

Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

Freckle Juice

by
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Book Information

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Andrew wants freckles more than anything else and uses a "freckle juice" recipe with hilarious results.

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Main Characters

Andrew Marcus a second-grade boy who is determined to have freckles so he can hide the dirt on his neck from his mother

Miss Kelly Andrew's understanding teacher, who helps him get rid of the freckles he draws on himself

Mrs. Burrows a woman who plays cards with Andrew's mother

Mrs. Marcus Andrew's mother, who sets a high value on cleanliness

Nicky Lane Andrew's freckled classmate, who dislikes his freckles

Sharon Andrew's classmate who tricks children into buying useless recipes

Vocabulary

alongside next to

chattering talking rapidly and continuously, often about unimportant things

decorated improved the appearance of something by adding ornaments

formula a recipe

inspected looked at something carefully

Synopsis

Andrew Marcus, a boy in Miss Kelly's second grade class, thinks that if he has freckles like his classmate Nicky, his mother will not notice when his neck is dirty. Andrew asks Nicky how to get freckles and is disappointed to hear that they are natural. Sharon, a classmate whom Andrew dislikes, overhears the question and offers to sell Andrew a freckle juice recipe. He is skeptical but agrees because he is desperate to have freckles.

The next day when Andrew reluctantly gives Sharon the money, Miss Kelly intercepts the recipe. She returns it to Andrew after school, and Andrew hurries home to use it. He stops at a neighbor's house where his mother is playing cards so he can get the house key from her. At home he quickly assembles the odd assortment of ingredients. He thinks the formula is disgusting and has to force himself to drink it.

The concoction makes him so ill that he is not able to tell his mother what is wrong because he fears he will vomit if he opens his mouth. She is convinced that he has appendicitis and is prepared to call for an ambulance until she finds the mess he has made in the kitchen. She realizes that he has made himself sick with the snack he created, so she sends him to bed with a dose of medicine. That night he dreams that a monster is torturing him by making him drink freckle juice three times a day. Andrew is disappointed but not surprised the next morning when he finds that he does not have freckles.

Andrew is absent from school that day but returns the following day determined not to let Sharon have the satisfaction of seeing him without freckles. On the way to school, he stops to apply freckles to his face with a blue magic marker. The children laugh when they see him, and soon Andrew is eager to get rid of the freckles. Shortly before the end of the school day, Miss Kelly gives Andrew a "secret formula" for removing freckles. He washes his face in the bathroom four times with her bar of lemon-scented soap in order to remove all of the

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blue ink.

Nicky then asks Miss Kelly if he can also use the secret formula, too, because he dislikes his freckles so much. Miss Kelly refuses, explaining that while Andrew looks better without the freckles, Nicky looks handsome with them, since they are a part of him. The story ends as Andrew overhears Sharon offering to sell Nicky a recipe for removing freckles.

Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

Initial Understanding

Why does Andrew decide to try Sharon's recipe even though he has doubts about it?

Even though Andrew does not completely trust Sharon, he is determined to find a way to get freckles. His determination overrules his doubts. For example, he wonders if no one in his family has freckles because they have never heard of freckle juice. He persuades himself that if the recipe works, the money is worth it. If it does not work, however, he will just make Sharon give him his money back.

Literary Analysis

What things does Andrew do that annoy his mother?

Andrew tries to avoid washing his face and neck and forgets other details about his personal appearance, such as zipping his pants. He also does not always remember his manners; for instance, he forgets to greet people when he enters Mrs. Burrows's house. Further, Andrew's mother is upset that Andrew did not clean up his mess in the kitchen.

Inferential Comprehension

Miss Kelly knows that Sharon is playing a trick on Andrew because Miss Kelly reads the recipe card with Sharon's name clearly written on it. Why then does Miss Kelly make no attempt to punish Sharon for tricking Andrew?

Miss Kelly is probably letting Sharon learn the consequences of her behavior, just as Miss Kelly lets Andrew learn his own lesson. She says nothing to Sharon even after Andrew comes to school decorated with blue marker freckles, and she makes no attempt to intervene when Sharon offers to sell a recipe to Nicky. Eventually Sharon's classmates will probably learn not to trust Sharon.

Constructing Meaning

How do you feel about how Sharon acted in this story?

Students' responses will vary. Some will feel that Sharon was mean and insensitive for taking advantage of Andrew's wish to have freckles. Some will feel that Sharon's trick on Andrew was funny, and others may even appreciate the clever way that Sharon manipulates both Andrew and Nicky to get their money.

Teachable Skills

Responding to Literature Andrew is upset that Sharon tricked him with the freckle juice recipe, so he draws blue freckles on his face. Have the students write about a time when they felt someone had tricked them. Have them describe how being tricked made them feel and what they did about it.

Recognizing Detail Sharon uses Andrew's desire to change his appearance to persuade him to buy a phony remedy. Have the students bring to class products that claim they can change a person's appearance. Make a chart that lists what each product claims to do. Then have students test some of the products to determine whether the products are effective. When they are done with their experiment, have them evaluate whether the advertisement was accurate or misleading.

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Students could also write response letters to the product manufacturers.

Making Predictions Sharon has tricked Andrew into buying a worthless recipe for fifty cents and is about to fool Nicky with the same trick. Have students write a brief story predicting what happens to Sharon later in the year. Does she continue to fool other students? Do the students trick her in return? Or does something else happen?

Identifying Persuasive Language Miss Kelly uses a clever strategy rather than an order to get Andrew to wash the blue freckles off his face. Have the students form brainstorming groups to create a list of clever strategies that Andrew's mother could use to get him to pay attention in class, remember to be polite in someone else's house, pick up after himself, etc.