

The Paper Bag Princess

Use Text Evidence

TIME	35 minutes full · 20 minutes short
PRIMARY SKILL	Infer a central message from words and an illustration
OBJECTIVE	Compare Ronald's idea of a "real princess" with Elizabeth's actions, then use the final picture to infer the book's message.
STUDENT	Two comparison columns and an explanation of why the final picture makes the ending happy.
EVIDENCE	
ESSENTIAL	The words say there is no wedding. What does the final picture add that changes the meaning of the ending?
QUESTION	

Before teaching

Read or play the complete book before the timed lesson. Mark the early princess picture, Ronald's demand after the rescue, and the final illustration.

Materials:	The book; marked passages 2, 11, and 12; Student Evidence page; pencil or crayons.
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Mark these moments: Elizabeth before the attack · Ronald's "real princess" demand · Elizabeth's rescue actions · final illustration

Lesson sequence

TIME	TEACHING MOVE
5 min	Test the phrase "real princess" Read Ronald's final demand and ask what his words suggest he thinks matters.

7 min	Compare first and last pictures Put the early and final illustrations side by side. Ask what changes in appearance and what the pictures show about Elizabeth's mood and agency.
13 min	Two ideas of a princess Students sort Ronald's criteria and the book's evidence into separate columns: appearance versus actions.
10 min	Let the final picture answer The last words only remove the wedding. Use the illustration to explain why the book presents that outcome as happy.

ELA SKILL LESSON • TEACHER SUPPORT

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Access routes

SOLO	Use the marked words and pictures to complete both columns and the final-picture explanation independently.
SUPPORTED	Sort prepared details into RONALD'S IDEA and THE BOOK SHOWS. Then use one visible detail from the last picture in the final explanation.
LISTENING	Replay Ronald's demand and describe the necessary final-picture evidence aloud. Student responds orally or dictates.
EXTEND	Explain why Ronald's appearance observations can be factually accurate while the judgment he builds from them is still rejected by the story.

Teacher guidance

This is a message lesson, not a slogan lesson. Take Ronald's list seriously, then require students to explain what the book values instead.

The final illustration matters because the words alone do not state that Elizabeth is better off.

Accuracy note: Do not claim the words directly state the message. The ending depends on combining Ronald's words, Elizabeth's actions, and the final visual evidence.

Assessment

- Identifies appearance as Ronald's measure.
- Names at least two appearance details.
- Names Elizabeth's rescue actions.
- Uses a specific final-picture detail as evidence of her mood.
- States a complete message, not just a topic word.

Short route · 20 minutes 4 min - Ronald's definition. 6 min - compare early and final pictures. 10 min - complete the columns and explain the final picture.

STUDENT EVIDENCE · GRADE 1

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What Ronald Sees, What the Story Shows

Name _____ Date _____ Compare Ronald's idea with what Elizabeth actually does. Then use the final picture to explain the ending.

RONALD'S "REAL PRINCESS"	WHAT THE STORY SHOWS
What appearance details does Ronald care about?	What actions show what Elizabeth is actually like?

THE FINAL PICTURE

What does the picture show about how Elizabeth feels? Which picture detail proves it? Why does that make the ending happy?

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Strong response

Ronald judges a princess by appearance. The story places that standard beside Elizabeth's actions: she follows the dragon, plans, removes the danger, checks that it is safe, and completes the rescue.

The final illustration shows her joyful even though she is still in the paper bag and the wedding is gone. A supported message is that what a person does matters more than meeting someone else's appearance standard.

Expected evidence

- Ronald: clean hair/clothes/shoes and acceptable appearance.
- Elizabeth: follows, plans, outwits/checks, rescues.
- Final picture: visible evidence that leaving without the wedding is presented positively.

Watch for

- Giving only a theme word such as "bravery."
- Saying Ronald's appearance details must be false for his judgment to be wrong.
- Ignoring the final illustration and relying on words alone.

Independent success

The student states a defensible central message and supports it with both character-action evidence and one specific visual detail from the ending.