

What are some ways people solve problems?

Materials

In this pack, students read realistic fiction stories about different ways people solve problems. Students must read closely to understand the story and to locate evidence to support their answer to the Key Question.

Trouble at the Plate Jordan struggles to hit the curveball, but his determination and persistence finally pay off.

The Dress Disaster When Tameka's dress is ruined unexpectedly, her mom finds a creative solution to save the day.

Where's Whiskers? When the cat Brandon is petsitting disappears, he discovers that sometimes working together is the best way to solve a problem.

The Pet Problem When Joshua's father threatens to find a new home for their dog because of its destructive behavior, Joshua seeks some expert advice to solve his pet problem.

CONNECTING PASSAGE

What Can We Do? When the school library is flooded, Jeremy and Sophia contemplate what they can do to help.

Student Response Sheet

Learning Goals

These selections support student learning of the following Common Core State Standards:

Literature

- Determine the theme of a drama from details in the text; summarize the text.
- Describe in depth a character or event in a story using specific details in the text.
- Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics.

BEFORE READING

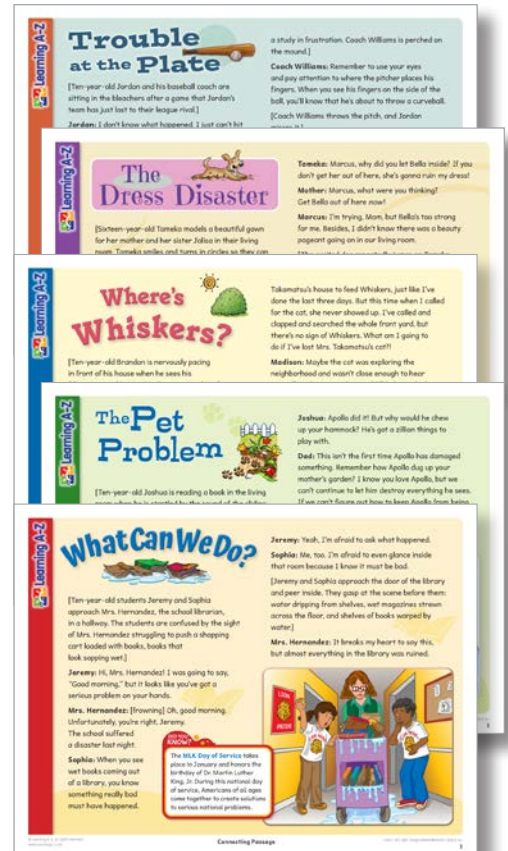
Introduce the Key Question

What are some ways people solve problems?

- Write the Key Question on the board and read it with students. Ask: *What are some ways people solve problems?* (Ask someone for help, find a solution, etc.) *What skills help people solve problems?* (creative thinking, determination, cooperation)
- Tell students that they will read some stories that contain information which they can use to answer the Key Question.

Preview the Passages

- Divide the group into teams of four and distribute the four passages (not the Connecting Passage) among team members. Have each student preview his/her passage by reading the title and looking at the illustrations.



Lesson Plan

- Introduce passage-related vocabulary by writing the words on the board and reading them aloud for student. (See Word Work)
- Distribute a Student Response Sheet to each student. Point out the chart on page 1. Ask a student to read the headings in the chart: *Problem, Solution*.
- Tell students to read the story one time to look for hard words and to understand what the story is about.
- Then have students reread and look for details in the text that show the problem and how it was solved. Students might highlight words and phrases in the text or take notes in the margins. After they read, they can use the information to write their first answer to the Key Question.

DURING READING

Reading and Discussing the Passages

Each story includes information about how a problem is solved. Students will first use this information to answer the Key Question about one story; team members will discuss all the stories to generate a team answer to the Key Question. Use the questions below to guide students as they read individual stories and use information from the story to write their first answer to the Key Question.

WORD WORK

The following words appear in one or more of the selections.

creativity (n.)	the ability to use one's imagination
determination (n.)	an attitude of willingness to work hard to reach a goal
perseverance (n.)	the quality of staying determined and committed in the face of a challenge or delay
problem (n.)	a question or puzzle that needs to be solved; a cause of unhappiness
situation (n.)	the way things are at a certain time
solution (n.)	the answer to a question, problem, or difficulty

Trouble at the Plate

1. *What is Jordan's problem? How does he feel?*
(He cannot hit a curveball. He feels frustrated.)
2. *What skills help Jordan solve his problem? How can you tell?*
(He has determination and perseverance; He doesn't give up and he keeps practicing.)
3. *What is the theme, or central message, of the story?*
(Determination and perseverance can help you overcome a problem.)

My First Answer Sample: Determination and perseverance can help people solve a problem.

The Dress Disaster

1. *What is Tameka's problem? How does she feel? How can you tell?*
(Her dress for the costume contest gets ruined. She feels upset, disappointed, and worried. Tameka says this event is a disaster and asks what she is going to do.)
2. *What does Tameka's mother do to turn the situation around? How does this solve Tameka's problem?*
(She uses makeup to make Tameka look like a zombie. Tameka's dress matches her character.)
3. *What is the theme, or central message, of the story?*
(Sometimes you need to use creativity to solve a problem.)

My First Answer Sample: Creativity and asking for help can help people solve a problem.

Where's Whiskers?

1. *What is Brandon's problem? How does he feel? How can you tell?*
(Brandon is taking care of his neighbor's cat and he can't find it; Brandon feels scared, worried, and frustrated; He is pacing nervously and he worries about how his neighbor will react.)
2. *Who helps Brandon? How do they work together to solve the problem?*
(Madison; As they search the backyard, Madison calls the cat's name while Brandon taps on its food bowl.)
3. *What is the theme, or central message, of the story?*
(Sometimes you need help from another person to solve a problem.)

My First Answer Sample: Working together can help people solve a problem.

The Pet Problem

1. *Which event highlights the problem? Which details show Apollo's destructive nature?*
(Joshua's dad discovers that Apollo has destroyed the hammock. The hammock is ripped in half and in shreds.)
2. *Who helps Joshua solve his problem? What makes Dr. Hamilton an expert on dogs?*
(Dr. Hamilton; He is a veterinarian, so he knows a lot about dogs.)
3. *What advice does the vet give to solve the problem?*
(The vet tells Joshua to walk Apollo more often, make sure he gets more exercise, and train him.)

My First Answer Sample: Getting expert advice and information can help people solve a problem.

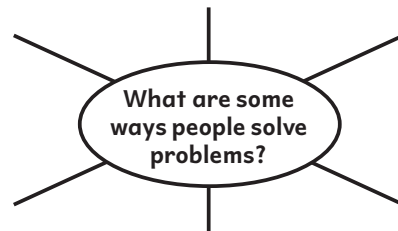
AFTER READING: TEAMWORK

Answer the Key Question

- Have teams gather. Students will need their stories and their Student Response Sheets. If you have not already introduced the Reporter and Discussion Leader roles for teams, you should do so now. (See [Using the Passage Packs](#).)
- Each group will share by having members summarize their stories and showing how they completed the chart.
- Tell the teams that their task is to look at each of the charts and identify the details that apply to all the problems and solutions they read about in order to add them to the Idea Web.
- Discussion Leaders should ask the questions from the Student Response Sheet to help teams focus on the information they need to answer the Key Question.

Why aren't the solutions in the stories all the same?
(One type of solution won't solve every problem.)

How are the solutions to the problems the same?
(The characters get help from other people, and they find creative solutions.)



Lesson Plan

- Tell the teams to write their team's answer to the Key Question.
- Encourage students to think of general terms for specific ones so the answer can apply to all the problems and solutions they read about. For example, students can refer to *other people* in place of *mother*, *sister*, and *vet*.

Our Team's Answer Sample: People solve problems by getting help from others, working together, and using creativity.

- Bring the teams together for a whole-class discussion, and ask each team to share their answer. Ask: *Is there anything you would add to the answer? Why or why not?* (Some students might want to add get more information, since one of the stories showed a character getting expert advice and many people might solve a problem by getting information or doing research.)
- Facilitate further whole-class discussion using questions similar to those on page two of the Student Response Sheet. Guide students to arrive at a class consensus in response to the Key Question.

Confirm or Revise the Team's Answer

- Distribute the Connecting Passage, *What Can We Do?* Prompt students with a culminating activity: *Describe why the characters in this passage are good at solving problems or not.*
- Have students read the story in pairs, independently, or as a team. Tell students to read the story and then decide which strategies would help the characters solve the problem. Then have students decide whether this story confirms the class answer to the Key Question. If not, ask: *How should the class revise the answer to the Key Question?*
- Facilitate discuss of the culminating activity by asking questions such as: *How do the characters in this story approach the problem in a similar or different way than the other story you read?*
- Use the Mini-Lesson to provide additional instruction using the passages.

MINI-LESSON

Author's Craft: Stage Directions

- Point out that each passage is in script form. Explain that every script contains stage directions, the text inside the brackets. Explain that stage directions provide information about the characters, the setting, and the events of the story. This text helps readers visualize, or picture in their mind, where the story takes place, what the characters are wearing, and how they move and interact.
- Ask: *How do the stage directions in What Can We Do? help you visualize the characters and the action?* (The stage directions help me picture two students and an adult. I can picture Mrs. Hernandez pushing a cart full of books.) *How do the stage directions help you understand how Mrs. Hernandez feels?* (The stage directions say she is frowning, which shows me that she is upset or unhappy.)
- Have pairs of students look at their stories and identify the stage directions. Then have students look for details that help them visualize the characters, the setting, and the events. Ask them to list these details in the first column of the Visualize Chart. Then have students use these details to sketch a character or an event from the story.

Text Details	Sketch
Sixteen-year-old Tameka; beautiful pink gown; ripping the front of her dress; walking in a slow, stumbling way; tiara sits askew; slightly messy hair; zombie makeup	