

## The Apple Orchard Riddle

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*Activity Level: Basic*

### PURPOSE

Students will develop character analysis skills by exploring adjectives the author uses to describe the physical and personality traits of the characters in Mr. Tippin's class. They will also have the opportunity to portray those traits in a play-acting activity with scenes from the book.

Set within the fictional story, the agricultural information is accurate and will allow students to gain awareness of where apples come from, steps in the process of making apple products, and relate this to agricultural activities around them.

### NEBRASKA STATE EDUCATION CONTENT STANDARDS CONNECTION

**LA.K.RP.2 | LA.1.RP.2 | LA.2.RP.2**

Describe characters and how they interact with one another.

**LA.K.RP.6 | LA.1.RP.6 | LA.2.RP.6**

Ask and answer literal (e.g., recall/details) and simple inferential (e.g., why or how) questions about how key details in literary text.

**LA.K.SL.2.a | LA.1.SL.2.a | LA.2.SL.2.a**

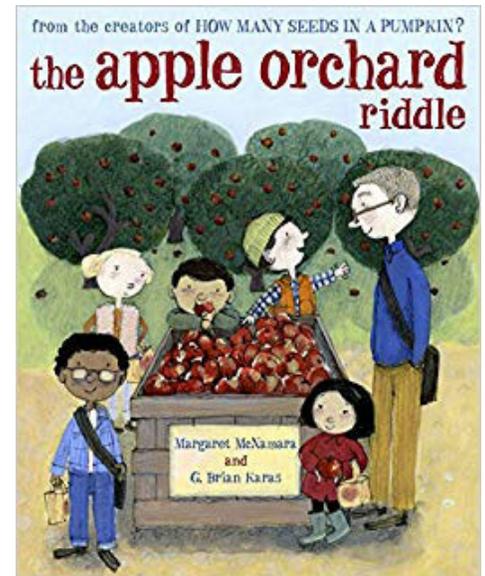
Demonstrate appropriate speaking techniques (e.g., appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, clear pronunciation) for a variety of purposes and situations, including interpreting K-2 text.

**LA.K.SL.1 | LA.1.SL.1 | LA.2.SL.1**

Converse with peers and adults in an all-inclusive manner to foster positive relationships while respecting diverse perspectives.

### WHAT'S THE CONNECTION TO AGRICULTURE?

*The Apple Orchard Riddle* shows how apples are grown, harvested, and processed for consumer food products, like cider, pies, and other baked goods like cakes, doughnuts, and turnovers. Similarly, farmers in Nebraska grow crops that go through specialized processes to make them valuable to the end user. Corn, wheat, and soybeans are just a few crops that Nebraska farmers grow. These commodities are turned into several products that we eat, wear, and use daily!



## MATERIALS

- One or more copies of *The Apple Orchard Riddle* (can split into groups with older or more advanced students; would need additional books)
- Character traits anchor chart (1 per copy for every 4-6 students)
- Character analysis task cards (1 per copy for every 4-6 students)
- Character traits worksheet (1 per copy for every 4-6 students)
- Optional: props or printed images of props for play acting scenes from book: red tractor, steering wheel, gas gauge, pedals, mouse, apples, red barn, worm, or apple with worm

## VOCABULARY

**Branch** – a part of a tree that grows out from the trunk

**Chute** – sloping channel to move things to a lower level

**Cider** – drink made of crushed fruit, typically apples

**Cider press** – press to crush fruit for cider

**Core** – tough central part of fruit containing seeds

**Fruit** – seed bearing structure of the plant

**Orchard** – a piece of land planted with fruit trees

**Pulp** – soft fleshy part of a fruit

**Riddle** – a question phrased to require cleverness to find the answer

**Ripen** – to become ripe; readiness for harvesting and eating

**Seeds** – how flowering plants reproduce

**Stem** – the stalk supporting fruit and attaching it to a larger branch, twig, or stalk

**Sterilized** – make free from bacteria or other living microorganisms

**Varieties** – a thing that varies in some way from others of the general sort

## BACKGROUND AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION

There are a variety of different types of apples discussed in this book. Similarly, there are different varieties of most agricultural crops, not limited to fruit and produce. Corn, wheat, and soybeans are a few popular crops that Nebraska farmers grow. These crops come in different varieties that are planted in different areas of the state based on climate, rainfall, and type of soil; just to name a few.

## INTEREST APPROACH

- There are multiple fun ideas and themes in *The Apple Orchard Riddle*. For the interest approach, introduce both the idea of the riddle and the ways we eat fruit.
- Introduce students to riddles by asking one or more of the following:
  - What invention lets you look right through a wall? *A window!*

- I'm short when I'm old, and tall when I'm young. What am I? *A candle!*
- What has hands but cannot clap? *A clock!*
- What is at the end of a rainbow? *The letter W!*
- How many months have 28 days? *All 12 of them!*
- A cowboy rides into a town on Friday, stays three days, then leaves on Friday. How did he do it? *His horse's name is Friday!*
- Introduce questions about how students eat fruit:
  - What are some ways we eat fruit? *Raw, desserts like pie, crisps, cobblers, juice, dried like raisins, canned.*
  - Can you name basic ways these fruits are prepared differently to make these various foods? *Washed and peeled or sliced, baked, pressed, dried.*

## PROCEDURE

1. Read *The Apple Orchard Riddle* aloud to the class, using voice inflection to demonstrate character differences among students in the story.
2. Based on student age and abilities, continue with an activity as a class or divide into groups (roughly 4-6 students per group):
  - a. Cider group: confident readers/independent learners who will have some discussion on their own
  - b. Star group: will discuss under the lead and model of the teacher
3. Supply each group with a copy of *The Apple Orchard Riddle*, at least one set of character analysis task cards to aid in discussion, at least one character traits anchor chart for reference, and at least one character analysis sheet for notes.
4. Lead or ask students to go through the book again, watching for ways the author conveys the personality of the characters. Encourage students to note the name of the character, the trait they observe, and text evidence to support their claim. Some examples are below:
  - a. *Tara*: quiet and independent because she lagged behind, stared out the window
  - b. *Mr. Tiffin*: patient with Tara when she is the last one out of the bus
  - c. *Jake and Molly*: doubtful – about the riddle and their time to solve it
  - d. *Alex*: unsure, answers a question quietly with a question
  - e. *Mr. Tiffin*: gentle with Tara's fears (that she is not good at tests)
  - f. *Farmer Hills*: generous with time, farm, and information
  - g. *Elinor*: enthusiastic and not afraid to share lots of information (several varieties of apples)
  - h. *Robert*: tall
  - i. *Jake*: courageous to try to answer the riddle, even if getting it wrong (barn)
  - j. *Mr. Tiffin*: observant and generous because he notices Tara put her apple down (with the worm), so he threw her one of his
  - k. *Elinor*: friendly, joyful at the word 'pulp'

- l. Jeremy: loud, enthusiastic (exclamations like, "Cool!")*
  - m. Charlie: friendly and curious (participating with questions during tour)*
  - n. Molly and Kimmy: curious, but careful (did not get too close to the peeling machine)*
5. Bring the class back together to discuss their character analysis findings. *Discussion will vary.* Explain that members of the class will act out three scenes from the book in order to display some of the traits we observed in the characters:
- a. Farmer Hills walking along the path; *assign students or ask for volunteers to act out scene: Farmer Hills, Alex, Jeremy, Elinor, Mr. Tiffin, and Robert*
  - b. Students exploring the red tractor; *assign students or ask for volunteers to act out scene: Robert, Alex, and Charlie*
  - c. Review at the end of the field trip with Mr. Tiffin; *assign students or ask for volunteers to act out scene: Mr. Tiffin, Molly, Elinor, Jeremy, Jake, Robert, and Tara*
6. Thank students for their participation and allow them to return to their seats or discussion circle for follow-up questions.

## LISTENING QUESTIONS

Introduce the main idea of the language arts activity (character analysis) through listening questions:

- Think of your favorite person: maybe a family member, grandma or grandpa, friends, or characters in a beloved story.
- What word would you pick that best describes the way they look?
  - *Answers will vary.*
- How about a word that describes their personality or how they act or make you feel?
  - *Answers will vary.*
- The book we will read today will have several characters: members of a class on a field trip with their teacher to visit farmers at an apple orchard. Let's pay attention to how the author creates different personalities in the characters, while sharing information on how apples are turned into food products we like to eat!

## FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

- Where are apples grown?
  - *Orchard.*
- What is the order of processing cider?
  - *Harvesting, washing, peeling, chopping, pressing, sterilization.*
- Is this book fiction or non-fiction?
  - *The book is fiction (Mr. Tiffin and the students in his class, etc.). Still, it shares accurate information on how farmers care for apple trees, harvest the fruits, and process them into food.*

- What other foods are processed from agricultural plants?
  - *Cornmeal for cornbread and muffins ground from corn kernels, wheat ground into flour for baking all sorts of breads, cakes, cereals, etc. Soybean oil extracted for cooking oil from soybeans. Corn, wheat, soybeans, and dry edible beans are all agricultural products grown in Nebraska.*
- What can we share with others about what we learned today?
  - *Different apple varieties ripen at different times. Farmers sell the nicest looking apples in the store, and use less attractive apples to make products like cider, pie, and turnovers. The riddle: star inside the apple.*

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Apple tasting
  - <https://www.thingstoshareandremember.com/apple-tasting-in-preschool-printable/>
- Various apple activities
  - <https://minnesota.agclassroom.org/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?lpid=374>
- Video: How It's Made – Apple Cider
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snyY5QzGiu0>
- Fruits of Our Labors – dry grapes into raisins
  - <https://minnesota.agclassroom.org/matrix/lessonplan.cfm?lpid=50>

## COMPANION RESOURCES

- Agricultural Products – Nebraska AITC
  - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Agricultural-Products.pdf>
- Apple Cycle – Nebraska AITC
  - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/The-Apple-Cycle.pdf>
- Food Products – Nebraska AITC
  - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Food-Products.pdf>
- Life of a Tree Enactment – Nebraska AITC
  - <https://nefbfoundation.org/images/FOUndation/Educators/Enriching-Activities/Life-of-a-Tree-Enactment.pdf>

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LITERACY OUTCOMES

- **Food, Health and Lifestyle**
  - **T3.K-2 b.** Recognize that agriculture provides our most basic necessities: food, fiber (fabric or clothing), energy, and shelter
- **Culture, Society, Economy, & Geography**
  - **T5.K-2 a.** Discuss what a farmer does

# Characteristic Traits

Friendly	Honest
Fun	Smart
Funny	Lazy
Adventurous	Mischievous
Brave	Mean
Bossy	Nosy
Cheerful	Shy
Curious	Respectful
Nice	Sad
Thoughtful	Serious
Dangerous	Selfish
Exciting	Trustworthy
Gentle	Wild
Generous	Sneaky
Happy	Silly
Annoying	

Find text evidence to explain why you chose that trait to describe the character.

How does the character feel in the story? How do these feelings affect the character?

What trait describes that character?

How does that trait influence the character's actions?

How does the character's actions affect the other characters?

Can these traits help you make predictions about what the character will do next?



# Characteristic Traits



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Outside (External) Traits**

**Inside (Internal) Traits**