

## Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Ways Characters Shape Stories.”

In this unit, we’ll be reading fables, folktales, myths, and poems. We’ll meet some well-known characters like King Midas and Paul Bunyan, and we’ll also get to know new ones such as Little Rooster, the main character in a well-known cumulative tale from Central America. As we read the selections, we’ll be looking carefully at the characters, noticing how they are described and what personality traits we can infer from their actions. We’ll also examine character motivations and discuss what characters learn as a result of their actions.

“Ways Characters Shape Stories” is an interesting unit that I expect will stimulate some lively discussions that will hopefully be continued at home. I look forward to working together as partners this year. Should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

# Ways Characters Shape Stories

In this unit, we'll read different kinds of fiction and think in depth about the question "How do our actions influence our lives?" Here are some activities designed to continue the character and story analysis we've done in class and to build on the skills and concepts your child has learned. Hopefully you'll even have some fun, too, as you work together!

## Topic Connection

### What a Character!

It's not just when we're reading books or watching movies that we find ourselves thinking about characters. Understanding the people we meet in fiction helps us understand the people we meet in our lives. So the next time you and your child are watching a movie, reading a book or interacting with someone, take a moment to talk about character traits and motivations.

## Vocabulary Connection

### Vivid Verbs

Authors use active, vivid verbs to help make their stories come alive. In our current unit, we've learned a few new vocabulary words including the verbs **blurted**, **beamed**, and **partake**. Discuss the meaning of the words with your child. How is *blurted* different from *said*, or *yell*? How about *beamed* and *shined*? Try to come up with other words for *partake*. For practice, and to distinguish between the meanings of the verbs, act them out.

## Comprehension Connection

### Summing Up!

Being able to identify and summarize key events is an important reading skill. Try to help your child practice this skill when you are reading together or watching a TV program or movie. Ask your child which events in a story are the most important. Why?

## Word Study Connections

### Compound Words

In our word study instruction, students are learning compound words (words created by joining two separate words with different meanings). To help your child with this skill, get 16 index cards and write one compound word on two cards (for example—"heart" on one, "beat" on the next). Then shuffle the cards and take turns flipping them over. The first person to call out the compound word wins. Below is a list of some compound words from the unit.

heartbeat	firelight	mountaintop	underwater
hillside	treetop	thunderclap	woodstove