

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Characters’ Actions and Reactions.”

We are beginning our second unit of study in the Benchmark Advance program. As a reminder, each three-week unit features one topic. As with the previous unit, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In our second unit of study, “Characters’ Actions and Reactions,” your child will explore how characters drive the action of a plot. For example, in the story *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy is going to visit the Great Oz. During the journey, she discovers a scarecrow that can talk. Your child will also explore some of the messages in character-driven classic stories, such as the challenges of growing up and believing in oneself. This will help students begin thinking about how they come across as characters in their own lives, with actions and reactions similar to those of characters they read about. The selections include a variety of genres, such as fantasy, drama, a fable, and informational texts.

I’m looking forward to this exciting unit, exploring with your children the wide range of characters we encounter in literature. It will be fun to discover how the children connect with the various characters as well as recognize the historical significance of some of our favorite children’s tales.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Character's Actions and Reactions

In this unit, we'll read drama and other genres of fiction featuring a variety of characters and think in depth about the question "How do we reveal ourselves to others?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about characters to build on the skills and concepts your child is learning in school. I know exploring this topic together will be fun for both of you!

Topic Connection

What the Others Are Saying

In this unit, students will be analyzing the actions and reactions of characters in popular literature. With your child, talk about what the characters from *Peter Pan* and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* think of each other. For example, what is Wendy's impression of Peter Pan? How would Dorothy describe the Scarecrow to her friends back home? Describe each character's relationship as "friend" or "foe," and then explain how you reached that conclusion.

Vocabulary Connection

Vocabulary Charades

Your child is learning words that can be used to describe characters and their actions, such as **mischievous**, **earnestly**, **haughty**, **appalled**, and **tedious**. Review the meaning of these words with your child by acting them out together. Play a game of charades in which you act out the words. Take turns so that you each have a chance to act out and to guess the words. For each word you guess, tell why you think someone might be driven to act or react in such a way.

Comprehension Connection

Compare-a-Character

Your child will be reading a variety of well-known stories featuring a range of characters, from Peter Pan to Dorothy from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Making connections between self and characters helps readers better understand how we might come across to others. Encourage your child to consider which of the characters in the unit's readings she or he is most like, and why. Have your child make a booklet out of pieces of folded paper. Have the left-hand page of the booklet reveal details about the character, and have the right-hand page reveal details that show how your child is similar to the character.

Word Study Connections

Dialogue Discoveries

Help your child gain a deeper understanding of some of the unit's vocabulary. Choose your favorite children's book and analyze the dialogue of some of the characters. Write down samples of the dialogue and choose a vocabulary word that best describes that dialogue. Explain why that dialogue shows that the character is **mischievous**, **earnest**, **haughty**, or **appalled**. Choose other words to describe the character as well.