

Spider®

THEME

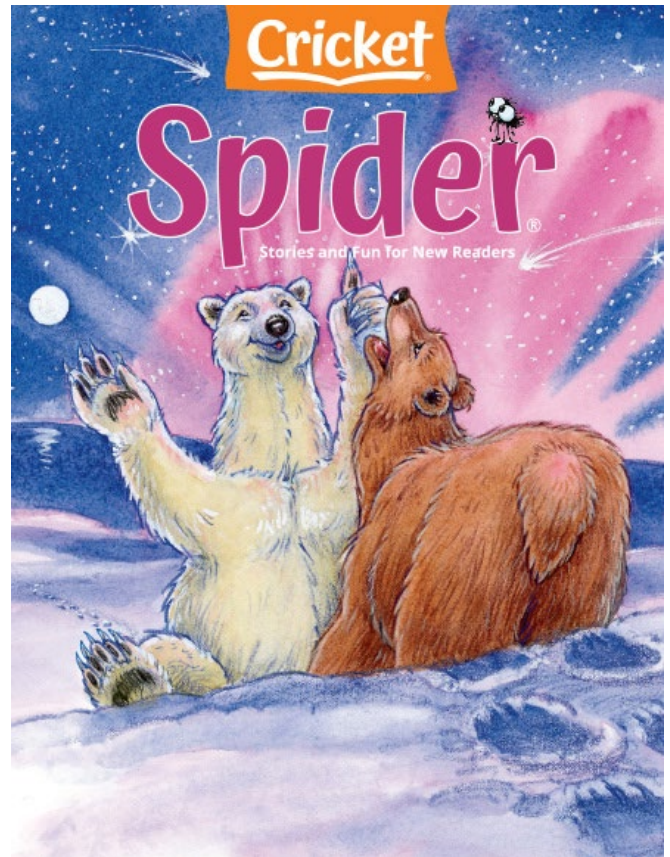
In this issue of Spider, all kinds of interesting things happen when events don't go as planned. For example, a mouse is mistaken for an elephant, a girl helps a star escape a monster, and a bear becomes a constellation of stars. Your students will enjoy thinking about how unexpected events make stories engaging and fun.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What can we learn about characters from their words and actions?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will create a magical story.
- Students will interpret words and phrases in a text.
- Students will plan and carry out investigations.
- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write narratives.



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

- **The Elephant Moon of Sir Herbert Spoon**
Historical Fiction, ~570L
- **The Child with Your Name**
Fantasy, ~550L
- **How Big Bear Stuck to the Sky**
Legend, ~650L

The Elephant Moon of Sir Herbert Spoon

pp. 11–17, Historical Fiction

Use this story about a quirky astronomer and his butler to help students learn about characters.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What can we learn about characters from their words and actions?

Remind the children that most stories tell about a problem the characters face and how they solve the problem. Ask the children who their favorite book and movie characters are, what problems they face, and how they solve their problems. Then, tell students to think about the problem in the story and how the characters solve them.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

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

1. The cars _____ down the highway trying to get away from the storm.
2. Bigfoot is said to be a _____.
3. _____, that is not nice!
4. No eating or drinking in the _____.
5. Please let the _____ know if you need anything during your stay.

RESOURCES

Analyze Characters

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will create a magical story.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **butler** (p. 11) a man that oversees other employees in a household
- **observatory** (p. 11) a place or building made for observing stars and planets
- **begging your pardon** (p. 18) a phrase that can be used to show someone is annoyed or offended by something another has said
- **hoax** (p. 19) an act meant to trick
- **whooshed** (p. 19) rushed past quickly

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Why was Sir Hebert's house so tall?
2. Why do you think Sir Hebert's workroom was so dirty?
3. How do you think the mouse got in the telescope? Explain.
4. Do you think the Queen really believed there was an elephant on the moon?
5. Why would the queen pretend to believe there was an elephant on the moon?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Characters

INSTRUCT: Explain that we can learn about characters by paying attention to the things that characters do, say, and think. Tell children to pause as they read to figure out what they learn about characters from these details. Read aloud the text on page 16. Then discuss with children what they learn about Sir Hebert Spoon from the details on this page. (He gets caught on the pole, has a dirty workroom, doesn't allow cleaning.) Have students point out story details that reveal this information. Next, have them work in pairs or individually to reread page 16 and note what they learn about Cecil. Discuss responses.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Analyze Characters* worksheet. Have the children work to complete it. Then have them share their responses.

EXTEND

Writing Discuss alternative endings to the story. *What if there was an elephant on the moon? How did it get there? What does an elephant do on the moon?* Have children write a magical alternative ending to the story and draw a picture to go with their story.

Name _____

Analyze Characters

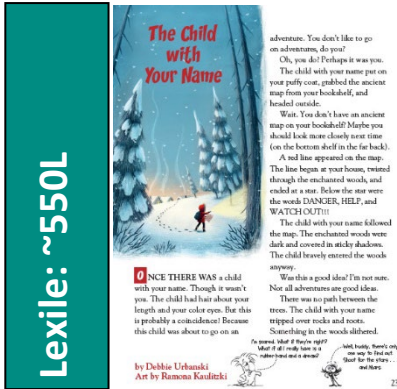
In the first column, record information from the story about what the characters from “The Elephant Moon of Sir Hebert Spoon” do, say, and think. Be sure to identify the characters you write about. In the second column, explain what you learn about the characters from this information.

Details from the story about what characters do, say, and think	What these details tell me about the character

The Child with Your Name

pp. 23–25, Fantasy

Students can practice visualization techniques by using this direct-address story about a girl who helps a star escape from a monster



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What can we learn about characters from their words and actions?

Create a word web with *brave* in the center. Ask children to name books and movie characters who show bravery. Invite them to describe the actions and words of brave characters. Record their responses in the diagram. Tell them to think about whether the character in this story is brave.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Introduce vocabulary words and definitions. Play Roll-a-Dice. This can be played in groups or individually. The children roll the dice and do what corresponds with the number on the die. **1** = Use the word in a sentence. **2** = Draw a picture that demonstrates the word. **3** = List two antonyms for the word. **4** = List two synonyms for the word. **5** = Break the word into syllables and list the part of speech. **6** = Make a connection between the word and your life, a book, or a movie. Remind them to look for these words as the story is read.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will interpret words and phrases in a text.
- Students will plan and carry out investigations.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **ancient** (p. 23) very old
- **enchanted** (p. 23) magical
- **cauldron** (p. 24) a large pot
- **miserable** (p. 24) very unhappy
- **tentacles** (p. 25) the long, flexible arms of an animal that are used for grabbing things and moving

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. Is the child in this story a girl or a boy? How do you know?
2. What do the child's words and actions reveal about her or him?
3. The narrator says the enchanted woods are covered in "sticky shadows." What do you think she means by this?
4. What sounds does the child hear in the woods? What creatures might make these sounds?
5. Was this adventure a good idea or a bad idea? Explain

SKILL FOCUS: Visualizing

INSTRUCT: Explain that good readers create mental pictures of characters, settings, and events in the stories they read. This is called visualizing. Tell children to listen to story details as you read aloud the first paragraph of the story. Then invite them to share what they visualized. Model this first if necessary. Next, ask what seems unusual about the way the paragraph is written. Point out that the narrator talks directly to the reader and makes the reader a story character.

ASSESS: Have children to work in pairs or individually to find another part of the story where the narrator talks to readers. Tell them to write a short description of what they visualized. Upon completion, discuss whether the direct address made visualizing easier or more difficult.

EXTEND

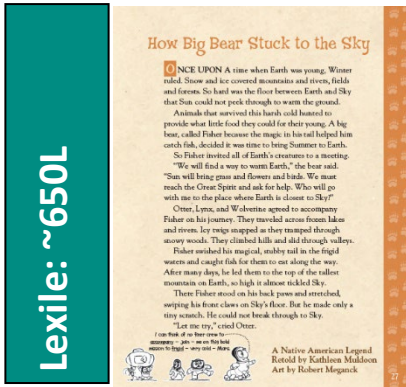
Science Remind children that the narrator of this story tells readers that stars are very large. Have the children conduct research to learn about the sizes of stars and the names of different star sizes. Invite them to share their research.

Spider® Teacher Guide: January 2025

How Big Bear Stuck to the Sky

pp. 26–30, Legend

Teach students about the characteristics of folktales using this story that explains how Ursa Major, the Great Bear constellation, came into existence.



RESOURCES

Elements of Folktales

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write narratives.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **pounce** (p. 28) to move quickly or suddenly
- **persistence** (p. 30) a quality that makes you continue trying to do something that is difficult
- **adorn** (p. 30) to decorate something or make it more attractive

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What can we learn about characters from their words and actions?

Remind children that many stories tell about how characters try to solve problems, but often events don't go as planned. Discuss folktales, fairy tales, and other familiar stories in which things don't go as planned for the characters. (Suggestions: "Cinderella," "The Three Little Pigs," "Goldilocks and the Three Bears") Finally, tell them to pay attention to what happens in this story when things don't go as planned.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then have the children work in small groups or individually to create a foursquare diagram for each word. Each diagram should include the word, its definition, a picture that shows the word, and a sentence that uses the word. Invite them to share their work. Then remind the children to look for the vocabulary words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

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

1. What are the two settings in this folktale?
2. Why do the animals want to warm Earth?
3. How is warmth spread to Earth?
4. Are Fisher and the other animals wrong to take some warmth?
5. Do you think the sky people are good or bad? Explain.
6. What does this folktale explain?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Folktales

INSTRUCT: Explain that a legend is a kind of folktale—a story that has been passed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Discuss folktales that the children have read. Then discuss what they notice about the characters, setting, and events in these folktales. Next, distribute a copy of the *Elements of Folktales* worksheet to the children. Go over the different elements and ask them to think of examples from familiar folktales.

ASSESS: Have children work in pairs or individually to complete the *Elements of Folktales* worksheet. Discuss responses together. Then work with them to come up with one or more themes or morals for the story.

EXTEND

Writing On a blank sheet of paper, add 20 or more randomly placed dots to represent stars. Distribute to the children and have them look for patterns and draw objects or figures using some or all the stars. Then have them make up tales about how their constellations came to be. Invite them to share their work.

Name _____

Elements of Folktales

Fill in the chart below with details from “How Big Bear Stuck to the Sky.”

1. The story is set in a distant time and place.	
2. Characters may be humans, animals, or gods.	
3. The story includes magic or supernatural events.	
4. The story is full of action.	
5. Good characters are rewarded.	
6. The story explains how something came to be.	