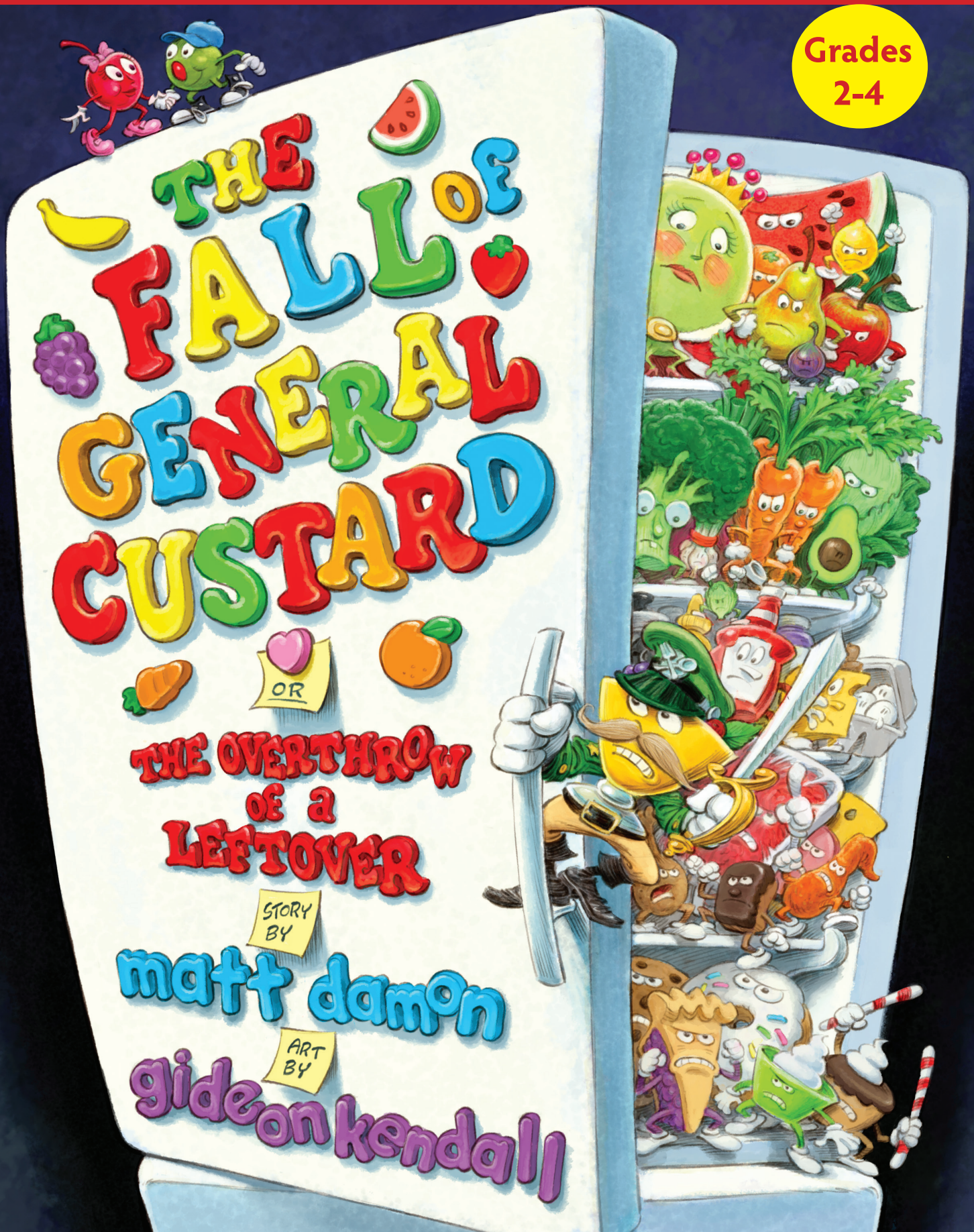


CLASSROOM GUIDE

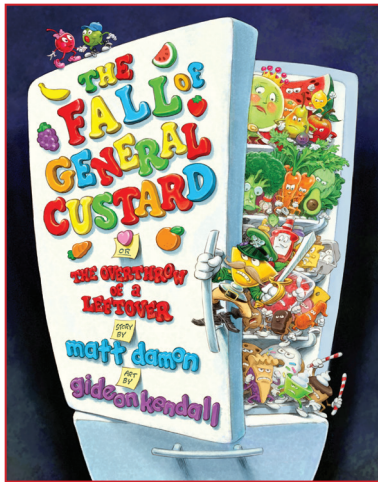
Grades
2-4



Meets Common Core State Standards

The Fall of General Custard Classroom Guide

Grades 2-4



About the Book

The Fall of General Custard brings to life a playful, imaginary world inside of a refrigerator. When the cherries are “foodnapped” by the greedy General Custard, a full-on food fight breaks out between the food groups.

“It was Custard’s fierce forces that fired food first.

A fat fudge sauce bomb landed loudly and burst.”

while

“Salamis and sausages, made in New York,

Tossed the poor salad with help from the pork.”

When conflict and division enter the normally peaceful world of the “Fridge”, the story demands resolution and speaks to important themes

and challenges which children frequently encounter in their own lives: cooperation vs. conflict and personal choices about right and wrong.

The heroine (a brave maraschino cherry named Rosaline) and the hero (a faithful Olive named Romeo) take risks for what they believe is right and shine a light of understanding and truth in the “Fridge” so that other foods can see the wisdom of choosing cooperation and peacemaking over the fear and conflict General Custard and his food fight offers.

This rhyming story, full of humor, wordplay, and wildly and delightfully detailed illustrations, stands on its own as pure entertainment, but can also be a launching point for thoughtful discussions with children about conflict and cooperation, as well as making a stand for what you believe is right.

About the Author



MATT DAMON is a professional storyteller and an elementary classroom teacher who lives in Ashland, Oregon. Matt’s personal journey as an educator and lover of stories has made him a believer in the power of story to impact children’s lives as well as influence the culture of a classroom. This power has inspired Matt to write his own stories to be shared with children.

About the Illustrator



GIDEON KENDALL is an artist, illustrator, animation designer, and musician in Brooklyn, NY. He has illustrated books for Penguin/Putnam and illustrated articles and record covers for publications and companies such as *The New York Times*, Puma, the Children’s Television Workshop, Scholastic, Disney, and Geffen.

A Note from the Author...

Hello Fellow Teachers,

At my school we have a saying: “Don’t just teach the Core. Teach the whole apple.” The Common Core State Standards are important as a guide, but as you know, teaching children with only standards in mind is “fruitless.” We must teach with the humanity of our students in the forefront of what we do. This means honoring imagination and creativity.

As a third grade public school teacher, I know the pressures you are under to present lessons that will help students address skills from the Common Core Standards. Too often, however, teachers are guided to curriculum materials that contain tightly prescribed, inauthentic tasks for students. Let *The Fall of General Custard Classroom Guide* help you and your students dive into engaging children’s literature your students will enjoy. You will be addressing multiple Common Core Standards as you and your students laugh together, discuss life-affirming themes, and cheer for the characters in the “Fridge.”

Though I have aligned this guide to the third grade CCSS, most of these lesson ideas address standards at multiple grade levels and can be adapted.

Have fun and Bon Appetit!

Matt Damon

Common Core Connections

Lesson Idea #1

“The Messages in the Mayhem” – *Finding Themes and Supporting with Evidence*

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in...

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

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

RL.3.2 – Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

RL.3.3 – Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Craft and Structure

RL.3.5 – Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.3.7 – Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.3.1 – Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.3.2 – Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Lesson Idea #2

“Why Did General Custard Start This Food Fight Anyway?” – *Character Traits That Shaped the Story*

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in...

Reading Literature

Correlates to the same standards as Lesson Activity #1, with the exception of RL.3.2

Speaking and Listening

Correlates to the same standards as Lesson Activity # 1

Lesson Idea # 3

“Delicious Mouthfuls of Meaning” – *Vocabulary Match*

Correlates to Common Core State Standards in...

Reading Literature

Key Ideas and Details

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

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.3.10 – By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Language

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.3.4 – Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple – meaning word and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

L.3.6 – Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.

****In addition to its use for reading and language lessons, *The Fall of General Custard* also cries out to be used as an engaging central text or literacy tie-in for any thematic unit involving cooperation, friendship, tolerance, bully prevention, nutrition or poetry!**

The Fall of General Custard Lesson Idea # 1

“The Messages in the Mayhem” – Finding Themes and Supporting with Evidence

Help your students identify the life-affirming “central messages” found in *The Fall of General Custard*.

Here are some of the themes your students can find:

Friendship – When characters like each other and are willing to help and support one another.

Cooperation – When characters work together to solve a problem or achieve a goal.

Kindness – When characters are generous and considerate of others.

Loyalty – When characters trust each other and help their friends, even in difficult situations.

Courage – When characters find strength in themselves to overcome a fear or accept a risk.

The following lesson idea will help you model for students how to find evidence for a theme (central message), as well as help you to guide students in finding and recording evidence of a theme on their own.

Materials Needed

- Large white or light colored paper for each student (8 ½ x 11 can work, but 11 x 17 or large construction paper is best)
- If you choose to use a whole-class format for your lesson, you will need chart paper or an ActiveBoard
- One or more copies of *The Fall of General Custard*.
- Optional: Document camera

Day One

Read *The Fall of General Custard* as a read aloud, so your students are familiar with the story.

Briefly discuss or review “theme.” Theme is a life lesson or message from the author. It is not stated explicitly, but is revealed by the actions of the characters. Ask students to suggest possible themes for the book as a lead-in to Day Two.

Day Two

1. Pick up the discussion from the previous day and present three themes (friendship, cooperation, kindness), letting your class know they will be discussing these themes and trying to locate evidence that supports the themes in the story.
2. Have students fold their paper in thirds and label the top of each third using each of the themes. (Having the paper pre-folded or pre-creased will save some delays, but it is also nice when kids have concrete motor skills woven into a lesson.)
3. Model recording an example of evidence under each theme heading.

Possible examples from the story:

Friendship:

The cherries are welcomed onto the fruit shelf at the beginning of the book.

Cooperation:

Roland O'Dew decides to help the cherries and olives protect Romeo.

Kindness:

The ham puts the broccoli's glasses back on so he can see again. Help the students notice that this evidence is revealed through illustration. (This supports learning around standard RL.3.7 regarding the contribution of illustrations to meaning in a story.)

4. Re-read scenes from the book that have evidence of the themes. (Scene suggestions are given below.) While focused on a particular scene, ask students to record on their papers examples of characters' actions that show evidence for one or more of the themes. Lesson Tip: Students may notice details from the story that easily support more than one theme. This is fine and shows how themes can be related.

You know your class best. The lesson format could be altered in the following ways, while still addressing the same skills.

- Whole class activity on chart paper or ActiveBoard.
- Small groups with a recorder working on chart paper.
- Partners or groups generating ideas together, but each student responsible for recording on their own folded paper.

The scenes I find helpful to re-read and focus on for the identified themes are located on the following page spreads: **4 and 5, 24 and 25, 26 and 27, 30 and 31.**

You will need to have the book open for students to see. If possible, make these spreads visible to your class with a document camera.

Since students have different abilities when it comes to writing, I often ask students to find and record 1-3 examples of evidence per scene. In this way, expectations are not one size fits all. Sometimes I will create group or partner situations that can help to modify tasks for different student abilities.

Day Three

You will want to create a time and format for sharing. Of course, it will depend on how you set up the lesson.

Options: Share out with whole class. Groups share with other groups or post their chart paper. Partner groups meet with partner groups to share.

Day Four – Optional Writing Extension

Guide the students in using the information gathered on their folded paper(s) to write a paragraph. They can state one of the themes in their topic sentence, and write supporting sentences by using evidence from the story that was recorded.

The Fall of General Custard Lesson Idea #2

"Why Did General Custard Start This Food Fight Anyway?"

– Character Traits That Shaped the Story

This lesson helps students to identify character personality traits, and to link these traits to the character's actions. Students will also understand how the characters' actions then help determine the sequence of events that unfold in a story.

I like this lesson because students are applying important vocabulary, learning about character traits, and applying the concept of cause and effect. This results in a rich, layered lesson.

Materials

General Custard vs. Queen Honeydew Venn Diagram (PDF)

Character Trait Fill-in (PDF)

Part One

Use the Venn diagram to model placing character traits correctly in the circles. (For example, you could show that greed would go in only Custard's circle, whereas leadership could be placed where the circles overlap.) Have students work independently, in pairs, or with you as a whole class to fill out the Venn diagram. Feel free to add, or have the students add, more character traits they feel might fit with either or both characters.

Below is a list of possible character traits to place in the Venn diagram. These appear again on the Character-Trait Fill-in sheet.

caring

greedy

a leader (shared trait)

a communicator (shared trait)

selfish

responsible

ambitious

determined (shared trait)

mean

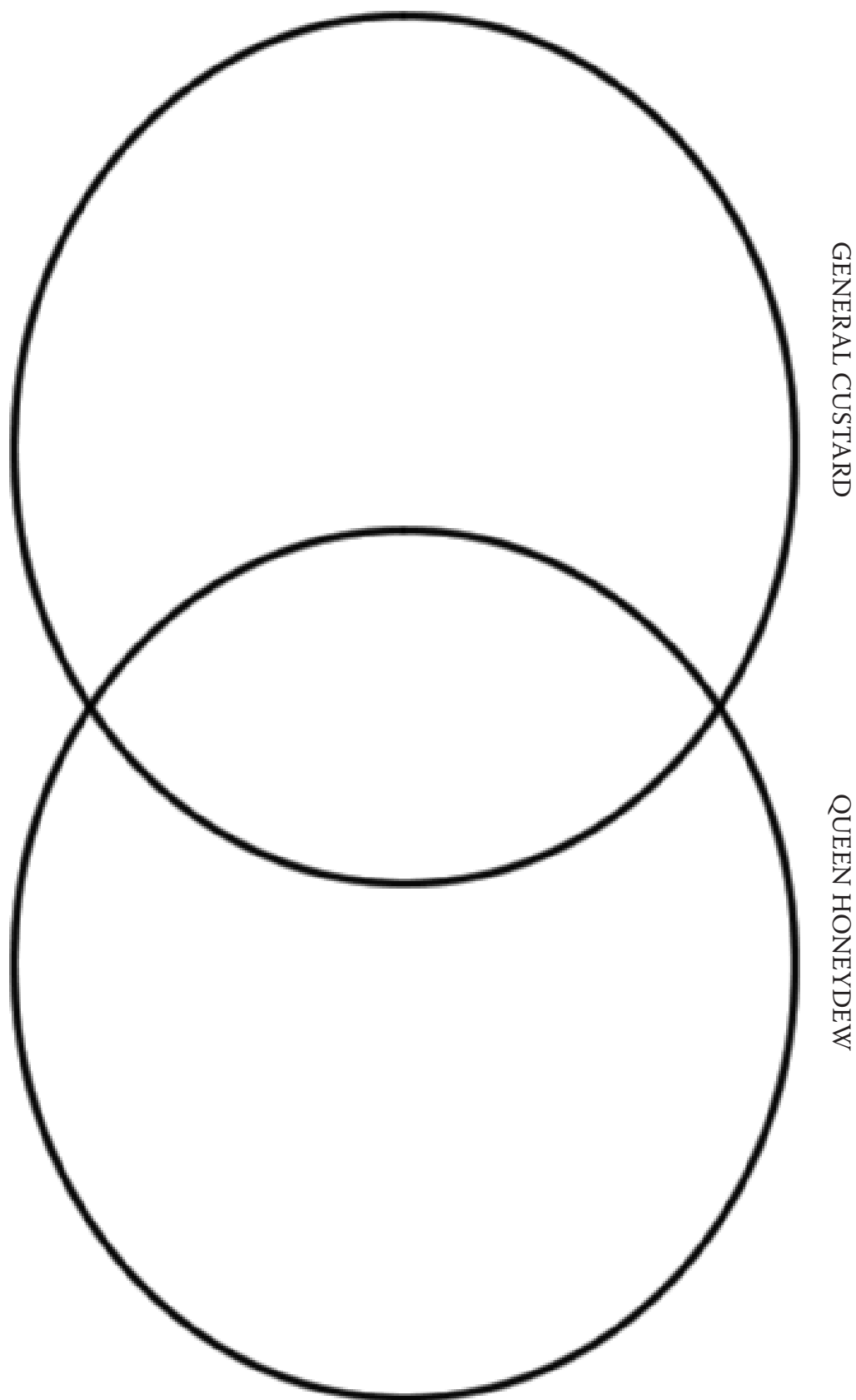
tricky



Name_____

Date_____

Character Traits of General Custard and Queen Honeydew



Part Two

Have your students attempt to complete the statements on the “Character Trait Fill-In” worksheet. You can have them do this independently, with partners or guided by you. I find modeling is the best way to introduce the “Character Trait Fill-In” worksheet especially since most questions have several possible answers. The idea of multiple correct answers is sometimes hard for some students to understand, but in the end, they tend to get excited about the flexible, layered thinking they must apply.

Possible Answers to “Character Trait Fill-In”

1. At the beginning of the story, General Custard wants to have the cherries placed on the dessert shelf because he is **greedy, ambitious, selfish**
2. The Queen won't let General Custard have the cherries because she is **responsible, caring, a leader**
3. Custard steals the cherries because he is **greedy, ambitious, selfish**
4. Custard is able to get the meats and desserts to fight on his side because he is **a leader, a communicator, tricky**
5. Custard attacks first because he is **a leader, determined, ambitious, mean**
6. Custard tells his food soldiers to peel and cream Romeo because Custard is **mean**
7. After Rosaline helps stop the war, the Queen asks Custard to join in the peace, and be a war ender because she is **responsible, a leader, caring, a communicator**
8. Custard refuses to stop fighting because he is... **greedy, selfish, determined**
9. The Queen orders that Custard be put in the freezer and guarded because she is... **responsible, a leader**
10. The Queen rules that Custard may return to the Fridge if he gives up his rough, warlike ways because she is **responsible, caring, a leader**



Name_____

Date_____

Character Trait Fill-In

selfish
a leader
responsible
tricky

caring
a communicator
ambitious

greedy
determined
mean

Directions: Use the words listed above to complete the following statements. Some statements can be correctly completed with more than one of the traits.

1. Near the beginning of the story, General Custard wants to have the cherries placed on the dessert shelf because he is...

2. The Queen won't let General Custard have the cherries because she is...

3. Custard steals the cherries because he is...

4. Custard is able to get the meats and desserts to fight on his side because he is...

5. Custard attacks first because he is...

6. Custard tells the foods on his side to peel and cream Romeo because Custard is...

7. After Rosaline helps stop the war, the Queen asks Custard to join in the peace and be a war ender because she is...

8. Custard refuses to stop fighting because he is...

9. The Queen orders that Custard be put in the freezer and guarded because she is...

10. The Queen rules that Custard may return to the Fridge if he gives up his rough, warlike ways because she is...



Lesson Idea # 3

"Delicious Mouthfuls of Meaning" – Vocabulary Match

Part One of "Vocabulary Match"

Materials

"Vocabulary Match" worksheet (one per student)

Copies of page 6 and 7 from *The Fall of General Custard*

(Display pages 6 and 7 on an ActiveBoard for the whole class, or hand out copies to students or student pairs. Back to back copies of page 6 and 7 will work well and reduce paper use.)

This matching activity can be done as a whole group, in pairs, or individually. With pages 6 and 7 available to look at, students use context clues and familiarity of the story to determine the meanings of challenging words they may be less familiar with.



Name _____

Date _____

Vocabulary Match

wielding

threatening

thrust

infamous

declare

foe

grumpy

greedy

unwholesome

bitter

partially

point of view

_____ wanting lots of money or things

_____ dangerous

_____ to tell everyone

_____ not healthy

_____ not sweet

_____ to hold a weapon

_____ the way a character sees or understands something.

_____ famous for being bad

_____ enemy

_____ partly

_____ to jab forward with a sword

_____ in a bad mood



A leftover custard was making a fuss,
Wielding his sword, making threatening thrusts.
“I’m General Custard the Infamous,
And I say the cherries belong down with us.

“Sweet maraschinos, I think you should know,
Belong on desserts for good taste and good show.
So, Queen, I demand that you send them below.
And if you do not, I’ll declare you my foe.”

This grumpy old custard was mighty upset.
These cherries were foods he was greedy to get.
If on top of his filling sweet cherries were set,
He was sure to be known as the best dessert yet.

The Queen then replied from her high, royal seat,
“Old Custard you’re different from most other treats.
Perhaps you were cooked at an unwholesome heat.
It seems that your filling is bitter, not sweet.

“Maraschinos are sweets. That is partially true.
But truth can depend on a food’s point of view.
Now, I say the cherries may choose what they do.
Since they say they’re fruit, I declare they are too.”



Part Two of "Vocabulary Match"

Meet Your Match

Materials

"Meet Your Match Sentences" worksheet (Can be copied on the back side of the "Vocabulary Match" sheet.)

"Meet Your Match Cards" (one set for the class)

Helpful Hints – print the word cards and definition cards on different colored paper so that students will know to seek out students holding the opposite color.

(To have cards for more than 24 students, simply repeat some of the words and their corresponding meanings. The students with repeated cards will find one of their matches.)

In this activity the students find a partner by matching their card with someone who has a definition or vocabulary word that corresponds with their own card. (For example, the student holding "unwholesome" would be trying to find the person holding "not healthy".

1. Pass out one "Meet Your Match" card to each student.
2. Students move about the room looking for another student with a corresponding card.
3. Once matching students locate one another, they sit at a desk or on the floor with their "Meet Your Match" worksheets. Together they help one another write sentences that correctly use the vocabulary word they share with their partner. (For example, the students with "unwholesome" and "not healthy" would both write sentences correctly using the word "unwholesome".)
4. Leave some time for sharing sentences as a class or in groups. The sharing acts as an informal assessment and/or a way for students to explain and refine their understanding of the word meanings.

Needed:

"Meet Your Match Cards"



Name _____

Date _____

Meet Your Match Cards

Vocabulary Words

wielding

threatening

thrust

infamous

declare

foe

grumpy

greedy

unwholesome

bitter

partially

point of view

Name_____

Date_____

Meet Your Match Cards

Vocabulary Definitions

wanting lots
of money
or things

dangerous

to tell
everyone

not healthy

not sweet

to hold a
weapon

the way a
character sees
or understands
something

famous for
being bad

enemy

partly

to jab forward
with a sword

in a bad mood

Name_____

Date_____

Meet Your Match Sentences

Work together with your partner to create sentences that correctly use your vocabulary word.
Try to write the sentence in a way that shows the meaning.

For example, the second sentence below is better than the first one.

The food was unwholesome.

We did not want to eat the spoiled food because it seemed unwholesome.

Our word is _____.

Our definition is _____.

Our Sentences:

1.

2.

3.
