



## Orientation

Ensure that you have read about using the plan in the Program Guide.

### Book summary

Read the following summary to the student.

Steve doesn't have much time to write a Valentine's message for Lara. His stepbrother, Nat, suggests that he writes Lara a poem – but Steve discovers he's an extremely bad poet.

### Introduction

Foster interest and activate the student's background knowledge. Be concise – focus on motivating and involving the student. Encourage prediction by using the text and illustrations on the cover of the book. Discuss new vocabulary and remind the student to use the glossary (when applicable). Also remind the student to ask him/herself questions before, during and after the reading.

Read the title aloud. Discuss the double meaning of "write" and why the author has used it. Explain that "right" and "write" are homophones.

Tell the student that the author uses Valentine's Day and humor to tell this story. What makes a good Valentine's poem? What kind of language should it use? Is it better if it rhymes? Encourage the student to think about how Lara would react to Steve's poems.

Explain to the student that this story is written in the first person. This allows us to find out what Steve is thinking, how he is feeling, and to hear his "voice."

## Conferencing

### Check how well the student reads

When you are conferencing, the student reads all or part of the book to you. Then:

- praise, pause, and prompt appropriately;
- check for accuracy (by counting mistakes) and fluency;
- check for understanding by using one or more of the following methods:
  - asking the comprehension questions provided and any others that seem necessary;
  - asking the student to retell the story in their own words;
  - asking questions about and discussing aspects of the story, such as the theme, plot, main ideas, sequence and characters;
  - encouraging the student to confirm the predictions they made during the orientation.

### Decide what the student does next

Next recommend that the student:

- practices some more on the same book, with or without the audio;
- completes one of the activities provided that is related to the book;
- practices with another book from the same level; or
- is assessed for promotion to the next level.

## Comprehension questions

1. What did the story tell you about Lara?
2. What was Steve thinking and feeling?
3. Why do you think Steve was so worried?
4. What makes this book funny?
5. What advice would you have given Steve?

## Answers to the Comprehension questions

1. Accept any of the following: Lara's full name is Lara Ali; she has brown eyes; she laughs; she plays with her hair.
2. Accept either of the following: he was feeling rushed and stressed; he wanted to write a Valentine's message but needed help.
3. He really likes Lara and wants her to think he's cool.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.

## Supporting English Language Learners

The following are suggestions for optional lessons to take with your English language learners. See the overview chart in the Program Guide for a summary of the text features of this book.

### Purpose

Analyzing a text and making inferences

### Introduce the concept and practice

Analyzing a character's actions helps the student to develop a sense of empathy and allows them to make inferences about the character's feelings.

When the student has read the book, direct them to page 3. Ask them to reread from "I could feel a blush ..." to the bottom of the page. Help the student to identify action verbs that describe what Steve did, for example, "rushed," "grabbed," "started scribbling," "tapped," "stared," and "threw." Write the action verbs on chart paper. Ask the student to read the list and to think about how Steve was feeling (stressed or under pressure). How do the action verbs help them to infer this? Find "grabbed" and "started scribbling" and ask the student what words the author might have used if Steve was not feeling under pressure. Together, you could analyze other parts of the book to infer how Steve is feeling.





Name: ..... Date: .....

Introduction: Steve doesn't have much time to write a Valentine's message for Lara. His stepbrother, Nat, suggests that he writes Lara a poem – but Steve discovers he's an extremely bad poet.

Errors  
M S

I checked the clock. I had 50 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ I had to leave \_\_\_\_\_ school. I had only \_\_\_\_\_ minutes to write an \_\_\_\_\_ Valentine's message for Lara Ali. \_\_\_\_\_ stared at what \_\_\_\_\_ written so far: "To Lara Ali \_\_\_\_\_ Steve Agostini. Happy Valentine's \_\_\_\_\_." How uncool was \_\_\_\_\_? I tossed my attempt \_\_\_\_\_ the trash and headed \_\_\_\_\_ my stepbrother's room. Nat \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ him what kind of Valentine \_\_\_\_\_ would send to Abbey. \_\_\_\_\_ – he's dating Janna \_\_\_\_\_. Or maybe it's Hayley. \_\_\_\_\_ couldn't keep up with Nat's \_\_\_\_\_. "Hey, Nat?" I \_\_\_\_\_ casually, leaning against the \_\_\_\_\_, "What kind of card \_\_\_\_\_ you send Hayley for Valentine's \_\_\_\_\_?" Nat glanced up \_\_\_\_\_ pulling on his tennis \_\_\_\_\_. A smile lifted the \_\_\_\_\_ of his mouth. So much for acting casual.

Accuracy Chart (Exact word replacement only)

Words Entered	Score	Level
More than 11 correct		Independent
10 or 11 correct		Instructional
Fewer than 10 correct		Frustration

Errors

M = Meaning (makes sense) \_\_\_\_\_ S = Syntax (sounds right) \_\_\_\_\_

Heard  Seen  Unseen

Comments: .....





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I had only 50 minutes to write an awesome Valentine’s message for Lara Ali before I had to leave for school. I stared at what I’d written so far. “To Lara Ali from Steve Agostini. Happy Valentine’s Day.” How uncool was that? I tossed my attempt in the trash and headed for my stepbrother’s room.

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“What kind of card would you send Hayley for Valentine’s Day?” I asked him. “Who wants to know?” he asked. “A friend,” I said. “Your *friend* could attempt one of those stupid poems,” he said. I rushed back to my room. There were 40 minutes to go. “Steve!” called Mom. “Breakfast!”

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I paid no attention to her. I grabbed another piece of paper and started scribbling, “I look into your eyes of blue and” – then I remembered. Lara Ali has these beautiful BROWN eyes! Then I wrote: *I look into your eyes of brown, And know that I will soon fall down.*

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I threw that piece of paper in the trash, too. I’d try the lovey-dovey stuff. I contemplated again. I scribbled again, but it wasn’t lovey-dovey. It was barfy-warfy, so I threw that attempt on top of the rest. There were 30 minutes to go.

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I raced back to Nat again. “Any other ideas for my friend?” I asked. “What else would you write on a Valentine to Hayley?” “You have to level with girls,” he said. “and show them some honesty. Girls also like poems about their name.” I had 20 minutes to write a poem before I had to leave.

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I tried, but I was no poet. The next minute there was a fourth piece of paper in the trash. With just one piece of paper and one minute left, I wrote: *To Lara. I hope you have a really excellent Valentine’s Day. From Steve.* I showed it to Nat. “Would you send a Valentine like that to Hayley?” I asked. “No,” he said. “I’m dating Terri now.”

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Name: ..... Date: .....

Words can be found in these directions:



The letter in each square can only be used in one word.

a	g	a	i	n	s	t	r	e	t	c	h	k	n	o	w
e	s	c	h	o	o	l	s	m	i	l	e	y	o	u	r
x	d	d	e	c	i	s	i	o	n	t	r	u	t	h	e
p	a	i	b	f	i	s	b	r	i	l	l	i	a	n	t
e	l	h	c	e	r	n	t	g	m	o	u	t	h	w	l
r	w	o	a	t	a	i	s	o	e	p	p	t	g	e	e
i	a	n	n	j	i	u	e	t	p	n	a	i	o	r	a
m	y	e	o	m	u	o	t	n	e	p	u	p	e	e	v
e	s	s	t	i	g	i	n	i	d	a	e	i	e	c	e
n	c	t	h	n	o	a	c	a	f	t	d	d	n	r	e
t	e	y	e	u	m	n	s	e	r	u	r	o	m	e	o
u	r	i	r	t	w	r	o	n	g	y	l	y	f	y	n
n	e	s	e	e	h	a	d	s	a	t	t	e	m	p	t
t	a	m	o	m	e	n	t	i	b	e	l	i	e	v	e
i	l	s	t	u	p	i	d	n	w	i	t	h	o	u	t
l	s	t	a	r	t	e	d	a	w	r	i	t	t	e	n

**Words to find:**

- |           |            |        |         |         |
|-----------|------------|--------|---------|---------|
| again     | dictionary | is     | on      | to      |
| always    | experiment | juice  | paper   | truth   |
| an        | friend     | know   | piece   | try     |
| another   | genuine    | leave  | school  | until   |
| attempt   | go         | minute | smile   | were    |
| beautiful | had        | moment | started | without |
| believe   | honesty    | mouth  | stopped | written |
| brilliant | in         | my     | stretch | wrong   |
| cereal    | instead    | of     | stupid  | your    |
| decision  |            |        |         |         |

Use the letters that are left to make the word that tells what Steve was writing for Lara. ....





- ★ Spin the numbered spinner.
- ★ The highest number starts.
- ★ You need to spin the exact number to move onto the END square.

**START**  
 You have only fifty minutes to write an awesome Valentine's message.

1

2

3

19

20

21

22 You have 30 minutes to go. Spin again. Go forward that number.

4 You write an uncool message and toss it in the trash. Name two numbers. If you spin one of them, go back to 1.

18 You try writing some lovey-dovey stuff, but it's barfy-warfy. Go back four spaces.

**END**  
 Nat says he wouldn't send a Valentine like that to Hayley. He's dating Terri now.

23 Nat tells you to show some honesty in your Valentine. Miss a turn.

5

17

30

24

6 You head for Nat's room to ask what kind of Valentine he'd give Hayley. Go on to 8.

16

29

25 You hurtle into the kitchen and eat your breakfast. Go forward four spaces.

7

15

28 Nat tells you that your message sounds genuine. Go on to 30.

27

26

8

14

13 Your mom calls you for breakfast, but you pay no attention. Spin again. Go back that number.

12

11

10

9 Nat tells you your "friend" could try one of those stupid poems. Go back to 5.





Name: ..... Date: .....

Imagine Steve giving Lara the Valentine. Write a conversation between them that shows Lara's feelings and Steve's response.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Write on the back of this page if you need more space.



Use the appropriate capital letters, punctuation, and spacing to show who is speaking.

