

TUMBLETA · VERIFIED STANDARDS LAYER Infer Theme from the Ending Texas · Grade 1 · Skill lesson	
WINNER STRAND Literary Elements - Theme STANDARD discuss topics and determine theme using text evidence with adult assistance;	1.8(A)

WHY THIS LESSON EARNS THE CODE

Students determine a message about copying and support that interpretation with evidence from the ending.

PLACEMENT

TEACHES - the student task directly practices the cited expectation. The canonical lesson follows unchanged.

Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading.

Verified 2026-09-08 · strict winner-only audit

TUMBLETA · SKILL LESSON

Infer Theme from the Ending

Stephanie's Ponytail · Grade 1 · Book 4785

Full lesson

TIME

35 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Work out why Stephanie says she will shave her head, and use the ending as evidence for what the book may be saying about copying.

STUDENT PRODUCT

A prediction, then an explanation with evidence

FOCUS

A central message the ending supports through evidence

Essential question

Did Stephanie change her mind, or did she plan this?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 9, 10, 11 and 12, found before the lesson
- One prediction sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 9 - the classroom, everyone colliding
- Passage 10 - standing on a desk, shouting it at them
- Passage 11 - a room of bald heads, and one ponytail
- Passage 12 - the last page, and what happens after the joke

Lesson sequence

1 Launch · 5 min

Focus:	A prediction the book wants you to get wrong
Teacher direction:	Ask the class to predict, before you read the last two pages, what Stephanie's head will look like tomorrow.

Write the predictions up. Then read.

Prepared text:	Passage 10 2 Teacher model · 7 min
Teacher direction:	Re-read the announcement and then the ending. Model the evidence-based claim: the final ponytail strongly supports the reading that Stephanie expected the others to copy what she announced, rather than proving what she was thinking.
Prepared text:	Passage 10, Passage 11 3 Why she said it · 13 min
Focus:	An interpretation supported by the established pattern

Teacher direction:	Using Passages 9, 10 and 11, write why Stephanie may have announced she would shave her head, and what evidence supports that interpretation.
Expected answer:	A strong interpretation is that Stephanie expects the others to copy her announcement. By then the whole class and the teacher have copied each ponytail she wears. She arrives the next day with a ponytail coming out the back, which strongly supports the reading that the announcement was meant to lead the copycats rather than describe a genuine plan for her own hair.
Prepared text:	Passage 9, Passage 10, Passage 11 4 What the book is saying · 10 min
Focus:	Say it, then support it
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 11 and 12, write what you think this book may be saying about copying, and give evidence.
Expected answer:	A fair reading is that copying somebody else's choices instead of making your own can leave you following them somewhere foolish. The class insults the ponytails and then wears them, ends up unable to see, and finally shaves its heads after Stephanie's announcement. Other interpretations are possible if they are supported from the pages.
Prepared text:	Passage 11, Passage 12

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: Take predictions before the ending and keep them visible. The class will probably expect a bald Stephanie.

Being wrong together makes the reversal visible. Press for the difference between evidence and certainty about motive: the ending strongly supports the trap reading, but students should state it as an interpretation and point to the final ponytail and the established copying pattern.

Expected answer:

Stephanie announces that she will shave her head after repeated rounds in which the class copies her. The next day they are bald and she arrives with the ponytail she began with. Those events strongly support the interpretation that she expected the others to copy her announcement. The final picture also complicates any claim that she simply “wins,” because the angry class chases her.

Model: I can say what the ending supports without pretending I can read Stephanie's mind. Her final ponytail is evidence for the trap interpretation.

Support and extension

Above: The teacher shaves her head too. Explain what that adds to your interpretation of the copying.

Below: Write what the ending shows, then complete: “This supports the idea that Stephanie...”

Assessment

Look for: Says Stephanie did not actually arrive bald. Uses her final ponytail as evidence. Connects the interpretation to the repeated copying. Gives a possible message about copying and points to evidence.

Short version

TIME

20 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Use the ending to evaluate why Stephanie announces that she will shave her head and what the story may suggest about copying.

STUDENT PRODUCT

A prediction, then a short explanation with evidence

FOCUS

An ending that supports an interpretation rather than stating it

Essential question

What does the ending make you think Stephanie was trying to do?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 9, 10, 11 and 12, found before the lesson

- One prediction sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 9 - the classroom, everyone colliding
- Passage 10 - standing on a desk, shouting it at them
- Passage 11 - a room of bald heads, and one ponytail
- Passage 12 - the last page, and what happens after the joke

Lesson sequence

1 Launch · 4 min

Focus:	Predict before the reveal
Teacher direction:	Ask what Stephanie's head will look like tomorrow. Record predictions, then read the ending.
Prepared text:	Passage 10, Passage 11 2 Compare prediction and evidence · 6 min

Teacher direction:	Compare the prediction with Stephanie's actual ponytail. Ask what interpretation that evidence supports.
Expected answer:	It strongly supports the reading that Stephanie expected the others to copy her announcement.
Prepared text:	Passage 10, Passage 11 3 Explain the ending · 10 min
Focus:	An interpretation supported by evidence
Teacher direction:	Write why Stephanie may have made the announcement and what the book may be saying about copying.
Expected answer:	Students should connect the final ponytail to the earlier copying pattern. They may argue that Stephanie set a trap, but they should present that as a supported interpretation rather than a certainty about her thoughts.
Prepared text:	Passage 9, Passage 10, Passage 11, Passage 12

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: The ending gives concrete evidence - bald copycats and Stephanie's ponytail - while leaving motive to interpretation. That makes it a clean lesson in making a claim and supporting it.

Support and extension

Above: Give a different possible reading of Stephanie's decision and say whether the pages support it.

Below: Finish: "The ending supports the idea that..." and point to one detail.

Assessment

Look for: Distinguishes what the page shows from what the student infers. Uses the ponytail and copying pattern as evidence.

States a message about copying as an interpretation, not a fact.