

Flexible Grouping

Grade Level: 4

Subject: Language – Reading

Focus: Inferring Character Feelings

Strategy Highlighted: Flexible Grouping

Learning Goal:

Students will identify and describe how a character feels at different points in a story, using evidence from the text to support their thinking.

Flexible Grouping in Practice	Adaptations for ELLs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole class for modeling and shared understanding• Partner work for supported practice• Interest-based groups for creativity and collaboration• Frequent group changes to keep engagement high and support diverse learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sentence frames and word banks• Visual supports (emojis, pictures of emotions)• Peer support in mixed-ability pairs• Choice in how to present (draw, speak, write)

Materials Needed

- Picture book with a clear emotional storyline (e.g., *The Paper Bag Princess*, *Enemy Pie*)
- Character Feelings Chart (Beginning - Middle - End)
- Chart paper or mini poster sheets
- Markers, crayons, sticky notes

Instructional Plan

Step 1: Whole-Class Introduction (15 minutes)

Grouping: Whole class

- Read the picture book aloud.
- Pause at key moments to model thinking aloud:
“How do you think the character feels right now?”
“What in the picture or words helped you know that?”
- Record one example on the board using the Character Feelings Chart.

Step 2: Partner Work (15-20 minutes)

Grouping: Mixed-ability pairs

Pairs are created with language support in mind—stronger English speakers are paired with developing ELLs.

- Students re-read a short section in pairs.
- Each pair completes a Character Feelings Chart together.
- Sentence frames are provided for English learners:
“At the beginning, the character feels _____. Then _____. At the end, _____.”

Step 3: Small Group Task (20-25 minutes)

Grouping: Interest-based groups (grouped by favorite scene or character)

- Each group creates a mini poster showing the character’s feelings and changes.
- Students can include drawings, dialogue bubbles, or written sentences.
- Groups present their posters informally to the class.
 - Groups may choose how to present (drawings, speech bubbles, written summary) depending on student comfort and language ability.

Step 4: Share & Reflect (10 minutes)

Grouping: Whole class

Ask students:

- “Did the character change in ways that you expected?”
- “What helped you understand the character’s feelings?”