

Monday 11.01.21

Title: To provide developed explanations for key information, events, character actions and motivations

Explaining character actions and motivations

We can enjoy reading a story much more if we **get to know the characters** in more detail. Details and descriptions in the text help us to understand characters. What characters **say** and how they **act** and **react** give us important information about the character's personality. It is also important to consider **why** characters act the way they do. We call this their **motivation**.

Read the text over the following two slides and consider what it tells us about the characters.

Explaining character actions and motivations

Amanda entered the silent classroom with trepidation. She didn't recognise anyone. Everyone appeared to pause what they were doing and observe her as she picked her way between the old fashioned desks to her seat. Her heart was pounding inside her school sweatshirt and her legs felt like they could no longer hold her weight. Could she calm the rising anxiety enough to arrive at her allocated seat, or would she spin around and sprint away from the situation, like she had done in her last school? Could she make it work this time?

“What's yer name, skinny girl?” came a rasping voice from behind her. Lisa Martin leaned forward, just as Amanda found the courage to take her seat.

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“You won’t fit in here, skinny girl,” she hissed under her breath.

“Leave her be, she doesn’t know anyone,” growled Josef but he knew that she wouldn’t – Lisa Martin couldn’t resist! Josef would have to be vigilant during breaks if he was to protect this girl from falling foul of the wrath of Lisa and her doting gang of spiteful girls.

Just then a small ball of scrunched up jotter paper bounced off Amanda’s head and a cruel giggle followed.

“That’s just for starters,” whispered Lisa menacingly. Josef smiled broadly at Amanda, whose eyes were brimming with tears, hoping she might realise that not all of the students in Bright Street Primary were unfriendly and unwelcoming.

Explaining character actions and motivations

Question:

- a) What evidence is there that Amanda is nervous when she enters the classroom? (2 marks)
- b) Why is she nervous? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

I know that I need to give **two** reasons for each answer as there are 2 marks. I will use **evidence** from the text to write my answer so I will scan and highlight once again. I do not need to write in full sentences – bullet points are fine.

Explaining character actions and motivations

Amanda entered the silent classroom with trepidation. She didn't recognise anyone. Everyone appeared to pause what they were doing and observe her as she picked her way between the old fashioned desks to her seat. Her heart was pounding inside her school sweatshirt and her legs felt like they could no longer hold her weight. Could she calm the rising anxiety enough to arrive at her allocated seat, or would she spin around and sprint away from the situation, like she had done in her last school? Could she make it work this time? "What's yer name, skinny girl?" came a rasping voice from behind her. Lisa Martin leaned forward, just as Amanda found the courage to take her seat.

Explaining character actions and motivations

Let's look at these one question at a time:

a) What evidence is there that Amanda is nervous when she enters the classroom? (2 marks)

This is a fairly straightforward case of finding the evidence. Look at the sections highlighted in **yellow**.

Answer:

a. Any **two** of the following:

- She enters the room with trepidation.
- Her heart was pounding inside her school sweatshirt.
- Her legs felt like they could no longer hold her weight.
- She wonders whether she could calm her rising anxiety.

Explaining character actions and motivations

Now let's look at the other question:

b. Why is she nervous? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

This question requires **inference** so we have to look for clues and work it out from there. Look at the section highlighted in **blue**.

... arrive at her allocated seat, or would she spin around and sprint away from the situation, like she had done in her last school? Could she make it work this time?

"What's yer name, skinny girl?" came a rasping voice from ...

This suggests she is anxious to make a better go of it this time.

She has been in this situation before and it did not end well.

Explaining character actions and motivations

What was the question again?

b. Why is she nervous? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

Remember that you still need to state the answer – it is not enough just to show the evidence you have found.

Answer:

b) It says in the text “would she spin around and sprint away from the situation, like she had done in her last school? Could she make it work this time?” This tells us that something may have gone wrong at her last school which would make her nervous this time.

Explaining character actions and motivations

Let's practise another **inference** question:

Why do you think Lisa does not want a new girl to join the class?
Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

“You won't fit in here, skinny girl,” she hissed under her breath.
“Leave her be, she doesn't know anyone,” growled Josef but he knew that she wouldn't – Lisa Martin couldn't resist! Josef would have to be vigilant during breaks if he was to protect this girl from falling foul of the wrath of Lisa and her dotting gang of spiteful girls.

This suggests Lisa likes things the way they are.

Lisa's gang dote on (love) her. Maybe she's worried they'll like Amanda instead.

Explaining character actions and motivations

What was the question again?

Why do you think Lisa does not want a new girl to join the class?
Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

Remember that you still need to state the answer – it is not enough just to show the evidence you have found. Have a go, then click to check your answer against ours. Are they similar?

Answer:

Lisa enjoys being the dominant one in the class with her “doting gang of spiteful girls” and probably does not want that to change. By hissing, “You won’t fit in,” she is suggesting that she wants to keep things as they are.

Your turn

Ready to try some all by yourself?

Questions:

- a) How does Josef try to look out for Amanda? (2 marks)
- b) Why do you think he does this? (1 mark)

 Click to reveal answers.

Answers

1. Any **two** of the following

- He says: “Leave her be, she doesn’t know anyone”.
- It says Josef would “have to be vigilant during breaks if he was to protect this girl from falling foul of the wrath of Lisa and her doting gang of spiteful girls.”
- He smiles at her to try to reassure her.

2. To make her feel welcome/ to reassure her/ to show her that not all students were unfriendly and unwelcoming.