



## Teacher Guide



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## Summary

Skyler is about to go on the biggest adventure of her life. Her mother has been relocated to Venice, Italy, with the possibility of a long-term move. While there, Skyler takes on an informal internship and will be blogging about the city--a position that could lead to even bigger things if all goes well.

One of her fellow interns, Logan, is cool, cute, and Australian. But the other intern, Zara, seems determined to sabotage Skyler's chances. And with a big assignment coming up, Skyler is already stumped.

Wishing she had someone to talk to, the first person who comes to mind isn't even on the same continent. Skyler knows that her BFF, Ella, would have all the answers, especially how to solve the writer's block. But after a summer bucket list that went awry, they didn't leave on the best of terms. Thanks to technology, Skyler and Ella get a long-distance shot at mending things.

But when Skyler's writing mistakes start to pileup, she isn't sure if she's up to the task. With the help of some Italian magic and her oldest friend, can Skyler learn to love her new city and stay connected to what matters most?

Thanks to her plan, Kenzie discovers a courage she didn't know she had—and finally feels like she belongs somewhere. But when things start to get complicated, Kenzie discovers that she'll have to face the consequences of everything she's done since her arrival--and that maybe home isn't necessarily a place on a map, but where your heart is.

Illustration © Annabelle Metayer

## About the Author

Dee Romito is a former elementary school teacher and is the author of books for young readers from picture books to middle grade. Always a traveler at heart, she's sent postcards of Big Ben from London, of snow-capped mountains from Switzerland, and of majestic castles from Ireland. And though she's only been to Italy once for a quick plate of pasta, sending a postcard from Venice just might be on her bucket list. You can visit her website at [DeeRomito.com](http://DeeRomito.com).



# BEFORE READING

Planning sheet



	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
before reading		
chapters 1-6		
chapters 7-12		
chapters 13-18		
chapters 19-24		
chapters 25-32		
after reading		

# BEFORE READING

## Prereading Activities



The following are suggested activities you can do with your students before you read *Postcards from Venice* 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 is the girl doing on the cover and why?

### Learn More about the Author

Read the “About the Author” section as a group or a class.

### Watch the Book Trailer

Coming soon at [deeromito.com/postcards-from-venice](http://deeromito.com/postcards-from-venice)! Discuss what the book is about and what challenges the main character might face.

### Discuss Prior Knowledge

Inside the frames of the graphic organizer, draw places you’ve been or places you dream of going! Write a caption for each location. Share with a partner or group. \*See appendix for graphic organizer

### Explore Themes

Have a discussion about trying new things and finding what you’re interested in.

Think about a time when you did something new. How did you feel? Was it easy or difficult? Have you ever had to make new friends? What is that like? What tips would you give to someone in that situation?

What interests do you have? What are some things you’d like to try or learn how to do? How can trying new things help you grow as a person?

### Create a Tour Guide

What would you put in a tour guide for your school, town, or city? What information would be important to include? What research would you need to do to get the correct information?

# 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.

- ★ Chapter 1 – What do you learn about Skyler and her personality in the first chapter? What do you learn about her mother?
- ★ Chapter 2 – When she’s asked what she likes to do, Skyler has a hard time coming up with answer. Why is it such a difficult question for her? How would you answer that question?
- ★ Chapter 3 – What is Skyler’s relationship like with her mother? Which sentences give you clues that help you understand how Skyler feels about it?
- ★ Chapter 4 – How are Skyler and Ella different? Find evidence in the text that shows this.

Skyler and Ella are still getting used to a new kind of friendship. How can you tell they’re both a little unsure of how to act with each other?

- ★ Chapter 5 – What writing tips does Marissa give Skyler?
- ★ Chapter 6 – Why isn’t Skyler very happy that Zara is her Italian tutor? What do you know about Zara so far?
- ★ Chapter 7 – Skyler asks herself this question about Zara, “Is she being tough because she doesn’t care—or because she’s afraid to care?” Which do you think it is?
- ★ Chapter 8 – An example of what’s called “Show, don’t tell” in writing is, “ We do the short walk to the bus station and are in Venice before the third song on my iPod is finished.” How does the author “show” the reader how long it takes instead of “telling” how long the ride is?
- ★ Chapter 9 – Do you think Skyler is starting to enjoy writing? Why or why not?
- ★ Chapter 10 – Skyler writes a postcard to Ella and says, “Mom didn’t ever stop to make a work phone call or check her e-mail. Not once.” Why is this such a big deal to Skyler?

Skyler resists Zara’s idea to follow Marissa and Logan, but eventually goes along with it. Why do you think she changes her mind?

★ Chapter 11 - In Chapter 11, Skyler says, “But then I remember all the languages floating in the air.” Why would so many different languages be spoken in Venice?

★ Chapter 12 – Skyler and Zara are having trouble getting along, but they also have moments where they seem to really appreciate each other. Where do you see evidence of this in Chapter 12?



★ Chapter 13 – Zara has been very confident, but in Chapter 13, Skyler sees a different side to her. Why is Zara acting differently?

When Skyler talks to her mom after getting in trouble, tells her, “I don’t have time for this” and Skyler responds with, “You ever have time.” How does this illustrate the core issue in their relationship?

★ Chapter 14 – When Skyler interviews Daniela about her life and the glassmaking business, she tries so hard to write down what Daniela says that she’s overwhelmed. What tips does Marissa give her?

★ Chapter 15 – Skyler has a hard time focusing on her blog post assignments, but easily writes to Ella for an hour. What is the difference between the two types of writing?

★ Chapter 16 – In Chapter 16, Skyler says, “All the newness of Italy has made my usual get-out-there-and-talk-to-everyone self a little hesitant.” How can unfamiliar people and places make you act differently?

★ Chapter 17 – Referring to writing, Logan tells Skyler, “... it’s like you’ve convinced yourself you can’t do this.” Do you think that’s true? Why or why not?

★ Chapter 18 – Skyler decides she wants to stick with the writing internship. Do think she’ll put in more effort and be more focused this time?

When it’s time for Skyler to go on her first gondola ride, she wants her mother to go with her. When her mother says she can’t, how does Skyler feel? Why?

★ Chapter 19 – The girls let their feelings toward each other get in the way of enjoying the gondola ride. Do you think Zara is at fault or is Skyler part of the problem too?

★ Chapter 20 – Skyler’s fifth-grade teacher used to ask students “Are you proud of your work?” before they turned it in. How is that different from just finishing something or checking it over?

This is the second time that Skyler made a mistake with her posts because she was rushing to go do something with her mom. Why was it so important to her to finish the post quickly?

★ Chapter 21 – Skyler decides that she wants to write about Venice for herself. What does she specifically want to have the stories for?

★ Chapter 22 – Sometimes authors hide what are called “Easter Eggs” in their stories for readers to find. When Skyler picks up a book to read, she says the title is *No Place Like Home*. Why do you think the author might have included that particular book in this story? How is it connected to the author?

Skyler finds out they will probably be staying in Italy for the year and she isn't sure how she feels about it. Do you think you'd like to spend a year in a foreign country? Why or why not?

★ Chapter 23 - Authors include little details about their characters to make them realistic. Why do you think Skyler always answers Ella's questions in mint green?

★ Chapter 24 – Ella is the type of person who needs a plan while Skyler likes to see where things lead her. Which character are you most like? Why?

★ Chapter 25 – Skyler says that working on her stories was fun when it was just for her. How is that different than writing something that's assigned?

★ Chapter 26 – Logan says something to Skyler at the end of Chapter 26 that makes her realize something about what she's been writing. What do you think that is?

★ Chapter 27 – Skyler decides to share the emails between her and Ella with Marissa, which means she's sharing some potentially embarrassing things. Why do you think she's willing to do this?

★ Chapter 28 – Skyler turns down a chance for the teen reporter role for the magazine which she wanted all along. Why isn't it something she wants to do anymore?

★ Chapter 29 – Skyler and her mother have a conversation on the train that shows how they've come to understand each other. What have they both realized because of their summer together?

The chef tells Skyler, “We get to decide our own menus.” Why does it feel like he's taking about her life when he says this?

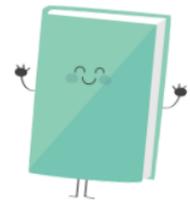
★ Chapter 30 – Skyler gets a couple pieces of really great news. What are they and how does she react to them?

★ Chapter 31 – Zara and Skyler are finally real with each other and apologize for the way they've acted. What finally pushes Zara to make things right?

★ Chapter 32 – In a postcard home, Skyler reminds her future self “You have plenty of time to figure it all out.” What does she mean by this and how does it relate to the theme of the book?

# EXPLORING THE BOOK

## Suggested Activities



### Have a Discussion or Literature Circle

Use the questions below to have a discussion about the story.

Skyler has to navigate her friendship with Ella as well as her relationship with her mom.

How do these things affect her?

What are the most important pieces of a strong friendship?

What are the most important pieces of a strong family relationship?

Why is communication between two people so important?

What might make you feel at home when you are somewhere new?

What might be fun about being somewhere new or different?

How can making new friends and having new adventures change your outlook?

### Compare and Contrast.

Skyler's experiences in Venice are very different from what she would have been doing back home, but many things are also the same. Use both the book and your own experiences to create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two.

\*See appendix for graphic organizer

### 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?

### Explore the Sites

Skyler gets to see so many fun places in Venice and she tries new things, like riding in a gondola. Learn more about the places she sees and the things she does by searching online, watching YouTube videos, using a tour book, using Google Earth, looking at photos, or talking to someone who's been there.

### Identify Character Traits

Choose a character who interests you. Identify a trait or quality the character has and note evidence from the book that demonstrates that trait. Look for things the character does, says, or thinks. \*See appendix for graphic organizer



# AFTER READING

## Extension Activities



### Plan a Trip

Skyler and her mother traveled through Italy and will likely take trips throughout the school year. Choose somewhere you'd like to go and research how you'll get there, where you'll stay, and what you might like to do while you're there.

### Connect with a Friend

Skyler uses postcards, emails, texts, and phone calls to keep in touch with Ella. Write an email or a letter to a friend about what's happening in your life. Be sure to ask some questions so your friend will write back!

### Send a Postcard

Let's not let sending postcards through the mail be a lost art! Provide students with postcards and have them send to friends or family members. Contact me at [deeromito.com/contact](http://deeromito.com/contact) if you'd like a set for the class!

### Create a List of Ideas

Skyler had to come up with things to write about within the themes *Only in Venice*, *Try Something New*, and *The Heart of Venice*. Create a list of what you would write about if you were doing the internship. OR change the themes to reflect your hometown or a place you'd like to visit: *Only in \_\_\_\_\_*, *Try Something New*, and *The Heart of \_\_\_\_\_*.

### Theme Discussion

Refer to previous discussion on trying new things and finding your interests. Do one of the following. 1. Write a journal entry discussing these themes. 2. Read the Author's Note in the back and write down your thoughts.

### Create a Book Trailer

Authors use book trailers as a way for readers to see what the book is about and to get them excited to read it. Plan out a trailer that includes the main characters, main themes, a script or on-screen text, and images that are important to conveying the story. If you'd like to make the trailer, go for it!

### Visit Dee Romito's Website

Learn more about the author and her upcoming books at [deeromito.com](http://deeromito.com). Students can also e-mail Dee and share their thoughts about the book.

# 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.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.

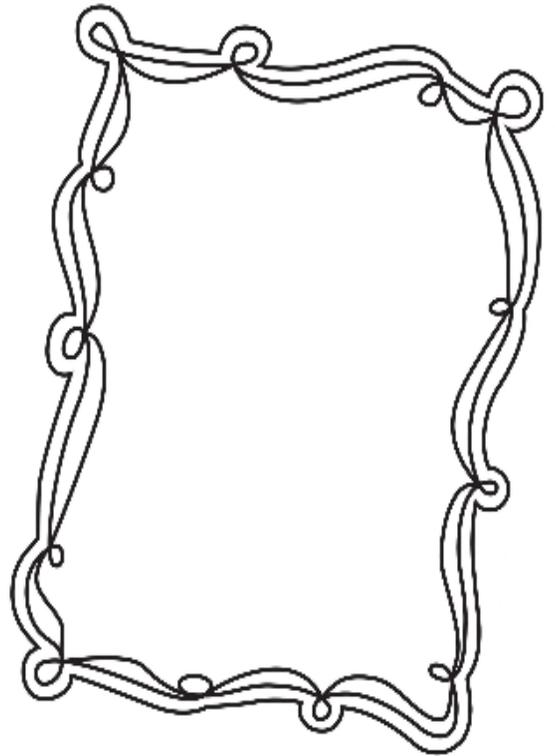
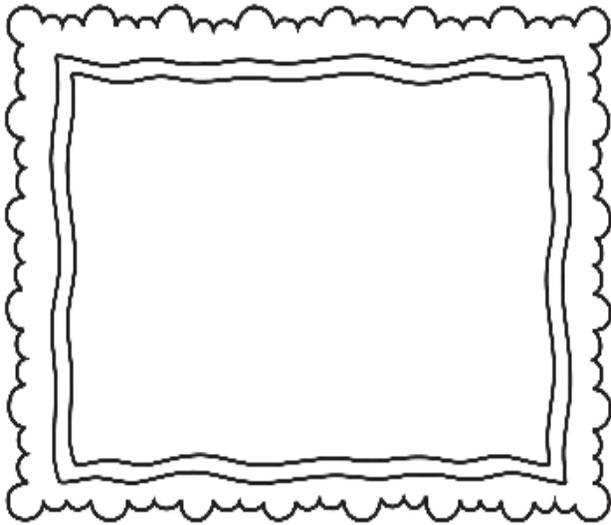
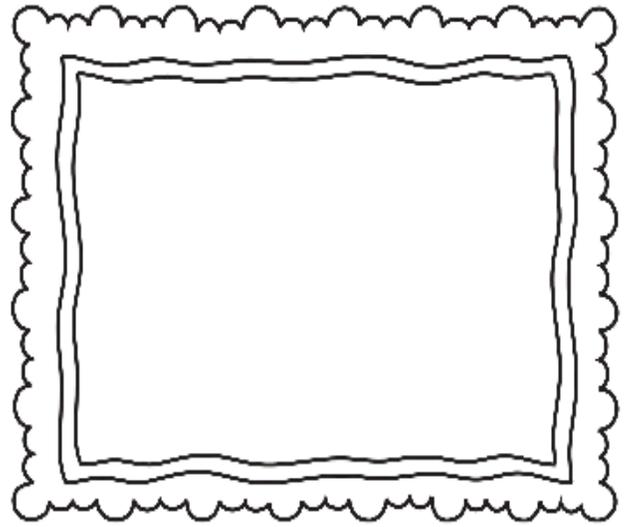
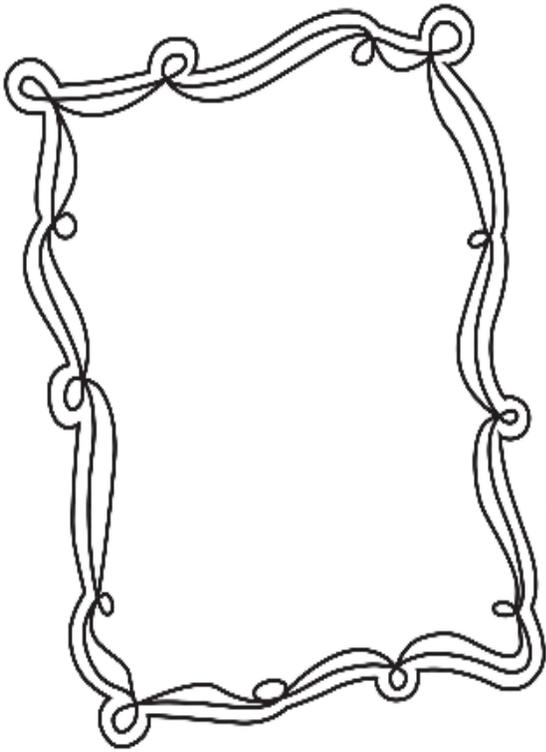
### *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use*

[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.

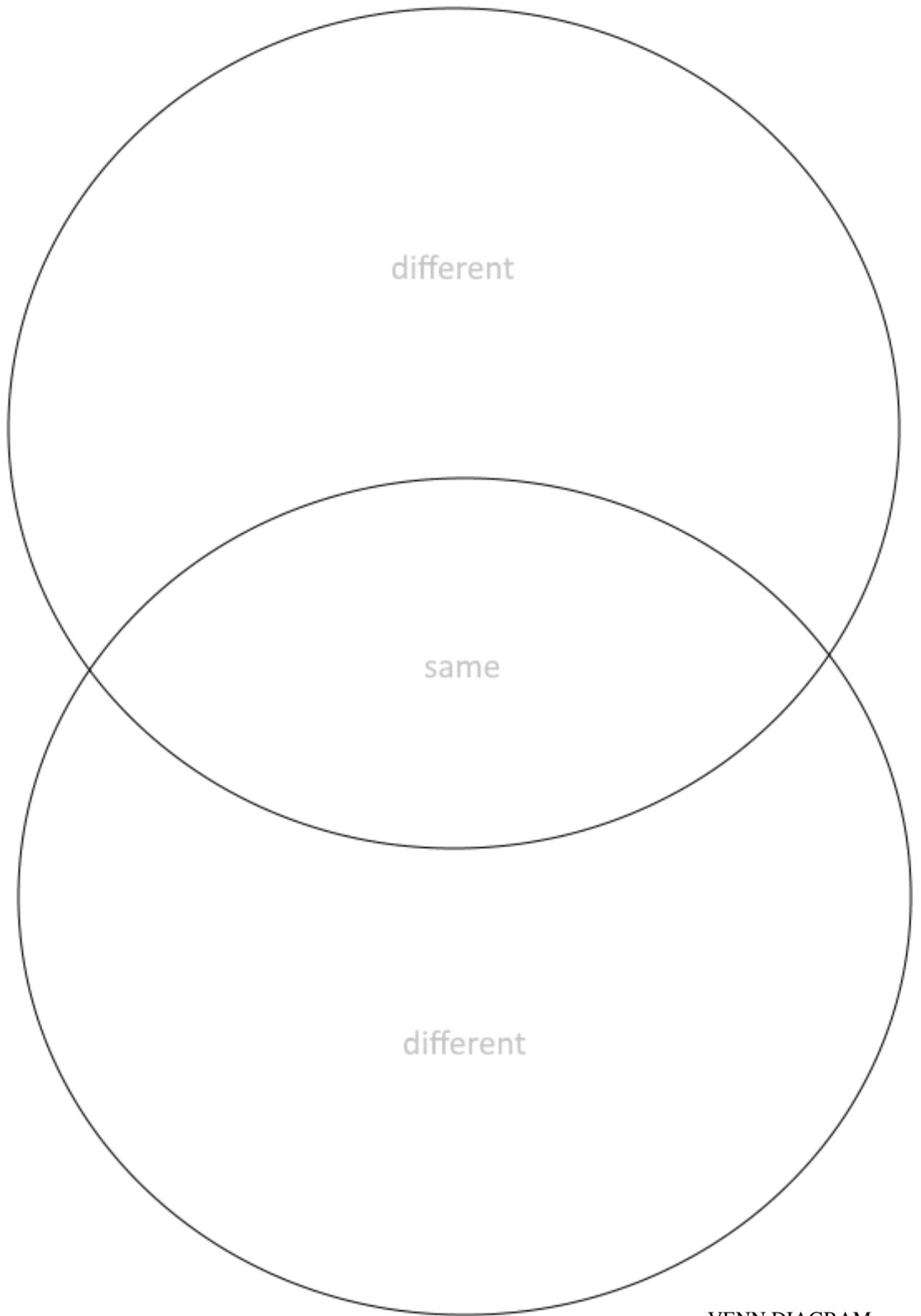
[CCRA.L.5](#) Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.



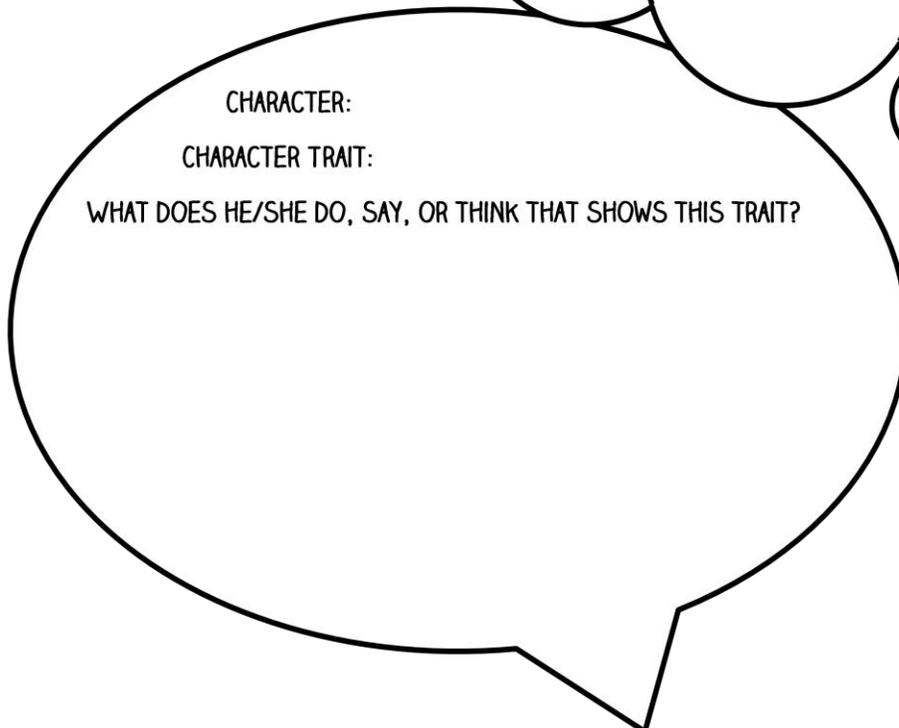
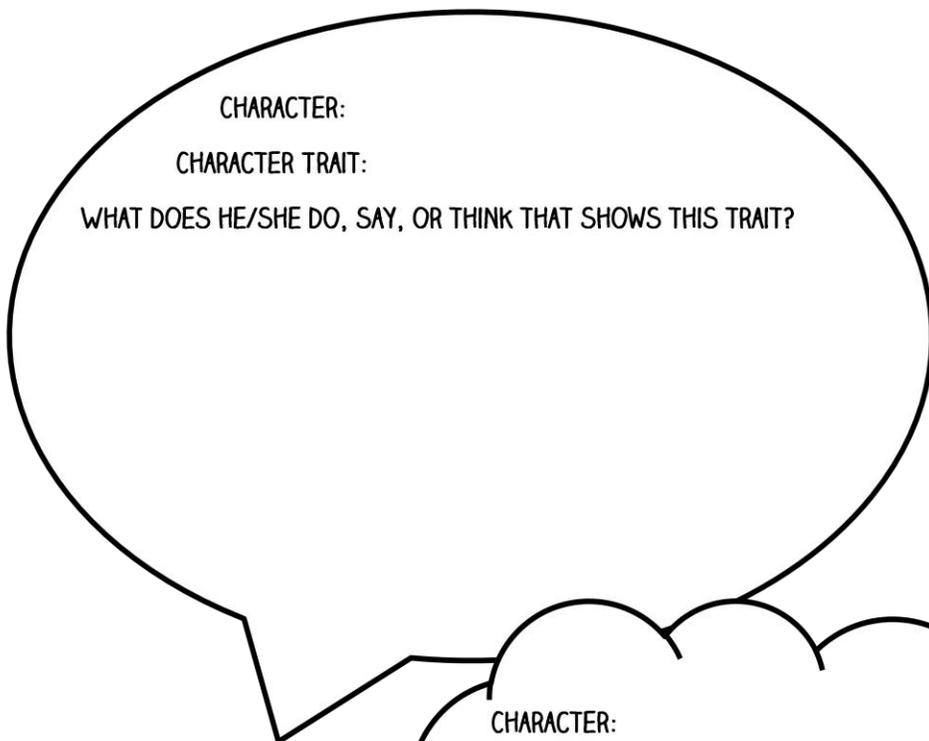
\*\* This guide was designed using a template that was created with [authorsandeducators.com](http://authorsandeducators.com).



PRIOR KNOWLEDGE



VENN DIAGRAM



CHARACTER TRAITS