

Name:
Before Reading

Class:
Word Splash

Write a brief short story using all of the following words. You have five minutes.

onion
birthday

jump rope
germs

sweater
waterfall

ruler
desk

eleven
voice

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PREVIEW

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Name:
"Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

Date:
Literary Analysis

1. How does the narrator feel about birthdays?

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2. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

PREVIEW

3. Why does the narrator wish that she was one hundred and two on this day?

PREVIEW

4. How is Rachel feeling when Mrs. Price gives her the sweater? Provide textual evidence.

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5. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

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6. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

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7. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

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8. What does Rachel imagine when she thinks about going home? Why?

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9. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "...the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

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10. Describe the red sweater. Do you think the red sweater is as awful as Rachel describes it to be? Why or why not?

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11. Why doesn't Rachel stand up for herself when Mrs. Price makes her wear the sweater?

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12. What is Mrs. Price's motivation for making Rachel put on the sweater? Why does Mrs. Price care that someone claim the sweater in the first place?

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13. Examine the imagery in the following lines: "My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast." What message is the author trying to convey to the reader?

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14. What happens after Sylvia claims the sweater as her own? Does Mrs. Price apologize to Rachel? Why or why not?

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15. How do you think this experience will affect Rachel in the future?

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16. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny—tiny you have to close your eyes to see it." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

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17. Circle back to the beginning of the story where Rachel explains her philosophy on birthdays. Does Rachel's story of her 11th birthday explain her specific beliefs about ages? Why or why not?

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18. How could this story have been different if Mrs. Price apologized to Rachel?

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19. What is the author's purpose for this story? Explain.

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21. Why do adults and children clash sometimes? Have you ever been in a situation where you were treated unfairly by someone older, especially an adult?

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22. Why is it that embarrassing moments feel so painful at the time they're happening, but seem humorous to us later on in life?

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23. How do you expect to feel on your birthday compared to how you actually feel? What are you "supposed" to feel like?

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24. What can you learn about someone's character from how he or she acts in an embarrassing situation?

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25. What is the best birthday you've ever had and what made it so special?

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Name:
"Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

Date:
After Reading Project

Design Your Own Sweater

Be creative and design a sweater that represents who you are and the things you appreciate in life! You should spend at least ten minutes brainstorming ideas before you begin decorating your sweater.

Requirements

- 1 Type of embellishment (such as buttons, zippers, string, bows, grommets, buckles or pockets)
- 1 Pattern anywhere on the sweater (such as polka dots, stripes, plaid, chevron, etc.)
- 1 Word or Phrase
- 2 of Your Favorite Colors
- 5 Graphics/illustrations that represent who you are (your favorite place, your goals, your favorite animal, etc.)
- Your Birth Year (or a year that is significant to you)
- Your First or Last Name
- Your sweater must be entirely colored.

Grading Rubric

Overall Appearance	Your sweater is detailed and neat. The overall appearance is creative and aesthetically pleasing.	10 Points
Content	You chose text and illustrations that highlight your personality. Your story is clear and easy to understand.	5 Points
Graphics	The graphic elements are colored and are incorporated seamlessly into the work.	5 Points

“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros – Suggested Lesson Procedure

1. Have students complete the before reading word splash activity. Students will write a brief, creative story based off words that are pulled directly from the text "Eleven." Set a timer for 5 minutes. Once time is up, have students pair and share. Next, ask for 1 or 2 volunteers to share their story out loud with everyone—students really enjoy this. This word splash strategy helps students make personal connections to words that will be part of the lesson and consider how these words may be connected to one another. It also builds anticipation for what the story will be about.
2. Read the story “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros (about 10 minutes in length). I highly recommend [watching this video](#) with your class which entails Sandra Cisneros reading her own story. It's powerful to hear the story the way she intended it to be read.
3. Give a copy of the literary analysis questions to students. Students can complete this activity in pairs or individually. Give students a time range to work, and then come together as a class to review the answers. It is essential to discuss the literary analysis questions to help students work on building this skill.
4. Assign students the after reading project—“Design your own sweater!” Use the powerpoint presentation to explain the requirements and expectations. This presentation also includes pattern ideas in case your students need some inspiration. Students should work on their projects independently, and you can hang them around the room once everyone is done.

Note to teachers: Due to copyright law, I am unable to offer a full text version of the story. If you enter “Full Text Eleven by Sandra Cisneros” into any search engine, you will find a copy of the story available for you to print and use in class. Here is the link I used: [“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros](#)



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Literary Analysis Answer Key

1. How does the narrator feel about birthdays?

The narrator believes you don't change much on your actual birthday; you don't switch ages, but rather you collect ages. So instead of becoming a new age, you are actually adding another layer to your life, and you are still prone to act like your previous ages throughout your life. The narrator feels detached from this birthday and her new age (11). She says it takes days, weeks, or even months before you finally feel like the age you are.

2. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

The author uses a simile here to compare ages to an onion, tree trunk, and wooden doll. All of these items are representative of something that has multiple layers within the same component. This explains her belief that our ages stay inside us, even if we get older and are labeled as our oldest age. Each year we get new rings and new layers which feels like being born again.

3. Why does the narrator wish that she was one hundred and two on this day?

The narrator believes that if she was older, she would have more experience, strength, and common sense. She thinks that because she is eleven, she is unable to act appropriately in an uncomfortable situation, and she wishes she was older in order to be braver and wiser.

4. How is Rachel feeling when Mrs. Price gives her the sweater? Provide textual evidence.

Rachel feels uneasy and mortified. She is confused and shrinking; she is fearful to speak up. Rachel says nervously, "That's not, I don't, you're not...Not mine." She states that, "I don't know why but all of a sudden I'm feeling sick inside, like the part of me that's three wants to come out of my eyes only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today." These lines show that Rachel is upset, but she's confused as to why she is nauseated or why she can't respond how she wants to. She is on the verge of crying.

5. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

This is a hyperbole because the sweater is not 1,000 years old, but it must look very old to Rachel. Rachel expresses her disgust for the sweater and she seems offended that anyone would even suspect the sweater belongs to her.

6. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

This is a simile comparing the sleeves of the sweater to a jump rope. A jump rope is a long rope, usually at least 8 feet long. Rachel is exaggerating the length of the sleeves to show that this sweater is worn and despicable. She is further emphasizing that this is not a sweater she would ever wear and she is highlighting how embarrassing this experience was for her.

7. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

This is a simile that represents the internal conflict Rachel is having with herself. She wishes she was older because she would know what to do in this situation if she were wiser and had more years to depend on. The description of "pennies in a tin box" allows readers to conceptualize a loud noise or being shaken which also depicts Rachel's feelings inside. Rachel is rattled by her teacher's accusation meaning she is nervous, worried, and irritated.

8. What does Rachel imagine when she thinks about going home? Why?

Rachel thinks about what will happen once school is over. "Mama is making a cake for me tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you." When a person is going through a tough situation, it is helpful if they remind themselves of something happy or positive that will come soon. Rachel holds onto the fact that she will be celebrating her birthday soon with her loving parents, and it helps her avoid crying.

9. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "...the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

This is a simile comparing the sweater to a mountain. Rachel is saying that the sweater is unmovable, like a mountain. It is impossible to miss and it's huge. This is emphasizing that she is stuck with this large sweater that she cannot ignore.

10. Describe the red sweater. Do you think the red sweater is as awful as Rachel describes it to be? Why or why not?

Rachel describes the sweater as old, raggedy, itchy, stretched out, red, full of germs, and smells like cottage cheese. The sweater was probably more appalling to Rachel at the time because it did not belong to her. It may have seemed more awful to her in the moment because she was forced to wear it, and she knew it was worn by someone else.

11. Why doesn't Rachel stand up for herself when Mrs. Price makes her wear the sweater?

At a young age, it's hard to stand up for yourself when you're taught to respect your teachers and all adults. Kids struggle to know when or if they should tell adults they are wrong because they might get in trouble for saying so. Rachel was probably feeling so overwhelmed that it paralyzed her into speaking up.

12. What is Mrs. Price's motivation for making Rachel put on the sweater? Why does Mrs. Price care that someone claim the sweater in the first place?

Mrs. Price doesn't want the sweater in her classroom anymore because it's been hanging in the closet for a long time now. She thinks Rachel is lying, so she tries to teach her a lesson by forcing her to wear the sweater.

13. Examine the imagery in the following lines: "My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can't stop the little animal noises from coming out of me until there aren't any more tears left in my eyes, and it's just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast." What message is the author trying to convey to the reader?

These lines show that this isn't just one small tear that Rachel lets out—she is crying in an uncontrollable manner. The author conveys to readers that Rachel is incredibly embarrassed and frustrated. She wishes she was invisible because she is sobbing in front of everyone and she can't stop. The author is showing readers that if you bottle your emotions up, or push them deep down to ignore them, they will still find a way to come out.

14. What happens after Sylvia claims the sweater as her own? Does Mrs. Price apologize to Rachel? Why or why not?

Nothing happens. Mrs. Price pretends everything is okay and does not apologize to Rachel. Unfortunately, this probably happens to a lot of kids. A child might know they are right, and when the truth comes out, the adults seem to not care and not take the effort to apologize to them. Mrs. Price doesn't apologize because either she is embarrassed for being wrong, or she thinks students will respect her less if she admits she was wrong.

15. How do you think this experience will affect Rachel in the future?

Answers will vary. Rachel might lose trust in some adults because Mrs. Price never apologized to her. Maybe Rachel will never let a situation like this happen to her again, and she will always remember to speak up for herself.

16. Examine the figurative language in the following line: "I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny—tiny you have to close your eyes to see it." What type of figurative language is this classified as, and what is the impact/significance?

This is a simile that shows Rachel wants this day to be a distant memory, that is so long gone, it's hard to see it or remember clearly. She wants this day to become insignificant, and a fleeting moment that doesn't matter anymore.

17. Circle back to the beginning of the story where Rachel explains her philosophy on birthdays. Does Rachel's story of her 11th birthday explain her specific beliefs about ages? Why or why not?

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This experience does reflect Rachel's beliefs about aging because on this day, Rachel probably felt 3 and 5 and 11... 3 because she was crying, and 5 because she was scared, and 11 because she was confused. Though Rachel had just turned a year older, she still carried those other ages with her.

18. How could this story have been different if Mrs. Price apologized to Rachel?

If given an apology, Rachel may have forgiven Mrs. Price for the situation and she might not have been so embarrassed if her peers witnessed the apology. Rachel might understand that adults make mistakes, and they still should admit when they are wrong. At the end of the story, Rachel wishes she was anything but eleven, but maybe she wouldn't feel this way if Mrs. Price had apologized.

19. What is the author's purpose for this story? Explain.

The author sends the message that just because you're older does not mean you will always act your age, and that's okay. It's normal to feel like a child sometimes, no matter how old you are.

20. How does the setting impact the story?

The setting takes place in Rachel's classroom. School is a very vulnerable place for kids. Large groups of children create an environment where everyone wants to fit in and not draw any negative attention to themselves. Kids are easily embarrassed when called out by a teacher in a negative way. School can be an uncomfortable setting because you are surrounded by people who don't know you beyond a surface level; especially for young kids who are still super dependent on their parents for guidance and comfort.

21. Why do adults and children clash sometimes? Have you ever been in a situation where you were treated unfairly by someone older, especially an adult?

Answers will vary. Because of the age gap, children and adults may disagree about values and beliefs. Their difference in perspective may lead to a lack of respect.

22. Why is it that embarrassing moments feel so painful at the time they're happening, but seem humorous to us later on in life?

Answers will vary. Enough time passes that people are able to disconnect from experiences. These moments no longer matter to them because they are so far detached from the situation or the people involved in the situation. Additionally, sometimes as people grow older, they realize certain embarrassing moments were not as bad as they remember, or that many other people share similar experiences.

23. How do you expect to feel on your birthday compared to how you actually feel? What are you "supposed" to feel like?

Answers will vary. Most people expect to feel older on their birthdays. You're supposed to be happy and/or excited, but that is not always the case.

24. What can you learn about someone's character from how he or she acts in an embarrassing situation?

Answers will vary. Some people show their true colors in an embarrassing situation because they are sensitive or exposed. Embarrassing moments can happen to anyone, and they help people learn not to repeat certain behaviors.

25. What is the best birthday you've ever had and what made it so special?

Answers will vary.



Name:
"Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

Date:
After Reading Project

Design Your Own Sweater

Be creative and design a sweater that represents who you are and the things you appreciate in life! You should spend at least ten minutes brainstorming ideas before you begin decorating your sweater.

Requirements

- 1 Type of embellishment (such as buttons, zippers, string, bows, grommets, buckles or pockets)
- 1 Pattern anywhere on the sweater (such as polka dots, stripes, plaid, chevron, etc.)
- 1 Word or Phrase
- 2 of Your Favorite Colors
- 5 Graphics/illustrations that represent who you are (your favorite place, your goals, your favorite animal, etc.)
- Your Birth Year (or a year that is significant to you)
- Your First or Last Name
- Your sweater must be entirely colored.

Grading Rubric

Overall Appearance	Your sweater is detailed and neat. The overall appearance is creative and aesthetically pleasing.	10 Points
Content	You chose text and illustrations that highlight your personality. Your story is clear and easy to understand.	5 Points
Graphics	The graphic elements are colored and are incorporated seamlessly into the work.	5 Points

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Design your **PREVIEW**
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own sweater!

Be creative and design a
sweater that represents who
you are and the things you
appreciate in life!



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Requirements

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- Your First **or** Last Name
- Your sweater must be entirely colored.



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PREVIEW
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Pattern Ideas
Design your own sweater!

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Polka Dots
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Stripes/Lines

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Plaid
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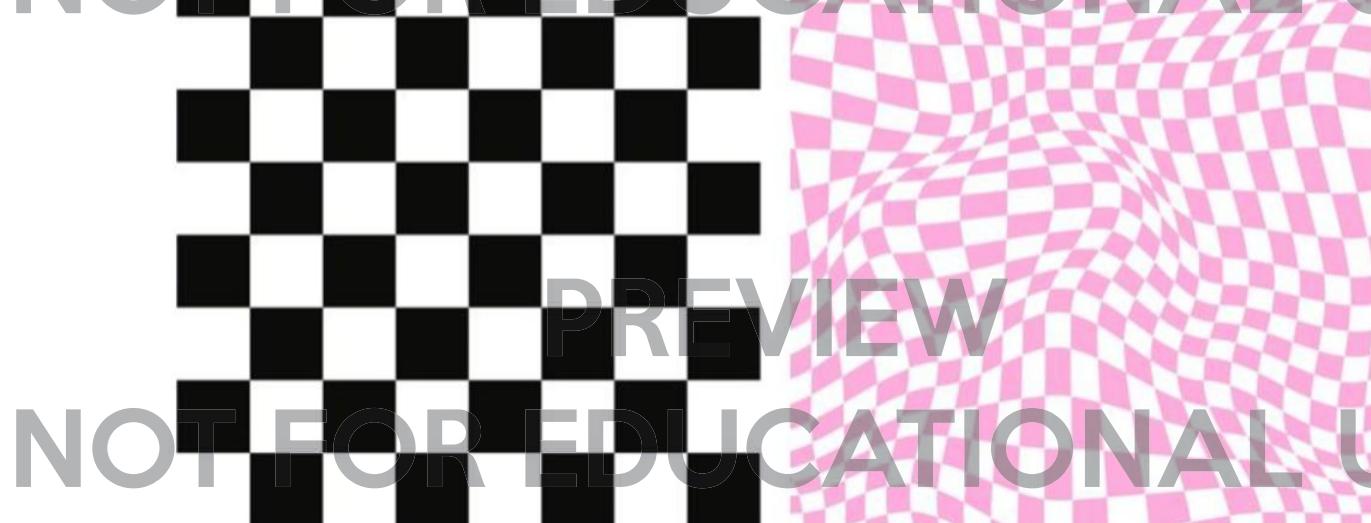


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Checkered

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Animal Print



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Southwestern

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Chevron



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Geometric Shapes



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Paisley/Floral

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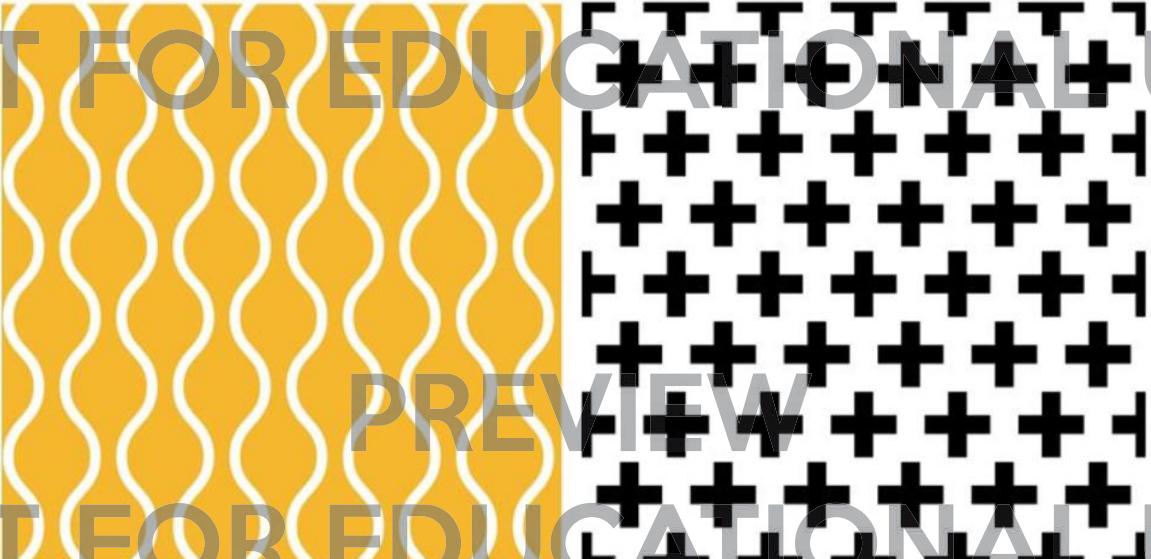


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Other



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Name: _____

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Name: Charlotte Jones

