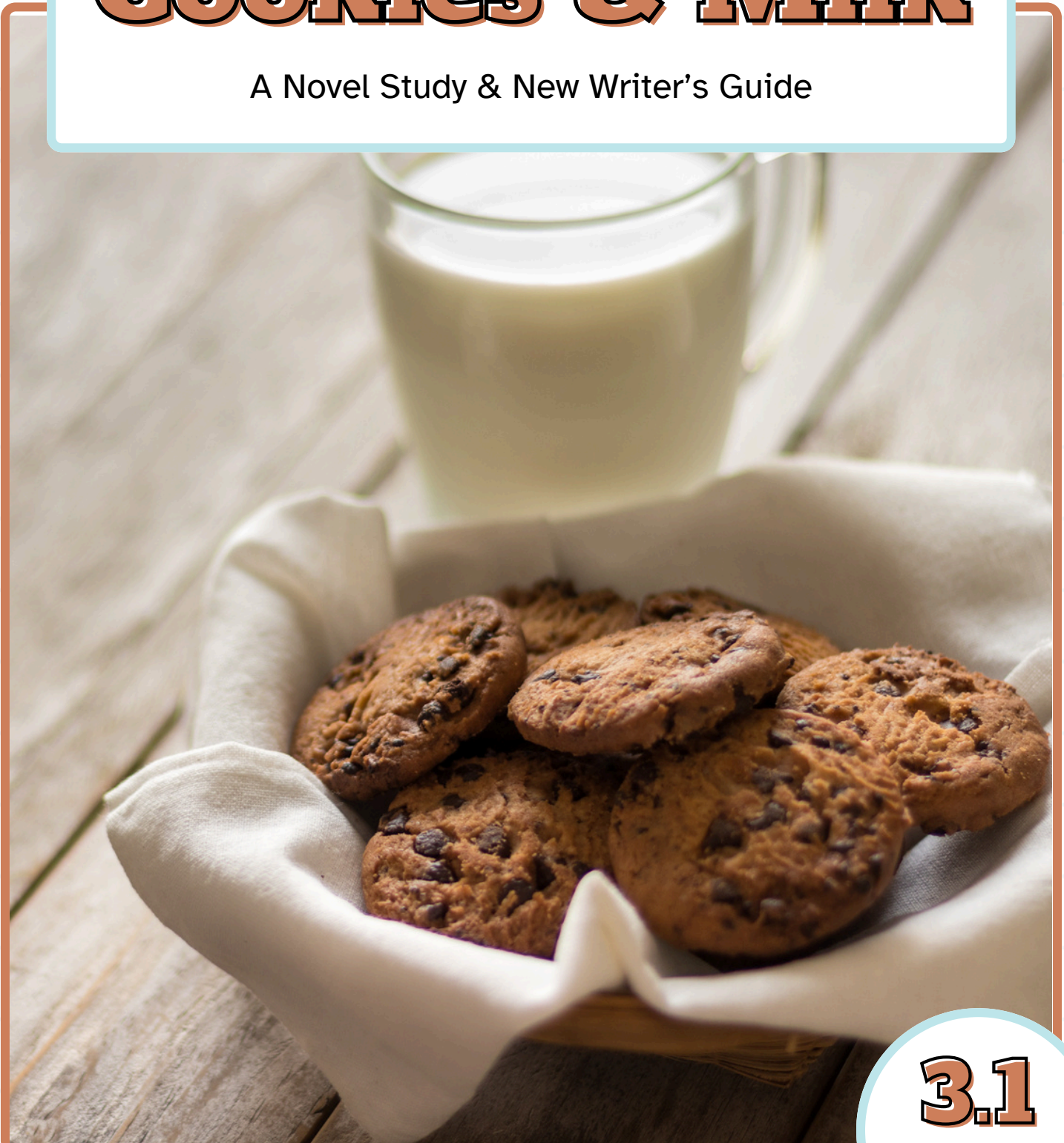


Cookies & Milk

A Novel Study & New Writer's Guide



3.1

Strong
Sentences



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WELCOME!

Over the next few weeks, you and your learner will explore the story of Ellis and his dad as they build a cookie store, work together, and navigate challenges along the way. You'll share reading time, talk about the characters and their choices, and practice writing skills that build confidence and clarity. Through discussion, short writing exercises, and hands-on activities, your learner will strengthen comprehension, critical thinking, and creativity. Take your time, enjoy the moments together, and hopefully, the story becomes a family favorite!

How this Guide is Structured:

Cookies & Milk is 36 chapters long and the full guide is scheduled over the course of 20 days. Chapters are chunked together 2 at a time, for an average of *about 18 pages* of reading per day.

Daily flow includes novel reading, followed by comprehension questions and a discussion topic, then 1-2 pages of writing instruction. Every 5th day, writing instruction is swapped for a craft project or hands-on activity.

Reading Recommendation:

How you and your learner digest the reading is up to you. Every learner is different and many third graders are still completing their phonics instruction and building the stamina to read longer passages of text. Feel free to take turns reading, completing the entire book as a read aloud, or listening to the audiobook. Whatever method you choose, know that this guide was written to be completely adult-led.

Note: *The audiobook for Cookies & Milk is performed by Shawn Amos himself and he does an excellent job! It's extremely engaging and fun to listen to if this is an accessible option for your family.*

Modifications:

All learners are different and you may be working with learners of various abilities. Feel free to make modifications as needed. Scribe for your learner, have them answer comprehension questions out loud instead of writing them down, go off paper and use a whiteboard, spread a single lesson out over 2 days! You know what is best.

What You'll Study:

Beginning writer's guides focus on reading comprehension, critical thinking skills, and beginning writing concepts. Grammar instruction beyond what is necessary to practice the focused writing concepts is NOT included. Spelling is not included and sentence writing activities in this guide will not instruct you to correct spelling mistakes. The Abundant Freedom philosophy is that heavier grammar and spelling instruction is better delayed until after all phonics instruction is complete. If you feel different, please feel free to supplement these subjects.

Covered Topics

Writing

- What is a sentence
- Basic editing
- Sentence types

Grammar

- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Punctuation

Literary Devices

- Onomatopoeia
- Simile
- Acronyms
- Theme

Appendix:

This guide includes an appendix in a separate file. The appendix contains additional information on pursuing deep dives, additional support cards, and additional practice pages.

Answer Key:

This guide includes an answer key in a separate file. The answer key contains expected or common answers to all of the material in the workbook, as well as some points to consider for discussion questions. There are no right or wrong answers for discussions, feel free to let your learner lead the way as to how much to answer.

Secular Disclaimer:

While this guide is secular, please note that Author Shawn Amos is also a musician by the name of 'The Reverend Shawn Amos'. His stage name is not referenced in this guide. There are three instances in the book where a character declares "Not today, Satan!". Amos has a single song listed in the playlist at the back of the book that has NOT been included in the playlist linked in this guide. The note from the author signs off with 'keep the faith'. If you listen to the audio, the closing remarks (once the book is over, during the closing credits) do mention Amos's stage name, as well as an instance of 'Amen'.

Note: Please screen all media and links to be sure they align with your family values.

Supply List

- Pencil
- A copy of the novel [Cookies & Milk](#) by Shawn Amos
*I *strongly* encourage reading this book while following along with the audiobook if this is an accessible option for your family.*
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue/glue stick
- A highlighter
- A children's thesaurus
- An "editing pen"
At this age, a great fun tool for this is one of those multi-colored pens.
- A 6-sided die
- A paper clip
- Access to YouTube
If you are using this guide digitally, all QR codes are clickable.

Project/ Craft Supplies

- [Pin Kit](#), or supplies to create a pin collection (see page 18)
- Tempera or acrylic paint, plus additional craft supplies (see page 42)
- Ingredients to make chocolate chip cookies (see page 53)



Lesson 1

☐ Read chapters 1 and 2

☐ Reading Comprehension



Who is the main character?

What 3 words would you use to describe the main character?

1

2

3

What does his dad want to do?



☐ Discussion

“

Your hair is so funny and lumpy! All scrunchy like...

~Amanda, pg.6

”

Has anyone ever said something to you that made you feel different or left out, even if they didn't mean to hurt your feelings? *How could you stand up for yourself and tell them how it made you feel?*

OR

A **microaggression** is an action or phrase that can hurt someone's feelings because of their race or skin color, even if the person didn't say it to be hurtful. It's like saying or doing something that makes someone feel left out or different in a bad way, the way Amanda talks about Ellis's hair.

Have you ever said something that hurt someone's feelings by mistake? *How could you make it right or say it in a kinder way?*



Lesson 1: Writer's Corner

What is a sentence?

A **sentence** is like a puzzle with three pieces: a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. If any piece is missing, the puzzle is incomplete.

Janyce (subject) **dropped** (verb) **her cookie.** (complete thought)

Aiden (subject) **played** (verb) **the harmonica.** (complete thought)

A sentence *without* all three pieces is called a **fragment**.

✓ Ellis plays harmonica while his dad bakes cookies. = complete sentence

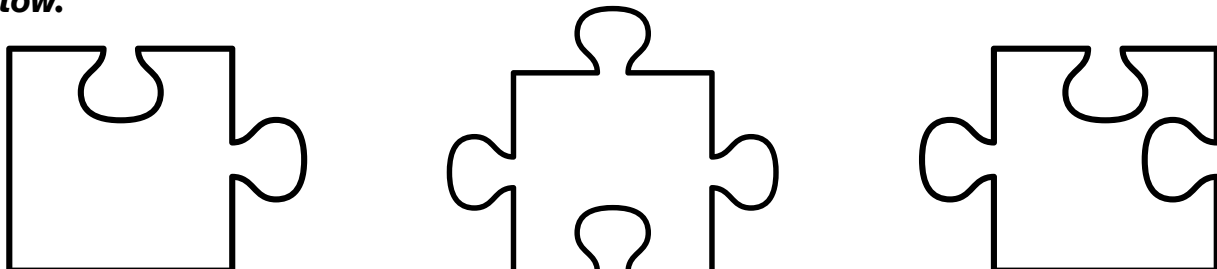
⊘ doing homework = fragment

Complete the following sentences by filling in the missing sentence puzzle pieces:

1. _____ (**subject**) walked home from school.
2. Jaida _____ (**verb**) her bike to the park.
3. Erik jumped over _____. (**complete thought**)

What did you eat for breakfast? Answer in a complete sentence.

What 3 things make a sentence complete? Write them in the puzzle pieces below.



Lesson 2



☐ Read chapters 3 and 4

☐ Reading Comprehension



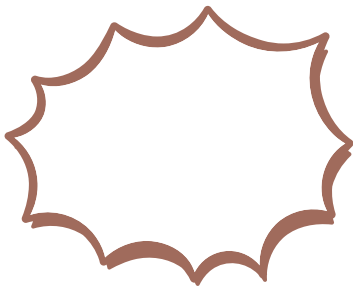
Who shows up at the cookie shop after Ellis and his dad?

Do you think this person is really as mean as they seem? Why or why not?

☐ Literary Device

Onomatopoeia are words that sound like the thing they describe. For example, the word "buzz" sounds like a bee flying. The word "woof" sounds like a dog barking. In *Cookies & Milk*, "THWACK!" is the sound used to show the sound of Grandma Ruby's cane.

What are some other *onomatopoeia* words you can think of?



☐ Discussion

“

“Your daddy don’t know one thing about openin’ up no cookie store. Just like he didn’t know nothing about selling no dashikis or opening up no disco car wash.”

~Grandma Ruby, pg. 24

”

Ellis’s dad is excited about opening the store, even though Ellis and Grandma Ruby have lots of doubts. How do you think you would feel if no one believed in you, but you knew you could do something great?

Lesson 2: Writer's Corner

Who or What?

Let's talk about the subject of the sentence. The subject is the "star" of a sentence, like the lead singer in a jazz band!

The trumpet played loudly. **Subject** = The trumpet

My sister baked cookies. **Subject** = My sister

Your turn! **Highlight the subject in each of these sentences:**

1. The piano sounds beautiful.

2. Mom dances to jazz music.

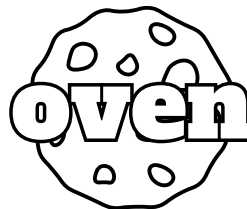
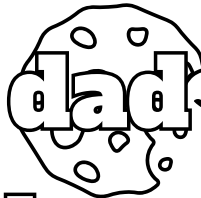
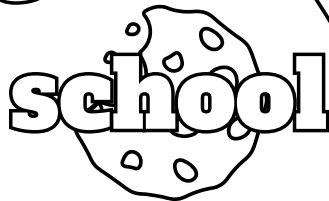
3. The cookies smell delicious.

Subjects are usually (but not always) nouns. A **noun** is a *person*, *place*, or *thing*. For example, in **The trumpet plays loudly**, the subject is *The trumpet* - and "trumpet" is a noun (*it is a thing*)!

Color the cookies with *PERSON* nouns **GREEN**

Color the cookies with *PLACE* nouns **BLUE**

Color the cookies with *THING* nouns **ORANGE**



Use at least one of the above nouns in a complete sentence.

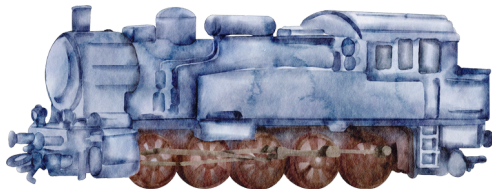
Lesson 3

☐ Read chapters 5 and 6

☐ Reading Comprehension



Who did Ellis's dad take the train to go live with?



Ellis has been repeating the same phrase to himself so far in each chapter. What is the phrase?



Why do you think he keeps saying this to himself?

☐ Listen

The harmonica is not a common instrument. If you are not already listening to the audio book, it's not too late to start! It's a really great experience and involves lots of background sounds, including the harmonica.

Scan or click to take a listen to this fun blues song!



☐ Discussion

“

“It’s like Dad transported himself back to 1945. I never knew Dad’s parents divorced, too.”

~Ellis, pg. 35

”

Knowing that his parents are going through a divorce, it is a surprise to Ellis that his dad’s parents are also divorced.

Why do you think Ellis doesn’t know this already?

Lesson 3: Writer's Corner

What's happening?

A **verb** is an action word that tells us what someone or something is doing. Verbs are the "doing" words in sentences!

Some verbs are action verbs that you **CAN** see happening:

The boys **play** music in the room. (*play* = verb)

Dad and Ellis **bake** cookies. (*bake* = verb)

Some verbs are action verbs that you **CAN NOT** see happening:

Thalia **loves** to read books. (*loves* = verb)

I **dream** of cookies and milk. (*dream* = verb)

Complete the following sentences by adding a verb to each subject.

1. Jordan _____ home from school.
2. The young girl _____ on the trampoline.
3. My dog _____ under my bed.

Draw a line to match each word to their proper part of speech.

mother

discover

squirrel

twirl

noun

verb

trumpet

think

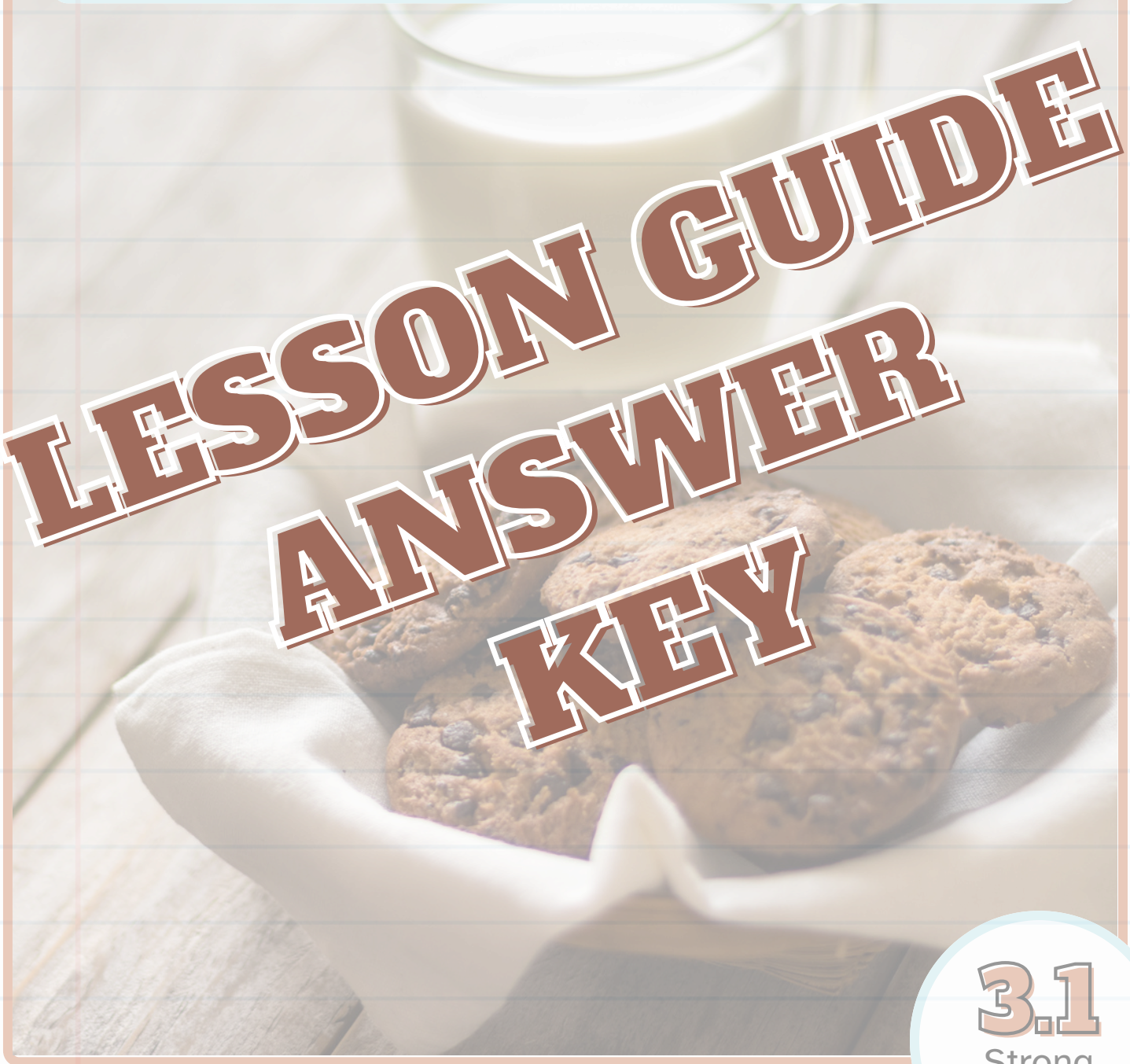
bakery

jog

Use one noun and one verb from above to write a complete sentence.

Cookies & Milk

A Novel Study & New Writer's Guide



**LESSON GUIDE
ANSWER
KEY**

3.1

Strong
Sentences

Lesson 1

☐ Read chapters 1 and 2

☐ Reading Comprehension



Who is the main character?

Ellis Bailey Johnson
or just 'Ellis'

What 3 words would you use to describe the main character? *some possible answers*

1

trouble-maker

2

class clown

3

short

What does his dad want to do?

He wants to open a shop that
sells chocolate chip cookies.



☐ Discussion

“

Your hair is so funny and
lumpy! All scrunchy like...

~Amanda, pg.6

”

Has anyone ever said something to you that made you feel different or left out, even if they didn't mean to hurt your feelings? *How could you stand up for yourself and tell them how it made you feel?*

OR

Have you ever said something that hurt someone's feelings by mistake? *How could you make it right or say it in a kinder way?*

A **microaggression** is an action or phrase that can hurt someone's feelings because of their race or skin color, even if the person didn't say it to be hurtful. It's like saying or doing something that makes someone feel left out or different in a bad way, the way Amanda talks about Ellis's hair.

Some discussion points:

- *Learners might share a time they felt left out by accident and how it made them feel.*
- *Guide toward responses about standing up kindly, explaining feelings, or apologizing and choosing kinder words.*

Writer's Corner #1

What is a sentence?

A **sentence** is like a puzzle with three pieces: a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. If any piece is missing, the puzzle is incomplete.

Janyce (subject) **dropped** (verb) **her cookie.** (complete thought)

Aiden (subject) **played** (verb) **the harmonica.** (complete thought)

A sentence *without* all three pieces is called a **fragment**.

- ✓ Ellis plays harmonica while his dad bakes cookies. = complete sentence
- ⊗ doing homework = fragment

Complete the following sentences by filling in the missing sentence puzzle pieces:

Answers will vary.

1. Angela / The girl / etc. (**subject**) walked home from school.
2. Jaida rode (**verb**) her bike to the park.
3. Eric jumped over the candle stick / the dog / etc. (**complete thought**)

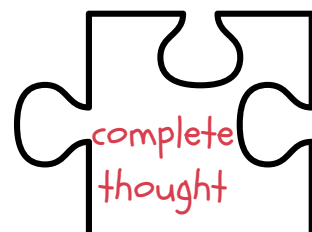
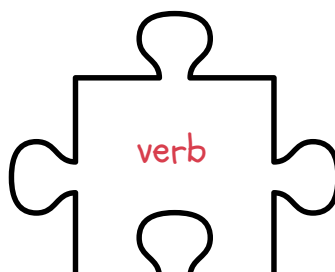
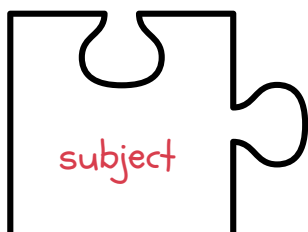
What did you eat for breakfast? Answer in a complete sentence.

I ate pancakes and fruit for breakfast.

Answers will vary. Encourage the learner to write a complete sentence with proper punctuation.

Punctuation will be explored further in later lessons.

What 3 things make a sentence complete? Write them in the puzzle pieces below.



Lesson 2



☐ Read chapters 3 and 4

☐ Reading Comprehension



Who shows up at the cookie shop after Ellis and his dad?

Grandma Ruby

Do you think this person is really as mean as they seem? Why or why not?

Yes, because she hits Ellis with the switch.

No, because she still loves Ellis.

some possible answers

☐ Literary Device

Onomatopoeia are words that sound like the thing they describe. For example, the word "buzz" sounds like a bee flying. The word "woof" sounds like a dog barking. In Cookies & Milk, "THWACK!" is the sound used to show the sound of Grandma Ruby's cane.

What are some other *onomatopoeia* words you can think of?

Answers will vary.



☐ Discussion

“

“Your daddy don’t know one thing about openin’ up no cookie store. Just like he didn’t know nothing about selling no dashikis or opening up no disco car wash.”

~Grandma Ruby, pg. 24

”

Ellis’s dad is excited about opening the store, even though Ellis and Grandma Ruby have lots of doubts. How do you think you would feel if no one believed in you, but you knew you could do something great?

Answers will vary. Learners may say they’d feel hurt or sad if no one believed in them. Others might say feel more dedicated to proving others wrong.

Writer's Corner #2

Who or What?

Let's talk about the subject of the sentence. The subject is the "star" of a sentence, like the lead singer in a jazz band!

The trumpet played loudly. **Subject** = The trumpet

My sister baked cookies. **Subject** = My sister

Your turn! Highlight the subject in each of these sentences:

1. The piano sounds beautiful.

2. Mom dances to jazz music.

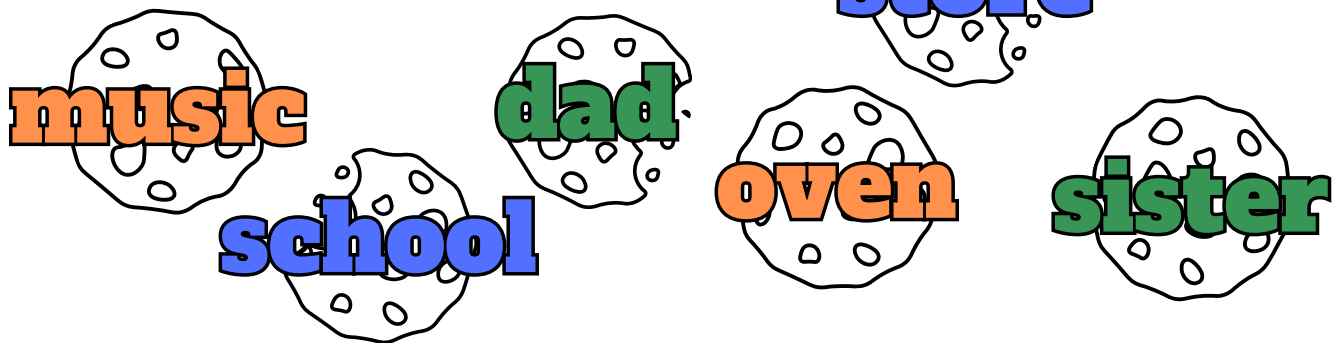
3. The cookies smell delicious.

Subjects are usually (but not always) nouns. A **noun** is a *person, place, or thing*. For example, in **The trumpet plays loudly**, the subject is *The trumpet* - and "trumpet" is a noun (*it is a thing*)!

Color the cookies with *PERSON* nouns **GREEN**

Color the cookies with *PLACE* nouns **BLUE**

Color the cookies with *THING* nouns **ORANGE**



Use at least one of the above nouns in a complete sentence.

My sister likes to read books.

Answers will vary. Encourage the learner to write a complete sentence with proper punctuation.
Punctuation will be explored further in later lessons.

Lesson 3

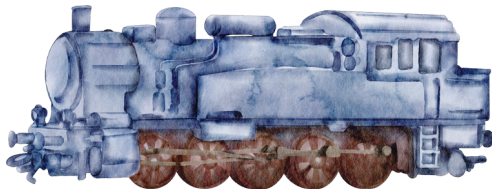
☐ Read chapters 5 and 6

☐ Reading Comprehension



Who did Ellis's dad take the train to go live with?

Aunt Della



Ellis has been repeating the same phrase to himself so far in each chapter. What is the phrase?

Please let me grow this summer.



Why do you think he keep saying this to himself?

He's tired of people calling him

short and his dad calling him

Little Man.

possible answer

☐ Listen

The harmonica is not a common instrument. If you are not already listening to the audio book, it's not too late to start! It's a really great experience and involves lots of background sounds, including the harmonica.

Scan or click to take a listen to this fun blues song!



☐ Discussion

“

“It's like Dad transported himself back to 1945. I never knew Dad's parents divorced, too.”

~Ellis, pg. 35

”

Knowing that his parents are going through a divorce, it is a surprise to Ellis that his dad's parents are also divorced. Why do you think Ellis doesn't know this already?

possible discussion point:

- Families don't always talk about divorce or personal history, especially things that may still be hurting them years later*

Writer's Corner #3

What's happening?

A **verb** is an action word that tells us what someone or something is doing. Verbs are the "doing" words in sentences!

Some verbs are action verbs that you **CAN** see happening:

The boys **play** music in the room. (*play* = verb)

Dad and Ellis **bake** cookies. (*bake* = verb)

Some verbs are action verbs that you **CAN NOT** see happening:

Thalia **loves** to read books. (*loves* = verb)

I **dream** of cookies and milk. (*dream* = verb)

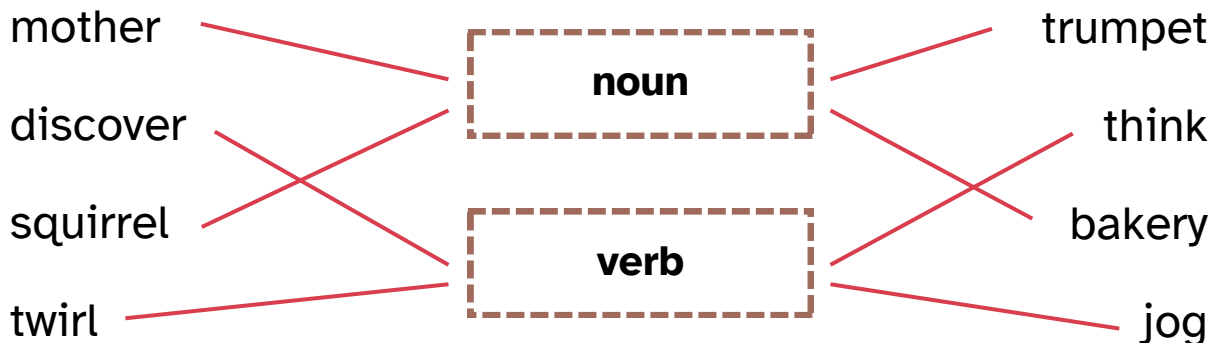
Complete the following sentences by adding a verb to each subject.

Answers will vary.

1. Jordan ran / walked / etc. home from school.
2. The young girl jumped / flipped / etc. on the trampoline.
3. My dog hides / sleeps / etc. under my bed.

*It can be hard to come up with different words on the spot. If your learner needs help coming up with ideas, see to the **Verbs** card in the appendix.*

Draw a line to match each word to their proper part of speech.



Use one noun and one verb from above to write a complete sentence.

I like to twirl when I think.

*Answers will vary. Encourage the learner to write a complete sentence with proper punctuation.
Punctuation will be explored further in later lessons.*

