Mr. Chapman said, “Class, I would like you to meet Benjamin Franklin Thomas Edison Wright.”

I thought to myself, “What kind of name is that? This kid must think he’s cool!”

Then things went from bad to worse. Mr. Chapman sat Benjamin Edison Franklin . . . whatever, in the chair right next to me! Yuck!

I sighed. “So much for a perfect year.”

I’ve listened to my child read the passage, and we’ve discussed the questions.

Date __________ Signed ________________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): ________
Everything was perfect until last Wednesday. It was 10:00 a.m., way after the tardy bell rang, when this kid with spiky hair and glasses walked in. He was no ordinary kid.

Questions to talk about:
1. What were some of the things that made Maya think it was going to be a perfect year?
2. What was different about the new kid?
I looked around. The girl with the beads in her hair scowled when Mr. Chapman said that I had lived all around the world. I thought, “I wish I was just plain Ben Wright who had never moved and never lived anywhere but the Bronx.”

Then things went from bad to worse. Mr. Chapman sat me right next to the girl with the beads in her hair. Yuck!

Questions to talk about:
1. What does it mean when it says Maya was scowling?
2. Why did Ben say, “Yuck,” at the end of the chapter?

I’ve listened to my child read the passage, and we’ve discussed the questions.

Date ________ Signed ____________________________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): ________

Please listen to your child read the story for accuracy and expression. You may wish to have your child read a second time to strengthen skills.
Hi, my name is Ben. I’m seven years old, and I’m in second grade. My dad, my brother, and I just moved to the Bronx. Another school (my sixth), another teacher (my sixth), another class (my sixth), another desk (my sixth). I’ve lived all over the world, but I hoped that this would be the last move for us.

My teacher, Mr. Chapman, said, “Class, I would like you to meet Benjamin Franklin Thomas Edison Wright. Benjamin is named after not one but three inventors. Ben’s dad is a very important computer scientist.”

I thought to myself, “So much for the perfect school. I wish I was just plain Ben Wright.”
Without stopping to think, Maya blurted, “Wow! Way cool! Way cool, Benjamin, Edison, Wright, Jones, or whoever you are.”

Ben said, “I’m Ben, just plain Ben.”
A Perfect Year
Chapter 3 • No Ordinary Room

In Apartment 9B, Maya sat pouting. Maya’s mom said, “Hey, Moody Maya, please go get your little brother. He’s playing downstairs with the boy in Apartment 8B. The family just moved in.”

In Apartment 8B, the doorbell buzzed. Bzzz, bzzz. Ben pulled himself off the couch. He shuffled across the floor and opened the door. Ben and Maya stood there speechless, glaring at each other.

Then at exactly the same time, Maya and Ben shouted, “What are you doing here?”

Ben said, “What do you mean? I live here.”

Just then Maya’s little brother, BJ, came bounding from another room. BJ tugged at Maya, “Come see the computer room!”

Maya hesitated. Then she went with BJ into the other room. Ben’s little brother sat at one computer, and a man with big round glasses and spiky hair sat at another computer.

Maya’s mouth dropped open. She was amazed. This was no ordinary room. One, two, three, four, five . . . There were five computers in the room!

Questions to talk about:
1. Where does this story take place?
2. Who did Maya find when she went to Apartment 8B?
3. What did Maya’s little brother want her to see?

Note: Numbers are for school use only.
“Oh,” said Maya. “I bet it’s Mom.”

Ben and Maya went to the door. Maya’s mom asked, “What are you doing?”

Maya said, “Sorry, Mom. This is Ben—my friend Ben—just plain Ben.”

Questions to talk about:
1. By the end of this chapter, were Maya and Ben still mad at each other?
2. Why weren’t Maya and Ben upset anymore?
3. What do you think will happen next?

I’ve listened to my child read the passage, and we’ve discussed the questions.

Date __________ Signed _____________________________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): __________

Please listen to your child read the story for accuracy and expression. You may wish to have your child read a second time to strengthen skills.
A Perfect Year

Chapter 4 • Earth on the Web

Ben’s dad didn’t look up from the computer. Ben’s dad typed—click, click, click.

The screen went black. Little stars appeared. “Whoooosh,” said Maya as the screen zoomed in on Earth. “Look at that! It’s Earth.” Maya was amazed.

Click, click, click. Ben’s dad typed an address. Whoosh! The earth turned. The camera zoomed in. Maya exclaimed, “It’s North America! There’s the United States.”

“Look, we’re zooming in on the city,” Maya blurted. “There’s the Bronx. Wow! There’s our apartment building!”

Ben said, “Wow, it’s just like being a bird in the sky. Check that out.”

The kids crowded around the computer screen.

Ben said, “We just got back from England. Can we go to England on the computer?”

Ben’s dad scratched his head and started to type into the computer when the doorbell buzzed.

Questions to talk about:
1. Where does this chapter take place?
2. What were three things the kids saw on the computer?

Questions to talk about:
1. Why did Ben want to go to England on the computer?
2. Have you traveled to England or to any other countries besides the one you live in?
By 4:00 p.m., we had munched through a bag of banana chips, three apples, and six cheese sticks. We had used up a box of crayons. We ended up with maps of:

1. Our planet, Earth
2. Our continent, North America
3. Our country, the United States

Amazing! Are we good or what? Perfect project. Perfect snacks. Perfect friends.

Second grade is perfect after all!

Questions to talk about:
1. What did the friends make?
2. Why was second grade perfect after all?

I’ve listened to my child read the passage, and we’ve discussed the questions.

Date ___________ Signed __________________________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): __________
A Perfect Year

Chapter 5 • Perfect or What?

It’s me, Maya, again. Ben, Ana, and I all hang out together now. Ana and I still have beads braided into our hair, and Ben still has spiky hair, and we all get along.

We all play soccer. My mom helped Ben learn how to dribble the ball.

Sometimes we go to Ana’s. She has a yard that we can play in.

Sometimes we hang out at Ben’s. He’s got all the cool computers.

The three of us like to work on projects together. Mr. Chapman is teaching us about maps.

On Saturday morning, Ana, Ben and I met to work on a map project. We needed to do only one map, but we got carried away.

Questions to talk about:
1. Who is this chapter about?
2. What do the kids like to do together?
3. How can you tell Maya, Ben, and Ana are friends?
An eel is different from most fish because it does not have scales. Its skin is covered in slime. Eels can have stripes or spots. They can be almost any color.

Many eels like to live in holes in rocks and reefs. You might see only its head sticking out. Eels look mean because they always show their many sharp teeth. But they are not looking for people to bite! They are just breathing.

Questions to talk about:
1. Describe an eel.
2. Have you ever seen an eel?

I’ve listened to my child read the passage, and we’ve discussed the questions.

Date ____________ Signed ________________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): ________
**Eel in the Fish Tank**

My name is Eel. I live in the fish tank in Mr. Chapman’s second grade classroom. Every school day, a girl with beads in her hair sits at the desk next to me. She’s cool. She talks to me softly. She never taps on the glass, and she scowls at kids who do. Best of all, she feeds me.

I’m glad she’s the eel feeder. I hope she gets to keep her job all year. Last year, I almost starved because the eel feeder forgot. Then another eel feeder gave me too much food, and I got sick. The girl with beads in her hair gives me just the right amount.

Some of the kids are frightened of me. I’m big and slimy, and I have lots of sharp teeth. I open and close my mouth all the time, but that’s just the way I breathe. The girl with beads in her hair understands me. She’s not scared. She gives me respect.

**What’s an Eel?**

An eel is a fish. Most fish have lots of fins. They have fins on their back and on their tail. They have fins on their belly and one on each side of their head. But eels are long and thin. Most of them have only one long fin that goes all the way down their long back. They swim by moving their body from side to side in an “s” shape.

### Questions to talk about:
1. Who do you think the girl with beads in her hair is?
2. Why does Eel open and close his mouth?

### Questions to talk about:
1. Describe an eel.
2. Would you like an eel for a pet? Why or why not?