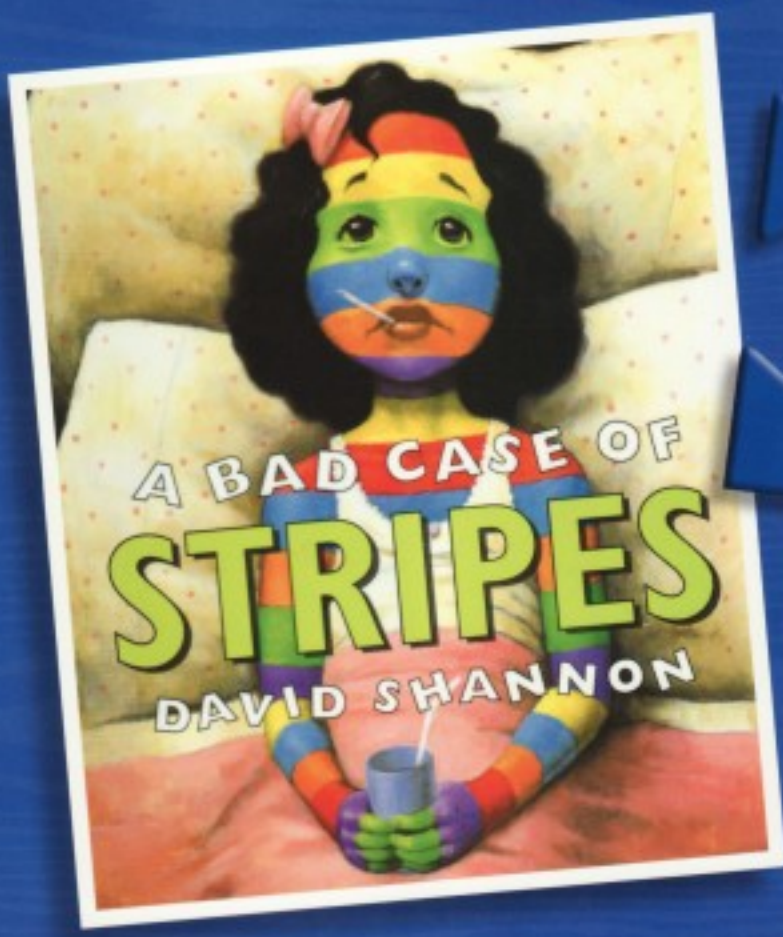


The Trait Crate™

TEACHING IDEAS

USING *A Bad Case of Stripes*



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Introducing the Ideas Trait

Students already know what is important to them, but many struggle to figure out how to incorporate these ideas into their writing. Fourth graders will appreciate how the author David Shannon uses imaginative and fanciful examples to show readers the value of staying true to yourself and your feelings. You may choose to introduce this trait by displaying the Key Qualities of the Ideas Trait transparency (reproducible version on page 8) and saying something like the following:

The ideas trait is the content of the writing—the message you are trying to convey to the reader. It's why you're writing in the first place. What do you want to say? What's it all about? That is your idea. To be strong in this trait, we look for the following qualities:

- The writing has a clear focus.
- The ideas are fresh and original.
- The reader learns something important.
- The writing makes sense.
- The writing includes good, juicy details.

As you write, ask yourself if you have focused on an important message. There should be a theme or big idea that is explored in a new way in your writing. In this lesson, we're going to look at how the writer of a picture book shares an important message with readers. Then you'll write a piece of your own using the same theme.

Prereading to Find the Big Idea

- 1 To get students thinking about the important idea of a story, tell them that you are going to share some information from famous children's stories and see if they can pick the theme from a list that also contains smaller details. Even if children are not familiar with these particular stories, they should be able to discern the big idea without prior knowledge.
- 2 Using the Big Ideas From Children's Stories transparency (reproducible version on page 9), share the information from each of the following stories one at a time. Read all the bullets aloud and then ask students to decide which one is the theme, or big idea, of the story. (The theme is set in boldface type in each of the following examples.) Discuss the reasons for their choices.

Key Qualities of the Ideas Trait

- The writing has a clear focus.
- The ideas are fresh and original.
- The reader learns something important.
- The writing makes sense.
- The writing includes good, juicy details.

Big Ideas From Children's Stories

"The Silly Duckling"

- A silly duckling does not look like his brothers and sisters.
- All the other animals make fun of the young duckling.
- Just because you don't fit in with one group doesn't mean you don't belong to another.
- The "duckling" is actually a peewee and turns into a swan.

"Three Little Pigs"

- Bad wolf pops off in the long run.
- Two pig brothers build houses of straw and wood.
- The wolf wants to eat the pigs.
- One pig brother builds a house of bricks.

"Little Red Hat"

- An owl wants to help the fox plant an acorn in the forest.
- In order to get what you want, you have to work for it.
- Every character in the story has many things to do.
- There are many steps to making bread.

Think About:



Writing With Original Ideas

- Does the writing have a “big idea” as its central theme?
- Do all the details support this big idea?
- How does this big idea relate to you and your life?

Character Cards



Character:
A football player who
likes to sew

Character:
A gourmet chef who
likes fast food

Character:
A painter who
does not like color

Character:
A rock star who sleeps
with a baby blanket

Problem Details

Character:
A dog groomer who
loves cats

Character:
A dentist who
loves candy

Character:
A cowboy who
is afraid of horses

Character:
A librarian who is
addicted to television

Student-Friendly Guide for Scoring Ideas

As the 6 + 1 Trait model helps you establish a common language around writing in your classroom, students will most likely begin to look at their own work for strengths and weaknesses using that language. This student-friendly scoring guide will help them. Give a copy to each of your students. They can learn the traits right along with you.



Ideas My Message

