



Facilitator Activity Guide

MEAN 'OLE CRANKFENDER
A LESSON IN CARING

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Note for teachers, parents, counselors, facilitators, and others who use the activities in this guide:

The extension activities in this guide are intended for Early Childhood learners in kindergarten through third grade. Students in this range exhibit a wide variety of aptitudes. It is understood that not all children (especially younger ones) will be able to complete all activities on their own. Some activities may need to be led wholly by the teacher; others may have to be done in pairs or in small groups. Please take into account the individual and corporate abilities of your group.



Caring

SUMMARY/RETELLING

Teacher or facilitator asks students to retell the story making sure they bring out appropriate story grammar (characters, setting, plot, etc.) and in correct order. Students can do this alone on paper or in a group.

Story summary:

EJ and his friend Johnny are playing outside with a flying disc when it accidentally flies into the yard of Mr. Crankfender and breaks his birdhouse. EJ believes it when Johnny says Mr. Crankfender is “the grumpiest car in the City of Auto.” Johnny also claims the old car is keeping all the toys that go over the fence in order to build a giant robot. Instead of owning up to the accident, Johnny and EJ run away. However, the next day Franklin informs EJ that he heard about the incident because his initials were on the disc. EJ agrees to go to Mr. Crankfender’s to work off what he owes for the birdhouse. Franklin also asks EJ to do a little more to “care for” Mr. Crankfender who is getting on in years. EJ spends the next couple of days working in his garden. When EJ finds out that the garden “belonged to his beloved Laura who is no longer with him” and who was the one who built the birdhouse, he feels bad about the accident and for running away. When the birdhouse is finished, the birds that used to come around return and Mr. Crankfender cares for them. EJ is so moved that he agrees to help Mr. Crankfender get ready for the flower show.



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BASIC COMPREHENSION (Understanding the Story)

Complete each sentence by choosing a, b, or c.

1. Who was playing with the flying disc at the beginning of the passage (story)?
 - a. EJ and Mr. Crankfender
 - b. EJ and Johnny
 - c. Johnny and Franklin
2. What does Mr. Crankfender do with the toys that land in his yard?
 - a. He throws them back over the fence
 - b. He keeps them
 - c. He sells them
3. Where do EJ and Mr. Crankfender work on the first day?
 - a. In the garden
 - b. In the garage
 - c. In the grass
4. When does EJ feel bad about breaking the birdhouse?
 - a. After he found out that Franklin knew about the birdhouse
 - b. After he found out about Mr. Crankfender not being able to be in the flower show
 - c. After he found out about Laura
5. Why does Mr. Crankfender like to take care of the birds?
 - a. Because they are little
 - b. Because EJ helped him build the birdhouse
 - c. Because his beloved Laura used to say how important it was to take care of each other



Caring

KEY

BASIC COMPREHENSION (Understanding the Story)

Complete each sentence by choosing a, b, or c.

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WORD STUDY/VOCABULARY

Caring: kindness, compassion. According to the passage, it is one of the greatest acts we can do for each other. It's also a wonderful feeling to know that you've helped someone in need.

Antonyms/opposites of caring: neglect, carelessness, thoughtless, indifference

I. **Crankfender is a compound word.**

Finding compound words can aid in finding patterns in words and can support both spelling and reading skills. Have students find other compound words in the passage (birdhouse, understand, someone, inside, backyard, afternoon, birdseed). They can then come up with some of their own as an extension activity.

II. **Understanding idioms & figures of speech.**

Each of these is an idiom or figure of speech used in the story. Read them in context and discuss with learners what each of them means. Ask if they can come up with some of their own.

“Now send it back. And **put some heat on it!**”

Johnny **poured on the speed.**

“You broke Crankfender’s birdhouse. He’s really going to **blow a gasket!**”

“Mr. Crankfender is **getting on in years ...**”



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POETRY/ DRAMA/QUOTES & SAYINGS

Here is a poem that can be used to reinforce phonics skills as well as the character trait of caring. Be sure to bring out not only the end rhymes, but also the r-controlled vowel practice embedded within other words that rhyme with care. (These are not always spelled the same!)

Facilitator can use existing poems, come up with own, or have children find and use some as a research exercise.

Baby Bear

“Please come into my little house,”
I said to Baby Bear.
“It’s really, really warm inside,
And the weather’s so bad out **there**.”

Baby Bear came to my house.
His **hair** was very wet.
“That’s kind of you,” he said to me,
“And we never even met!”

“I want to be your friend,” I said.
“And show you that I **care**.”
“Please use this towel to dry off,
I have much more to **share**!”



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CREATIVE THINKING/WRITING

These activities can be done individually, in partners, or in small groups.

- What does the student **know**?
 1. What did they think Mr. Crankfender was doing with all the toys?
 2. Name the flowers in Mr. Crankfender's garden and their colors.

- What does the student **comprehend**?
 1. Why did Mr. Crankfender's wheels creak when he rolled out of the house?
 2. How did Franklin know that it was EJ's disc that broke the birdhouse?

- What can the student **apply**?
 1. What would you have done if you or your friend had broken something that belonged to a neighbor? A friend?
 2. Talk/think about a time when you broke something and did not tell the person. How did you feel?

- How does the student **analyze**?
 1. Why did Mr. Crankfender wink at EJ at the end of the story?
 2. What were they laughing about?

- How does the student **synthesize**?
 1. What would have happened if EJ had not gone to help Mr. Crankfender?
 2. What other ways could EJ help care for Mr. Crankfender?

- How does the student **evaluate**?
 1. Do you think Johnny should have helped EJ with the chores for Mr. Crankfender? Why or why not?
 2. Do you think EJ will continue to help Mr. Crankfender around his house? Why or why not?



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