In this lesson, students will explore the trait of responsibility through the characters in a famous Dr. Seuss book. By the end, students’ character and knowledge about literacy will have grown.

**Learning Objectives**

- Students will be able to understand the central message or lesson of a story.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast the experiences of the characters in a story.

**Materials and preparation**

- **The Cat in the Hat** by Dr. Seuss
- Butcher paper or poster
- Markers
- Pens or pencils
- Paper

**Key terms**

- responsible

**Introduction (10 minutes)**

- Read the story *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss. Stop periodically to ask comprehension questions and refocus students.
- After finishing the story, inform students that they are going to be thinking about the characters in the story and the characters’ decisions.

**Explicit Instruction/Teacher modeling (10 minutes)**

- Pass out pieces of paper and writing utensils to students. Instruct students to copy what is put on the butcher paper or poster.
- Ask students to think about the major characters in the story.
- Have them list Sally and her brother, the Cat in the Hat, Thing One and Thing Two, the goldfish, and possibly the mother. Write these along the top of the poster, drawing a column for each.
- Explain to students that being **responsible** means being accountable for doing the right thing. This means that even if no one is looking or knows, a responsible person still tells the truth and follows the rules.
- Tell students that they are going to think about the different characters in the story. Ask them to think about when the characters acted responsibly or not responsibly.
- Provide students with a few examples. One example might be letting the Cat in the Hat into the house when their mother was gone. Explain that this was irresponsible behavior for Sally and her brother.
- Have your students write this on their charts under the column for Sally and her brother.
- Explain that another example might be standing on a ball in the house. Tell your students that this is irresponsible behavior for the Cat in the Hat and can go under his column.

**Guided Practice (5 minutes)**

- After giving students a few examples, instruct them to work with partners for a few minutes to add some more examples to their chart.
- Call the group back together and add a few more ideas to the class chart.
Independent working time *(10 minutes)*

- Explain to students that you would like them to finish their charts.
- Then, have them turn over their papers and choose another book to write about on the other side.
- Have them follow the same steps of thinking about the major characters, thinking about all of the events of the story and determining responsible and irresponsible behaviors to create another chart similar to the one for *The Cat in the Hat*.

**Differentiation**

**Enrichment:**

- For an additional challenge, have students consider the consequences of the responsible and irresponsible actions.
- Add chart columns for students to write about personal experiences similar to those of characters in the stories.

**Support:**

- For extra assistance, pair up students to write down their ideas together.
- Drawing pictures or having a scribe may help some students better express their thoughts.

**Assessment (5 minutes)**

- Walk around the room, identifying whether or not the students are putting behaviors under the correct column.
- Instruct your students to write a list of 5 responsible decisions they have made.

**Review and closing (5 minutes)**

- Discuss any additions that students would like to make to the class chart.
- Post the final chart in the classroom so that students can reference it in the future.
- Ask your students how the characters in *The Cat in the Hat* compare to the characters in the other stories they wrote about.
- Have your students provide their own definitions of what responsibility means.
- Encourage students to think about how making responsible or irresponsible decisions impacts characters in the stories.
- Remind students that many stories have a meaning or message that the author is trying to convey. Tell them that when they read stories, they should be on the lookout for these lessons.