



Grades 3-8

Authors and Educators Resources

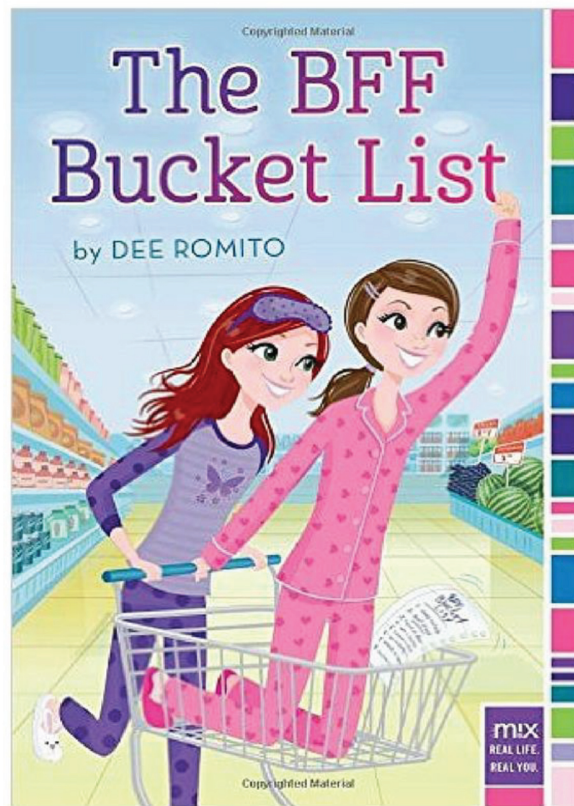


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Teacher's Guide

by Pamela Brunskill and Dee Romito

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Summary

Ella and Skyler have been best friends since kindergarten—so close that people smoosh their names together like they’re the same person: EllaandSkyler. SkylerandElla.

But Ella notices the little ways she and Skyler have been slowly drifting apart. And she’s determined to fix things with a fun project she’s sure will bring them closer together—The BFF Bucket List. Skyler is totally on board.

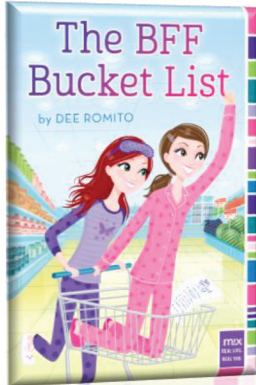


Illustration
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The girls must complete each task on the list together: things like facing their fears, hosting a fancy dinner party, and the biggest of them all—speaking actual words to their respective crushes before the end of summer. But as new friends, epic opportunities, and super-cute boys enter the picture, the challenges on the list aren’t the only ones they face.

And with each girl hiding a big secret that could threaten their entire friendship, will the list—and their BFF status—go bust?

Themes of friendship, navigating challenges, and growing up are woven throughout the book.

About the Author

Dee Romito lives in her hometown of Buffalo, New York, where she and her family are steadily checking items off their own bucket list of adventures. You’re likely to find her at the local ice cream shop, writing at a café, or curled up on the couch with her cats. And while she does her best to be a grown-up most of the time, giggling with her BFFs is still one of her all-time favorite things. You can visit her website at DeeRomito.com.

To join the fun and create your own bucket list, visit TheBFFBucketList.com!

Watch for future releases, *Best. Night. Ever.*, *No Place Like Home*, and *The Italy List*, coming in 2017 and 2018.



BEFORE READING

Planning sheet



	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
before reading		
chapters 1-6		
chapters 7-12		
chapters 13-18		
chapters 19-24		
chapters 25-30		
chapters 31-38		
after reading		

BEFORE READING

Prereading Activities



The following are suggested activities you can do with your students before you read *The BFF Bucket List* by Dee Romito.

Study the title and cover

What do they tell you about the book? What do you think the story is about? What are the girls doing on the cover and why?

Learn more about the author

Read the "About the Author" section as a group or a class.

Create a mini scrapbook

Gather four or more photos of you and one of your best friends, or draw shared events inside the frames of the graphic organizer. Write captions that include the approximate date and describe what you were doing and why. *See appendix for graphic organizer

Explore themes

Have a discussion about friendship, navigating challenges, and growing up, with the use of essential questions. Ask students the following to guide their thinking, which can be part of a larger thematic study unit on friendship:

What makes a good friend? What about a best friend?

What kinds of challenges might friends face when it comes to their friendship?

Is it okay to have more than one best friend?

What does it mean to grow up? What milestones are you looking forward to?

When is change a good thing? When is it not?

Complete a Venn diagram

Describe your best friend or a good friend of yours. How is he/she similar to you, and how is he/she different than you? *See appendix for graphic organizer

Write a letter

Write to a friend using the proper format for a friendly letter.



EXPLORING THE BOOK

Discussion Questions and Journal Prompts



The following questions can be used for group discussion or as journal prompts to help your students better understand the book.

Chapters 1-6

Ella and Skyler have different feelings about high school. How would you describe each of them? Include references from the book to back up your comments.

Are you more like Ella or Skyler? Why?

Why do you think Skyler's desire to hang out with new friends bothers Ella?

In Chapter 3, Ella rewrites the lists of things she is excited to do over the summer. Do you think she will let go of who she is to retain her friend?

Why does Ella write the BFF Summer Bucket List?

What happens when friends grow apart?

What do you think will happen with Mensing Academy? Why?

Chapters 7-12

Social media is part of life for Ella and Skyler. How does it compare to your experience with social media?

What do you think of Ella's biggest fear? How would you react if your best friend told you that?

What does being a good friend entail? Do you think Ella and Skyler are being good friends at this point? Why or why not?

Do you think Ella shares any responsibility for Skyler's injuries? Why or why not?



Chapters 13-18

Why do you think it's so hard for Skyler to tell Ella no?

How would you describe Skyler's relationship with her mom?

What would your favorite activity from Ella and Skyler's Bucket List be? Why?

Chapters 19-24

In Chapter 19, what does Ella refer to as "a BFF ultimatum?" and how does she react?

How is Ella's mindset changing regarding friendship and change in general?

Have you ever gotten into a fight with your BFF? If so, what happened? If you could change anything about that time, would you?

In Chapter 24, the girls try to give things away. Were you surprised by what happened with Miss McCarty? Why or why not?

Chapters 25-30

Have you ever gone letterboxing? If so, what was it like? If not, does it remind you of anything else? Does it seem fun to you?

Why is it so hard for Ella and Skyler to tell each other the truth? Why do they still keep their secrets?

Who is jealous of whom? Is it possible to have more than one BFF?

Why doesn't Skyler completely trust Brooke?

In what ways is Mensing Academy a good fit for Ella?

Do you think Brooke knew about Ella's lime allergy? Why or why not?

Chapters 31-38

In Chapter 31, Skyler says, “We don’t trade friends because we like different things, Brooke. I still like plenty of the same things Ella does.” What does this suggest about her view of friendship?

How do Ella and Skyler learn of each other’s secrets?

Why is it so hard for Ella and Skyler to be honest with each other after they’ve learned each other’s secrets?

In Chapter 36, Ella decides not to eat her last Starburst when she introduces herself to Alex. Why? What does this suggest about her character’s growth?

What is the difference between best friends and true friends? Which would you rather have?

What do you think the future will hold for Ella and Skyler? What clues in the book make you think that?





Theme

Have a discussion or literature circle

Periodically revisit the theme of friendship and talk about some of the following topics:

What makes a good friend? What about a best friend?

Why do people get jealous?

Is it okay to have more than one best friend?

When is change a good thing? When is it not?

Why is communication important when it comes to friendship?

Compare and contrast

What does it mean to be growing up? What is life like for a kid versus an adult? Work with a partner or in groups to complete the compare and contrast chart. *See appendix for graphic organizer

Point of view

Rewrite it

Choose a scene and rewrite it from a different character's point of view, only writing about what that character sees, hears, thinks, or feels. How did the scene change?

Journal it

The author chose to tell this story with a dual point of view. Why do you think she did that? What are the benefits of incorporating two characters' perspectives? How would the story be different if only Ella or Skyler had told it? When you're finished, discuss your ideas with a partner.

Wear someone else's shoes

Think of a recent event like a birthday party, a vacation, or even a trip to the store. How would someone else describe that event? How differently would your parents, your friends, or even one of your pets tell the story? Write about it from their point of view or discuss it with a partner or reading group.



Character Development

Identify character traits

Choose a character (or characters) who interests you. For each character, identify a character trait and note evidence from the book that shows what the character does, says, or thinks that demonstrates that trait. *See appendix for graphic organizer

Illustrate a character

Skyler and Ella are shown on the cover of the book, but what do the other characters look like? Illustrate one of the side characters and include at least three things that represent their interests and character traits. Think about what you've read and use your imagination! Include a quote from *The BFF Bucket List* that represents who your character is at this point in the story.

Design a temporary tattoo

In Chapter 14, Ella and Skyler get temporary tattoos. Ella gets a butterfly, while Skyler gets a dragon. These items represent things each girl likes as well as their personalities. What would you want in an airbrush tattoo? Why? Design one you would like to get.

Using the Senses

Explore the use of senses

Authors use senses to help tell a story so the reader can see the world as the characters do. As you read, fill in the graphic organizer with examples of what the characters see, hear, taste, feel, and smell. Are there examples of all senses? Is one used more often than the others? How does using the senses help the reader understand the character and setting better? *See appendix for graphic organizer

Examine sensory details

In Chapter 23, Dee Romito uses the sensory detail of sound to make the scene at The Donut more real for readers. There's spraying water, the chatty crowd, and news reporters that Ella needs to shout over. What other sounds or sensory details do you notice in that scene? How does it help to make the scene real?



Voice

Investigate dialogue.

A lot of *The BFF Bucket List* is a dialogue among friends. Examine how the author uses quotes and conversations. An example comes from Chapter 1 when Skyler says, “I had to act like I was adjusting my flip-flop in order to get it without looking like a complete tool.” Discuss what makes this sound like a real person. Can you find more examples?

Investigate narration.

Skyler and Ella have very distinct voices. If the chapter titles didn’t tell you who was speaking, how would you know who was narrating? List at least four different ways you could tell.

AFTER READING

Extension Activities



Letterboxing

Research and complete a letterboxing activity near you. Go to www.letterboxing.org to find out more.

Plan a fancy dinner

What would you include on the menu if you were planning a dinner party? Pick at least one appetizer, main dish, and dessert and find recipes for each.

Write a letter

Write to someone you consider a true friend and tell him/her what you love about your friendship.

Visit Dee Romito's website

Learn more about the author and her upcoming books at deeromito.com. Students can also e-mail Dee and share their thoughts about the book.

Theme discussion

Periodically refer back to the initial theme discussion and essential questions on friendship.

Create your own bucket list

Ella and Skyler had twelve challenges on their list. Create your own list at TheBFFBucketList.com with activities you'd like to complete with friends or family.



APPENDIX

Standards Alignment and Graphic Organizers



Depending on which activities you complete, the following **Language Arts Common Core anchor standards** can be met. For standards in other subjects, see state guidelines.

READING

Key Ideas and Details

[CCRA.R.1](#) Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

[CCRA.R.2](#) Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

[CCRA.R.3](#) Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

[CCRA.R.4](#) Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

[CCRA.R.5](#) Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

[CCRA.R.6](#) Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

[CCRA.R.10](#) Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

WRITING

Text Types and Purposes

[CCRA.W.1](#) Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

[CCRA.W.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

[CCRA.W.3](#) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.



Production and Distribution of Writing

[CCRA.W.4](#) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

[CCRA.W.9](#) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

[CCRA.W.10](#) Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Comprehension and Collaboration

[CCRA.SL.1](#) Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCRA.SL.3](#) Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

[CCRA.SL.6](#) Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

LANGUAGE

Conventions of Standard English

[CCRA.L.1](#) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

[CCRA.L.2](#) Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

[CCRA.L.3](#) Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

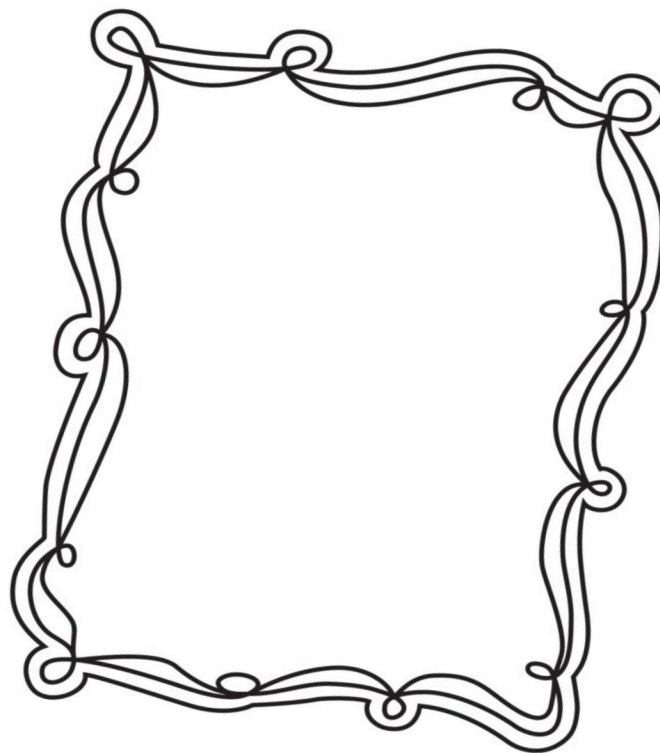
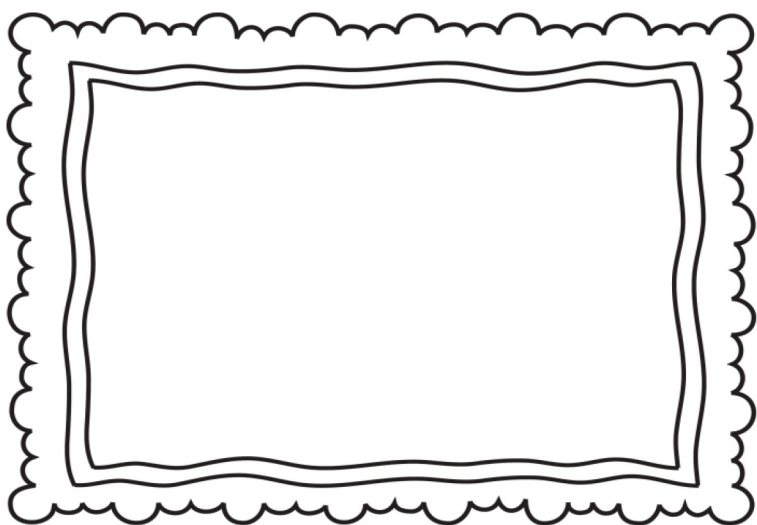
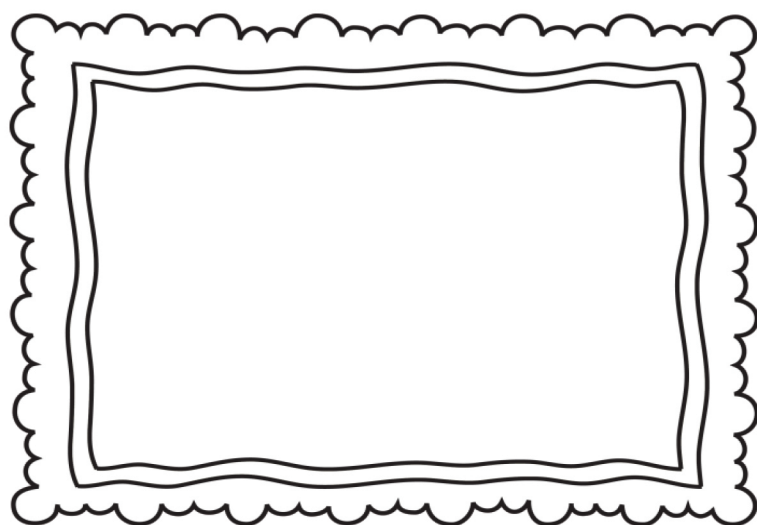
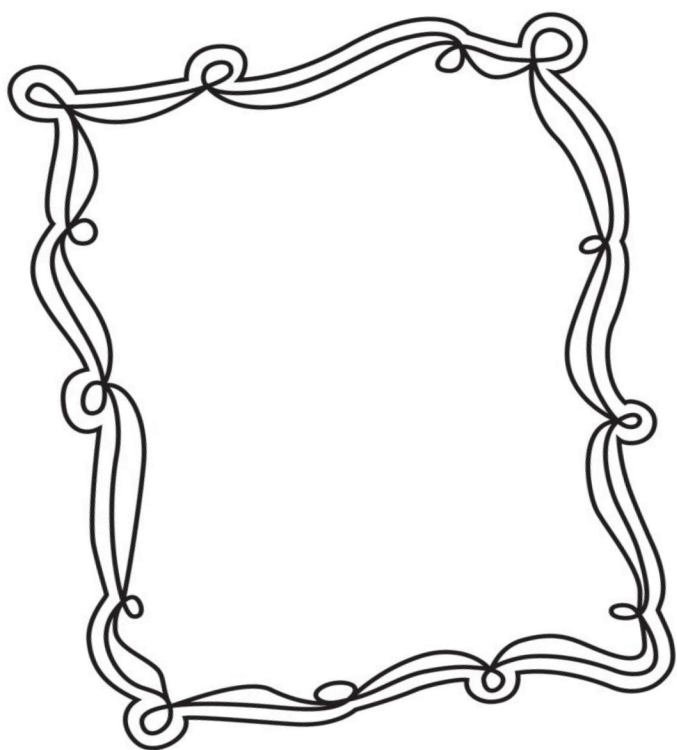
[CCRA.L.4](#) Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

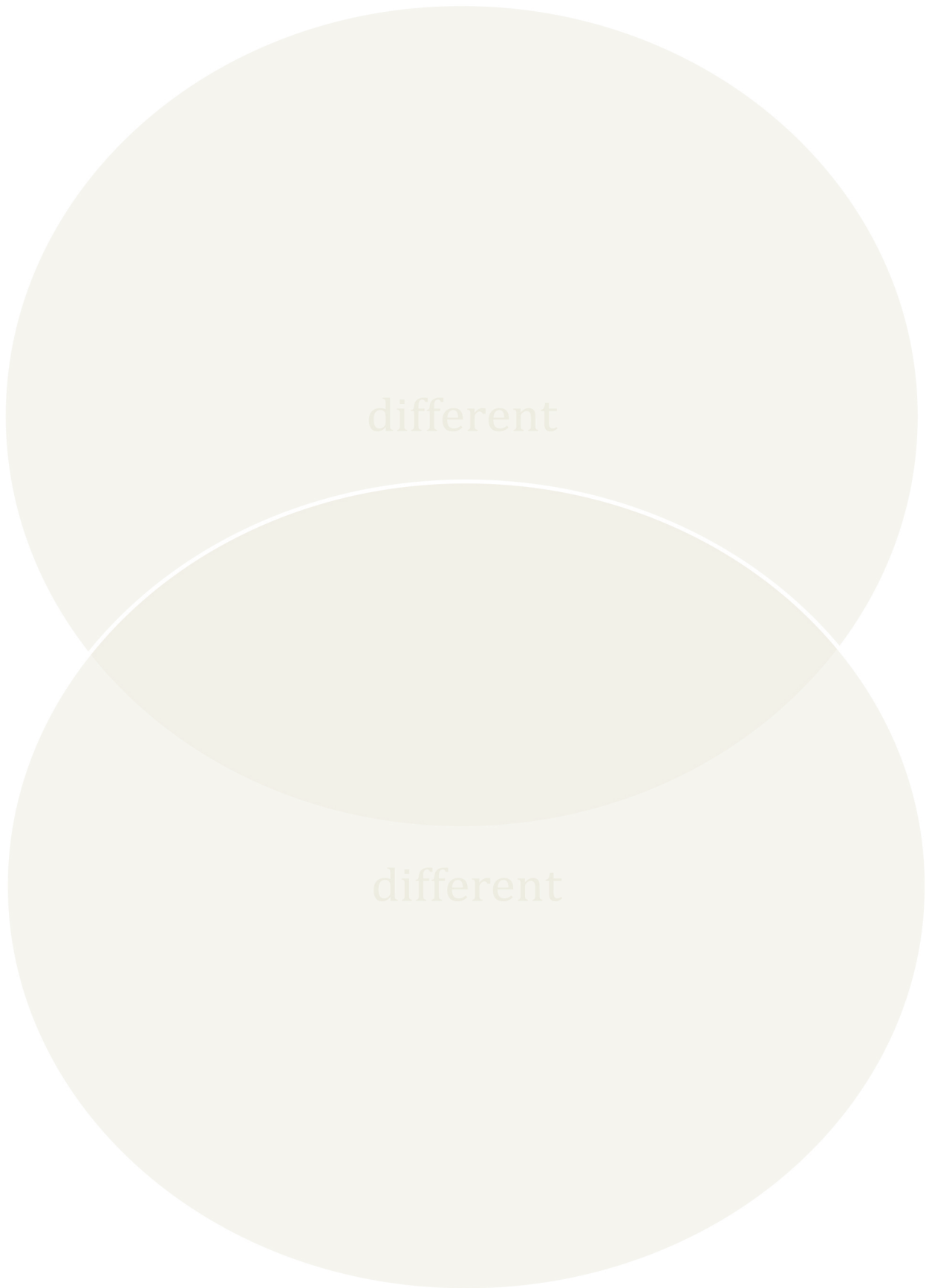
[CCRA.L.5](#) Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

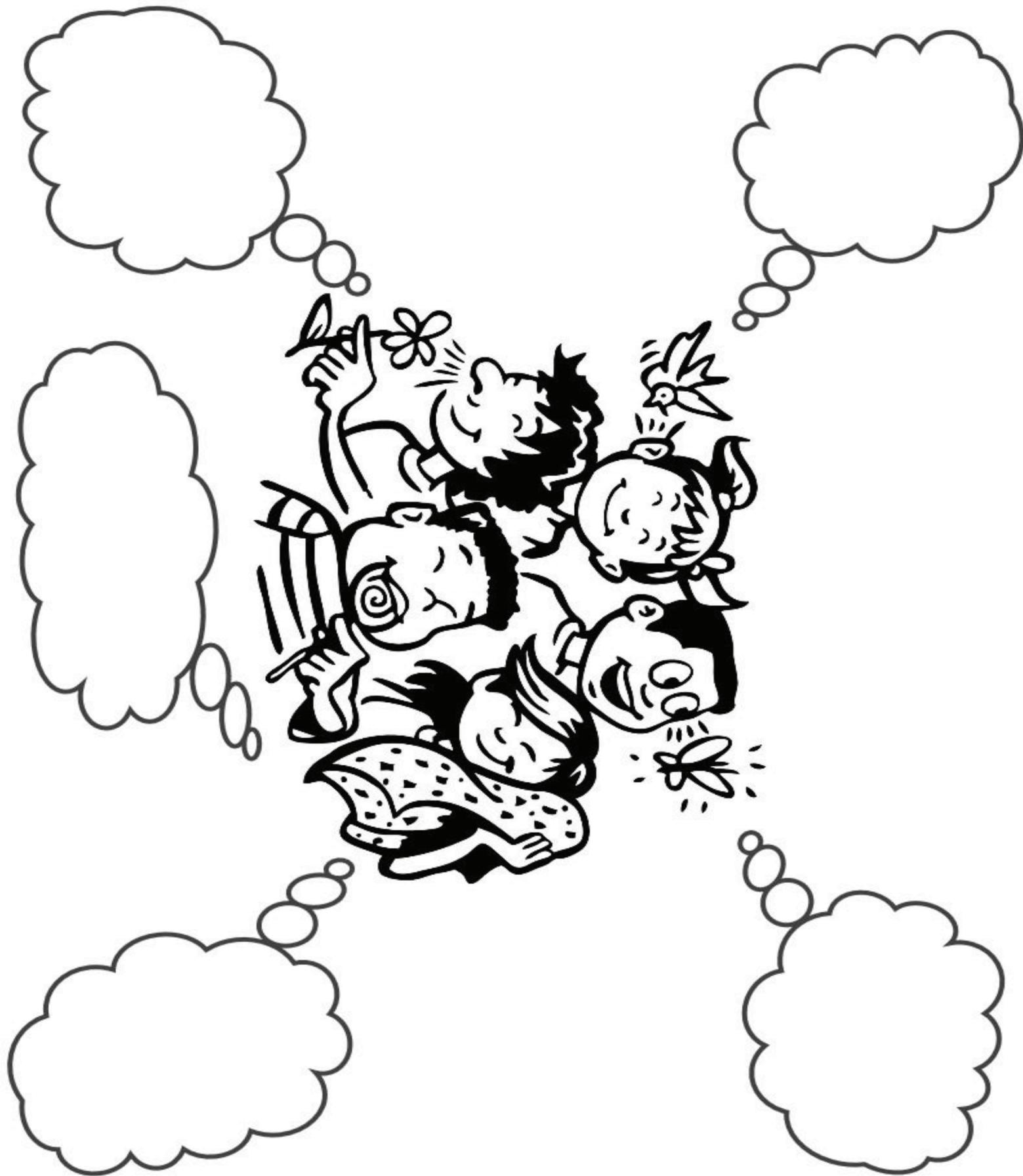
CHARACTER:
CHARACTER TRAIT:
WHAT DOES HE/SHE DO, SAY, OR THINK THAT SHOWS THIS TRAIT?

CHARACTER:
CHARACTER TRAIT:
WHAT DOES HE/SHE DO, SAY, OR THINK THAT SHOWS THIS TRAIT?

CHARACTER:
CHARACTER TRAIT:
WHAT DOES HE/SHE DO, SAY, OR THINK THAT SHOWS THIS TRAIT?







KIDS

ADULTS

SAME



DIFFERENT