Like most eight-year-olds, Daniel needed permission from his parents to go most places. The trouble was, Daniel’s parents wouldn’t give permission for Daniel to go to Africa or the Great Barrier Reef. Mrs. Wong said Daniel could travel the world when he was grown up.

Questions to talk about:
1. How old was Daniel?
2. What was Daniel’s problem?

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

Date __________ Signed ____________________________________________
Optional Second Reading (initial here): __________
When You Are Grown Up

Chapter 1 • Daniel Wong: World Traveler!

Daniel Wong loved to look at maps and read about interesting places. On his bookshelf he had a complete set of Magic Tree House books, a picture book of Africa, a book all about Hawaii, and a book about Australia. Above his bed hung a map of New York City, and in a shoebox beneath his bed he kept three old bus tickets from the Bronx his father had given him. Even though his father had told him the bus tickets couldn’t be used again, Daniel thought they might still come in handy.

Daniel was the sort of boy who kept a lot of stuff because he thought it might be useful someday. If you emptied Daniel’s pockets out, you would find many treasures.

Last Tuesday you would have found four green marbles, two red marbles, an unopened piece of bubble gum, a brown shoelace, six paper clips, a small note pad, and a pencil.

Daniel wanted to do many things, but the thing he wanted to do most of all was travel the world. He wanted to be DANIEL WONG: WORLD TRAVELER! He wanted to go to Africa and see zebras running across the grassy plains. He wanted to go to the Great Barrier Reef and swim with an ancient sea turtle. He wanted to wear a vest with lots of pockets where he could put all his stuff. Plus, he wanted to eat some cool food he had only read about. Daniel liked trying different kinds of food, though his favorite food in the world was his mother’s chocolate cake.

Questions to talk about:
1. Who is the story about?
2. What kinds of things did Daniel keep on his bookshelf?

Note: Numbers are for school use only.
After school, Daniel raced home to see if he had grown any taller. He went to his bedroom and stood beside the wall by the door. Then he took out his pencil and made a mark where the top of his head was. He grabbed a ruler off his desk and started to measure.

His ruler was only 12 inches long so he had to make several marks and then do some addition on his small note pad, which was OK because Daniel was good at math. After doing the math and re-checking the numbers, Daniel found out he was exactly 49 1/2 inches tall.

At first, Daniel was very excited because 49 1/2 seemed like a lot of inches. Then he realized that he hadn’t written down how tall he was at the start of the day. “Rats!” thought Daniel. He would have to start over.

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

Date __________ Signed ____________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): __________
When You Are Grown Up

Chapter 2 • Stretching Out

Daniel’s mother told him that he could travel the world when he was grown up. So Daniel spent the next several afternoons trying to grow up. He thought that if he became taller, he would be grown up.

He was not the tallest boy in his class at school, but certainly not the shortest either. He thought he was in fine shape but not yet grown up enough to go to Africa or the Great Barrier Reef, according to his mother.

In PE class, Daniel spent several extra minutes stretching out. He got his friends Ana and Ralph to pull on his arms from opposite sides. They pulled and pulled until Daniel told them to stop because he thought his eyes might pop out. It would do no good to get all the way to Africa or the Great Barrier Reef and not be able to see anything because he had no eyes.

After Ana and Ralph had stopped pulling on his arms, Daniel’s arms felt longer. When he asked Ana and Ralph if he seemed taller, Ana said, “I’m not sure, Daniel, but your arms do seem redder.”

Questions to talk about:
1. How did Daniel think he could become grown up?
2. What did Daniel have his friends do?
Then he’d get right back up on the monkey bars and hang some more. Daniel got tired of hanging by his arms, so he switched to hanging by his legs upside down. This turned out to be easier than hanging by his arms, but it made him feel dizzy watching the kids play kickball upside down. Daniel closed his eyes and started humming to himself.

When one of the teachers, Mrs. Martinez, asked Daniel what he was doing, Daniel replied, still hanging upside down from the monkey bars, “I want to go to Africa!”

Questions to talk about:
1. 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): ________
When You Are Grown Up

Chapter 3 • Hanging Around

The next day Daniel decided not to have his friends pull his arms. His arms didn’t feel longer any more, and besides, Daniel didn’t like the feeling of being pulled apart. He had come up with a new plan that wouldn’t hurt so much. Daniel remembered watching a little boy on TV try to get taller by hanging from the monkey bars. The plan hadn’t worked for the boy on TV, but Daniel thought the plan still sounded pretty good. Maybe it would work for him.

At recess when his friend Larry offered to play jacks with Daniel, Daniel said no. When his friend Antonia asked if Daniel wanted to make a sand castle, Daniel said no.

Mr. Wong had tried to teach Daniel about manners a couple of years ago after Daniel had told Mr. Wong’s boss that he looked like a pufferfish. So when Franklin asked Daniel if he wanted to pretend they were space dinosaurs, Daniel said, “No, thanks. I’ve got to grow up.”

Daniel spent the entire recess trying to hang from the monkey bars. It was hard work, hanging on the bars like a monkey. After a couple of minutes of hanging, Daniel’s arms would get tired and he’d let go.

Questions to talk about:
1. Why didn’t Daniel want his friends to pull his arms again?
2. What was he going to try next?
3. Do you think his new idea will work? Why or why not?
Daniel thought this was a fine idea. The trouble was that Daniel had very short hair, so even if he could make it stand straight up, it would make him only a little taller.

Daniel needed to get longer hair fast. He knew that hair did not grow very quickly, and besides, his mother cut his hair every month.

Daniel paced his room thinking about his problem. He often paced when he had to solve a difficult problem. He did his best thinking while pacing.

Questions to talk about:
1. How do you think Daniel can make his hair taller?
2. Why did Daniel pace?
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): ________
When You Are Grown Up

Chapter 4 • Staying the Same

After school, Daniel raced home once more. In his bedroom he stood beside the same wall and made another mark where the top of his head was. Daniel looked to see where the mark was. Unbelievable! The mark was at the same place as yesterday. Daniel was no taller than before, no closer to going to Africa.

Daniel sat on his bed for a long time thinking about ways to get taller. Daniel had remembered going to a basketball game where all the players were tall. In fact, some of them were giants! Maybe he could play basketball to get taller. Then Daniel remembered dribbling the basketball into his friend Cedric’s garage door. Daniel had to get five stitches on the top of his head. Basketball was out of the question.

Thinking about the top of his head gave Daniel an idea. Maybe he didn’t have to make his body taller. After all, he was measuring his height by the top of his head. And what was on top of Daniel’s head? His hair! Daniel thought that if he could somehow get taller hair, he would be taller!

Questions to talk about:
1. Why did Daniel race home?
2. How did Daniel see how tall he was?

1. Daniel decided that basketball was out of the question. What does out of the question mean?
2. Why was basketball out of the question?
Then Daniel carefully taped the pipe cleaners to his headband so that the ends stood straight up. When Daniel was finished he had a new crown of tall hair. He put it on and admired his new hair in the mirror. The black pipe cleaner and black headband matched his black hair perfectly! Daniel stood by the wall and measured to the top of his hair. Daniel was a full four inches taller!

Questions to talk about:
1. What did Daniel do with the pipe cleaners?
2. Did this idea work?

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

Date __________ Signed _________________________________

Optional Second Reading (initial here): ________

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When You Are Grown Up

Chapter 5 • A Great Idea

Suddenly Daniel looked up at the map of New York City on his wall. It made him think of the old bus tickets from the Bronx, which he kept beneath his bed in the . . . shoebox! Daniel quickly grabbed the shoebox from under his bed and opened the lid.

Besides the old bus tickets from the Bronx his father had given him, Daniel kept many other things in his shoebox. There they were—pipe cleaners left over from a school art project.

Daniel grabbed the pipe cleaners. He pulled all the black ones out of the package. Fortunately, he had used only the red and green pipe cleaners for the school art project.

From his desk drawer, he took out black construction paper, a pair of scissors, and sticky tape. Daniel knew exactly what to do.

Daniel cut a long strip of paper two inches thick. From this strip he made a headband by carefully wrapping it around his head and taping it.

Then he grabbed all of the pipe cleaners. He counted 18 pieces. He measured each pipe cleaner with his ruler. They were all exactly six inches long.

Questions to talk about:
1. What do you think Daniel is doing?
2. Do you think his idea will work?
After dinner Mrs. Wong tried to cheer up Daniel with some chocolate cake. That did make him feel better.

Then Mr. Wong told Daniel that maybe during summer vacation, Daniel, Mr. Wong, and Mrs. Wong would all drive to the Grand Canyon! This was exciting news. It would be the first big adventure for DANIEL WONG: WORLD TRAVELER!

Questions to talk about:
1. What cheered Daniel up?
2. Do you think Daniel reached his goal? Why or why not?
3. Would you like to be a WORLD TRAVELER? If so, where would you want to go?

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

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.
When You Are Grown Up

Chapter 6 • Big Hair

At dinner that evening Daniel wore his new tall hair and proudly told his parents that he was grown up and soon he would be traveling the world. Daniel explained about his new hair and how he had been trying to get taller so he would allowed to be DANIEL WONG: WORLD TRAVELER!

First, he would go to Africa, then to Australia to the Great Barrier Reef. He would need a vest with lots of pockets and lots of snacks.

After hearing this, Mr. Wong began laughing. His face turned red. He laughed so hard and for so long that Daniel was afraid he might never stop. Mrs. Wong tried not to hurt Daniel’s feelings, but she laughed a little too.

After several minutes, Mr. Wong finally stopped laughing. Mrs. Wong explained that when she had said Daniel could travel the world when he was grown up, she had meant he could go when he was older, not taller.

Daniel took off his crown of tall hair. He was a little upset that his parents had laughed at him, but after a while he thought it was a little funny too. Still, Daniel felt frustrated. He would not be going to Africa or the Great Barrier Reef anytime soon.

Questions to talk about:
1. Why did Mr. Wong start laughing?
2. How do you think Daniel feels?

Questions to talk about:
1. Have you ever gotten mixed up like Daniel did?
Penelope’s brother was right. Penelope’s body had puffed into a huge ball. Spines stuck out through her clothes. Penelope couldn’t believe what was happening. Her eyes were as big as saucers. She was speechless!

“Oh my,” said her mother. “You are a prickly pufferfish. You got what you wished for!”

Penelope said, “I am sorry for being so prickly. I will never be grumpy again. I love my hair. I love my clothes. I love my brother. I love being me.”

Poof! Penelope was back to her normal self. And from that day on, she was never prickly again.

Well, almost never.

Questions to talk about:
1. What happened to Penelope? Why?
2. How did Penelope get back to normal?
3. What lesson did you learn from this story?

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.
Prickly Penelope

“Wake up, Penelope,” called Mom. “It’s time for school.”

“Not yet,” moaned Penelope. She slowly rolled out of bed, changed into her school clothes, and looked in the mirror.

Penelope grumbled, “I don’t like my flat hair. I wish it were spiky. I don’t like these boring clothes. I wish they were flashy!”

Penelope grabbed her backpack and trudged down the stairs. She sat down at the table and stared at her breakfast. “That oatmeal is boring. It is a bowl of goop. I want oatmeal with spunk. I want a bowl of spiky flakes that hop and pop. I want a meal with pizzazz.”

Penelope’s older brother bounded into the room. “Good morning,” he said cheerfully.

“What are you so happy about?” snapped Penelope.

Mom said, “Penelope, you need to stop being so grumpy. You are almost prickly.”

“Ha! She is prickly—Prickly Penelope,” said her brother. Then he laughed.

“Prickly!” said Penelope. “I like being prickly. If I could, I would be prickly like a pufferfish!” said Penelope. “I could blow up and prickle you.”

All of a sudden the oatmeal started hopping and popping in the bowl. Penelope’s body started to tingle. Her flat hair turned spiky. Her boring clothes turned flashy. Penelope’s eyes bulged and her mouth opened wide. She took a huge gulp of air. Poof! She puffed up like a pufferfish. Sharp silver spikes started to poke through her clothes.

“Prickly Penelope is a pufferfish!” yelled her brother.

Questions to talk about:
1. Describe Penelope.
2. What else have you read about a pufferfish?