

Character Studies

Grade 3: Fiction, Unit 3

Postassessment Sample Responses

Following are sample responses for each question, at a range of levels. These samples will help students notice if they have done similar work in their responses, and thus will be a helpful part of their self-assessment. These can also serve as mentor texts to help your students to identify specific ways they can lift their work to the next level.

Question	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>1. What kind of person is Taylor? How do you know this?</p> <p><i>Inferring About Characters and Other Story Elements: Character Traits</i></p>	<p>Taylor is scared. <i>Or</i> Taylor is scared to jump but then she does.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level may confuse traits with feelings. They may include descriptions of what a character does, says, or thinks. Or students could supply a trait, if the trait is explicitly named in the text.</i></p>	<p>Taylor is the kind of person who is determined. Even though she is scared to jump, she still doesn't get out of the line for the diving board.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level tend to identify a character trait and to use evidence to support this thinking. The third bullet does not apply to this question.</i></p>	<p>Taylor is the kind of person who is determined. Even though she is scared to jump, she still doesn't get out of the line for the diving board. It almost seems like she's determined to jump because she wants to be brave.</p> <p>Taylor is also a good big sister—she watches her brother.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level tend to show how characters are complicated. One way to do this is by trying to be more precise in describing characters' motivations or feelings. Another way is to discuss more than one trait or motivation. This response does both of these.</i></p>
<p>2. Reread lines 57 to 60 below. These lines show a change in Taylor. How did she change? What caused her to change?</p> <p><i>IDID IT!</i></p> <p>Travis is doing a happy dance. I climb out, dripping. "Hey," I say, like I've been doing this forever. "Let's go again."</p> <p><i>Inferring About Characters and Other Story Elements: Character Response/Change</i></p>	<p>Taylor didn't want to jump before but then she did and so now she feels excited.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level show that a student has supplied a reason for why a character changed. As long as responses include a reason, the reason doesn't need to show an in-depth understanding of the deep reasons for the change. Note that responses at this level tend to mention a change in feelings or actions and provide a surface-level reason for the change.</i></p>	<p>Taylor felt excited when she got out of the water because she jumped, and now she knows she can do it again. She realizes jumping is not scary.</p> <p><i>A big difference between responses at level 2 and level 3 is that the level 3 response tends to be more text-based. The student is more apt to point to an event that causes the change. Often when the response becomes more text-based, it also becomes deeper and more precise.</i></p>	<p>When Taylor got out of the water after she jumped, she realized that jumping is not so scary. She wanted to jump again! This is a big change because in the beginning Taylor was so scared. Her stomach felt like oatmeal bubbling. But then her brother told her you can do it. Then she tried and she did it!</p> <p><i>Responses at this level differ from earlier ones because now the reader talks about change over time by saying what happened before the change, what caused the change(s), and what happened after. Also, readers are apt to think about how other parts of a story—other characters, occurrences in the setting/the world—play a part in causing the change.</i></p>

Question	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>3. Reread lines 28 to 30 below. Think of how all stories tend to go. Then explain how this part fits into the story structure.</p> <p><i>You don't have to do this, I tell myself.</i></p> <p><i>But next week is the pool party, my brain argues. You'll be the only one who can't go on the diving board.</i></p> <p>Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole</p>	<p>This part comes right after Taylor watches other kids jump. She's going to do it.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level show a grasp for the sequence of a story and show that the reader understands what came before (and sometimes after) this part.</i></p>	<p>This part is the main character's thinking. It shows why she decided to jump.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level show an awareness of how the part under discussion fits into the whole story and a knowledge of story structure. Ideally the reader recognizes that this is not only internal thought that develops the character, but also shows the character's motivation. The response above suggests the reader recognizes this shows character motivation, but doesn't control that technical term.</i></p>	<p>This part is important to the story because it shows Taylor's motivation for getting over her fear of going off the diving board. The part is Taylor's thinking. It shows why she ends up jumping.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level show that the reader grasps the structure of stories in general enough to name what aspect of the story is under discussion (i.e. the character's motivation). Readers also show an understanding of how this part of the story fits into this particular story.</i></p>
<p>4. What is an important lesson that readers can learn from this story? Support your answer with evidence from the text.</p> <p>Determining Themes/Cohesion</p>	<p>I think Taylor was happy that she jumped. I like jumping off the diving board too.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level tend to focus on the story itself, rather than on a universal theme that the story develops. Students may simply retell a part of the story, or they may name a lesson they learned from it or a reaction—or feeling—they had.</i></p>	<p>Readers can learn that sometimes you have to try something that scares you. For example, when Taylor finally jumped she realized it was fun. She even wanted to jump again.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level tend to name a life lesson that a character in the story learns, most likely at the end. Students can tell about a part of the story that shows this lesson.</i></p>	<p>Readers can learn that even when you're scared, you can push yourself to be brave. Taylor was scared to jump across the whole start of the story, but she really wanted to be able to jump off the diving board so she kept pushing herself to try. At the end, she thought that she could do it and she did!</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>Readers can learn that you can do things with the support of people who care about you. For example, early in the story, Taylor was really scared. But when her brother, Travis, jumped, he made her smile. Then later he cheered her on. He said, "You can do it!" And she did.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level explore one theme across the story. Students are not yet able to name multiple themes, but can explain how one theme emerges in more than one part of the text. Some students may do this by showing the absence of the theme at the start of the story, and the presence of it by the end, while other students may cite a couple examples of the theme developing across the story.</i></p>