

Skill: Identify and infer stated and implied character traits

3rd Grade Nonfiction: The Chicago Fire

Center for Urban Education

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Chicago started out as a small town. Then many people moved to Chicago. They wanted to be part of the new city. They were brave. They came here to make a new life. They started with nothing. They worked hard. They made their homes good places to live.

But Chicago grew so fast people did not have time to build homes of brick. So they made them of wood. The city had to put in streets quickly. The streets were made of wood. People had just put wooden planks down to make streets. They stuck them together with tar.

Some people said to watch out. They said that all the wood was dangerous. There could be a fire. But more people kept moving here. They needed homes in a hurry. So they kept building more wooden houses.

More than 100 years ago there was a big fire in Chicago. It was 1871. It had been hot all summer. The trees and bushes were dry because they needed rain. It had not rained enough to keep them growing green.

The fire kept burning. It lasted more than 30 hours. People tried to stop it. But all the wood kept the fire burning. Finally, it started to rain. That helped to put the fire out.

When people saw how much was burned, they were worried. How would they be able to stay here? But the people who had moved here had started with nothing. They had built the city. They could have moved. But they decided to stay. They would rebuild the city of Chicago.

The day after the fire the newspaper had headline that said "Cheer up! Chicago shall rise again." People stayed and worked together. They built new homes of brick.

People helped each other. They shared food. They shared homes. And they passed laws about building in Chicago. From then on, people would build with bricks so homes would not burn. By 1891, Chicago was a big city again. People who had stayed felt glad. They knew they had made the right choice.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. Which trait did the people who moved to Chicago have?

- a. new
- b. hard working
- c. worried
- d. careless

2. Why do you think the people who moved here were brave?

- a. They built homes.
- b. They traveled a lot.
- c. They hurried.
- d. They stayed after the fire.

3. What trait do you think the people who said to watch out had?

- a. careful
- b. careless
- c. angry
- d. friendly

4. What trait do you think people who shared food after the fire had?

- a. greedy
- b. helpful
- c. frightened
- d. mean

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What is a character trait? Explain in your own words and give an example.

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	d	a	b

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. A character trait is a way a person is. An example is: friendly.

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3rd Grade Fiction: The Turtle and the Ducks

Center for Urban Education adapted from Gutenberg ©2007

Once upon a time, a turtle lived in a pond with two ducks. They were good friends. The turtle liked to talk. He always had something to say to the ducks. He liked to hear himself say it. He was very friendly.

One summer it was very hot and dry. The pond dried up. The two ducks saw that they could no longer live there. They decided to move. They would go where there was more water. They told the turtle they were leaving.

"Oh, don't leave me behind!" begged the turtle. "Take me with you."

"But you cannot fly!" said the Ducks. "How can we take you with us?"

"Take me with you! Take me with you!" said the turtle.

The ducks felt so sorry for the turtle. They were kind ducks. "We have thought of a way," they said. But you have to keep still. We will each take hold of one end of a strong stick. You take the middle in your mouth. Then we will fly up in the air with you and carry you with us. But remember not to talk! If you open your mouth, you will fall."

The turtle said he would not say a word. He was very grateful. So the ducks brought a strong little stick and took hold of the ends, and the turtle bit firmly on the middle. Then the two ducks rose slowly in the air and flew.

When they were above the treetops, the turtle wanted to say, "How high we are!" But he remembered, and kept still. When they passed another pond he wanted to say, "Let's stop here." But he remembered, and stayed silent. Then they came over the town. People looked up and saw them. "Look at the ducks carrying a turtle!" they shouted. Everyone ran to look. The turtle wanted to say, "What business is it of yours?" But he didn't. Then he heard the people shout, "Isn't it strange!"

The turtle forgot everything except that he wanted to say, "I am not strange. I am special!" He opened his mouth—and fell from the sky. Luckily, the turtle fell in a bush. But the turtle broke its leg and could not walk for weeks. A family felt sorry for the turtle and took it in. The mother said, "We will help you." She put a tub in their yard so it could have water. It wasn't a pond. But at least the turtle was alive. He helped her every day by eating weeds in the garden.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

6. Which trait do the ducks have?

- a. mean
- b. foolish
- c. kind
- d. birds

7. Which trait does the turtle have?

- a. angry
- b. greedy
- c. lazy
- d. talkative

8. Which trait do you think made the turtle fall?

- a. frightened
- b. careful
- c. lazy
- d. proud

9. Which trait do you think the mother who saved the turtle had?

- a. helpful
- b. busy
- c. angry
- d. sad

10. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What trait do you think the turtle learned to have after he fell?

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Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	c	d	d	a

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. patient; cooperative; helpful