

Names:

“Charles” by Shirley Jackson

**Group Work Questions—Reading Comprehension**

1) How does Laurie’s mother express to the reader that Laurie was growing up?

2) How do you think Laurie’s mom felt about Laurie growing up (making inferences)?

3-5) Provide 3 examples of Laurie’s bad behavior at home:

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6-10) List 5 examples of Charles’s bad behavior at school:

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11-13) Provide 3 ways Charles’s teacher punishes him:

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14) How does the kindergarten teacher reward Charles for his good behavior?

15) Why does Laurie’s mother miss the first PTA meeting?

## Understanding Literary Elements

- 16) Describe the setting of the story:
- 17) How does the use of two different places as the setting impact the story?
- 18) How does the story being told from Laurie's mother's point of view impact the story?
- 19) What is the conflict a character must overcome?
- 20) How does Laurie's mother describe Laurie at the beginning of the story? (What do you think about Laurie after reading the first paragraph?)
- 21) How does this impact the reader's view of Laurie?
- 22) What is the theme (or moral) of the story?

**Making inferences—When we make inferences, we are making educated guesses. The guesses are not right or wrong as long as you have evidence from the text to support your guess.**

- 23) As the reader, what can we infer about Laurie's mother's expectations of Laurie? Why?
- 24) Do you think Laurie's mother would have missed the first PTA meeting if she knew her son was the one behaving poorly? **Why or why not?**
- 25) How does Laurie respond when his dad asks, "What are they going to do about Charles, do you suppose?"
- 26) Based on this answer do you think Laurie is concerned with the consequences? Why or why not?
- 27) How do we know Laurie's father is not as concerned about Charles as Laurie's mother?
- 28) At the end of the story, Shirley Jackson provides a surprise ending. However, if we look at the beginning, we see **there are hints and clues** to the fact that Laurie could be Charles. What is this type of literary element called?

## Using Context Clues

**Use the surrounding text to help provide a definition for the underlined words**

29) During the third and fourth weeks it looked like a reformation in Charles; Laurie reported grimly at lunch at lunch on Thursday of the third week, “Charles was so good today the teacher gave him an apple.”

Reformation—

30) Based on the previous sentence, how does Laurie feel about Charles behaving better?  
(Hint: Think about the adverb used to describe the way Laurie reported the news)

31) “With the third week of kindergarten Charles was an institution in our family [.].”:

Institution—

32) “You know what Charles did today?” Laurie demanded at the lunch table, in a voice slightly awed. “He told a little girl to say a word and she said it and the teacher washed her mouth out with soap and Charles laughed.”

Awed—