

Compare and Contrast

Texas · Grade 1 · Skill lesson

WINNER	1.8(B)
STRAND Literary Elements - Character	
STANDARD describe the main character(s) and the reason(s) for their actions;	

WHY THIS LESSON EARNS THE CODE

Students compare Stephanie's responses to insult and copying and explain the reasons her behavior changes.

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

Compare and Contrast

Stephanie's Ponytail · Grade 1 · Book 4785

Full lesson

TIME

33 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Compare how Stephanie answers an insult with how she answers being copied.

STUDENT PRODUCT

Two speech bubbles, and the last word

FOCUS

A character's response, the same every time until it is not

Essential question

Why does being copied upset her more than being insulted?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 2, 6, 11 and 12, found before the lesson
- One response sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 2 — the stairs, and a line of copied ponytails

- Passage 6 — a ponytail out of the top of her head, drawn close up
- 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:	The reply she gives every single time
Teacher direction:	Say the three ugly words to the class in the flat chant the book gives them, and ask what they would say back. Collect the answers. Then read what Stephanie says.
Prepared text:	Passage 6 2 Teacher model · 7 min
Teacher model:	I read Stephanie's reply from two different rounds and it is word for word the same both times. She does not say the ponytail is nice. She does not say they are wrong about it. She says it is hers and she likes it - which is not an argument about how it looks at all, and there is nothing they can say back to it.
Prepared text:	Passage 2, Passage 6 3 Two different answers · 12 min
Focus:	Calm at the insult, furious at the copying
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 2 and 6, write what Stephanie says to the children when they insult her ponytail, and what she says when they copy it.
Expected answer:	When they call her ponytail ugly she is completely calm, and she gives the same answer every time: it is her ponytail and she likes it. She never defends how it looks. But when they copy it she is not calm at all - she calls them a bunch of copycats who just do whatever she does and have not got a brain in their heads. So the insult does not bother her and the copying does, which is the opposite way round from what most people would expect.
Student product:	Two boxes: what she says to an insult, what she says to a copy
Prepared text:	Passage 2, Passage 6 4 The last thing she says · 10 min
Focus:	Her own words, given back
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 11 and 12, write what Stephanie says on the last day, and what the last picture adds.
Expected answer:	On the last day she looks at a room of bald heads and says the three words they have been saying to her all week - that they are ugly, ugly, very ugly. She has taken their insult and handed it back. The last page says only The End, but the picture says more: the whole bald class, and a bald dog, are chasing her out of the school with their fists up while the principal watches from the doorway. So she has won the argument and is now in trouble.
Prepared text:	Passage 11, Passage 12

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: The good question in this book is not whether Stephanie is right but why the copying stings and the insult does not, and a Grade 1 class can get a long way with it. Read her reply in a bored voice - it is a bored reply - and read the copycat speech as a real loss of temper. The contrast does the teaching. Be ready for children who notice that Stephanie is unkind too: she says they have no brains, she tricks them, and she ends by calling them ugly. They are right, and the last picture agrees with them.

Expected answer:

Stephanie has two completely different responses. To being insulted she is unbothered, and her answer never changes by a word: it is her ponytail and she likes it. She never claims it looks good. To being copied she loses her temper - they are a bunch of copycats who do whatever she does and have no brain in their heads, and later, standing on a desk, brainless copycats. And on the last day, facing a room of shaved heads, she uses their own three words on them.

Model: I notice she never once tells them her ponytail is nice. That would be an argument she could lose. Saying it is hers and she likes it is not something they can disagree with, and it is why the same seven words work four times over.

Support and extension

Above: Stephanie ends the book by insulting everybody. Explain whether that makes her right or wrong, using the last picture.

Below: Fill the two speech bubbles, then write what she says on the last day.

Assessment

Look for: Gives Stephanie's reply to the insult. Says the reply is the same every time. Says she got angry about being copied. Uses the word copycats, or brainless copycats. Says she called the bald children ugly at the end.

Short version

TIME

17 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Compare how Stephanie answers an insult with how she answers being copied.

STUDENT PRODUCT

Two speech bubbles, and the last word

FOCUS

A character's response, the same every time until it is not

Essential question

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Materials

- The book
- Pages 2, 6, 11 and 12, found before the lesson
- One response sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 2 — the stairs, and a line of copied ponytails
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- 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 · 3 min

Focus:	The reply she gives every single time
Teacher direction:	Say the three ugly words to the class in the flat chant the book gives them, and ask what they would say back. Collect the answers. Then read what Stephanie says.
Prepared text:	Passage 6 2 Teacher model · 5 min
Teacher model:	I read Stephanie's reply from two different rounds and it is word for word the same both times. She does not say the ponytail is nice. She does not say they are wrong about it. She says it is hers and she likes it - which is not an argument about how it looks at all, and there is nothing they can say back to it.
Prepared text:	Passage 2, Passage 6 3 Two different answers · 9 min
Focus:	Calm at the insult, furious at the copying
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 2 and 6, write what Stephanie says to the children when they insult her ponytail, and what she says when they copy it.
Expected answer:	When they call her ponytail ugly she is completely calm, and she gives the same answer every time: it is her ponytail and she likes it. She never defends how it looks. But when they copy it she is not calm at all - she calls them a bunch of copycats who just do whatever she does and have not got a brain in their heads. So the insult does not bother her and the copying does, which is the opposite way round from what most people would expect.
Student product:	Two boxes: what she says to an insult, what she says to a copy
Prepared text:	Passage 2, Passage 6

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: The good question in this book is not whether Stephanie is right but why the copying stings and the insult does not, and a Grade 1 class can get a long way with it. Read her reply in a bored voice - it is a bored reply - and read the copycat speech as a real loss of temper. The contrast does the teaching. Be ready for children who notice that Stephanie is unkind too: she says they have no brains, she tricks them, and she ends by calling them ugly. They are right, and the last picture agrees with them.

Expected answer:

Stephanie has two completely different responses. To being insulted she is unbothered, and her answer never changes by a word: it is her ponytail and she likes it. She never claims it looks good. To being copied she loses her temper - they are a bunch of copycats who do whatever she does and have no brain in their heads, and later, standing on a desk, brainless copycats. And on the last day, facing a room of shaved heads, she uses their own three words on them.

Model: I notice she never once tells them her ponytail is nice. That would be an argument she could lose. Saying it is hers and she likes it is not something they can disagree with, and it is why the same seven words work four times over.

Support and extension

Above: Stephanie ends the book by insulting everybody. Explain whether that makes her right or wrong, using the last picture.

Below: Fill the two speech bubbles, then write what she says on the last day.

Assessment

Look for: Gives Stephanie's reply to the insult. Says the reply is the same every time. Says she got angry about being copied. Uses the word copycats, or brainless copycats. Says she called the bald children ugly at the end.