

SCENARIO

In past years Mr. Simon's second graders did not understand how, through the course of a story, a character may change and that the author and illustrator cleverly craft the text and illustrations to depict this change. Sometimes the change is subtle, while other times a major event causes the change. However, with the state adopting the Common Core State Standards, Mr. Simon realizes that he needs to carefully select books that will help his second graders understand how authors use text and illustrations to depict character growth. He has always used Kevin Henkes's books because students can identify with the main characters, and he will continue to do so because Henkes's protagonists exhibit the type of change that will facilitate literary understanding. He begins with *Julius: The Baby of the World* (Henkes, 1995) because the change is abrupt and obvious, and students should be able to find support in the text for this character growth. Mr. Simon also has decided to teach this lesson in small groups of four or five so all students have a chance to share their ideas.

After reading the story and sharing the pictures, he begins the discussion with these questions about the main character Lilly.

MR. SIMON: At the beginning of the story, what was Lilly's attitude toward the baby? April: Lilly did not like him.

TY: No, that's not right. Mr. Simon, turn back to the first page, it says she liked him.

MR. SIMON: What makes you say that Lilly likes Julius? Be sure to cite evidence from the story to support your point of view.

TY: (Pointing to the words) It says she gave him things, told him secrets, and sang lullabies. Oh, and here it says Lilly was the best big sister. So at the very beginning of the story, Lilly liked Julius.

MR. SIMON: What do you think, April, is Ty right?

APRIL: I guess, but she only likes him before he is born. Afterward, she doesn't like him.

JUSTINE: In fact, she does mean things to him. I like the picture where Lilly is counting wrong and saying the ABC's in the wrong order. That was mean because Julius will learn them the wrong way.

MR. SIMON: Natasha, did you see anything else in the text or illustrations that shows that Lilly did not like Julius after he was born?

NATASHA: I liked it when Lilly kept saying *disgusting* after the parents talked about his wet nose. That meant that she really doesn't like him at all.

DAMON: I like how you read that word, Mr. Simon, *DISGUSTING* (said with great emphasis).

MR. SIMON: How does Lilly feel about Julius at the end of the story?

NATASHA, APRIL, AND TY: She loves him!

DAMON: Turn to the page when Lilly's cousin says Julius is disgusting. See, right here, it says: "Lilly's nose twitched. Her eyes narrowed." That means that she doesn't like what her cousin said about her brother.

TY: She also says here (pointing to the text), "For your information . . ." When my dad says that, I know he means business and wants me to pay attention to what he is going to say.

APRIL: I like how she said here (pointing to the text), "Kiss! Admire! Stroke! Lilly commanded." I am sure she said it like this: "KISS" (long pause), "ADMIRE" (long pause), "STROKE."

TY: Look here, the author made these words all big: "JULIUS IS THE BABY OF THE WORLD!"

In previous years, Mr. Simon had never taught such a lesson in small groups. He was pleased with the first lesson, believing that his students gained some appreciation for how an author can show character change in a story and the way they could point to specific text and illustrations to support their stance about the way Lilly changed.

As you read this chapter, consider the following questions:

Guiding questions

1. Did Mr. Simon choose an appropriate book for this lesson? Why or why not?

2. Could he have chosen a better one? If yes, what book would you suggest?

3. Reread the discussion. Could Mr. Simon do a better job of directing students' attention to how the author changed the protagonist's attitude toward her brother?

4. As you read this chapter, think of other ways Mr. Simon could teach this lesson and what book you would choose after this one.

5. What writing assignment could Mr. Simon add in order for students to write their responses?