

Character Studies

Grade 3: Fiction, Unit 3

Preassessment 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 Shannon?</p> <p><i>Inferring About Characters and Other Story Elements: Character Traits</i></p>	<p>Shannon's mad.</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>Shannon bosses people around. She makes them recycle.</p> <p><i>Note that 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>I think Shannon is the kind of person who bosses people around. Like she yells at Tara for stealing the cans.</p> <p><i>Note that 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>Shannon is the kind of person who is bossy. Like she makes Jody recycle her juice and yells at Tara for stealing the cans. But when she teams up with Tara to help people you realize she is also a nice person!</p> <p><i>Note that responses at this level tend to show how characters are complicated. They discuss more than one trait and/or motivation. Students also use and discuss details from different parts of the text to support their answers.</i></p>
<p>2. Lines 98 to 102 below show that Shannon has changed. Discuss how and why the character made this change.</p> <p>Then Shannon leaned over to me and whispered, "You were right Jody."</p> <p>I just sat there, gaping like a goofball.</p> <p>The bully and The Can Queen—business partners?</p> <p>Tara—a bully with a heart of gold (or at least aluminum)?</p> <p>Me—"right"?! <i>Inferring About Characters and Other Story Elements: Character Response/Change</i></p>	<p>Shannon isn't mad at Tara anymore. She knows she wasn't really stealing the cans.</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>Shannon isn't mad at Tara anymore. She knows she wasn't <u>really</u> stealing the cans. Even if it looks like she's stealing the cans, she's just using them to help needy families.</p> <p><i>A big difference between the responses for 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>Early in the story Shannon was very mad at Tara because she thought she was taking the cans from the recycling bins. Then she learned she was really doing that to help needy families. Jody helped Shannon realize this because she said the big thing isn't really who gets the money from recycling. It's about helping the environment and other people.</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 41 to 44 below. Think about the parts of every story. What part is this section of the story? Explain how it fits with the rest of the story.</p> <p>We walked up and down the hallways looking for clues until we spotted Tara the Terrible. As we watched, Tara banged a can against a wall. Instantly, it flattened into a disk that she tossed into her daisy-patterned backpack.</p> <p>Shannon ran right up to Tara. "Stop! Thief!" she shouted.</p> <p><i>Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole</i></p>	<p>This part comes after Shannon starts a recycling program and she is mad because someone is taking the cans! The custodian wants to know who?</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. Ideally the reader will supply the literary name for the part—the problem—but that isn't required at this level.</i></p>	<p>These lines show the problem in the story. The custodian discovers someone is taking cans out of the recycling bin and Jody and Shannon set out to solve that mystery.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level tend to name which story element was featured in a particular part in the story (in this case, "the problem"). Student responses also include the importance of the particular part to the rest of the story.</i></p>	<p>This part is important to the story because it shows the first big problem in the story. The custodian discovers someone is taking cans out of the recycling bin. Jody and Shannon soon figure out that mystery—it is Tara. Then Shannon is mad at Tara for ruining the recycling program.</p> <p><i>Responses at this level show that the reader grasps enough of the structure of stories in general to name what part of the story is under discussion (i.e., the problem). Readers also show an understanding of how this part of the story fits into this particular story. The response above suggests that the reader understands that the problem changes from a mystery—who took the cans—to a relationship problem. That is, learning who took the cans doesn't actually solve the problem of the story.</i></p>
<p>4. What is an important lesson that readers can learn from this story? Support your answer.</p> <p><i>Determining Themes/Cohesion</i></p>	<p>I think the story was better at the end when Shannon stopped being bossy. It's not good to be bossy.</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 it is important to work together. For example, at the end of the story Shannon worked together with Tara and her school and they were able to help families at the YWCA.</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 it is important to work together. At first, when Shannon worked alone, she didn't collect a lot of cans. But when she worked together with Tara, the school's recycling program was a success AND they got to have a pizza party.</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>Readers can learn that it is important to work together. When Shannon stopped being bossy and teamed up with Tara, the school's recycling program was a success. And next month, they will be able to help the YWCA build a playground!</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>