

Character Response

Source lesson: What Vashti Does About It

Full lesson	
TIME	33 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Describe how Vashti responds at the moments that change the story, using the words and the pictures.
STUDENT PRODUCT	A chart of what she does and how she is feeling
FOCUS	A character's response, read from a word and a color
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	Is being encouraged the only thing that gets somebody started?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 4, 9 and 16, found before the lesson
- One response sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 4 — the first mark, made in temper, on a page washed red
- Passage 9 — arms folded, looking sideways at the frame
- Passage 16 — a smaller boy, looking up at her

Lesson sequence

1 Launch · 4 min

Focus:	A page washed red
Teacher direction:	Read the page where she makes her first mark and show it. Ask the class what mood she is in. The picture answers before the words do.
Prepared text:	Passage 4

2 Teacher model · 7 min

Teacher model:	I read the jab page and then the page where she folds her arms in front of the framed dot, and I say what surprises me. Neither of these is Vashti feeling encouraged. The first is temper - she is not drawing, she is stabbing the paper to prove a point. The second is being annoyed at her own dot. She says hmmph, and the word she puts weight on is that. Both times, being cross is what gets her moving.
Prepared text:	Passage 4, Passage 9

3 What she does, and what mood she is in · 12 min

Focus:	Cross, twice, and moving both times
Teacher direction:	Using Passages 4 and 9, write what Vashti does at each of these two moments and how she is feeling.

Expected answer:	At the first moment she grabs a marker and jabs the paper hard and says there, as if she has settled an argument. The whole page behind her is washed red and she is turned away from her own paper. At the second moment she is looking sideways at her dot in its gold frame with her arms folded, and she says hmmph and that she can do better than that.
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Neither time is she feeling encouraged or pleased. Both times she is annoyed, and both times being annoyed is what makes her start working.

Student product:	Two rows: what she does, and the mood
Prepared text:	Passage 4, Passage 9

4 How she answers the boy · 10 min

Focus:	The reply she does not give
Teacher direction:	Using Passage 16, write what the boy says about himself, and what Vashti does not say back.
Expected answer:	The boy tells her she is a great artist and that he wishes he could draw, and when she says she is sure he can, he insists he cannot - he says he could not draw a straight line even with a ruler to help him. Vashti does not argue with him and does not tell him he is wrong. She has been exactly where he is standing, and she says almost nothing.
Prepared text:	Passage 16

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: This lesson exists because the obvious answer is wrong. Children expect the framed dot to make Vashti happy, and it does not - it annoys her, and the annoyance is what works. Read hmmph aloud properly, with the folded arms, and ask whether it sounds pleased. The red page is worth projecting: the color behind her is her temper and it is the only page in the book washed like that. Accept cross, annoyed, fed up, determined. Push back gently on happy, and ask what in the picture says so.

Expected answer:	Vashti's first mark is made in temper. She grabs a marker, jabs the paper and says there, turned away from her own work, on a page washed red behind her. When she finds her dot framed in gold the next week she is not pleased either: she stands with her arms folded, says hmmph, and announces she can do better than that. Being annoyed is what starts her working both times. Later, when the boy tells her he cannot draw a straight line even with a ruler, she does not argue with him at all.
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Model: I notice that the book shows me her mood in the color of the page as much as in what she says. On the page where she jabs the paper, everything behind her is red. Nowhere else in the book is a page angry like that, and by the end she is standing inside a great orange dot instead.

Support and extension

Above: Being annoyed is what makes Vashti start. Explain whether her teacher planned that, using what the teacher does and does not say.

Below: Fill the two rows, then write what Vashti does not say to the boy.

Assessment

Look for:

- Says Vashti was cross when she made the first mark.
- Uses the red page, or the jab, as the evidence.
- Says she was annoyed by the framed dot, not pleased.
- Gives the word hmmph, or the word she stresses.
- Says she did not argue with the boy.

Short version	
TIME	17 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Describe how Vashti responds at the moments that change the story, using the words and the pictures.
STUDENT PRODUCT	A chart of what she does and how she is feeling
FOCUS	A character's response, read from a word and a color
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	Is being encouraged the only thing that gets somebody started?

Materials

- The book
- Pages 4, 9 and 16, found before the lesson
- One response sheet each

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 4 — the first mark, made in temper, on a page washed red
- Passage 9 — arms folded, looking sideways at the frame
- Passage 16 — a smaller boy, looking up at her

Lesson sequence

1 Launch · 3 min

Focus:	A page washed red
Teacher direction:	Read the page where she makes her first mark and show it. Ask the class what mood she is in. The picture answers before the words do.
Prepared text:	Passage 4

2 Teacher model · 4 min

Teacher model:	I read the jab page and then the page where she folds her arms in front of the framed dot, and I say what surprises me. Neither of these is Vashti feeling encouraged. The first is temper - she is not drawing, she is stabbing the paper to prove a point. The second is being annoyed at her own dot. She says hmmph, and the word she puts weight on is that. Both times, being cross is what gets her moving.
Prepared text:	Passage 4, Passage 9

3 What she does, and what mood she is in · 6 min

Focus:	Cross, twice, and moving both times
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Teacher direction:	Using Passages 4 and 9, write what Vashti does at each of these two moments and how she is feeling.
Expected answer:	At the first moment she grabs a marker and jabs the paper hard and says there, as if she has settled an argument. The whole page behind her is washed red and she is turned away from her own paper. At the second moment she is looking sideways at her dot in its gold frame with her arms folded, and she says hmmph and that she can do better than that.

Neither time is she feeling encouraged or pleased. Both times she is annoyed, and both times being annoyed is what makes her start working.

Student product:	Two rows: what she does, and the mood
Prepared text:	Passage 4, Passage 9

4 How she answers the boy · 4 min

Focus:	The reply she does not give
Teacher direction:	Using Passage 16, write what the boy says about himself, and what Vashti does not say back.
Expected answer:	The boy tells her she is a great artist and that he wishes he could draw, and when she says she is sure he can, he insists he cannot - he says he could not draw a straight line even with a ruler to help him. Vashti does not argue with him and does not tell him he is wrong. She has been exactly where he is standing, and she says almost nothing.
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