

Where This Fits in Your Year

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

Place this lesson in a Grade 1 character-comprehension sequence when students are learning to use what a character says and does as evidence. Students compare Stephanie's calm, repeated answer when classmates insult her ponytail with her angry response when they copy it. They record both responses, notice that the insult reply stays almost unchanged across rounds, and then use the bald-class ending to explain how her final words echo the class's own insult.

The strongest curriculum connection is usually to expectations about describing characters from key details. Students do more than name a character: they compare two responses to different situations and explain the contrast from dialogue and action. That meaningfully practices character analysis, although a broader expectation may also require setting, plot, explicit trait naming, or a central-message connection that this lesson does not require.

Use this after students can locate what a character says in the text. The lesson is especially useful for showing that a character does not respond the same way to every challenge, and that repeated dialogue can make a change in response easier to see.

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 explicit trait naming, setting/plot work, or a central-message connection if the local expectation requires those elements.

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 | What Stephanie Says Back | South Dakota

TumbleTA | Regional Skill Lesson

TUMBLETA | ELA SKILL LESSON

Stephanie's Ponytail

What Stephanie Says Back

GRADE 1 · 33 minutes FULL · 17 minutes SHORT

PRIMARY SKILL

Compare a character's responses to two different situations

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?
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BEFORE TEACHING

Materials:	The book; Passages 2, 6, 11 and 12 marked; one response sheet per student.
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Text to mark: Passages 2 and 6 - repeated insult and reply. Passage 11 - bald class. Passage 12 - final picture.

FULL ROUTE

TIME

TEACHER MOVE

STUDENT WORK

4 min

Read one insult and Stephanie's repeated reply.

Notice the calm, unchanged response.

7 min	Compare her reply from two rounds. Model what she does not argue about: whether the Describe what stays the same. ponytail looks nice.
12 min	Compare what she says when insulted with what she says when copied. Record the contrast: calm at the insult, furious at the copying.
10 min	Use the bald-class ending and last picture to record her final words and what the picture Explain how she hands the class's own adds. insult back.

TEACHER GUIDANCE

Stephanie's Ponytail

What Stephanie Says Back

WHY THIS TEXT WORKS

The contrast does the teaching. Stephanie does not defend how the ponytail looks; she says it is hers and she likes it. Copying produces a completely different response. Keep the complication: Stephanie is unkind too, and the last picture supports that reading.

ASSESSMENT

- Gives Stephanie's reply to the insult.
- Says the reply is the same every time.
- Says she gets angry about being copied.
- Uses copycats or brainless copycats.
- Says she calls the bald children ugly at the end.

SHORT ROUTE

3 min launch; 5 min model; 9 min compare the two responses and finish with the last word.

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

What Stephanie Says Back

Name: _____ Date: _____

WHEN THEY INSULT HER PONYTAIL

What does Stephanie say? How does she sound?

WHEN THEY COPY HER

What does Stephanie say? How does she sound?

THE LAST WORD

What does she say to the bald class at the end?

TEACHER KEY

Stephanie's Ponytail

What Stephanie Says Back

INSULT

When they call the ponytail ugly, Stephanie stays calm. She says it is her ponytail and she likes it. She does not argue that it looks nice.

COPYING

When they copy her, she loses her temper and calls them copycats / brainless copycats.

ENDING

At the end she gives their own insult back to them and calls the bald class ugly.