonstrate conventions of academic English.
- Students will use a mathematical process to calculate travel distances.
- Students will participate in a philanthropic venture.
- Students will create a travel brochure for the country of Spain.



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.

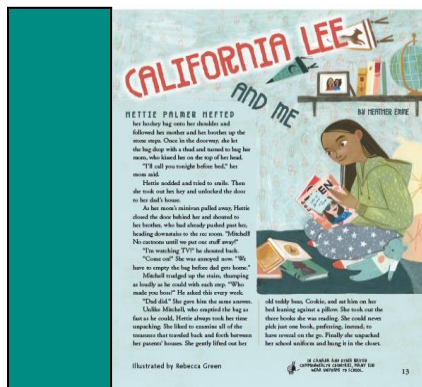
SELECTIONS

- **California Lee and Me**
Contemporary Fiction
- **Together and Apart**
Poem
- **Scotch Broom**
Folklore

California Lee and Me

pp. 13–17, Contemporary Fiction

This story tells the tale of two young friends ultimately separated by time, distance, and personal ambition. The relatable story reminds readers that friendships can blossom at any point in life, and that making new friends can be an exciting journey.



RESOURCES

Developing Connections: Life Links

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn how friendships change over time.
- Students will develop connections to the text.
- Students will use a mathematic process to calculate travel distances.

KEY VOCABULARY

- hefted (p. 13)** lifted something heavy upward
- trudged (p. 13)** walked slowly and with heavy steps, typically because of exhaustion or harsh conditions
- kilt (p. 14)** a knee-length pleated skirt traditionally consisting of a woolen plaid design

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do authors portray growth?

Successful participation in friendship activities can increase students' self-confidence and self-esteem. Encourage active listening and help students build connections based on shared experiences with a simple game such as "Two Truths and a Lie." In this game each participant shares two true statements and one false statement about themselves. The other players have to guess which statement is the lie, and in doing so will learn something about their classmates in the process.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following statements and underline the key vocabulary words. Review how to infer the meanings of new terms by using context clues and background knowledge. Then have partners work together to determine the meaning of each term. Reveal definitions.

- We trudged through the snow until we reached the cabin.
- The school uniform consisted of a white blouse, black shoes, and a blue and green kilt.
- He hefted the sack over his shoulder and headed for home.

READ & DISCUSS

Read the article aloud with the class. Have students reread the text in small groups to answer the questions below. Discuss responses.

- What details do you discover about Hettie's personal life on the first page of the story? (p. 13)
- Why does Hettie's mom slip a surprise into her overnight bag?
- Describe the video that Hettie makes for the contest.
- Do you think that Cally actually saw Hettie's entry? Why/why not?
- What insight does Hettie's father offer about friendship?

SKILL FOCUS: Developing Connections

INSTRUCT: Making connections is a critical reading comprehension strategy that helps students derive meaning out of what they are reading. The ability to make connections involves a process of linking prior knowledge to new knowledge and experiences. Instruct students to review the article and to use the *Life Links* graphic organizer to record connections to the world, to another text, and to themselves.

ASSESS: Have volunteers share their connections. Collect and assess.

EXTEND

Mathematics: The story reveals that Hettie lives in Toronto, Canada and her childhood friend, Cally, has moved to Los Angeles, California. Post: *The driving distance between Toronto and L.A. is 2,518 miles and takes 37 hours. The flight distance between Toronto and L.A. is 2,176 miles and takes 5 1/2 hours.* Have students solve: A) How many more miles is the trip by car? B) How many fewer hours does it take to fly than to drive?

Life Links

Developing Connections Reread the story and record connections to your own life, a text-to-text connection, and a text-to-world connection.

TEXT TO SELF

thoughts
experiences
travels
family
friends
school

reminds me of _____

because _____

TEXT TO TEXT

other books
characters
poem
articles
websites
blogs

is similar to _____

because _____

TEXT TO WORLD

current events
movies
television
games
news
pop-culture

makes me think of _____

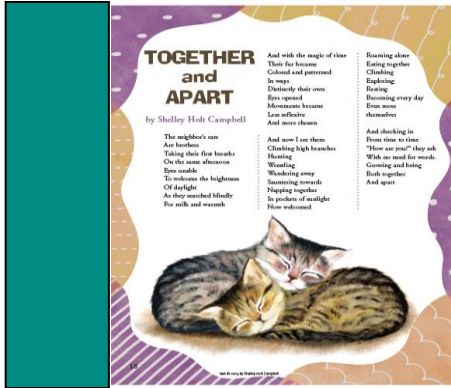
because _____

Cricket® Teacher Guide: February 2024

Together and Apart

p. 18, Poem

Students will read an endearing poem that describes the early growth and development of two newborn kittens.



RESOURCES

Interpret Words and Phrases:
Furry Findings

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the early growth of kittens through poetry.
- Students will interpret words and phrases.
- Students will participate in a philanthropic venture.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **distinctly** (p. 18) in a way that is easy to recognize because of being different from other things
- **reflexive** (p. 18) without conscious control
- **sauntering** (p. 18) walking in a slow, relaxed manner, without hurry or effort.

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do authors portray growth?

Present “Together and Apart” and tell the class that it is the title of a poem they will be reading about kittens. Activate prior knowledge by creating a T-chart on the board with the headings Appearance Words and Movement Words. Have the class help you generate a list of words under each heading pertaining to kittens/cats. After the reading of the poem, revisit the list and note the words that appeared in the poem. (These words will also be useful for any “cool cats” who wish to create their own poem.)

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the key vocabulary words and definitions on the board. Then display the following cloze sentences and have students supply the correct word:

1. Michael felt the _____ jerk of his head backward as the ball came towards him.
2. Carolyn heard voices in the other room, one _____ male.
3. _____ along the boardwalk, she felt the sunshine on her face.

READ & DISCUSS

Pose the following questions to prompt meaningful discussion.

1. How does the author feel about kittens? What words in the poem help you come to this conclusion?
2. How many kittens does the neighbor have?
3. Why do baby animals often sleep with their bodies overlapping?
4. What are some activities that the growing kittens enjoy?
5. How do the kittens check in with each other without using words?

SKILL FOCUS: Interpret Words and Phrases

INSTRUCT: Strong word choices use vocabulary and language to maximum effect, creating clear moods and images. Students’ ability to interpret words and phrases will make their writing more powerful and their reading more meaningful. Students will reread the first three stanzas of the poem on the *Furry Findings* worksheet and analyze what is revealed from the word choices and phrases that the author selected.

ASSESS: Review answers. Have students repeat the exercise, studying word choices in the final two stanzas. Collect and evaluate.

EXTEND

Philanthropy: Guide students to get involved in animal welfare in their city or town by contacting the local shelter. Speak to a director and obtain a copy of their “wish list.” Have students meet in small groups and delegate the responsibilities of organizing a school-wide animal shelter donation drive. Remind students that a successful donation drive includes: planning, promotion (posters, flyers, buttons, etc.), a hook (animal-themed trivia night, pet photo contests, etc.), and a convenient way to collect, organize, and distribute donations.

Furry Findings

Interpret Words and Phrases Reread the stanzas and draw meaning from the author’s words and phrases. Complete the chart.

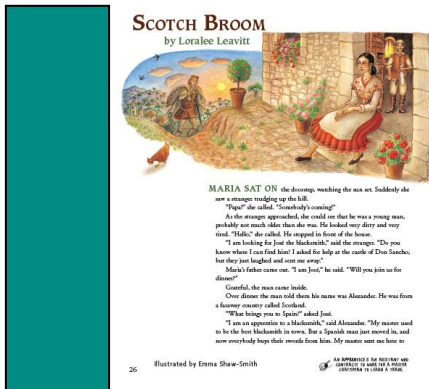
Stanza from “Together and Apart”	In your own words, what information is revealed in this stanza?	What specific words and phrases helped to create an image in your mind?
The neighbor’s cats Are brothers Taking their first breaths On the same afternoon Eyes unable To welcome the brightness Of daylight As they searched blindly For milk and warmth		
And with the magic of time Their fur became Colored and patterned In ways Distinctly their own Eyes opened Movements became Less reflexive And more chosen		
And now I see them Climbing high branches Hunting Wrestling Wandering away Sauntering towards Napping together In pockets of sunlight Now welcomed		

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Scotch Broom

pp. 26–32, Folklore

This tale reveals that Scotch Broom is more than a beautiful shrub with yellow flowers. In this story, it represents a vow of love and a promise ultimately fulfilled.



RESOURCES

Conventions of English:
Ready, Set, Revise!

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the folklore associated with Scotch Broom.
- Students will demonstrate the conventions of academic English.
- Students will create a travel brochure for the country of Spain.

KEY VOCABULARY

- apprenticeship** (p. 27) an arrangement in which someone learns an art, trade, or job under an expert
- persisted** (p. 30) continued to do something in a determined way even when facing difficulties or opposition
- disheartened** (p. 30) having lost determination, hope, or courage

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do authors portray growth?

Introduce the article by telling students that they will be reading one of the many folktales surrounding Scotch Broom. The shrub is both ornamental and invasive. Historically used for medicinal (diuretic) and utilitarian purposes (making brooms), it can also negatively affect wildlife habitats and is highly flammable, threatening many acres of land. In addition, for many it symbolized abundance and strength, thus becoming quite a controversial shrub. Guide a discussion on other plants and trees that have both drawbacks and advantages.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the three vocabulary words and definitions. Have students Think-Pair-Share with a partner. Give them the following directives, one at a time:

- Discuss **apprenticeship** opportunities in different fields.
- Discuss book and movie characters that have **persisted** at a specific activity towards a goal. Were they successful? Why/why not?
- When have you become **disheartened**? What caused it?

READ & DISCUSS

Post and discuss questions prior to reading. Have students read the story independently and answer the questions in full sentences.

- How did José know the Spanish sword was a fake?
- Why did Alexander refuse José's offer to stay in Spain?
- What gifts did Don Sancho bring to Maria? How did she respond?
- Explain how and where the yellow flowers grew.
- What event caused customers to come flocking back to José?

SKILL FOCUS: Conventions of English

INSTRUCT: The conventions of academic English are important to help readers more easily read and understand texts. Instruct that spelling, grammar, and punctuation is required by students in all curriculum areas for effective speaking, reading, and writing. Have students practice these skills using the *Ready, Set, Revise!* worksheet and the folklore of "Scotch Broom."

ASSESS: Have the students peer-review the worksheet by trading papers with a partner. They will need to locate each sentence in "Scotch Broom" and check that the sentence has been accurately corrected.

EXTEND

Social Studies: The story mentions several times that Spain is a beautiful country. Have students locate Spain on a map of the world and then allow time for students to use book and online resources to learn more about this passionate, sophisticated country. Instruct them to fold a piece of paper into thirds and create a travel brochure. Alternatively, many computer programs will have easy-to-use templates. Using information from the various resources, students should include the following: location, climate, plant/animal life, recreation, places to visit (attractions), best times to visit, and interesting facts.

Ready, Set, Revise!

Conventions of English Use what you know about the rules of spelling, grammar, and punctuation to correct the sentences below. Rewrite the sentence correctly on the line, and then have a partner locate the sentence in the story and review your work for accuracy.

1. I am José, he said. Will you join us for dinner.

2. Sometimes Alexander helped maria gather eggs and work in the vegtable garden.

3. Maria sat on the door step and watched him get smaller and smaller until he disapeared.

4. “Now I know why Maria wasn’t interested in me” thought Don Sancho

5. Marry me, Maria?” he commanded.

THINK TANK: Use the back of the paper to write a sentence with errors for your partner to edit correctly.