

What Shapes a Perspective?

Why can two people face the same world and notice, judge, or understand it differently?

6 days · 6 books · 244 min in full · 130 min short · Grades 2–3

The idea

A perspective is shaped by more than an opinion. Experience, role, circumstance, expectations, and access to information all affect what a person notices and how they judge what happens. This unit keeps that broader question in view from the beginning.

The first four days compare explicit judgements and reactions. The final two broaden the lens to circumstance and access, showing that perspective can be shaped by what a person has experienced, where they stand, and what they are able to know.

The arc

- One event can receive opposite verdicts.
- Experience can shape the answer a person gives.
- Assumptions can shape how the same character is read.
- Two listeners can react differently to the same story.
- Circumstance can shape a person's position without being chosen.
- Position inside an activity changes what information a person can see and learn.

Where this fits in your year

Place this after students can recount events and compare simple reactions. The recurring question is not merely “Who thinks what?” but “What about this person's experience, role, circumstance, or position helps explain that view?” Days 1–4 establish judgement and reaction; Days 5–6 deliberately widen perspective to circumstance and access.

The 6 days

DAY 1 · Disaster or Triumph

Collect the different verdicts on what Bagels does to the play, and explain whose opinion settles it.

Why here. One event is judged by everybody present, making attribution visible from the first day.

From Bagels Come Home by Joan Betty Stuchner · 43 min full · 22 min short.

DAY 2 · Four People, Four Answers

Collect what each person tells Reece about his lost frog, and explain what each answer is really about.

Why here. Four adults answer the same question out of their own jobs, memories, or experience. The class begins naming what shapes the answer.

From *Where's Burgess?* by Laurie Elmquist · 43 min full · 22 min short.

DAY 3 · Person or Animal

Compare the grown-ups who treat Wombat as a person with those who treat him as an animal, and work out what makes the difference.

Why here. Perspective now affects classification, not just approval or disapproval: assumptions change what observers think they are looking at.

From *Wombat Smith, Volume 1: Wombat Takes on Tasmania* by Anne Sautel · 37 min full · 24 min short.

DAY 4 · The Believer and the Doubter

Compare how June and Leopold listen to Jelly's stories, and explain how each reacts when the truth comes out.

Why here. The story is constant; the listeners are not. This closes the core judgement-and-reaction sequence.

From *Princess Angelica, Part-Time Lion Trainer* by Monique Polak · 43 min full · 22 min short.

DAY 5 · Two Cabin Boys

Compare Jake and Richard Barleycorn across the same parts of life, then distinguish differences either boy chose from differences they simply had to live with.

Why here. The unit now widens deliberately from judgement to circumstance. Students learn that a perspective can be shaped by conditions a person did not choose.

From *Captain Jake* by Shannon Stewart · 35 min full · 18 min short.

DAY 6 · Four Carvers on One Shoreline

Compare the four carvers, then identify what the boy can learn because he is positioned inside the craft for a day.

Why here. The final day adds access: where a person stands can determine what information becomes available to them. That is a bridge to later narrator-limit work.

From *Soapstone Porcupine* by Jeff Pinkney · 43 min full · 22 min short.

Words to use

judgement — a verdict somebody gives, not a fact. experience — something a person has done or lived through that may shape an answer. circumstance — a condition of a person's life that may not be chosen. position — where someone stands in relation to an event or activity, including what they can see or know.

Checkpoints

After Day 2 · Who said so, and why them. Remove speaker labels from four answers in the Where's Burgess? materials. The child matches each answer to its speaker and explains what in that person's experience, job, or memory makes it fit.

After Day 5 · Same job, different life. Compare Jake and Richard across food, schooling, illness, and willingness to work. The child identifies which differences are circumstances and which may be choices.

Look for. Students can explain a perspective-shaping difference without automatically turning every difference into an opinion or a choice.

The task at the end

What shaped this view? Each pair chooses one case from Days 1–6 and completes four columns: person, what they notice/judge/know, evidence, and what shapes that position (experience, assumption, circumstance, role, or access). The last column is read aloud without the name; the class identifies the most likely person and explains why.

Collect. One fully supported four-column analysis. Time. About 45 minutes.

Teacher key

The final column must name something specific enough to explain the position. "They are different" is not enough. Accept experience, role, circumstance, assumption, or access when the text supports it. On Day 5, differences in food, schooling, and what happens if the boys are ill are unchosen circumstances; willingness to work is the clearest potentially chosen difference.

What a strong answer looks like

- Attribution — names whose perspective or position is being described.
- Evidence — cites what the person says, does, notices, or has access to.
- Shaping factor — explains the role of experience, assumption, circumstance, role, or access.
- Comparison — holds the same question steady while explaining why two positions differ.

Keeping the daily evidence

Keep the Day 1 verdict analysis and the Day 5 circumstance comparison. Growth is visible when students move from naming different opinions to explaining what shapes those differences.

What to pass on

Students who can name different views but cannot explain what shapes them need this distinction before Grade 3 narrator work, where limits of knowledge or access are circumstances rather than faults.

The books this unit uses

- Bagels Come Home by Joan Betty Stuchner · 1 lesson
- Where's Burgess? by Laurie Elmquist · 1 lesson
- Wombat Smith, Volume 1: Wombat Takes on Tasmania by Anne Sautel · 1 lesson
- Princess Angelica, Part-Time Lion Trainer by Monique Polak · 1 lesson
- Captain Jake by Shannon Stewart · 1 lesson
- Soapstone Porcupine by Jeff Pinkney · 1 lesson