

What Does It Mean to Be Kind?

by Rana DiOrio

A girl wearing a red hat finds the courage to be kind to the new student in class. Her kindness spreads until her whole community experiences the magical shift that happens when people understand what it means to be kind and act on their best impulses!

Create Successful Reading Habits

Follow-up Questions to Text Dependent Questions

Current research from the What Works Clearinghouse shows that teachers should ask students to refer to the text to justify their answers.* Depending on the grade level, this may mean recalling events and passages in the text or pointing to illustrations to justify their answers. Follow-up questions should both provide students with a model for thinking about the text and its meaning and help them learn to construct and support opinions with textual evidence. Examples of recommended follow-up questions include the following:

- What makes you say that?
- What happens in the book that makes you think that?
- Can you explain what you meant when you said _____?
- Do you agree with _____? Why or why not?
- How does what you said connect with _____?
- Let's see if what we read provides us with any information that can resolve _____'s and _____'s disagreement.

* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse. (n.d.). Practice Guides. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

SCIENCE OF READING – EXPLICIT AND SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION

Effective reading instruction is systematic, explicit, and scaffolded; it provides multiple examples and opportunities for students to practice the skill or concept being taught.

Systematic instruction is ...

- thoughtfully outlined, builds upon prior learning, and is delivered on a continuum from simple to complex skills.
- broken down into manageable step-by-step chunks that are appropriate to the instructional goals and pacing of instruction.
- a carefully planned scope and sequence of instruction.

The goal of **systematic instruction** is to ensure that whenever students are asked to learn a new skill or concept, they already possess the appropriate knowledge and understanding to efficiently learn the new skill or concept.

Explicit instruction is ...

- making the skill taught obvious to the student.
- scaffolded and typically follows the "I Do, We Do, You Do" instructional routine.
- an instructional routine that gradually shifts the responsibility from the teacher to the student.

The following scaffolding should occur during explicit instruction:

1. **I Do:** The teacher explains and models the skill or concept by showing exactly how to do what was explained. The teacher should provide multiple examples and, when appropriate, nonexamples.
2. **We Do:** The teacher provides guided practice with scaffolding. The teacher monitors and scaffolds instruction by prompting and giving corrective feedback as students practice the skill or concept with the teacher or a peer.
3. **You Do:** The teacher provides independent practice. Students practice the skill or concept independently while the teacher monitors and gives feedback.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT FLORIDA'S B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

Within the Florida B.E.S.T. Standards for ELA:

- The Foundations benchmarks do not spiral in the same way as those in the other strands.
- The standards contain a Progression of Foundational Skills for print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word analysis, and fluency.
- It is important to review the Progression of Foundational Skills to understand how the foundational standards you are teaching build upon previous standards and prepare for future standards.

Look for standards alignment in each section of this guide.

WORD WORK – DECODING WORDS WITH THE -EA VOWEL TEAM

Support your students in decoding by explicitly teaching them about **vowel teams**. Vowel teams are two vowels that work together to make one vowel sound. Some vowel teams make a long-vowel sound, and the first letter in the vowel team will say its name.

Display the word **mean**. (title)

- Say, “This is the word *mean*. It has three sounds: /m/ /ē/ /n/.” Ask students to say the three phonemes with you as you run your finger underneath each one.
- What long vowel sound do you hear when I say the word *mean*? (/ē/)
- Underline the *ea* in *mean*. There are two vowels in this word that work together to make one long /ē/ sound.
- Point to the first vowel, *e*, and say, “What vowel is this?”
- Point to the second vowel, *a*, and say, “What vowel is this?”
- Say, “When *e* and *a* are next to each other in a word, most of the time, the first vowel says its name, /ē/.”
- Ask students to read the whole word, *mean*.

Keep practicing with other words from the book that have the -*ea* vowel team. Point out that while many words with the -*ea* vowel team will make the long /ē/ sound, some words do not. Give some nonexamples from the book, like *learn* (p. 19) and *spread* (p. 25).

ELA.1.F.1.3: Use knowledge of grade-appropriate phonics and word-analysis skills to decode words accurately.

- f. Decode words that use final -*e* and vowel teams to make long-vowel sound.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Spend time demonstrating and practicing the sound and mouth articulation for the -*ea* vowel team. Ask students to gently place an index finger on each side of their mouth so that they feel the movement their mouth makes when they say words that have the -*ea* vowel team and make the long /ē/ sound. Point out how their mouth moves differently when they say *learn* and *spread*.

TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

Tier 2 vocabulary words can be used for explicit vocabulary instruction. When teaching vocabulary, it is important to create and share student-friendly definitions that are appropriate for the level of your students. Help students make connections to the word by providing contextual information that relates to the text being read and builds upon their background knowledge. Here are some examples of Tier 2 vocabulary words from the book:

compliment (p. 8) **struggling** (p. 11) **injured** (p. 13) **encouraging** (p. 17)

Help your students identify and explain **descriptive language** in the text. Descriptive language includes words and phrases that describe people, places, things, emotions, or actions. Talking about descriptive language adds meaning to the story and helps readers see, hear, taste, smell, or feel what is being described in the book. In this activity, students will identify and explain action verbs that describe the actions of a kind person.

- Say, “A verb is a word that tells an action or something that you do. For example, the word *waving* is a verb because it tells the action of lifting your hand in the air and moving it back and forth.” Act out waving. Say, “I am *waving* to my students.” Ask students to act out *waving*.
- Say, “Throughout the story, the author uses verbs to describe the actions of kind people or things that kind people do.”
- Write the word *smiling* (p. 7) on chart paper or a whiteboard. Say, “The author says that being a kind person means *smiling* at a new student in class.”
- Say, “*Smiling* is a verb because it describes an action or something that you do.”
- Say, “How does the action of *smiling* at a new student make you a kind person? Turn and talk to a partner.”
- As you read the story, discuss other verbs and how they describe the actions of being a kind person. Record the verbs on the chart paper or whiteboard.

Writing activity: Ask students to select one of the verbs that you have recorded on the chart paper or whiteboard. Students will draw a picture to illustrate themselves being a kind person by performing the action. Underneath their picture, ask them to write a sentence using their chosen action verb and the sentence starter, *I am a kind person because I am _____* (e.g., *I am a kind person because I am **helping** my dad cook dinner.*).

ELA.1.R.3.1: Identify and explain descriptive words and phrases in text(s).

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Turn and Talk is an instructional strategy that allows students time to think about the question you have posed, and share their thinking with a peer in a low-pressure environment. If you find that students need additional support in providing a response during their Turn and Talk, provide them with a sentence starter such as, “ (*action*) makes you a kind person because .”

READ FOR MEANING – IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN THE MORAL OF A STORY

- **ELA.1.R.1.2: Identify and explain the moral of a story.**
 - **Clarification 1: This benchmark introduces the moral of a story as a precursor to theme in 2nd grade. A moral is the lesson of a story. During instruction, let students know that not all stories have a lesson by referring to stories read that did not have a moral or a lesson.**
- **ELA.K12.EE.1.1 Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.**
- **ELA.K12.EE.3.1 Make inferences to support comprehension.**

Before:

Say to students, “Sometimes the stories you read have a moral, or lesson, that the author wants you to take away or learn. Many times, the lesson is not stated right there in the story, and we need to dig deep into the book to figure out what the lesson is.” Give an example of a familiar story with a moral, and discuss what the lesson is. “The story that we are going to read has an important lesson that the author wants you to learn. We are going to dig deep into the book together to figure out what that lesson is.”

During:

Use a T-chart to record evidence of acts of kindness in the story in the left column and how the acts of kindness help others in the right column. The recorded information and class discussion will support students in identifying and explaining the lesson, or moral, of the story that **small acts of kindness can help people in a big way.**

There are many examples of acts of kindness in this book. Discuss at least three of the acts of kindness below to support students in inferring the moral.

Being kind means ... smiling at the new student in the class. (p. 6 - 7)

- “What act of kindness is happening on this page?” (Record this in the left column of the T-chart.)
- “What emotions would you be feeling if you were a brand new student, and it was your first day in a school where you didn’t know anyone? Why?”
- “How could smiling at a new student help them feel less scared or alone?” (Record responses in the right column of the T-chart.)
- Ask students to turn and smile at the student on their left and their right. “Did that take a lot of effort to smile? One small smile could be a big help for a new student who is feeling scared or alone.”

Being kind means ... giving someone a compliment. (p. 8)

- Provide a student-friendly definition of *compliment*, and give an example.
- “What act of kindness is happening on this page?” (Record this in the left column of the T-chart.)
- “What compliment do you think the girl is giving to the boy? What is happening in the book to make you think that?”
- “What is a compliment that you have received? How did it make you feel?”
- “Does it take a lot of time out of your day to give someone a compliment? How could giving this boy a compliment about his painting help him?” (Record responses in the right column of the T-chart.)

Being kind means ... encouraging someone who needs support. (p. 17)

- Provide a student-friendly definition of the word *encouraging*, and give an example.
- “What act of kindness is happening on this page?” (Record this in the left column of the T-chart.)
- “What do you think the little girl is saying to the girl behind her to encourage her? Why do you think that?”
- “Describe a time that someone encouraged you to do something. How did it make you feel afterward?”
- “Does it take a lot of time to give someone encouragement like, ‘You’re doing a great job!’ or ‘Keep going! You can do it!’”
- “How do you think encouraging this girl will help her do a good job in the race?” (Record responses in the right column of the T-chart.)

READ FOR MEANING – IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN THE MORAL OF A STORY

Being kind means ... picking up trash that isn't yours. (p. 18)

- “What act of kindness is happening on this page?” (Record this in the left column of the T-chart.)
- “What is the boy with the soda doing while the other children are picking up trash? How does the boy change his behavior to be more helpful and kind?”
- “If you see a snack wrapper lying on our classroom floor, even if it’s not yours, what is the kind and helpful thing to do? Why?”
- “Does it take a long time to pick up a piece of trash that you see on the floor, and throw it in the trash can?”
- “How does picking up trash, even if it’s not yours, help other people?” (Record responses in the right column of the T-chart.)

After:

- Say, “Now we are going to identify the moral, or lesson, that the author wants you to learn.”
- Review the information recorded on the T-chart. Say, “Do any of the acts of kindness that we talked about take a long time or a lot of effort to complete?”
- Say, “These are called small acts of kindness.” On the chart paper, write *Moral (Lesson)*: and the beginning of the sentence, *Small acts of kindness*.
- Say, “Even though the acts of kindness in this story are small, do you think that they help people in a small way or a big way? Why? Turn and talk to a partner about your thinking.”
- Say, “Based on your conversations and your thinking, how should we finish this sentence? Small acts of kindness....” (help people in a big way)
- Complete the sentence on the chart paper, and read the moral to the students. Say, “This is the lesson that the author wants you to learn by reading this story.”

Writing activity: Students can demonstrate understanding of the moral by writing about an example of a small act of kindness in the story and explaining how it could help someone in a big way. They can write about an act of kindness you talked about together, or use another example from the text.

Text-to-Self Connection: What small act of kindness can you do this week to help someone else? How will that small act of kindness help someone in a big way?

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Focus on the illustrations in the story to support children in identifying examples and nonexamples of acts of kindness in the text. Ask students:

- What is happening in this illustration?
- Do these actions help another person? Why or why not?
- Is this an example of an act of kindness?
- If it is not kind, what could this person do differently next time?

Examples: *Holding a door for someone, putting your arm around someone who is sad*

Nonexamples: *Kicking trash on the ground instead of picking it up, bullying someone*