



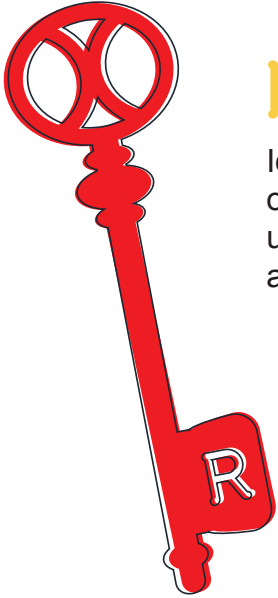
Name the Characters

Keys to
Comprehension

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Name the Characters



Keys for the Teacher

Identifying characters helps readers understand a story through descriptions of who they are, what they say and do, and how they look. Having a better understanding of characters can enhance comprehension since behaviors and attributes are directly tied to the meaning of the story.

Keys for the Children

Good readers understand and remember more about a story by looking closely and thinking hard about the characters.

Lesson

Introduce this strategy by starting with familiar characters such as: Cat in the Hat, Pigeon, Lily, Curious George, Corduroy, Hungry Caterpillar, plus Elephant and Piggie. Hold up books featuring familiar characters and ask students to “turn and tell” the name of the character to their neighbor. Since some children might not have the word “character” in their vocabulary, this is a way to “show” it.

As you browse through the familiar books, here are some questions to ask about the characters.

- *How do they look?*
- *What do they do?*
- *Who are their friends?*
- *What do they wear?*
- *Where do they live?*

Share with the children that good readers try to learn about characters in books because they help us understand and remember the story.

After read alouds is a perfect time to delve deeper into the characters. Talking about character motivation while making connections to our own lives encourages higher level thinking skills.

Questions to ask might be:

- *Why did they make that choice?*
- *What would you do?*
- *Has this ever happened to you?*
- *How were they feeling?*
- *What will they do next?*

Some stories have one character while others have many. It is necessary for students to be able to discriminate between the major characters and the extra characters. Challenge students to think of criteria to help determine the most important characters within the story.

Notes...

1

Bookstores often sell stuffed familiar book characters. Spotlighting them, in combination with books, makes character discussions even more fun. Students can also use the stuffed versions as reading partners.

