

Peyton's Pages of Possibility:
A Second Grade Adventure



TEACHER GUIDE

Discussion Questions, Activities,
and Teaching Ideas for Every Chapter



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*Discussion Questions, Activities
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About This Guide

Thank you for choosing *Peyton's Pages of Possibility* as part of your classroom community.

This teacher's guide was created to help educators nurture not only strong readers but also confident, compassionate, and resilient learners.

Throughout Peyton's journey, students discover that success is not measured by perfection. Instead, they learn that perseverance, courage, kindness, curiosity, and friendship help us become the people we are meant to be.

Each chapter includes meaningful discussions, literacy activities, writing opportunities, and social-emotional learning experiences designed specifically for second- and third-grade students.

The activities encourage children to think deeply about the story while making authentic connections to their own lives.

Whether used as a whole-class read aloud, literature circle, homeschool resource, or independent novel study, this guide provides everything needed to create engaging learning experiences.

Themes of the Novel

Students will explore important life lessons including:

- Growth Mindset
- Perseverance
- Kindness
- Empathy
- Courage
- Friendship
- Self-Confidence
- Identity
- Problem Solving
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Reading and Writing Workshop
- Mathematical Thinking
- Scientific Inquiry
- Discovering Individual Strengths

Essential Questions

Use these questions throughout the novel.

- What makes someone brave?
- How do mistakes help us learn?
- What makes a good friend?
- How can perseverance change our thinking?
- Why is kindness important in a classroom community?
- What does it mean to have a growth mindset?
- How do stories help us understand ourselves and others?
- How can everyone contribute different strengths to a classroom?
- What does it mean to "become" instead of simply "be?"
- Why is every person's story important?

Suggested Pacing Guide

Option 1: Four-Week Novel Study

- Read one chapter each day
- Complete one literacy activity
- Finish with a culminating project

Option 2: Twenty-Day Read Aloud

- One chapter per school day
- Discussion
- Journal response
- SEL activity

Option 3: Literature Circles

Students meet after each chapter to discuss:

- Character development
- Vocabulary
- Predictions
- Connections
- Theme

Before You Begin

Introduce the Novel

Ask students:

- What makes a story unforgettable?
- What is something you feel confident doing?
- Is there something that feels difficult right now?
- Have you ever discovered you were better at something than you first believed?
- What helps you keep trying when something is hard?

Create a class anchor chart titled:

Every Person Has a Story

Invite students to share:

- One strength they already know they have
- One thing they hope to learn this year
- One word they hope describes them by the end of the school year

Keep this chart displayed throughout the novel and revisit it after each chapter.

Chapter 1

The Girl Who Collected Stories

Summary

Readers meet Peyton Carter, an imaginative second grader who loves books, writing, and noticing the stories all around her. She introduces her caring family, shares her hopes for second grade, and quietly reveals one wish that stands out from the rest—she wants to be brave. Although she doesn't yet realize it, this school year will help her discover strengths she never knew she had.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify important character traits.
- Describe the setting.
- Make text-to-self connections.
- Identify the theme.
- Make predictions using evidence from the text.
- Explain how details help readers understand a character.

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness

Students reflect on their own strengths, interests, hopes, and goals.

Character Trait Spotlight

Curiosity

Discuss:

Curious people ask questions, notice details, and enjoy learning.

Ask:

How does Peyton show curiosity in this chapter?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- What kinds of books do you enjoy?
- Have you ever imagined yourself inside a story?
- If your life were a book, what would Chapter One be called?
- What is something you hope happens this school year?

During Reading

Stop and Discuss

Page 7

Why do you think Peyton believes everyone has a favorite story waiting for them?

Page 9

What details show Peyton notices things other people might miss?

Page 10

What does Dylan's curiosity tell us about his personality?

Page 11

Why do you think Peyton wrote "Be brave" on her list?

Page 13

Predict:

What challenges do you think Peyton might face this year?

Comprehension Questions

Remembering

1. What does Peyton love most?
2. Where does Peyton live?
3. Who are Peyton's family members?
4. What notebook list does Peyton create?
5. What is the last thing she writes?

Thinking

6. Why do stories matter so much to Peyton?
7. What does Lucy mean when she says Peyton "collects stories"?
8. Why is bravery important when beginning something new?

Going Deeper

9. Which character are you most like so far? Explain.
10. What lesson do you think this chapter teaches?

Text Evidence Challenge

Find a sentence that shows Peyton is an observant person.

Explain how you know.

Making Predictions

Complete the sentence:

"I predict Peyton will _____ because _____."

Students must use evidence from the chapter.

Character Map

Peyton Carter

Likes

- Reading
- Writing
- Adventure stories
- Imagining new worlds

Strengths

- Curious
- Creative
- Observant
- Kind

Goal

- To be brave

Theme Discussion

Possible themes:

- Everyone has a story.
- New beginnings require courage.
- Our strengths help shape who we become.

Discuss:

Which theme do you think is most important?

Growth Mindset Connection

Peyton doesn't know what second grade will bring.

Instead of knowing everything...

She chooses hope.

Discuss:

What does it mean to have a growth mindset before learning even begins?

Writing Response

"My First Chapter"

Imagine your life is a book.

Write about your own first chapter.

Include:

- Your family
- Your favorite things
- Your strengths
- Something you hope to learn
- One goal for yourself this year

Cross-Curricular Extension

Art

Design a book cover titled:

The Story of Me

Include:

- illustrations of yourself
- your interests
- your family
- your dreams
- symbols that represent you

Speaking & Listening

Partner Discussion

Finish each sentence:

One thing Peyton and I have in common is...

One thing that is different about us is...

Something I hope Peyton learns is...

Teacher Tip:

Create a classroom bulletin board titled:

Every Student Has a Story

Display a paper book for each child.

Inside each book students write:

- *My favorite thing*
- *My biggest strength*
- *Something I want to learn this year*
- *One dream for second grade*

Continue adding pages throughout the novel.

Student Journal Page

Peyton's Journal Reflection

Name: _____

Chapter One

My Thinking

Something I learned about Peyton...

One word that describes Peyton is:

Why?

My prediction for Chapter Two:

Graphic Organizer

Character Traits

Evidence From the Story	What it Shows About Peyton

★ Lucky Duck Reflection

Character Trait Earned Today: Curiosity 

How did you show curiosity today?

- ☐ I asked thoughtful questions.
- ☐ I noticed something new.
- ☐ I tried to learn something.
- ☐ I explored a new idea.

Draw or write about your example below.

Chapter 2

Welcome to Room 202

Chapter Summary

Peyton enters Room 202 and immediately feels welcomed by its inviting learning spaces, classroom library, and encouraging teacher, Mrs. Alvarez. During Morning Meeting, students share their interests, helping Peyton begin to feel like she belongs. Later, Peyton's excitement fades slightly when math begins. Although she enjoys reading and writing, math makes her feel unsure of herself. Mrs. Alvarez reminds the class that learning happens "one step at a time," a message Peyton decides to remember.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Describe how the setting influences a story.
- Compare characters' interests.
- Identify examples of growth mindset.
- Explain how a character's feelings change throughout the chapter.
- Support answers using text evidence.

Character Trait Spotlight

Belonging

Discuss:

Everyone deserves to feel welcomed, valued, and included.

Ask:

How does Mrs. Alvarez help students feel like they belong?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- What makes a classroom feel welcoming?
- What helps you feel comfortable in a new place?
- What would your dream classroom include?
- Why do teachers ask students to share about themselves?

During Reading

Stop 1

Mrs. Alvarez's classroom has several special areas.

How do these spaces help students learn in different ways?

Stop 2

Read the classroom sign:

Everyone in this classroom is a learner.

What does this mean?

Does it mean everyone already knows everything?

Stop 3

Why do you think Mrs. Alvarez asks students to share something they love?

Stop 4

How does Peyton's thinking change when math begins?

What clues tell you how she is feeling?

Stop 5

Why does Peyton write down the words:

One step at a time

Why are those words important?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What is the name of Peyton's teacher?
2. What special places are in Room 202?
3. What question does Mrs. Alvarez ask during Morning Meeting?
4. What does Peyton say she loves?
5. Which subject makes Peyton nervous?

Inferential

6. Why do you think Mrs. Alvarez smiles when Peyton talks about books?
7. Why does Peyton compare reading and math?
8. What kind of classroom environment has Mrs. Alvarez created?

Higher-Level Thinking

9. Why do you think every student answered a different way during Morning Meeting?
10. What lesson do you think Mrs. Alvarez hopes students learn on the first day?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find evidence that Mrs. Alvarez believes every child can succeed.

Write the sentence.

Explain what it teaches.

Character Feelings Chart

Beginning of Chapter

End of Chapter

Excited

Hopeful

Curious

Encouraged

Nervous

Ready to Keep Trying

Discuss: What events caused Peyton's feelings to change?

Theme Discussion

Possible themes:

- Every learner belongs.
- Classrooms should be welcoming places.
- Learning takes time.
- Everyone has different strengths.

Growth Mindset Mini-Lesson

Mrs. Alvarez tells students:

"Learning happens one step at a time."

Ask:

What are some things you could not do when you were younger but can do now?

Complete the sentence:

I can't _____ yet, but I am learning.

Writing Activity

My Dream Classroom

Write about your perfect classroom.

Include:

- What it looks like
- Books you would have
- Classroom jobs
- Decorations
- Classroom rules
- How students would treat one another

Draw a picture to match.

Cross-Curricular Activity

STEM Challenge

Using building blocks, LEGOs, or recycled materials, design a classroom reading nook.

Requirements:

- Comfortable
- Organized
- Easy to access books
- Inviting for readers

Students explain why they made each design choice.

Speaking & Listening

Partner Discussion

Finish these statements:

Mrs. Alvarez is a good teacher because...

The classroom reminds me of...

I think Peyton feels...

One way I help others belong is...

Classroom Connection

Morning Meeting Favorites Graph

Have students answer:

What do you love?

Choices might include:

- Reading
- Sports
- Art
- Animals
- Science
- Music
- Nature
- Building
- Writing

Create a class bar graph.

Discuss:

- Which answer was most popular?
- Were any answers unique?
- What does this tell us about our classroom community?

Teacher Tip

During the first week of school, or at any time of the year, create a bulletin board titled:

Room _____ Is Full of Learners

Each student decorates a paper puzzle piece with:

- *Their name*

- *Favorite book*
- *Favorite subject*
- *One goal*
- *One strength*

Assemble the pieces into one large puzzle to symbolize that everyone belongs.

Student Journal Page

Peyton's Reflection Journal

Chapter Two

Today I learned...

One thing I admire about Mrs. Alvarez is:

Something that feels difficult for me is:

One small step I can take is:

Graphic Organizer Idea

Create a Setting Map

Room 202

Draw and label:

- Classroom Library
- Writing Center
- Science Table
- Morning Meeting Area
- Student Desks

Then answer:

Which area would you visit first? Why?

Lucky Duck Reflection

Today's Character Trait: Belonging

Today I helped someone feel welcome by:

- ☐ Saying hello
- ☐ Inviting someone to play or work with me
- ☐ Helping a classmate
- ☐ Listening respectfully

☐ Encouraging someone

Draw or describe your act of belonging below.

Extension Project

Design Your Own Classroom

Using chart paper or a digital drawing tool, create your ideal classroom. Include:

- A classroom motto
- A reading corner
- A writing center
- A STEM area
- A kindness corner
- A place where students celebrate one another's successes

Write a paragraph explaining how your classroom helps every student feel safe, valued, and excited to learn.

Chapter 3

The One Thing Peyton Couldn't Do

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, readers discover that although Peyton loves reading, writing, and learning, she lacks confidence in math. During a math lesson, she notices classmates using different strategies while she feels unsure where to begin. Later, while reading one of her favorite graphic novels, Peyton realizes that story characters don't start with all the answers—they learn through challenges. Mrs. Alvarez reinforces this idea by reminding Peyton that difficult work helps her brain grow. By the end of the chapter, Peyton begins replacing self-doubt with a new belief: **"I am still learning."**

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Describe how characters respond to challenges.
- Identify internal and external conflicts.
- Explain how a character changes over the course of a chapter.
- Recognize examples of growth mindset.
- Support ideas with evidence from the text.

SEL Focus 

Self-Confidence

Students learn that everyone has strengths and areas where they are still growing.

Character Trait Spotlight

Perseverance

Discuss:

Perseverance means continuing even when something feels difficult.

Ask students:

- When have you kept trying even though something was hard?
- How did you feel afterward?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- Is there a subject that feels easy for you?
- Is there a subject that takes extra practice?
- How do you feel when something is difficult?
- What helps you keep trying?

Create a T-chart:

Things That Feel Easy

Things That Take Practice

Explain that every learner has both.

During Reading

Stop and Think #1

Why does Peyton enjoy reading workshop so much?

How is it different from math?

Stop and Think #2

Peyton hears classmates talking about strategies.

Why do you think she begins to doubt herself?

Stop and Think #3

What changes when Peyton begins reading her graphic novel?

How does reading help her think differently?

Stop and Think #4

Mrs. Alvarez says:

"Something being difficult does not mean you can't do it."

What does she mean?

Stop and Think #5

Why is Peyton's final notebook entry so important?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. Which subject makes Peyton uncomfortable?
2. What words does Peyton hear classmates using?
3. Where does Peyton go during independent work?
4. What does Mrs. Alvarez tell Peyton about difficult work?
5. What final sentence does Peyton add to her notebook?

Inferential

6. Why does Peyton compare learning math to reading a story?
7. Why is Mrs. Alvarez's advice meaningful?
8. Why do you think Peyton writes about herself in her notebook?

Critical Thinking

9. Why is "I am still learning" more powerful than saying "I can't do it"?
10. What advice would you give Peyton?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find one sentence that shows Peyton is beginning to change the way she thinks about herself.

Explain why you chose it.

Character Feelings Chart

Beginning	Middle	End
Confident in reading	Frustrated in math	Hopeful

Discuss:

What events caused Peyton's feelings to change?

Theme Discussion

Possible themes:

- Mistakes help us grow.
- Everyone learns differently.
- Confidence grows through practice.
- Growth takes time.

Growth Mindset Mini-Lesson

Display these two statements:

 I can't do this.

 I can't do this **yet**.

Discuss:

How does one small word completely change the meaning?

Classroom Activity

"The Power of Yet"

Give each student a paper leaf.

Students finish this sentence:

I can't _____ yet, but I am practicing every day.

Examples:

- multiply
- ride a bike
- swim
- read chapter books
- play piano

Create a bulletin board titled:

The Power of YET

Writing Activity

Things I Know About Myself

Like Peyton, students create a list.

I am...

- a reader...
- a friend...
- a helper...
- curious...
- creative...
- kind...

Finish with:

I am still learning to...

Encourage illustrations.

Math Connection

Discuss:

Peyton says stories have characters, problems, and solutions.

Can math problems have those too?

Give students a simple word problem.

Ask them to identify:

- Characters
- Problem
- Clues
- Solution

This reinforces Peyton's idea that math tells stories.

Speaking & Listening

Turn and Talk

Finish each sentence:

Something I used to think I couldn't do was...

Now I can...

Something I am still learning is...

Teacher Tip

Introduce a classroom phrase:

Instead of saying:

"I can't."

Students practice saying:

"I'm still learning."

Use the phrase all year whenever students become frustrated.

Student Journal Page

Peyton's Reflection Journal

Chapter Three

One thing Peyton learned about herself was...

A challenge I am working on is...

Someone who encourages me is...

Today I will remind myself:

Graphic Organizer

Growth Mindset Ladder

Step 1

Something feels hard.



Step 2

Ask for help.



Step 3

Keep practicing.



Step 4

Learn from mistakes.



Step 5

Celebrate growth.

Students write one example for each step.

Lucky Duck Reflection

Today's Character Trait

Perseverance

Today I showed perseverance by...

- ☐ Trying again
- ☐ Asking for help
- ☐ Not giving up
- ☐ Learning from a mistake
- ☐ Encouraging myself

Draw or describe your example.

Extension Activity

"Brain Growth Experiment"

Read a short article or watch a brief, age-appropriate video explaining how the brain forms new connections when we practice difficult skills.

Then ask students:

- What surprised you?
- Why are mistakes actually helpful?
- How might this change the way you think about learning?

Finish with a class discussion:

"What does it mean to grow your brain?"

Teacher Tip

*This chapter is an ideal opportunity to establish a classroom culture where mistakes are celebrated as part of learning. Consider creating a "**Favorite Mistake of the Week**" routine. Invite students to share a mistake that taught them something new, reinforcing Peyton's realization that growth comes through perseverance rather than perfection. This lesson will connect beautifully to the introduction of the Lucky Duck system in Chapter 4.*

Chapter 4

The Lucky Duck Wall

Chapter Summary

When Peyton arrives at school on Monday morning, she discovers a colorful new bulletin board called the **Lucky Duck Wall**. Mrs. Alvarez explains that the ducks are not rewards for being perfect—they recognize character traits such as perseverance, kindness, creativity, and responsibility. Throughout the week, Peyton notices that her teacher celebrates students' effort, courage, and kindness just as much as correct answers. At the end of the week, Peyton earns her first Lucky Duck—a green duck for **perseverance**. She realizes that Mrs. Alvarez noticed not just her work, but her determination to keep trying.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the central message of the chapter.
- Explain how character traits are developed through actions.
- Describe how positive classroom communities encourage growth.
- Make text-to-self connections.
- Recognize that effort is just as valuable as achievement.

SEL Focus

Responsible Decision-Making

Students recognize that everyday choices shape who they become.

Character Trait Spotlight

Perseverance

Definition:

Continuing to work toward a goal even when something is difficult.

Ask students:

- Why is perseverance more important than being perfect?
- How did Peyton demonstrate perseverance?

Before Reading

Display the following quote:

"Who you are becoming is more important than what you already know."

Ask:

- What do you think this means?
- Can people grow new character traits?

During Reading

Stop and Think #1

Why do you think Mrs. Alvarez chose ducks instead of trophies or prizes?

Stop and Think #2

What do the different duck colors represent?

Would you add another color? Why?

Stop and Think #3

What kinds of behaviors does Mrs. Alvarez notice?

Are they all about academics?

Stop and Think #4

Why is Peyton surprised when she receives a duck?

Stop and Think #5

How does Peyton's thinking about herself begin to change?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What is the Lucky Duck Wall?

2. Which color duck represents perseverance?
3. Name two other character traits represented by ducks.
4. Which duck does Peyton receive?
5. Why does Mrs. Alvarez give Peyton the duck?

Inferential

6. Why doesn't Mrs. Alvarez reward only correct answers?
7. What message does the Lucky Duck Wall send to students?
8. How do you think this classroom is different from others Peyton has experienced?

Critical Thinking

9. Which Lucky Duck would be hardest for you to earn? Why?
10. If you designed your own classroom recognition system, what would it celebrate?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find evidence that shows Mrs. Alvarez notices students' character—not just their grades.

Explain why that is important.

Character Analysis

Peyton

At the beginning of the chapter:

- Curious
- Unsure

At the end of the chapter:

- Proud
- Encouraged
- More confident

What caused this change?

Theme Discussion

Possible themes:

- Character matters more than perfection.
- Small choices shape who we become.
- Every child deserves to be recognized.
- Growth is worth celebrating.

Growth Mindset Mini-Lesson

Mrs. Alvarez celebrates:

- effort
- kindness
- courage
- perseverance

Discuss:

Why might these be even more important than always getting the right answer?

Writing Activity

My Lucky Duck

Imagine your teacher gave you a Lucky Duck today.

Write about:

- Which color would you earn?
- Why?
- What did you do?
- How did it make you feel?

Illustrate your duck.

Art Activity

Design a New Lucky Duck

Students invent a new duck.

Include:

- Color
- Character trait
- Name
- Picture
- Explanation

Examples:

 Gratitude Duck

 Honesty Duck

 Respect Duck

 Teamwork Duck

 Hope Duck

Classroom Activity

Lucky Duck Compliment Circle

Sit in a circle.

Each student finishes:

"I noticed _____ showing _____ today because..."

This teaches students to recognize positive actions in others.

Speaking & Listening

Turn and Talk

Which character trait is most important?

Why?

Can someone have more than one Lucky Duck trait at the same time?

Explain.

Teacher Tip

Begin a classroom recognition board inspired by the novel.

Instead of rewarding only high grades, celebrate:

- *Persistence*
- *Curiosity*
- *Kindness*
- *Leadership*
- *Responsibility*
- *Creativity*
- *Empathy*
- *Collaboration*

This reinforces the message that every child has strengths worth recognizing.

Student Journal Page

Peyton's Reflection Journal

Chapter Four

Today I learned...

The character trait I am most proud of is...

One way I showed perseverance this week was...

One character trait I want to strengthen is...

Graphic Organizer

Character Traits Web

Center Circle:

 **Who Am I Becoming?**

Around the circle, students write or draw:

- Kind
- Brave
- Creative
- Responsible
- Curious
- Helpful
- Respectful
- Persevering

Finally, students star the trait they are currently working on.

Lucky Duck Reflection

Today's Character Trait

 **Perseverance**

Today I...

- ☐ Kept trying.
- ☐ Solved a problem.

- ☐ Learned from a mistake.
- ☐ Finished something difficult.
- ☐ Encouraged myself.

My example:

Family Connection

Lucky Duck Challenge

Send home a simple recording sheet.

Families look for examples of character at home.

Tonight I showed...

- ☐ Kindness
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Perseverance
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Courage
- ☐ Empathy

Students write one sentence describing what they did and share it the next day.

Extension Project

Build a "Wall of Possibilities"

As a class, create a bulletin board inspired by the novel.

Each student decorates a paper duck with:

- Their name
- A character strength
- A goal they are working toward
- One encouraging message for classmates

Throughout the year, invite students to add more ducks as they grow. By year's end, the display becomes a visual reminder that success is measured not only by what students know, but by the caring, courageous, and resilient people they are becoming—a message that beautifully reflects the heart of *Peyton's Pages of Possibility*.

Chapter 5

A Classroom Full of Possibilities

Chapter Summary

Mrs. Alvarez introduces a classroom activity that encourages students to think about their individual strengths and the many possibilities that lie ahead. As classmates share their unique talents, Peyton realizes that no two students are exactly alike—and that's what makes Room 202 special. She begins to understand that everyone has gifts to contribute, whether in reading, art, math, science, music, or kindness. This chapter helps Peyton see that classrooms are strongest when everyone's strengths are celebrated.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the central message of the chapter.
- Compare and contrast characters' strengths.
- Explain how diversity makes a classroom community stronger.
- Identify examples of positive self-talk.
- Reflect on their own unique talents.

SEL Focus 

Social Awareness

Students recognize and appreciate the unique strengths and perspectives of others.

Character Trait Spotlight

★ Appreciation

Definition:

Recognizing and valuing the strengths and contributions of others.

Discuss:

- Why is every student important?
- How would a classroom be different if everyone had exactly

Before Reading

Ask students:

- What is one thing you are really good at?
- What is one thing a friend is really good at?
- Can someone be good at more than one thing?
- Why is it important that everyone has different strengths?

Create an anchor chart titled:

Our Classroom Strengths

Record students' responses.

During Reading

Stop and Think #1

What do you notice about the strengths students share?

Stop and Think #2

Why does Peyton enjoy hearing about her classmates' talents?

Stop and Think #3

How does Mrs. Alvarez help students appreciate one another?

Stop and Think #4

What new idea does Peyton begin to believe about herself?

Stop and Think #5

Why is it important that everyone contributes something different?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What activity does Mrs. Alvarez introduce?
2. What kinds of strengths do students share?
3. How does Peyton react to hearing about her classmates?
4. What does Peyton begin to realize?
5. Why is every student's contribution important?

Inferential

6. Why do you think Mrs. Alvarez planned this activity?
7. How does learning about others help Peyton grow?
8. Why are differences valuable?

Critical Thinking

9. What would happen if everyone in the classroom had the exact same strengths?
10. How can recognizing someone else's talent encourage them?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find a sentence that shows Peyton begins seeing herself in a new way.

Explain how this moment helps her grow.

Character Analysis

Peyton's Thinking

Before

"I wish I were good at everything."

↓

After

"Everyone has different strengths."

Discuss:

How has Peyton's mindset changed?

Theme Discussion

Possible themes:

- Everyone has gifts to share.
- Differences make communities stronger.
- We grow when we celebrate one another.
- Every person matters.

Growth Mindset Mini-Lesson

Complete these sentences together:

"I may not be the best at _____."

"But I am really good at _____."

"And I can keep growing in both."

Discuss why every learner has strengths **and** opportunities to grow.

Writing Activity

My Strengths Matter

Students complete the prompt:

The world is better because I...

Encourage them to include:

- talents
- character traits
- ways they help others
- dreams for the future

Illustrate the writing with a self-portrait.

Art Activity

Strength Stars

Give each student a large paper star.

In the center:

"I Shine When..."

On each point, students write one strength:

★ Reader

★ Artist

★ Problem Solver

★ Friend

★ Scientist

★ Athlete

★ Musician

★ Helper

Display the stars around the classroom with the title:

Every Star Makes Our Classroom Brighter

Speaking & Listening

Partner Discussion

Finish these sentences:

One strength I admire in my partner is...

One strength I have is...

One strength I want to develop is...

Teacher Tip

*Start a weekly routine called "**Strength Spotlight.**"*

Each Friday, invite students to recognize a classmate by sharing:

"I noticed _____ showing their strength when..."

This encourages children to notice positive qualities beyond academics.

Student Journal Page



Peyton's Reflection Journal

Chapter Five

One strength I already have is...

One strength I am still developing is...

A classmate who inspires me is...

Because...

Graphic Organizer

My Strength Tree

Roots

- People who help me grow

Trunk

- My character

Branches

- My strengths

Leaves

- My dreams

Students decorate and color their trees.

Lucky Duck Reflection

Today's Character Trait

Appreciation

Today I noticed someone else's strength.

Their name:

Their strength:

How did I encourage them?

Cross-Curricular Connection

Math Graph

Survey the class:

"Which strength best describes you?"

Categories:

- Reading
- Writing
- Math
- Science
- Art
- Music
- Sports
- Helping Others
- Building
- Technology

Create a bar graph.

Discuss:

- Which strength had the most responses?
- Were all strengths represented?
- What does this tell us about our classroom?

Family Connection

Family Strength Interview

Students interview someone at home.

Ask:

- What is one of your strengths?
- How did you discover it?
- What advice would you give me?

Students share their interviews in class.

Culminating Activity

Our Classroom Book of Possibilities

Create a class book inspired by Peyton.

Each student completes one page:

Title:

"The Possibilities in Me"

Include:

- A self-portrait
- Three strengths
- One challenge they are working on
- One dream for the future
- A sentence beginning:

"My story is still being written because..."

Bind the pages into a class book and place it in the classroom library. Invite students to revisit it throughout the year and add new pages as they grow, reinforcing the message that every learner's story continues to unfold.

 **Teacher Tip:** *Since this chapter centers on recognizing strengths, consider displaying the class book alongside your Lucky Duck Wall. Together, they create a powerful visual reminder that students are celebrated not only for what they achieve, but also for who they are becoming.*

Chapter 6

The Missing Lucky Duck Mystery

Chapter Summary

One morning, Mrs. Alvarez discovers that one of the Lucky Ducks has disappeared from the classroom display. Rather than becoming upset or blaming students, she turns the situation into a mystery for the class to solve together. Peyton and her classmates gather clues, ask thoughtful questions, and work respectfully as a team. In the end, the missing Lucky Duck is found tucked inside a library book that had been accidentally returned to the classroom shelf. More importantly, students learn that honesty, teamwork, and careful observation help solve problems better than blame or assumptions.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the problem and solution in the chapter.
- Explain how characters work together to solve a mystery.
- Distinguish between facts and assumptions.
- Practice making predictions using text evidence.
- Understand how cooperation strengthens a classroom community.

SEL Focus 

Responsible Decision-Making

Students learn to solve problems calmly, honestly, and respectfully.

Character Trait Spotlight

Integrity

Definition:

Doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Discuss:

- Why is honesty important?
- How can honesty help solve problems?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- Have you ever misplaced something important?
- How did you find it?
- Why is it important not to blame someone before knowing the facts?
- What makes a good detective?

Create an anchor chart titled:

Good Detectives...

Students suggest ideas such as:

- Observe carefully
- Ask questions
- Gather clues
- Listen carefully
- Stay calm
- Work together

During Reading

Stop and Think #1

How does Mrs. Alvarez react when she notices the missing Lucky Duck?

Why is her response important?

Stop and Think #2

What clues do the students discover?

Which clue seems most important?

Stop and Think #3

How does Peyton contribute to solving the mystery?

Stop and Think #4

Why doesn't Mrs. Alvarez accuse anyone?

Stop and Think #5

What lesson do the students learn after finding the Lucky Duck?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What is missing?
2. How does Mrs. Alvarez respond?
3. What clues do the students collect?
4. Where is the Lucky Duck found?
5. How was it accidentally misplaced?

Inferential

6. Why does Mrs. Alvarez stay calm?
7. How does teamwork help solve the mystery?
8. Why is Peyton good at noticing clues?

Critical Thinking

9. Why can making assumptions sometimes hurt others?
10. What would you have done if you had found the Lucky Duck first?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find evidence that Mrs. Alvarez trusts her students.

How does her trust affect the classroom community?

Theme Discussion

Possible themes:

- Honesty builds trust.
- Problems can be solved peacefully.
- Teamwork makes us stronger.
- Good detectives look for facts before making decisions.

Discuss:

Which lesson is most important?

Growth Mindset Mini-Lesson

Sometimes mistakes happen accidentally.

Discuss:

What's the difference between:

- Making a mistake
- Making a bad choice

How should we respond to each?

Writing Activity

Become a Detective

Write your own classroom mystery.

Include:

- A missing object
- Three clues
- Two suspects
- The solution
- The lesson learned

Illustrate your mystery story.

STEM Connection

Build a Mystery Box

Place a classroom object inside a covered box.

Students ask **yes/no questions** to determine what's inside.

Afterward, discuss:

- Which questions gave the best clues?
- Which questions helped eliminate possibilities?

Connect this to how detectives gather evidence before making conclusions.

Speaking & Listening

Partner Discussion

Finish these sentences:

A good detective always...

One clue that helped solve the mystery was...

Working together helped because...

Teacher Tip

Introduce the phrase:

"Clues Before Conclusions."

Whenever classroom problems arise, remind students to gather information before making assumptions.

This encourages thoughtful problem-solving and respectful communication.

Student Journal Page



Peyton's Reflection Journal

Chapter Six

The mystery was...

The clue I thought was most important was...

A time I solved a problem by staying calm was...

One way I can show honesty is...

Graphic Organizer

Detective Notebook

Mystery

Clues

1.

2.

3.

My Prediction

What Really Happened

Lesson Learned

Lucky Duck Reflection

Today's Character Trait

Integrity

Today I showed integrity by...

- ☐ Telling the truth
- ☐ Admitting a mistake
- ☐ Returning something I found
- ☐ Helping solve a problem fairly
- ☐ Being honest even when it was difficult

My example:

Cross-Curricular Connection

Science Skills

Explain that scientists and detectives use many of the same skills:

- Observe
- Ask questions
- Gather evidence
- Test ideas
- Draw conclusions

Give students a simple classroom object (such as a leaf, shell, or rock) and have them record observations before making any guesses about it.

Family Connection

Family Mystery Night

Invite students to create a simple mystery game at home.

They can:

- Hide a small object.
- Write three clues.
- Have a family member solve the mystery.

Afterward, students reflect:

- Which clue was the most helpful?
- Was it difficult not to give away the answer?



Culminating Activity

Room 202 Detective Agency

Transform your classroom into a detective headquarters for one day.

Assign small groups a "classroom mystery" to solve using observation, teamwork, and reasoning. Each group receives a Detective Badge and completes a case report that includes:

- The mystery
- The clues
- Their prediction
- The evidence
- The final solution
- The lesson they learned

Conclude with a class discussion about how Peyton's curiosity, careful observation, and willingness to work with others helped solve the mystery—and how those same skills can help us become stronger learners every day.

Chapter 7

Friends Who Help You Grow

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 7, Peyton begins to understand that growth does not happen alone. As she continues to discover her strengths and work through challenges, she learns the importance of having friends who encourage, support, and believe in her. Peyton realizes that true friends do not have to be exactly like us—they celebrate our differences and help us become the best versions of ourselves.

Through conversations and shared experiences, Peyton discovers that asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Instead, it is a brave choice that allows us to learn, improve, and grow.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify ways friends can support one another.
- Recognize that everyone has different strengths and challenges.
- Understand that asking for help is part of learning.
- Reflect on how their words and actions can encourage others.
- Practice empathy and kindness in friendships.

SEL Focus

Friendship, Empathy, and Encouragement

Students discuss:

- What makes someone a good friend?
- How can our words make someone feel?
- How can we help someone who is struggling?

Key Message:

A true friend does not make you feel like you have to be perfect. A true friend helps you believe you can grow.

Character Trait Spotlight

Kindness

Peyton learns that kindness is more than being nice—it is noticing when someone needs support and choosing to help.

Class Discussion:

- What are small ways we can show kindness?
- How does kindness help our classroom become a better community?

Before Reading Questions

1. What makes someone a good friend?
2. Have you ever helped a friend learn something new?
3. How do you feel when someone believes in you?
4. Is it easy or difficult to ask for help? Why?

During Reading: Stop and Think Questions

Page/Section 1

What challenge is Peyton facing?

Teacher Note: Encourage students to identify feelings as well as events.

Page/Section 2

How does Peyton's friend respond when she needs help?

Page/Section 3

What does Peyton learn about friendship?

Page/Section 4

How do Peyton and her friends show that everyone has different strengths?

Comprehension Questions

1. What does Peyton learn about asking for help?

2. How do her friends support her?
3. Why is it important to celebrate differences?
4. What is one lesson Peyton learns about friendship?
5. How does Peyton change from the beginning to the end of the chapter?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find evidence in the chapter that shows:

- ★ Peyton feels supported.
- ★ A friend demonstrates kindness.
- ★ Peyton shows growth.
- ★ Someone recognizes another person's strength.

Sentence Frame:

“I know _____ because the text says _____.”

Theme Discussion

Theme: We Grow Better Together

Ask:

- Why do we need other people to help us grow?
- Can someone be a good friend even if they are different from us?
- How can we help classmates feel included?

Growth Mindset

Mini-Lesson

“Yet” Power

Explain:

Sometimes we say:

✗ “I can’t do this.”

A growth mindset changes it to:

✓ “I can’t do this **yet**.”

Discuss:

- Something I couldn’t do before but can do now.
- Something I am still learning.

Students complete:

“I am growing as a learner because I am learning to _____.”

Writing Activity

My Friendship Recipe

Students create a “recipe” for a great friend.

Example:

1 cup kindness
2 scoops encouragement
A sprinkle of patience
A spoonful of laughter

Writing Prompt:

“A good friend is someone who _____ because _____.”

Cross-Curricular Extension

Classroom Community Challenge

Students work together to create a “Friendship Wall.”

Each student adds:

- One strength they bring to the classroom.
- One way they can support others.

Example:

“My strength is creativity. I can help others by sharing ideas.”

Speaking & Listening Activity

Compliment Circle

Students sit in a circle.

Each student shares:

“One thing I appreciate about a classmate is...”

Teacher Reminder:

Encourage specific compliments.

Instead of:

“You are nice.”

Try:

“You helped me when I was confused during math.”

Student Journal Page



Today I learned that friendship means...

One way I can encourage someone is...

One strength I have is...

Graphic Organizer

Friends Help Us Grow

Friend

How They Help

**How It Makes
Someone Feel**

Lucky Duck Reflection

Which Lucky Duck trait did Peyton demonstrate?

- ☐ Kindness
- ☐ Perseverance
- ☐ Empathy
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Growth Mindset

Explain:

“Peyton showed this trait when...”

Extension Activity

“Kindness Cards”

Students create anonymous kindness cards for classmates.

Examples:

- “I noticed you worked really hard today!”
- “You make our classroom better because...”
- “I believe in you!”

Teacher Tip

Chapter 7 provides an opportunity to strengthen classroom community. Students often enter a new school year wondering if they belong. This chapter reinforces that every child brings valuable strengths and that asking for support is part of becoming a confident learner.

Remind students:

“We are never just one thing. We are readers, writers, mathematicians, artists, friends, helpers, and so much more.”

Chapter 8

Discovering Hidden Strengths

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 8, Peyton begins to recognize that some of her most important strengths are the ones she does not always notice right away. While she may still worry about the things that feel difficult, she starts to see that being a successful learner is not about being perfect—it is about discovering what makes her unique.

Through reflection, encouragement from others, and new experiences, Peyton realizes that creativity, curiosity, perseverance, and kindness are just as valuable as getting the “right answer.” She learns that every person has gifts waiting to be discovered.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify their own personal strengths and talents.
- Understand that strengths can look different for every person.
- Recognize the connection between effort and growth.
- Practice positive self-talk.

Celebrate the unique qualities of themselves and others.

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness & Confidence

Students explore:

- What are my strengths?
- What makes me unique?
- How can I recognize strengths in others?

Key Message:

Everyone has special qualities that make them valuable.

Sometimes we discover our strengths when we try something new.

Character Trait Spotlight



Self-Belief

Peyton begins to understand that believing in herself is an important part of learning.

Discuss:

- What does it mean to believe in yourself?
- How can we encourage ourselves when something feels difficult?

Before Reading Questions

1. What is something you are really good at?
2. Can people have strengths that are not school subjects?
3. Why might someone not notice their own strengths?
4. How can we help others see what makes them special?

During Reading: Stop and Think Questions

Beginning of Chapter

What does Peyton notice about herself?

Middle of Chapter

What strengths do others see in Peyton that she may not recognize?

Reflection Moment

Why do you think Peyton has trouble seeing her own strengths?

End of Chapter

How has Peyton's thinking about herself changed?

Comprehension Questions

1. What does Peyton discover about herself?
2. Why is it important to recognize strengths beyond academics?
3. How do Peyton's friends or family help her?
4. What lesson does Peyton learn?
5. How does Peyton show growth throughout the chapter?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find examples from the chapter that show:

- ★ Peyton discovering a strength
- ★ Someone encouraging Peyton
- ★ Peyton showing perseverance
- ★ Peyton changing her thoughts about herself

Sentence Frame:

“Peyton discovers _____ when _____.

Theme Discussion

Theme: Everyone Has Gifts to Share

Discuss:

- Are all strengths easy to see?
- Can kindness be a strength?
- Can creativity be a strength?
- Can trying your best be a strength?

Teacher Message:

“Sometimes our greatest strengths are not things we can measure on a test.”

Growth Mindset

Mini-Lesson

Strengths Grow With Practice

Create a class chart:

Something I Am Learning:

How I Will Grow:

- Practice
- Ask questions
- Try again
- Learn from mistakes

Discuss:

“A strength is not always something we are born with. Sometimes it is something we build.”

Writing Activity

My Pages of Possibility

Students create a personal reflection page.

Prompt:

“One thing that makes me special is...”

Students include:

- A strength they have
- Something they enjoy
- Something they are working to improve

Cross-Curricular Extension

Strengths Inventory

Students complete:

I am a great...

- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Listener
- ☐ Problem solver
- ☐ Creator
- ☐ Helper
- ☐ Reader

- ☐ Writer
- ☐ Team member

Then add their own:

“I am also a great _____.”

Speaking & Listening Activity

“I Notice Your Strength”

Students partner up.

Each student shares:

“One strength I notice in you is...”

Encourage students to give examples.

Example:

“I notice you are patient because you helped your partner.”

Student Journal Page



A strength I have is...

Someone who helps me see my strengths is...

A new strength I want to grow is...

Graphic Organizer

My Strengths Tree

Roots:

Things that help me grow
(family, friends, teachers, experiences)

Branches:

My strengths

Leaves:

Goals I am working toward

Lucky Duck Reflection

Which Lucky Duck trait did Peyton show?

- ☐ Growth Mindset
- ☐ Perseverance
- ☐ Kindness
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Responsibility

Explain:

“Peyton showed this trait when...”

Extension Activity

Classroom Strengths Museum

Students create a “museum display” about themselves.

Each display includes:

- My name
- One strength I have
- Something I love
- Something I am learning

Students walk through the museum and celebrate one another.

Teacher Tip

Chapter 8 is an important opportunity for students to develop a positive identity as learners. Many children enter classrooms already knowing what they struggle with, but they may not recognize their abilities and gifts.

Encourage students to remember:

“You are more than one grade, one test, one mistake, or one challenge. You are a collection of strengths, dreams, and possibilities.”

Chapter 9

Mistakes Help Us Learn

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 9, Peyton experiences a moment when something does not go as planned. At first, she feels disappointed and worries that making a mistake means she is not good enough. With encouragement from her teacher, friends, and family, Peyton begins to understand that mistakes are not proof that she cannot succeed—they are opportunities to learn.

Peyton discovers that every learner makes mistakes, including people who are very successful. What matters most is how we respond, what we learn, and whether we are willing to try again.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that mistakes are a natural part of learning.
- Identify how mistakes can help us grow.
- Practice using positive self-talk.
- Develop perseverance when facing challenges.

Reflect on how they respond when things are difficult.

SEL Focus

Resilience & Growth Mindset

Students explore:

- How do I react when I make a mistake?
- How can I be kind to myself when learning is hard?
- How can mistakes help me improve?

Key Message:

Mistakes are not the opposite of success. They are part of the journey toward success.

Character Trait Spotlight

Perseverance

Peyton learns that perseverance means continuing to try even when something feels challenging.

Discuss:

- What does perseverance look like?
- What does perseverance sound like?

How can we encourage ourselves?

Before Reading Questions

1. How do you feel when you make a mistake?
2. Are mistakes always bad? Why or why not?
3. Can mistakes help us become better learners?
4. What can we say to ourselves when something feels hard?

During Reading: Stop and Think Questions

Beginning of Chapter

What happens that causes Peyton to feel frustrated?

Middle of Chapter

What thoughts does Peyton have about herself? Are those thoughts helpful?

Reflection Moment

What advice would you give Peyton?

End of Chapter

How does Peyton's thinking change about mistakes?

Comprehension Questions

1. What mistake does Peyton make?
2. How does Peyton feel at first?
3. Who helps Peyton understand mistakes differently?
4. What does Peyton learn from the experience?
5. How does Peyton demonstrate growth?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find examples showing:

- ★ Peyton feels frustrated
- ★ Someone encourages Peyton
- ★ Peyton changes her thinking
- ★ Peyton demonstrates perseverance

Sentence Frame:

“At first Peyton thought _____, but later she realized _____.”

Theme Discussion

Theme: Mistakes Are Opportunities

Discuss:

- Why do people sometimes fear mistakes?
- What happens if we never make mistakes?
- How do mistakes help our brains grow?

Teacher Message:

“When we make mistakes, our brains are practicing and learning.”

Growth Mindset Mini-Lesson

The Power of “I’m Learning”

Create a class anchor chart:

Fixed Mindset:

“I’m bad at this.”

Growth Mindset:

“I’m learning this.”

Fixed Mindset:

“I made a mistake.”

Growth Mindset:

“My mistake showed me what I can practice.”

Writing Activity

My Mistake Made Me Stronger

Prompt:

“A time I made a mistake and learned something was...”

Students write:

1. What happened?
2. How did I feel?
3. What did I learn?
4. What will I try next time?

Cross-Curricular Extension

Scientist Mindset Activity

Discuss how scientists learn through mistakes.

Students complete:

“Scientists do not give up when _____ because _____.”

Extension:

Students design a simple experiment where they make predictions, test, and revise.

Speaking & Listening Activity

Mistake Makeover

Give students common situations:

- “I got an answer wrong.”
- “My drawing did not look how I wanted.”
- “I had trouble reading a word.”

Students turn the negative thought into a growth mindset thought.

Example:

“I can’t do this.”

becomes:

“I can’t do this **yet.**”

Student Journal Page



A mistake that helped me learn was...

Next time something is difficult, I will...

A positive thing I can tell myself is...

Graphic Organizer

My Learning Journey

Challenge	What I Tried	What I Learned

Lucky Duck Reflection

Which Lucky Duck trait did Peyton demonstrate?

- ☐ Perseverance
- ☐ Growth Mindset
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Courage
- ☐ Kindness

Explain:

“Peyton showed this trait when...”

Extension Activity

Create a “Mistakes Help Me Grow” Poster

Students illustrate:

- A challenge they faced
- A strategy they used
- What they learned

Display posters as a reminder that the classroom is a safe place to learn.

Teacher Tip

Chapter 9 provides an important opportunity to normalize mistakes in the classroom. Students who fear mistakes often avoid challenges, but students who understand mistakes as part of learning are more willing to take risks.

Create a classroom culture where students hear:

- ✨ *“Mistakes are welcome here.”*
- ✨ *“We learn from trying.”*
- ✨ *“Every mistake gives us information.”*

Remind students:

“You do not have to be perfect to be successful. You just have to keep learning.”

Chapter 10

Jack, Annie, and Math

Chapter Summary

Peyton discovers that the same qualities that help her enjoy adventure stories—curiosity, perseverance, and problem solving—can also help her succeed in math. Inspired by the characters Jack and Annie, she approaches a difficult math problem one step at a time and realizes she doesn't have to choose between being a reader and a mathematician. She can be both.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify how characters transfer skills from one subject to another.
- Recognize that strategies used in reading can also help solve math problems.
- Practice explaining mathematical thinking.
- Develop confidence through perseverance.
- Reflect on their own strengths and growth.

Comprehension Questions

Before Reading

1. Who are Jack and Annie?

2. Have you ever learned something from a favorite book?
3. What helps you when something feels difficult?

During Reading

1. Why does Peyton think about her favorite stories?
2. What does she do first when solving the math problem?
3. What strategy does she use?
4. How does Mrs. Alvarez respond?
5. What important realization does Peyton have?

After Reading

1. What changed in Peyton's thinking?
2. Why is solving a problem step by step helpful?
3. How are readers and mathematicians alike?
4. What lesson can you use in your own life?

Discussion Questions

- Can reading make us better problem solvers?
- What does perseverance look like?
- Have you ever used something you learned in one subject to help in another?
- Why is explaining your thinking important?

SEL Connection

Identity

Students discuss:

"I don't have to choose just one thing that I am."

Create an anchor chart:

I Can Be...

- a reader
- an artist
- an athlete
- a scientist
- a mathematician
- a musician
- a helper
- a creator

Emphasize that people have many strengths.

Writing Activity

"I Can Be Both"

Students complete:

I used to think I was only good at _____.

Now I know I can also _____.

Illustrate themselves doing both activities.

Math Connection

Choose one multi-step word problem.

Instead of focusing only on the answer, have students explain:

- First...

- Next...
- Then...
- Finally...

Celebrate clear thinking rather than speed.

Reading Connection

Read a short mystery story.

Ask:

- What clues helped solve the mystery?
- How is solving a mystery similar to solving a math problem?

Students compare the two processes.

STEM Challenge

Provide a simple puzzle or building challenge.

Afterward, ask students:

- What was your first step?
- Did you change your plan?
- What clues helped?

Discuss how engineers, scientists, readers, and mathematicians all solve problems.

Art Activity

"Adventure Backpack"

Students draw an adventure backpack filled with tools they need for learning.

Ideas include:

- books
- pencils
- courage
- perseverance
- curiosity
- kindness
- creativity
- patience
- growth mindset

Class Discussion Circle

Prompt:

"What is one challenge you've overcome by taking it one step at a time?"

Students share experiences and encourage one another.

Growth Mindset Connection

Create a classroom poster:

Every Adventure Begins With One Small Step

List examples:

- Read one page.
- Solve one part.
- Ask one question.
- Try one strategy.
- Learn one new thing.

Extension Activity

Invite students to design their own "Learning Adventure Map."

Include:

- Starting Point
- Challenge
- Helpful Tools
- Helpers Along the Way
- Obstacles
- What I Learned
- Celebration

Students illustrate and present their maps.

Student Journal Page



Peyton realized she didn't have to choose between being a reader and a mathematician.

**What are two things that make you uniquely you?
Explain why both are important.**

Teacher Reflection

After teaching this chapter, reflect:

- Did students recognize that skills transfer across subjects?
- Were they able to explain their thinking?
- Did students show increased confidence in discussing math?
- Which activities encouraged the most engagement?



Teacher Tip

*This chapter is an excellent opportunity to help students understand one of the book's central messages: **our strengths in one area can help us grow in another, and we never have to limit ourselves to being just one thing.***

Chapter 11

The Science Showcase Surprise

Chapter Summary

Peyton and Theo partner for the school's Science Showcase. Their first design doesn't work, but instead of giving up, they examine what went wrong, make changes, and improve their project. They learn that mistakes are valuable because they help us learn and grow. Their teamwork earns them the Outstanding Collaboration recognition.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that mistakes are part of learning.
- Recognize the importance of teamwork.
- Practice the engineering design process.
- Learn to solve problems through observation and revision.
- Appreciate different strengths within a team

Comprehension Questions

Before Reading

1. Have you ever worked on a project with a partner?

2. What makes a good teammate?
3. What do you do when something doesn't work?

During Reading

1. What project do Peyton and Theo choose?
2. Why do they work well together?
3. What problem do they encounter?
4. How do they solve it?
5. What recognition do they receive?

After Reading

1. Why were their mistakes important?
2. How did teamwork help the project succeed?
3. What lesson did Peyton learn?
4. How can mistakes become opportunities?

Discussion Questions

- Why is teamwork sometimes better than working alone?
- Should mistakes be celebrated? Why?
- What unique strengths did Peyton and Theo each bring?
- What happens when we keep trying?

SEL Connection

Working Together

Discuss:

- Listening respectfully
- Sharing ideas
- Encouraging teammates

- Solving disagreements
- Celebrating everyone's contributions

Create an anchor chart:

Great Teams...

- Listen
- Encourage
- Share
- Solve problems together
- Celebrate success together

Writing Activity

"My Perfect Team"

Students write about someone they enjoy working with.

Include:

- Why they make a good team
- What each person contributes
- What they learned together

Illustrate themselves completing a project.

STEM Activity

Build a Better Bridge

Using:

- craft sticks

- index cards
- tape
- straws

Students build a bridge that supports small objects.

Reflection questions:

- What worked?
- What didn't?
- What did you change?
- How did your team cooperate?

Science Connection

Conduct a simple sink-or-float investigation.

Students:

- Predict
- Test
- Observe
- Record
- Revise predictions

Discuss how scientists learn from experiments.

Art Activity

"Mistakes Help Us Grow"

Students draw two pictures:

Before

"My idea didn't work."

After

"I changed it and improved it."

Write one sentence describing what they learned.

Cooperative Learning Activity

Give teams a classroom challenge such as:

- Build the tallest tower
- Create a paper airplane
- Design a marble path

Afterward, students reflect:

- How did your team communicate?
- How did everyone contribute?

What would you change next time?

Growth Mindset Connection

Create a chart with the following title:

Mistakes Are Clues

Students brainstorm:

- What did the mistake teach me?
- What can I try next?

- How can I improve?

Student Journal Page

Peyton said, "We found something we need to fix."

Write about a time when something didn't work the first time.
What did you learn from it?

Teacher Tip

After teaching this chapter, consider:

- *Did students value collaboration?*
- *Were students willing to revise their work?*
- *Did they understand that mistakes support learning?*
- *How well did groups communicate*

Chapter 12

Field Day

Chapter Summary

Field Day makes Peyton nervous because she doesn't see herself as a fast runner. Mrs. Alvarez reminds the class that success isn't about winning—it's about trying your best. Encouraged by her teammates, Peyton finishes the relay race with courage and earns an orange Lucky Duck for bravery. She realizes that courage means trying even when you're afraid.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Define courage.
- Understand sportsmanship.
- Appreciate effort over achievement.
- Encourage classmates.
- Reflect on personal bravery.

Comprehension Questions

Before Reading

1. What is Field Day?
2. What activities make you nervous?

3. How can teammates encourage one another?

During Reading

1. Why is Peyton worried?
2. What does Mrs. Alvarez tell the class?
3. What do Peyton's teammates do?
4. What happens after the race?
5. Why does Peyton receive the orange Lucky Duck?

After Reading

1. What does courage mean?
2. How did encouragement help Peyton?
3. Have you ever been nervous before trying something new?
4. Why is trying your best more important than winning?

Discussion Questions

- Is bravery the same as being fearless?
- How do kind words help others?
- Why should we celebrate effort?
- What makes someone a good teammate?

SEL Connection

Courage Looks Like...

Create an anchor chart.

Courage is:

- Asking for help
- Trying again
- Sharing ideas
- Standing in front of the class
- Trying something new
- Being kind
- Admitting mistakes

Discuss how courage appears in everyday classroom moments.

Writing Activity

"A Time I Was Brave"

Students describe:

- What happened
- Why they were nervous
- What they did
- How they felt afterward

Illustrate the moment.

Physical Education Connection

Create classroom relay stations emphasizing teamwork instead of speed.

Possible stations:

- Bean bag balance
- Jumping
- Hula hoop pass
- Puzzle relay
- Book balancing

Celebrate:

- Encouragement
- Cooperation
- Positive attitudes

Art Activity

Courage Medal

Students design a medal that says:

"I Tried My Best!"

Decorate with symbols representing bravery.

Classroom Activity

Courage Compliments

Students write anonymous encouraging notes to classmates.

Examples:

- I noticed you...
- You were brave when...
- You kept trying...
- You helped someone...

Read several aloud during closing circle.

Growth Mindset Connection

Poster Title:

Brave Doesn't Mean Perfect

Students finish:

- I can be brave by...
- I grow when...
- I am proud of myself because...

Student Journal Page



Peyton learned that courage means trying even when you feel nervous.

Describe something that makes you nervous. What could help you be courageous enough to try?

Teacher Tip

After teaching this chapter, reflect:

- *Did students understand that courage includes everyday challenges?*
- *Were students encouraging toward classmates?*
- *Did discussions shift from winning to effort?*

Which students demonstrated bravery in new ways?

Chapter 13

The Author Visit

Chapter Summary

When children’s author Elena Marquez visits Harbor Heights, Peyton is surprised to see messy first drafts filled with crossed-out words and changes. Peyton learns that good writers do not create perfect stories on their first try—they keep writing and revising. Inspired, Peyton leaves the visit confident in her identity as a writer.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand that writing involves revision and making mistakes.
- Recognize that published authors do not write perfectly on the first try.
- Identify how character perspectives shift after new experiences.
- Make text-to-self connections regarding personal writing experiences.

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness & Growth Mindset

Students learn that creating something meaningful requires practice and revision rather than instant perfection.

Character Trait Spotlight

★ Inspiration

- **Discuss:** What does it mean to be inspired by someone else's journey?
- **Ask:** How did seeing Mrs. Marquez's rough draft change Peyton's view of writing?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- Have you ever seen a messy first draft of a story?
- What do you think authors do when they make mistakes?
- How do you feel when you have to change or edit your writing?

During Reading

- **Stop 1:** Why is Peyton surprised to see Mrs. Marquez's first drafts?
- **Stop 2:** What does Mrs. Marquez mean when she says, "Writers don't create perfect stories. They create stories, then they improve them"?
- **Stop 3:** How does Peyton's view of herself change at the end of the chapter?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. Who visits Harbor Heights Elementary?
2. What surprising thing does Elena Marquez show the students?
3. What answer does Mrs. Marquez give when Peyton asks how to know if a story is good?

Inferential

4. Why did Peyton think good writers just instantly knew what to write?
5. How does seeing an author's mistakes give Peyton confidence?

Critical Thinking

6. Why is revising a story an example of having a growth mindset?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find a sentence in Chapter 13 that shows Peyton realizing she is a writer *today* rather than waiting for the future.

Writing Activity

"My Messy First Draft" Give students a quick-write prompt. Remind them not to worry about spelling or perfect handwriting. Afterwards, have them select two sentences to edit or expand, celebrating the revision process.

Student Journal Page



1. One thing that surprised me about Mrs. Marquez's writing was:

2. What does it mean to write from the heart?

3. Complete this sentence:

I am a writer because...

Chapter 14

Fractions and Friendship

Chapter Summary

Peyton faces a new math concept—fractions—and initially feels nervous. However, with help from Mrs. Alvarez’s pizza visual and Amira’s explanation that fractions are about parts of a whole, Peyton makes a connection to her own world. She creates a fraction project representing the different parts of her classroom community and realizes math belongs in her story too.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explain how visual models help make abstract math concepts clearer.
- Analyze how peer collaboration supports learning.
- Connect real-world situations to fractions (parts of a whole).

SEL Focus

Relationship Skills & Peer Support

Students explore how accepting help from friends makes learning less intimidating.

Character Trait Spotlight

 **Connection**

- **Discuss:** How can we connect new, difficult ideas to things we already know and love?
- **Ask:** How did Peyton connect fractions to her classroom community?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word *fractions*?
- How can working with a classmate help when learning a tough topic?

During Reading

- **Stop 1:** Why does Mrs. Alvarez use a pizza to explain fractions?
- **Stop 2:** How does Amira explain fractions to Peyton?
- **Stop 3:** What parts does Peyton include in her classroom fraction project?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What math topic is introduced in Room 202 in this chapter?
2. What real-life object does Mrs. Alvarez use to demonstrate equal parts?
3. What parts does Peyton include in her fraction artwork?

Inferential

4. Why was Peyton able to understand fractions better after talking with Amira?
5. What does Peyton mean when she says, "Maybe math belonged in her story after all"?

Critical Thinking

6. How does Peyton's attitude toward math in Chapter 14 compare to her attitude in Chapter 3?

Text Evidence Hunt

Find evidence in Chapter 14 showing that Peyton is becoming more confident when faced with a new math topic.

Cross-Curricular Extension (Math & Art)

"Fractions of Me" Students draw a circle or square and divide it into 4 or 8 equal sections. Each section represents a part of their identity or day (e.g., $\frac{1}{4}$ reading, $\frac{1}{4}$ sports, $\frac{1}{4}$ family, $\frac{1}{4}$ art).

Student Journal Page



1. A fraction is a part of a _____.

2. One way a friend helped Peyton in this chapter was:

3. If I made a fraction chart of my school day, one important part would be:

Chapter 15

The Writing Contest

Chapter Summary

Although Peyton loves writing, she is nervous about sharing her work. Encouraged by Amira and inspired by the visiting author, she revises her story and enters the school writing contest. Winning the Storytelling Award is exciting, but the greatest reward comes when a younger student says Peyton's story made them feel like they belong. Peyton realizes that stories can connect people.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the writing process (drafting, revising, sharing).
- Recognize the importance of revision in creating a story.
- Build confidence in sharing personal work.
- Understand how stories impact others and foster empathy.

SEL Focus

Courage & Vulnerability

Students learn that sharing their authentic work requires bravery, but it can create meaningful connections with others.

Character Trait Spotlight

 Empathy & Confidence

- **Discuss:** Why can sharing something you created feel scary?
- **Ask:** How did Peyton's story help someone else feel like they belong?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- Have you ever shared your writing with an audience?
- Why can sharing your work feel scary?
- Why do authors revise their work?

During Reading

- **Stop 1:** Why is Peyton nervous about entering the contest?
- **Stop 2:** What advice does Amira give Peyton when she hesitates?
- **Stop 3:** How does Peyton improve her story before submitting it?
- **Stop 4:** What award does Peyton receive?
- **Stop 5:** What comment from a younger student matters most to Peyton?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What contest does Mrs. Alvarez announce?
2. What is Peyton's story about?
3. What award does Peyton win at the celebration?

Inferential

4. Why was the younger student's comment more meaningful to Peyton than winning an award?

5. How does Peyton's willingness to revise show growth?

Critical Thinking

6. Peyton writes that "Stories are bridges". What does this mean?

Connected Classroom STEM Challenge

Give your students paper, scissors, and glue and challenge them to work in teams to engineer the longest continuous chain possible. They must collaborate to fold, cut, and attach their links.

Student Journal Page

Chapter 15 Reflection: The Writing Contest

1. Peyton revised her story by:

2. What does it mean when Peyton says "Stories are bridges"?

3. One story I would like to share with others is about:

Chapter 16

The Big Math Moment

Chapter Summary

Peyton faces one of her biggest challenges yet—explaining her mathematical thinking in front of the class. Instead of letting fear stop her, she solves the problem step by step and confidently shares her reasoning. Mrs. Alvarez celebrates Peyton's courage with a special "Math Courage Award". Peyton realizes she is growing in the areas that once challenged her the most.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explain mathematical thinking clearly step by step.
- Develop confidence in public speaking and academic risk-taking.
- Use perseverance to solve multi-step problems.
- Recognize personal growth over time.

SEL Focus

Self-Efficacy & Risk-Taking

Students learn that true confidence comes from trying hard things and working through fear.

Character Trait Spotlight

 **Courage**

- **Discuss:** What does courage look like in a math class?
- **Ask:** How did Peyton show courage when presented with a multi-step problem?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- Have you ever had to explain a math strategy at the board?
- Why can speaking in front of the class feel difficult?
- What strategies help you stay calm when doing something hard?

During Reading

- **Stop 1:** What makes the math problem in this chapter different or challenging?
- **Stop 2:** How does Peyton begin solving the multi-step problem?
- **Stop 3:** How do the green and orange Lucky Ducks help Peyton make her decision?
- **Stop 4:** How do Peyton's classmates react to her explanation at the board?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What task does Mrs. Alvarez ask students to do on Monday morning?
2. What award does Peyton receive from Mrs. Alvarez?
3. What final reflection does Peyton write in her notebook?

Inferential

4. How has Peyton changed since the beginning of the book regarding math?
5. Why is explaining your thinking just as important as getting the correct answer?

Critical Thinking

6. What does Peyton mean when she writes, "I am growing in the things that challenge me"?

Math & Speaking Activity

"Classroom Math Talk"

Provide a multi-step word problem. Give students time to solve it step by step using sentence starters (*First... Next... Then... Finally...*). Have partners present their thinking to each other, practicing active listening and respectful questions.

Art Connection: Fraction Quilt Project

1. The Mindset Launch

Reinforce the idea that making a mistake in math is actually the exact moment their brain grows a new connection. Introduce the "Mistake Masterpiece" rule: no erasers allowed today.

2. The Fraction Target

Hand out a square paper grid divided into 4 or 8 equal parts. Model how to color a specific target, like **one-half** or **one-fourth** counting the total parts together first.

3. The Pivot Phase

Students begin coloring their quilt blocks with markers. If someone slips up and colors three squares instead of two, guide them to pivot: they can change their total parts, color the rest to find a new fraction, or invent a new pattern.

4. The Gallery Assembly

Tape all the individual paper squares together on the wall to form one massive classroom fraction quilt. Have students share how a coloring mistake actually made their piece of the quilt more interesting.

Student Journal Page

1. When Peyton went to the board, she showed courage by:

2. A hard thing that I have gotten better at this year is:

3. Draw or write a strategy you use when a math problem feels tricky:

Chapter 17

Peyton's Story

Chapter Summary

As the Harbor Heights Writing Celebration approaches, Peyton is excited but nervous about reading her story aloud. With encouragement from her big sister Lucy, Peyton realizes that feeling excited and scared at the same time is part of courage. After reading her story about the Story Tree, a younger student tells Peyton that her story made them feel like they belong. Peyton discovers that sharing her voice can make a meaningful difference in someone else's life.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Develop confidence in public speaking.
- Recognize the impact of storytelling on others.
- Understand that courage often includes feeling nervous.
- Build empathy through listening and sharing.
- Celebrate personal voice and expression.

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness & Social Awareness

Students reflect on how sharing their personal stories builds connections and fosters a sense of community and belonging.

Character Trait Spotlight

Courage

Discuss: Courage isn't the absence of fear—it's choosing to share your voice even when you feel nervous.

Ask: How does Peyton show courage at the Writing Celebration?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- Have you ever spoken or read in front of a group of people?
- What feelings do you experience before presenting?
- Can you feel excited and nervous at the same time?
- Why are our individual stories important to share?

During Reading

Stop and Discuss

- **Stop 1:** Why is Peyton feeling so nervous about the Writing Celebration?
- **Stop 2:** What advice does Lucy give Peyton about her feelings?
- **Stop 3:** How does the audience react when Peyton finishes reading her story?
- **Stop 4:** Why is the younger student's comment so meaningful to Peyton?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What event is Harbor Heights hosting?
2. Who gives Peyton advice when she feels nervous at home?
3. What is the title or topic of the story Peyton reads?
4. How does the audience react after Peyton finishes reading?
5. What does the younger student tell Peyton after her presentation?

Thinking

1. 6. Why does Lucy say that being excited and scared can happen at the same time?
2. 7. How does Peyton demonstrate courage in this chapter?
3. 8. Why are stories considered "bridges" between people?

Going Deeper

1. 9. How did Peyton's perception of herself change after speaking to the younger student?
2. 10. Why is sharing your authentic voice important, even when it feels scary?

Text Evidence Challenge

Find a sentence that proves Peyton felt supported by her family and classmates during her presentation. Explain your choice.

Growth Mindset Connection

Peyton felt scared, but she didn't let fear stop her from sharing her story. She learned that bravery means taking action even when your hands feel shaky.

Writing Activity

"My Story Matters"

Students write a short narrative about a happy memory, a challenge they overcame, or someone who helped them feel welcome.

- *Prompt:* Write about a time you showed courage or helped someone else feel like they belonged.

Cross-Curricular Extension: Art & Speaking

- **Story Illustration:** Students illustrate the most important scene from their personal narrative. Display the artwork on a bulletin board titled: *"Every Voice Matters."*
- **Classroom Author Celebration:** Host a mini author celebration where students take the "Author's Chair" to read a paragraph of their writing aloud to the class.

Graphic Organizer

Courage Anchor Map

- **What Courage Feels Like:** (e.g., shaky hands, fast heartbeat, butterfly stomach)
- **What Courage Sounds Like:** (e.g., "I'll try," "I'm nervous, but I can do it," "My voice matters")
- **What Courage Looks Like:** (e.g., taking a deep breath, stepping up to the microphone, trying again)

Lucky Duck Reflection

Character Trait Earned Today: Courage

How did you show courage today?

- ☐ I shared an idea with the class.
- ☐ I tried something even though I felt nervous.
- ☐ I spoke up for myself or a friend.
- ☐ I read aloud or presented my work.

Student Journal Page

One way Peyton showed courage today was.

One word that describes Peyton in this chapter is **Courageous** because. _____

A time I felt both excited and nervous was when _____

Chapter 18

More Than Numbers

Chapter Summary

As the second-grade school year draws to a close, Peyton reflects on everything she has learned and how much she has grown. Looking at her green, orange, and colorful Lucky Ducks, she realizes she used to focus too much on what she *couldn't* do instead of recognizing all her strengths. Peyton proudly writes a new list in her notebook celebrating who she has become—a reader, writer, problem-solver, and resilient learner.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Reflect systematically on personal academic and emotional growth.
- Identify personal strengths and character traits.
- Practice constructive self-talk and positive affirmations.
- Recognize that effort and perseverance are key components of success.

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness & Self-Management

Students practice reflective thinking to evaluate their progress over time and develop positive self-identity.

Character Trait Spotlight

 **Reflection & Self-Belief** Discuss: Looking back at where we started helps us see how far we've come. Ask: How has Peyton's view of herself changed from Chapter 1 to Chapter 18?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- How have you grown or changed since the beginning of this school year?
- What is something that felt hard in September that feels easier now?
- Why do we sometimes focus on our mistakes instead of our successes?
- Why is self-reflection an important tool for learning?

During Reading

Stop and Discuss

- **Stop 1:** What items cause Peyton to start reflecting on her school year?
- **Stop 2:** What realization does Peyton have about her past focus during math class?
- **Stop 3:** What new list does Peyton write in her notebook?
- **Stop 4:** How do the Lucky Ducks represent more than just plastic toys or awards?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What time of year is it in Chapter 18?
2. What objects prompt Peyton to think back on her second-grade journey?
3. What mistake does Peyton realize she was making earlier in the year?
4. What are two things Peyton writes on her new list?
5. What does Peyton realize about her ability to handle hard things?

Thinking

1. Why is the chapter titled "More Than Numbers"?
2. . How does writing a list help Peyton organize her thoughts and self-belief? .
3. What role did Mrs. Alvarez and Peyton's classmates play in her personal growth?

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean to measure success by *who you are becoming* rather than just test scores?
2. How can you apply Peyton's reflection process to your own learning journey?

Text Evidence Challenge

Find a line in the text that shows Peyton shifting her mindset from self-doubt to self-confidence.

Growth Mindset Connection

Growth isn't about being perfect overnight; it's about making progress step by step and recognizing how much your brain has grown through effort.

Writing Activity

"Things I Know About Myself Now"

Following Peyton's example, students create a four-part reflective list:

1. *I can...*
2. *I have learned...*
3. *I am proud of...*
4. *I am becoming...*

Cross-Curricular Extension

Art: The Growth Garden

- Students cut out a paper flower or tree leaf.
- On the stem, they write a challenge they faced.
- On the petals/leaf, they write the strengths and skills they used to overcome it.
- Display together as a class "Growth Garden" on the main wall.

Student Journal Page

One thing I used to struggle with that I am better at now is.

Three words that describe my growth this year are:

One positive sentence I can tell myself when work gets tricky is

Graphic Organizer

Then vs. Now Character Chart

Trait / Mindset	Beginning of the Year (Peyton)	End of the Year (Peyton)
Feelings About Math	Nervous, unsure, doubted herself	Confident, views it like a story/puzzle
Response to Challenges	Wanted to give up or felt stuck	Uses strategies, perseveres step by step
Self-Talk	"I can't do this."	"I am still learning and growing."

Lucky Duck Reflection

Character Trait Earned Today: Reflection

How did you show reflective thinking today?

- ☐ I celebrated a personal success.
- ☐ I identified an area where I want to keep growing.
- ☐ I recognized the hard work of a classmate.
- ☐ I thought about how my mistakes helped me learn.

Chapter 19

The Last Week of Second Grade

Chapter Summary

During the final week of school, Mrs. Alvarez assigns a special project: writing a letter to their future selves. Peyton reflects on everything she wants to remember—her friendships, perseverance through math, and the importance of reading, writing, and wondering. Before dismissal, Mrs. Alvarez reminds the class that their Lucky Ducks represent moments when they chose to grow rather than just prizes. Peyton realizes that while Room 202 is changing, her growth will stay with her.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Reflect on annual classroom experiences and milestones.
- Format and write a letter to their future selves.
- Set realistic, meaningful goals for the upcoming school year.
- Demonstrate gratitude for teachers, peers, and personal experiences.

SEL Focus

Relationship Skills & Self-Management

Students practice goal-setting, express gratitude to their learning

community, and prepare emotionally for transitions.

Character Trait Spotlight

Gratitude & Goal-Setting

Discuss: Endings allow us to look back with gratitude and look forward with hope.

Ask: What message does Peyton want her future self to remember?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- What is your favorite memory from our classroom this year?
- If you could send a message to yourself one year from today, what would you say?
- Why is it important to celebrate the end of a school year?
- What does it mean when Mrs. Alvarez says the Lucky Ducks represent choices?

During Reading

Stop and Discuss

- **Stop 1:** How does Room 202 look different during the last week of school?
- **Stop 2:** What writing assignment does Mrs. Alvarez give the class?
- **Stop 3:** What three important commands does Peyton include in her letter ("*Keep...*")?
- **Stop 4:** What final message does Mrs. Alvarez share about the Lucky Ducks?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. What assignment does Mrs. Alvarez give during the last week of school?
2. Name two memories or lessons Peyton includes in her letter.
3. What three things does Peyton tell her future self to keep doing?
4. According to Mrs. Alvarez, what do the Lucky Ducks truly represent?
5. How does Peyton feel about leaving Room 202?

Thinking

6. Why is writing a letter to your future self a powerful activity?
7. Why did Mrs. Alvarez wait until the end of the year to remind students about the meaning of the ducks?
8. How did Peyton's relationships with her classmates help her succeed this year?

Going Deeper

9. How can a classroom community help a student feel safe enough to take learning risks?
10. What lessons from second grade will you carry with you into the next school year?

Text Evidence Challenge

Find a sentence in Chapter 19 that shows Mrs. Alvarez emphasizing character over physical rewards.

Growth Mindset Connection

The physical classroom walls may be taken down at the end of the year, but the brain connections, confidence, and character traits you built will stay with you forever.

Writing Activity

"Letter to My Future Self"

Students compose a formal letter following this structure:

- *Date & Greeting:* Dear Future Me,
- *Paragraph 1:* What I want to remember about my class and friends this year.
- *Paragraph 2:* A challenge I overcame and how I grew.
- *Paragraph 3:* My goals and hopes for next year.
- *Closing:* Sincerely, (Student Name)

Teacher Tip

Seal these letters in envelopes to be opened at the end of the next school year!

Cross-Curricular Extension

Social Studies & Art: Memory Jars

Each student receives a paper shaped like a jar to illustrate their favorite classroom memories on. (e.g., Science Showcase, Field Day, Morning Meetings). Display them on a bulletin board or alternatively, have the students save them in their desks and add to them all year.

Student Journal Page

My favorite memory from this school year is.

I want to thank my teacher/friend for

One thing I want to accomplish next year is

Graphic Organizer

Future Self Time Capsules

Make a simple table with some or all of the following sections and ask students to fill in by drawing or writing.

All About Me

- **My Name:**
- **My Age:** 7 or 8
- **My Height:** (You can use a piece of yarn to measure them, cut it to size, and put the yarn in the capsule!)
- **My Eye Color:**
- **My Hair Color:**

My Favorites

- **Favorite Color:**
- **Favorite Food:**
- **Favorite Toy/Game:**
- **Favorite Movie or TV Show:**
- **Favorite Book:**
- **What I want to be when I grow up:**

My World in 2026

- **Who is my best friend:**
- **What is my favorite subject in school:**
- **What I am best at doing:**

- **My favorite thing to do on the weekend:**

Lucky Duck Reflection

Character Trait Earned Today: Gratitude

How did you show gratitude today?

- ☐ I thanked someone who helped me.
- ☐ I shared a positive memory with a friend.
- ☐ I treated our classroom materials with care as we packed up.
- ☐ I reflected on my teacher's support.

Teacher Tip

Make the time capsule special by including a photo, drawing, and handprint in each time capsule envelope or box.

Chapter 20

The First Page

Chapter Summary

On the first day of summer break, Peyton returns to her favorite spot beneath the Story Tree in Willow Park. She opens a new notebook and writes "Chapter One," realizing that endings are simply new beginnings in disguise. Peyton reflects on how stories are found everywhere—in classrooms, friendships, questions, and mistakes. She proudly affirms her identity as a reader, writer, learner, friend, and problem-solver, leaving a blank page at the end of her journal because her story is still being written.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the central theme and author's purpose of the novel.
- Understand that learning and personal development are lifelong processes.
- Formulate personal affirmations that reflect positive self-identity.
- Synthesize the connections between character growth, overcoming challenges, and future goals.

SEL Focus

Self-Actualization & Optimism

Students embrace a forward-looking mindset, recognizing that their identity is dynamic, flexible, and full of ongoing possibilities.

Character Trait Spotlight

Lifelong Learning & Hope

Discuss: Learning doesn't stop when the school bell rings at the end of the year.

Ask: Why does Peyton leave a blank page at the end of her notebook?

Before Reading

Ask students:

- What does the phrase "every ending is a new beginning" mean to you?
- Where do you think Peyton will go to write her final journal entry?
- How has Peyton changed from the very first page of Chapter 1?
- What makes someone a "storyteller" in real life?

During Reading

Stop and Discuss

- **Stop 1:** Where is Peyton sitting on the first day of summer?
- **Stop 2:** According to Peyton, where are stories found besides books?
- **Stop 3:** What are the six statements Peyton writes to describe herself?
- **Stop 4:** Why does Peyton leave a blank page in her journal?

Comprehension Questions

Recall

1. Where does Chapter 20 take place?
2. What date/time is it when Peyton opens her notebook?
3. Name three places Peyton says stories can be found.
4. What list of "I am" statements does Peyton finalize in her journal?
5. What does Peyton place beside her Lucky Ducks at home?

Thinking

1. Why is "The First Page" an appropriate title for the final chapter?
2. How does Peyton's view of math and challenges differ now compared to Chapter 3?
3. What is the overarching message the author wants readers to take away from Peyton's story?

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean to be a "story still being written"?
2. Which character or lesson in Room 202 inspired you the most this year, and why?

Text Evidence Challenge

Find the exact lines in Chapter 20 where Peyton defines what it means to be a learner and a storyteller.

Growth Mindset Connection

You are never defined by a single test score, a single subject, or a single mistake. You are a reader, creator, problem-solver, and

friend whose story is just beginning!

Writing Activity

"The First Page of My Next Chapter"

Students complete a creative writing prompt outlining their hopes, dreams, and aspirations:

- *Title:* Chapter One: My Next Adventure
- *Guiding Prompt:* Write about who you are today and what possibilities you are excited to explore next year. Include three "I am" statements and one goal you are excited to pursue.

Culminating Extension Project

Peyton's Pages of Possibility Booklet

Students compile their work from throughout the novel study into a personal keepsake booklet containing:

1. **Cover:** Designed by the student titled "*My Book of Possibilities*".
2. **Page 1:** My Strengths & Growth Mindset Goals.
3. **Page 2:** A Challenge I Overcame (My "Power of Yet" Moment).
4. **Page 3:** My Lucky Duck Character Traits.
5. **Page 4:** Letter to My Future Self.
6. **Page 5:** The Blank Page ("My Story Continues...").

Student Journal Page

Final Affirmation: Complete Peyton's poem for yourself:

- I am a _____.
- I am a _____.
- I am a _____.
- I am brave because _____.
- My story is still being written because
_____.

Rewrite your special poem on a shape that represents your favorite thing about you.

Graphic Organizer

Create a Novel Summary Web

Central Theme	Peyton's Strengths	Peyton's Challenges	Lessons From Room 202
We are always growing and learning.	Reading Writing Creativity Curiosity	Math Confidence	One step at a time. Mistakes help our brains grow. We grow better together.

Lucky Duck Reflection

Character Trait Earned Today: Lifelong Learner

How will you continue growing as a learner over the summer?

- ☐ I will read books that inspire me.
- ☐ I will ask curious questions about the world around me.
- ☐ I will keep trying when things get tricky.
- ☐ I will be a kind and supportive friend.

A Final Word to Teachers

Dear Teacher,

As you know, education is so much more than helping children learn to read, write, solve problems, and master standards.

It is helping children discover who they are.

It is helping them find confidence after disappointment.

It is helping them see mistakes as stepping stones instead of roadblocks.

It is reminding them that every challenge is simply another page in their story—not the ending.

Thank you for choosing to see the possibility in every child.

Thank you for creating classrooms where students feel safe enough to wonder, brave enough to try, and valued enough to belong.

Thank you for helping children write stories filled with courage, kindness, perseverance, and hope.

The work you do today will echo far beyond your classroom walls.

Years from now, your students may not remember every lesson you taught.

But they will remember the teacher who believed in them.

And sometimes...

One teacher's belief becomes the first chapter in a child's lifelong confidence.

Thank you for being that teacher.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Jennifer Lee Quattrucci

Author of *Peyton's Pages of Possibility*

Author of *Educate the Heart: Screen-Free Activities for Grades PreK-6 to Inspire Authentic Learning*

giveeverydayachance.com   

"Every child is a story still being written. Thank you for helping your students turn the page with courage, kindness, curiosity, and hope. The next chapter is brighter because of teachers like you."