

The Purr-fect Home

Tina stepped off the bus and ran inside her house. Her mom was in the basement. “Come see what happened while you were at school,” shouted Tina’s mom.

Tina ran down the stairs. There, in a cozy basket, was their cat Mollie with three brand-new kittens!

Tina squealed with delight, “Ooooooh! They are so sweet!”

“They were born this afternoon,” giggled her mom. “Aren’t they adorable?”

Tina loved watching the kittens grow. They were each so different. One had tons of energy. It chased its tail in circles. One was fancy. It had snow-white fur and bright green eyes. It walked around like a proud princess. And one was teeny. It was sweet and shy. It liked to curl up on Tina’s lap and sleep.

Tina’s family could not take care of Mollie plus her three kittens. So they hung signs around the neighborhood that read *Free kittens! Stop by 557 Spruce Street to meet them.*

“Will someone want this itty-bitty kitten?” asked Tina with concern. “It will need a lot of love to grow big and strong.”

“I’m sure you will find great homes for all the kittens,” responded her mom.

“That makes me feel better,” said Tina.

The signs worked! Within hours, a school friend named Sonia stopped by. She always wore pink and kept her hair neatly brushed. Sonia spent some time with the kittens.

“Can I take this one?” she asked, choosing the fancy kitten. “She’s sooooo pretty!”

“Absolutely!” replied Tina.

A while later, a neighbor boy named Matt showed up on his skateboard. He was always moving, moving, moving! Matt spent some time with the kittens.

“Can I take this one?” he asked, choosing the energetic kitten. “He’ll be a blast to play with!”

“Sure thing,” replied Tina.

Already, two kids had stopped by and two kittens were gone. Only the teeny kitten remained.

“I hope we can find someone to take care of it,” worried Tina.

“I know the perfect person,” responded Tina’s mom.

“She is caring, responsible, and kind.”

“W-who?” stammered Tina with a combination of relief and sadness.

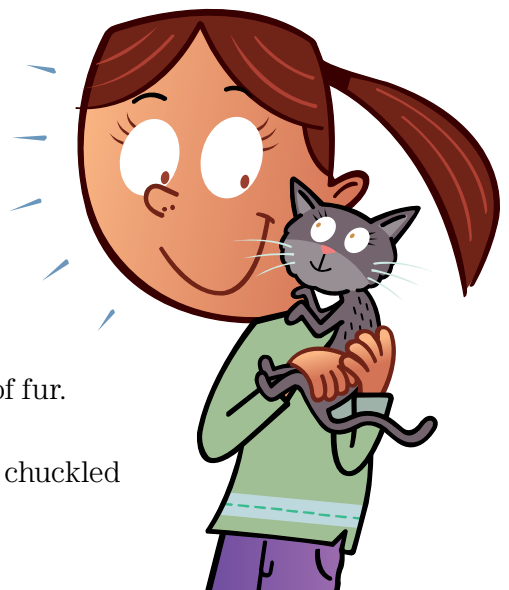
Her mom gave a wide smile and said, “You!”

Tina was thrilled. She jumped up and down. She clapped her hands. Then she scooped up her new pet.

“I will call you Teeny,” she whispered to the tiny ball of fur.

“Meow,” responded the kitten.

“Looks like Teeny found the purr-fect home after all!” chuckled her mom.



DIALOGUE: The words spoken by characters in a story. Dialogue is always contained inside quotation marks. It is made up of a *quotation*, which captures what is said, AND a *speaker tag*, which identifies the speaker. Dialogue provides information about the speaker as well as the plot.



Key Questions

1. Find an example of dialogue in this story. Can you identify the quotation? Underline it. Can you locate the speaker tag? Circle it.
2. Speaker tags can occur before, after, or even in the middle of a quotation. Can you find examples of each in the story?
3. Dialogue can be statements, questions, or exclamations. Can you find an example of each in the story?
4. Dialogue provides key clues about characters. Can you find quotations in this story that provide clues about the speaker? What do they tell you?
5. Dialogue provides important information about the plot and helps move it along. Can you find quotations in this story that provide information about the plot? What do they tell you?

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question: When writing dialogue, there are zillions of different words that can be used instead of *said*. Use a dry-erase marker to try out new verbs from the box below. How does each new word shade the meaning of the quotation? Discuss your thoughts. What other words can you think of to use instead of *said*? Add them to the lines below, then try them out.

“I have a lot of homework to do,” _____ verb (instead of said) _____ child's name.

whispered

replied

commented

snorted

cried

laughed

stated

promised

shouted

retorted

croaked

sniffled

yelled

snickered

sobbed

hissed

The Write Stuff

Some stories are constructed solely from dialogue. Write the following line on the top of your paper: “Oh no, I can’t believe this is actually happening!” yelled Tina. Then turn on your imagination and write a brand-new story that is told completely through dialogue.



Answer Key

TIP: No two readers interpret a story—including its characters, plot, setting, tone, or imagery—exactly the same way.

For that reason, it's wise to invite differing opinions and healthy debate in the context of your literacy lessons.



DIALOGUE:

The Purr-fect Home

Key Questions: 1. Answers should include underlined quotations and circled speaker tags, such as *"Come see what happened while you were at school,"* (shouted Tina's mom.)

2. Example of a speaker tag before a quote: *Tina squealed with delight, "Ooooooh! They are so sweet!"* Example of a speaker tag after a quote: *"I'm sure you will find great homes for all of the kittens," responded her mom.*

Example of a speaker tag in the middle of the quote: *"They were born this afternoon," giggled her mom. "Aren't they adorable?"*

3. Example of a statement: *"That makes me feel better," said Tina.* Example of a question: *"Will someone want this itty-bitty kitten?" asked Tina with concern.* Example of an exclamation: *"Absolutely!" replied Tina.*

4. Answers will vary, but could include: *"W-who?" stammered Tina with a combination of relief and sadness.* This dialogue shows that Tina is both happy and sad about the thought of the kitten finding another home. **5.** Answers will vary, but could include: *"Come see what happened when you were at school," shouted Tina's mom.* This tells readers that something important has happened.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question: Answers will vary.

Common Core State Standards Correlation

This lesson and activity will help you meet many of the reading and language arts standards recommended in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Listed below are the specific CCSS Reading Standards for Literature (RL) addressed in this lesson at each grade level. For more information about the CCSS, visit www.corestandards.org.

Literary Element



DIALOGUE

RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

RL.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.5.3: Compare or contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in a text (e.g., how characters interact).

RL.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.3: Describe how particular elements of a story's or drama's plot unfold in a series of episodes, as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward resolution.