

REGIONAL CURRICULUM PLACEMENT

Where This Fits in Your Year

South Dakota | Grade 1 | ELA | Stephanie's Ponytail

Place this lesson in a Grade 1 literary-comprehension sequence when students are moving from retelling what happened to explaining why it happened. Students work with three cause-and-effect pairs from the story and must connect each pair with because. They explain that Stephanie bumps into objects because the front ponytail blocks her sight, that the class collides for the same reason after copying her, and that the hairstyles spread because the children keep copying what she wears.

The strongest curriculum connection is usually to work on characters and important events. Students identify concrete events, name the actions that produce them, and support the relationship with details from the story. The lesson deliberately rejects a simple and-then sequence: two events are not treated as cause and effect merely because one follows the other. That makes the student product stronger evidence of comprehension than a chronological retell alone.

Use this lesson after students can identify beginning-middle-end events and before asking them to trace longer causal chains. It gives Grade 1 students a clear sentence frame and highly visible evidence while keeping the reasoning demand genuine.

STRONGEST CURRICULUM CONNECTION

REINFORCES

Describe characters using key ideas and details (1.RL.3) Student evidence: Students use character actions and important events as evidence in an explanation.

Limitation: The lesson does not require the full range of character, setting, and event description.

TEACHER MUST ADD FOR BROADER EVIDENCE

Add setting or complete story-structure work if the local expectation requires more than the focused event reasoning in this lesson.

REVIEW STATUS: READY

Source: 2025 South Dakota English Language Arts Standards | Grade 1

This regional page changes curriculum placement only. The four-page canonical Skill Lesson that follows is unchanged.

Stephanie's Ponytail | Because Of The Ponytail | South Dakota

TumbleTA | Regional Skill Lesson

Stephanie's Ponytail

Because Of The Ponytail

GRADE 1 · 33 minutes FULL · 17 minutes SHORT

PRIMARY SKILL

Explain cause and effect using explicit evidence

OBJECTIVE	Find what causes what in this book, and say the reason in your own words.
STUDENT PRODUCT	Three pairs of boxes joined by 'because'
FOCUS	Causes and effects stated on the same page
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	Why did a hairstyle end up with a whole class walking into walls?

BEFORE TEACHING

Materials:	The book; Passages 4, 8 and 9 marked; one cause-and-effect sheet per student.
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Text to mark: Passage 4 a crowd of side ponytails. Passage 8 - Stephanie walking to school with hair over her eyes. Passage 9 - the classroom collisions.

FULL ROUTE

TIME

TEACHER MOVE

STUDENT WORK

4 min

Read what Stephanie bumps into and ask why. The reason is on the same page.

State one effect and its cause.

7 min	Model two complete because sentences: Stephanie's collision and the class's collision.	Separate what happened from why.
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12 min	Use Passages 4, 8 and 9 to record three supported cause-and-effect pairs.	Complete all three because bridges.
10 min	Track how copying grows and what the larger number of copies ends up causing.	Explain how more copying creates more trouble.

TEACHER GUIDANCE

Stephanie's Ponytail

Because Of The Ponytail

WHY THIS TEXT WORKS

Do not accept two events merely because they happen one after another. Start with the physical cause - hair over the eyes means Stephanie cannot see - then move to copying, which is a different kind of cause. Require 'because' in every explanation and watch for 'and then' replacing causal reasoning.

ASSESSMENT

- Says she could not see because of the ponytail in front of her nose.
- Names something she bumped into.
- Says the class bumped into things for the same reason.
- Says the children copied Stephanie's ponytail each time.
- Says more people copied as the book went on.

SHORT ROUTE

3 min launch; 5 min model; 9 min complete the three because pairs.

KEEP THE CLAIM TIGHT

Assess only the named skill. Do not turn a correct partial explanation into a broader claim the student has not shown.

STUDENT PAGE Stephanie's Ponytail Because Of The Ponytail Name: _____ Date: _____	
1. WHAT HAPPENED	WHY

because	
2. WHAT HAPPENED	WHY
because	

3. WHAT HAPPENED

because

WHY

MORE COPIES, MORE TROUBLE

How does the copying grow? What does that cause by the front-ponytail round?

TEACHER KEY

Stephanie's Ponytail

Because Of The Ponytail

1. SAMPLE ANSWER Stephanie bumps into trees, cars, houses and the principal because the ponytail hangs in front of her eyes and she cannot see.
2. SAMPLE ANSWER The class bumps into desks, walls and one another because they copied the front ponytail and cannot see either.
3. SAMPLE ANSWER Stephanie's hairstyles appear on other heads because the children keep copying what she wears, even after calling it ugly.

MORE COPIES, MORE TROUBLE

The copying grows each round: first the girls, then girls and some boys, then the whole class, and finally the teacher. By the front-ponytail round, more people cannot see, so more people collide with things.