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# Introduction

*Reading and Writing Activities for Social-Emotional Learning* includes 15 units revolving around character development. The units were designed to help students develop a strong set of social and emotional skills necessary to cope with the social aspects of their daily lives. After reading each passage, students are provided with four different writing activities to gauge their understanding of the concepts provided.

Units can be presented consecutively or used as needed to address specific situations. Each unit is set up in the same manner and includes the following components:

- **Teacher Notes** — Designed for the busy teacher, this page summarizes the passage and highlights the concepts addressed. Three or four thought-provoking discussion questions are provided for each reading passage. These questions should help guide the teacher when presenting each unit.
- **Reading Passage** — Each 3-page reading passage addresses a different aspect of character development in an age-appropriate manner. These passages can be read independently by students or as shared reading in small groups. (See page 4 for Lexile Level Chart.)

Many passages describe contemporary situations and how the characters may or may not deal with them. When possible, these passages leave it up to the student to determine how the characters resolved the situations they found themselves in. Other passages discuss events in history and how people's actions changed the way citizens were treated.

- **Reading Comprehension Questions** — Five questions follow each reading passage. The questions were designed to assess students' understanding of what they read. By reviewing these questions and answers as a class, educators can readily assess if students are grasping the material presented. These questions will hopefully be used as conversation starters to discuss the topics in greater depth when appropriate.
- **Writing Activities** — Four different writing activities are provided in each unit to increase understanding of each character development topic. Hopefully there will be time available for each activity, but if not, teachers may choose which activities are most appropriate for their students. These writing activities include poems, letter writing, journal entries, diary entries, and more.

# Lexile Level Chart

| Unit/Passage Title      | Page | Lexile | Word Count |
|-------------------------|------|--------|------------|
| Unit 1—Appreciation     | 6    | 530    | 412        |
| Unit 2—Caring           | 14   | 540    | 427        |
| Unit 3—Citizenship      | 22   | 490    | 416        |
| Unit 4—Courage          | 30   | 510    | 406        |
| Unit 5—Fairness         | 38   | 530    | 354        |
| Unit 6—Generosity       | 46   | 520    | 423        |
| Unit 7—Good Judgment    | 54   | 510    | 443        |
| Unit 8—Honesty          | 62   | 530    | 375        |
| Unit 9—Loyalty          | 70   | 520    | 405        |
| Unit 10—Patriotism      | 78   | 520    | 423        |
| Unit 11—Perseverance    | 86   | 500    | 399        |
| Unit 12—Respect         | 94   | 540    | 433        |
| Unit 13—Responsibility  | 102  | 530    | 434        |
| Unit 14—Tolerance       | 110  | 520    | 432        |
| Unit 15—Trustworthiness | 118  | 510    | 396        |



Leah sighed and put on her uniform. She was unhappy. At her last karate lesson, the older kids had made fun of her. Leah was new at karate, and she did not always understand what the sensei, or teacher, was saying. She had trouble with the moves, especially the kicks.

"I do not want to go," Leah said to herself. She tied her white belt tighter around her waist. She tried to think about what it would feel like to earn a yellow belt. That would mean she was getting better at karate.

"Let's go!" her mother called. Leah walked to the car. She decided she would work hard to learn today's lesson. Each little move that Leah got right would bring her closer to that yellow belt.

During the lesson, Leah kept her eyes on the sensei. She worked hard to imitate the moves. She did not look at, or listen to, the other students. She just focused on her own feet and hands.



At the end of the lesson, Sensei Nelson called her over.

"You did a very good job today," Sensei Nelson said. "You did not give up trying to follow the lesson. If you would like extra practice, I would be happy to help you after class."

"I'll ask my mom," Leah said. Her mom thought it was a great idea, and Leah began to work harder than ever to learn the karate moves. Soon, Sensei Nelson told her she was ready to try for her yellow belt.

On the day of the test, Leah tied her white belt around her waist. She hoped it would be the last time she used that belt. Would she have a yellow belt by the end of the day?

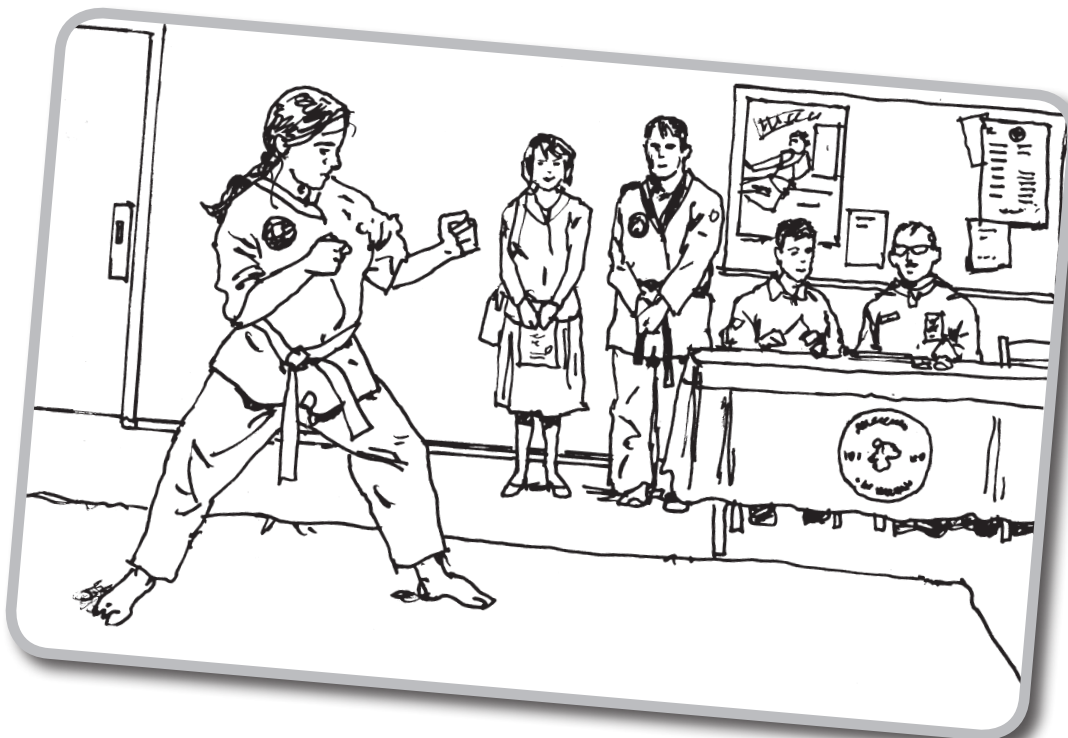
When she got to the gym, other kids were practicing. They all looked nervous. Leah was nervous, too. Part of her wanted to go home, but she had worked too hard to give up now.



# Perseverance

## Unit 11 Reading Passage

When they called her name, Leah walked onto the mat. Her sensei and her mom gave her big smiles. Leah took a deep breath. She would try her very hardest, and if she did not get her yellow belt this time, she would not give up. Leah would take the test again and again until she earned that yellow belt. It might take more than one try, but Leah knew she could do it.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1** What color belt does Leah have at the beginning of the story? What color belt does she have when the story ends?

Beginning of the story: \_\_\_\_\_

End of the story: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2** *You need to take a test to get a yellow belt in karate.* Is this a fact or an opinion? Explain your answer.

a) fact

b) opinion

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3** Put the events of the story in order: \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Leah goes to the karate test.
- b) Leah gets help from Sensei Nelson.
- c) Leah does not want to go to karate class.
- d) Leah decides to focus on her karate lesson.

- 4** Does Sensei Nelson want Leah to get a yellow belt? How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 5** What did Leah do after Sensei Nelson offered her extra help?

- a) took her test for her yellow belt
- b) asked her mom if it was okay to take extra lessons
- c) tied her white belt around her waist
- d) gave up

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A** Write two endings for the story. In one, Leah earns her yellow belt. In the second ending, Leah does not earn her yellow belt. Explain how she feels in each story and what she decides to do.

**Ending 1—Leah earns her yellow belt.**

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**Ending 2—No yellow belt this time.**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**B** List two ways Leah could help another karate student who wants to give up.

**1**

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**2**

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**C** What do you think will happen when Leah earns her yellow belt? Will she stop taking karate? Will she continue?

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