

Character Studies
Grade 3: Fiction, Unit 3

Readers, today you will read a story called “Jump.” After you read the story, you will be asked to stop and answer a few questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

<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>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>I DID IT!</i></p> <p>Travis is doing a happy dance.</p> <p>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>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><i>Analyzing Parts of a Story in Relation to the Whole</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><i>Determining Themes/Cohesion</i></p>

Jump!

by Sara Matson

I rub the goose bumps on my arms as a kid struts to the end of the diving board. He gives a friend on the ground the thumbs-up and launches into a cannonball. *Boing! SPLASH!* He comes up laughing. *See, Taylor? I tell myself. It's easy. Fun.* 1

Four kids to go until my turn. At the front of the line, a girl in a pink suit giggles with her friend. 10

"Go!" my little brother, Travis, yells to them.
"Let's jump together," Pink Girl tells her friend.

The gigglers reach the sixth rung of the ladder before the lifeguard whistles. "Just one at a time!" she shouts. 15

Pink Girl goes on alone, slowly. Will she change her mind, like I did last week? Will the lifeguard have to help her down the ladder while everyone stares?

In front of me, Travis hops around like a monkey.
Pink Girl jumps, her hair shooting out like a parachute. *SPLASH!* 20

Three kids to go. Travis steps on my foot.
"Watch it!" I snap.
"Sorry." He moves away, just as Pink Girl's friend does a first-class belly flop.

My brother's face lights up. "Did you *see* that?" 25

I don't answer. Only two kids to go. My stomach bubbles like a pot of oatmeal on the stove.
You don't have to do this, I tell myself.
But next week is the pool party, my brain argues. *You'll be the only one who can't go on the diving board.* 30

The board clunks, and a girl dives gracefully into the pool. Life is so unfair.

Travis is next. He scampers up the ladder and waves his skinny arms.
"Watch this!"

I close my eyes, then open them just in time to see him hop off the end of the board. He pops out of the water, grinning. I can't help smiling, too. 35
Nothing scares that kid.

The boy behind me taps my shoulder. *It's my turn.*

I count the rungs as I climb.

One

40

Two, three.

Four, five, six.

Seven, eight.

Nine.

Blue water stretches out in front of me. Kids are shooting off the waterslide at the other end of the pool. A boy runs across the concrete. A lifeguard blows her whistle at him. Everywhere, everyone is moving. Except me.

45

"What are you waiting for?" demands a kid on the ground.

I step forward. The water looks so far away.

50

Then I see Travis standing by the lifeguard's chair, shivering. His eyes lock on mine. "You can do it!" he yells.

That's what I've always told him: When he was learning to tie his shoes. Or write his name. Or ride his bike without training wheels. *You can do it.*

I take a deep breath and step out into nothing. My body drops, my stomach rises. Then my toes slice the water and I plunge deep. I flap my arms and pull myself to the surface, where my face finds the sun. *I DID IT!*

55

Travis is doing a happy dance.

I climb out, dripping. "Hey," I say, like I've been doing this forever. "Let's go again."

60

"Jump!" by Sara Matson, *Highlights Magazine*, August 2011. Copyright © 2011 Highlights for Children, Inc. Columbus, Ohio. All rights reserved. Used by permission.