

THE STORY DOOR CHALLENGE

Meet the Character. Enter the World. Become the Storyteller.

A ready-to-use reading adventure for elementary classrooms (grades K-5)

Dear Educators,

Would your students rather meet a favorite fictional character or step inside the world of a favorite book? The wonderful thing about reading is that a memorable story lets us do both.

Through characters and settings, children can explore unfamiliar places, recognize their own feelings, imagine other perspectives, and ask what they might do differently. The Story Door Challenge turns that experience into a playful, flexible classroom activity. It is not a test: there are no winning answers, only thoughtful choices and new possibilities.

AT A GLANCE

Time	30–45 minutes; or use one round at a time
Format	Whole group, partners, or small groups
Materials	A familiar book; paper/cardstock; pencils, crayons or markers; optional sticky notes
Learning goals	Comprehension, perspective-taking, oral language, sensory description, creativity

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Choose a story students know well. Let children respond by speaking, drawing, writing, pointing, or moving. For younger students, model one answer aloud; for older students, ask them to support ideas with evidence from the text.

Teacher opening: “Today a story door is opening in our classroom. We will decide where it leads, who we meet, and what might happen if we step inside!”

THE FIVE ROUNDS

Use these in sequence or as stand-alone mini activities.

1 | WOULD YOU RATHER? • 5-7 MINUTES

Do: Label opposite sides of the room A and B. Read a choice aloud. Students move, raise an A/B card, or point. Invite several children to explain their choices.

- Meet your favorite character OR visit the world of your favorite book?
- Have dinner with a character OR explore their world for a day?
- Change a story's ending OR discover what happens ten years later?

Ask: "What made you choose that? Did anyone's answer change your thinking?"

2 | OPEN THE STORY DOOR • 7-8 MINUTES

Do: Draw a door on the board. Invite students to imagine opening it into the setting of a familiar book. Give quiet thinking time, then have partners describe what is on the other side.

- Where does the door lead? What is the first thing you see?
- What can you hear, smell, or feel?
- Who or what might you encounter first?

Ask: "Which details in the book helped you imagine that place?"

3 | MEET THE CHARACTER • 8-10 MINUTES

Do: Pair students. One plays a book character; the other interviews them. After three questions, switch roles. For K-1, model the interview as a class.

- What do you want most? What are you worried about?
- What was your hardest choice?
- What advice would you give someone like me?

Ask: "What in the story makes you think the character would answer that way?"

KEEP THE ADVENTURE GOING

4 | WHAT IF YOU WERE THERE? • 5-8 MINUTES

Do: Choose an important moment in the book. Students imagine joining the scene and complete the sentence below orally or in writing.

“If I stepped into _____, I would _____ because _____.”

- Would you make the same choice as the character?
- Could you help solve the problem?
- How might your decision change what happens next?

5 | CREATE YOUR OWN STORY DOOR • 10-15 MINUTES

Do: Distribute the printable on the next page. Students decorate the outside of a door with clues about a book. Inside, they draw or write about the world, a character, and the adventure they would have there.

Display idea: Make a classroom gallery called “Every Book Opens a Door.” Invite classmates to guess which story is behind each door.

THE FINAL CHALLENGE | BECOME THE STORYTELLER

Ask: “If you could write a story that opened a door for someone else, where would you take them?” Invite each child to share one sentence about their own story idea.

DIFFERENTIATE WITH EASE

- K-1: Read questions aloud; accept pictures, gestures, and dictated answers.
- Grades 2-3: Ask for a complete sentence and one detail from the book.
- Grades 4-5: Ask students to explain character motivation and write a short alternate scene.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Stories take us places, introduce us to different perspectives, and help us imagine what might be possible. Ask students: “What did this book help you see, feel, or understand?”

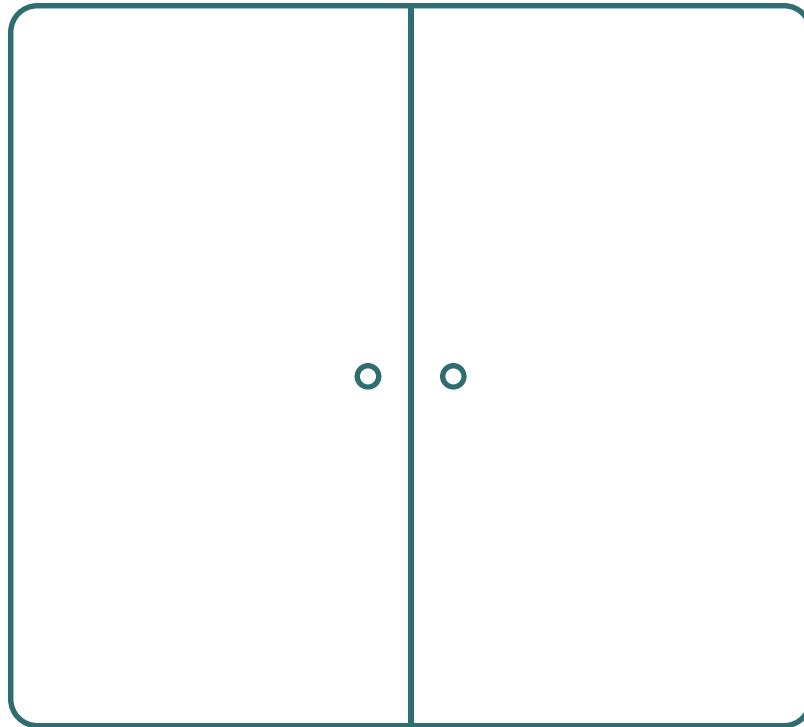
Open a book. Open a mind. Open a heart. Open a world.

MY STORY DOOR

Name: _____ Date: _____

My book: _____

Decorate the door with clues about your book. Then imagine what is waiting on the other side.
DRAW YOUR STORY CLUES ON THE DOOR



Behind my door, I see: _____

A character I would meet: _____

The first thing I would do: _____

Something this story helps me understand: _____

My own story idea: If I could open a door for someone else, I would take them to...
