

# THE FIXERS

## TEACHER'S GUIDE AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1st-grade Reading Level)



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## How to Use this Teacher’s Guide to The Fixers Series

The Fixers is designed to give older teen and adult struggling readers an edgier, higher-interest reading experience. With comic-book-style covers by New Zealand artist Samantha Asri to attract readers and support the text, these books are precisely leveled and suited for use at either the independent or the instructional level. Each book has 70-75% decodable text and 20-25% sight words (Fry 200 and Dolch Preprimer-First Grade word lists), with no more than 5% challenge words. Figurative language and idioms are minimized. Text is highly cohesive (that is, the text makes connections for the reader), because we do not expect struggling readers to both decode and make jumps of reasoning.

**For Independent Level:** If your student can decode one- and two-syllable phonetically regular words (see our Sound Out Skill Levels chart for details:

<http://www.highnoonbooks.com/soundoutchart>

and has mastered the Fry 200 and Dolch Preprimer-First Grade word lists, these books may be used for independent reading. You may choose to familiarize your student with the challenge words for each book (see below) beforehand. The challenge words include words that may not be phonetically decodable at 1st-grade level (“computer,” “pizza”), or are higher-order concepts (“Officer”), higher-level sight words (“friend,” “school”), or proper nouns (“Lena”).

**For Instructional Level:** This series can be used for either whole-class reading or paired reading. We suggest pre-reading exercises: Graphic organizers (such as story maps) can be very helpful to familiarize students with setting, characters, and plot. (High Noon Books offers The Teacher’s Big Book of Graphic Organizers, and there are also many downloadable examples of graphic organizers on the Internet.) Students should be introduced to the challenge words and can be asked to predict characters or action based on the front covers, interior illustrations, and chapter titles. The comprehension questions should be presented with scaffolding, such as reading the questions aloud as the students follow along, as a Think-Pair-Share activity, or as a class discussion.

## Meeting the Common Core Standards

When your students have finished reading a book, you can assess comprehension using the questions, answers, and discussion topics for each book below. If students are asked for quotes from the books, they are directed to the particular chapter that contains the answers.

We have included correspondences between comprehension questions and the new Common Core State Standards (commonly referred to as “CCRs,” College and Career Readiness) . Although The Fixers books are at High Noon Books’ 1st-grade reading level, their content is aimed at readers age 14 and up. Therefore, comprehension questions cover selected Common Core Standards for a range of levels from Grade 1 through Grade 4.

The full text of the standards can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/>

Older students may enjoy doing the advanced group exercises provided below the comprehension questions. These will require teacher preparation.

**Note:** We have included only a few questions that ask the reader to make inferences (beginning in the Grade 4 standards), and we minimize the use of idioms and figurative language in the Fixers stories. We generally do not expect struggling readers to meet these standards, as their cognitive resources are largely occupied by the decoding process at this reading level. However, you as the teacher are the best judge of your students’ capabilities. If you have students who can meet these higher-level standards, we encourage you to compose your own questions to maximize their progress through the standards.

## Which CCRs Can Students Fulfill with The Fixers Comprehension Questions?

The comprehension questions correlate with the following Common Core Standards.

Standards are coded as follows:

RL = Reading/Literature K/1/2, etc. = Grade      1/2/3, etc. = Standard Number

Example: RL.1.1 = Reading/Literature, Grade 1, Standard 1

Reading: Literature K-5

**Key ideas and details:**

- RL.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
- RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

**Craft and structure:**

- RL.1.4 Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
- RL.2.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

**Integration of knowledge and ideas:**

- RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
- RL.1.9 Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
- RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- RL.3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).
- RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**Comprehension Questions**

Note: The answers given below are not exhaustive. If students give other answers, we leave it to your professional judgment to determine whether they are correct.

**Advanced Exercises – All Books**

**Perform the story as a play.** Tell students that they can make a story vivid by reading it aloud as if it were a play. Note that plays include characters who speak dialogue; and that they often have narrators, people who are not involved in the action but who provide information about what is happening. Using examples from the Fixers books, show students how to recognize narration as well as character dialogue. Then assign a stronger reader or readers to take the part of the narrator, and choose others to take the parts of the story characters. Have the narrator read the text of the story, pausing to let the appropriate characters read the dialogue. Remind characters that their dialogue will be in quotation marks in the story. As they read, encourage students to use gestures and tones that their characters would use.

**Write your own ending.** Tell students that a plot is the series of events that make up a story, and that the climax is the exciting or suspenseful event that occurs right before the story's ending. The heroes are trapped—will they escape? Will justice be served, or will the bad guys get away? Then have students find the climax of the story, and write a new ending to follow it. Guide them to brainstorm ideas for alternate endings, and then choose the one they like best. Use questions such as the following to help them plan new dialogue for the characters: “What would Lena say to that?” “How would Shane feel when that happened?” “Could the Kings gang members change and be sorry for what they did?”

**Write new dialogue.** Urban students familiar with the type of setting used in The Fixers may be interested in discussing how realistic the character portrayals are. Select two characters in one of the books for analysis, and focus on a few specific scenes. If students contend that the characters are not true to life, have them write new dialogue for the scene or scenes.

# Missing

## Challenge Words

camera  
cameras  
cold  
computer  
computers  
door  
friend  
Lena  
Lena's  
looked  
Mr.  
Mrs.  
Officer  
officers  
police  
school  
talk  
video  
wanted

## Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Dawn hide in back of a trash can? (Chapt. 1)
2. Shane did some illegal computer hacking to help find Dawn. Do you think this was the right or the wrong thing to do? What else could Shane have done to help? (Chapt. 3)
3. Does Benny sound as if he will help Lena? What does he say that makes you think he will or won't? (Chapts. 4 and 5)

## Missing Answer Key

1. She didn't want the men to see her/She knew a drug deal was going down. (Chapt. 1, pp. 2, 4) (RL.1.1, 2.1, 4.3)
2. There is no right or wrong answer to this, but after students answer, it might be a good topic for class discussion. The issue is that Shane hacked illegally, but for a good cause. However, he could have stayed within the law (and his company's rules) by telling either his company or the police to check the tapes. This would still have helped find Dawn and not risked his job. Students might want to talk about Shane's choice to do things this way: Mistrust of the police, for example, or impulsivity and failure to think through possible consequences. (Chapt. 3) (RL.2.3, 2.6,)
3. [Requires making inferences] Benny does not sound helpful. He pretends not to know anything about Dawn's disappearance: "Really? That's too bad." "Are you trying to get me to rat out my boys?" (Chapt. 4, p. 21) or to blame the victim: "Who? That girl? Sounds to me like she started all this." (Chapt. 5, p. 29) [Other quotes also acceptable] (RL.1.1, 1.4, 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1)

# Looking for a Home

## Challenge Words

camera  
college  
computer  
computers  
door  
friend  
friends  
Lena  
Lena's  
Locas  
looked  
looking  
Officer  
police  
school  
schools  
talk  
wanted

## Comprehension Questions

1. What made Marta worried about her friend Liz? (Chapt. 1)
2. What was special or important about the earring that Shane gave to Lena? (Chapt. 4)
3. Shane had a plan to use Liz and Marta's dance moves for his project. What was Shane's plan? Find quotes in the book to explain. (Chapt. 6)

**Looking for a Home Answer Key**

1. She saw a gang symbol on Liz's arm/She thought Liz was getting involved with the Locas gang /Liz's stepmother wanted her to move out/Liz didn't know where her parents were. (Chapt. 1, pp. 4-5) (RL.1.1, 1.3, 2.1)
2. The earring contained a camera (and microphone), so Shane could follow her movements on his computer. (Chapt. 4, pp. 19-20) (RL.1.1, 1.3, 2.1)
3. Shane wanted to use Liz and Marta's dance moves in his computer game. Quotes: "Do you think I could get them to help me with a computer game?" "Players in the game get points for good dance moves."/When the dancers do their moves, the computer sees their moves." (Chapt. 6, pp. 32-34) (RL.1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 4.3)

# Trapped

## Challenge Words

building	person
college	police
company	school
computer	tabletables
computers	talk
door	told
doors	worked
Lena	worker
Lena's	workers
looked	working
looking	
Martek	
office	
Officer	
officers	

## Comprehension Questions

1. What did Shane see or hear that made him think there was something wrong at the brick building next door? Find a sentence that talks about this. (Chapt. 1)
2. Take a look at the picture on page 22. What do you think Shane is feeling? What part of the picture tells you what he feels? What has just happened to make him feel that way? (Chapt. 4).
3. What was really going on in the brick building? (Chapt. 6)

**Trapped Answer Key**

1. Shane heard shouting at night. There were trucks loading and unloading. He saw a girl being pulled away from a window. Quotes: “People shouted late at night.”/”Why are they so loud at night?” “He saw a thin girl looking out a window in the brick building. Then he saw a man grab her.” [Other quotes acceptable] (Chapt. 1, pp. 2, 4) (RL.1.1, 1.4, 1.7, 2.1)
2. Shane is happy that he has hacked into Martek’s computers/email/made contact with people from the brick building next door. He is pumping his fist to show his happiness. (Chapt. 4, p. 22, 23) (RL.1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7, 3.7)
3. The workers were being treated badly/threatened/The company was making fake/knockoff bags. (Chapt. 6, pp. 33, 34) (RL.1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 5.2)

# Hit and Run

## Challenge Words

blood	office
computer	Officer
computers	officers
door	pizza
eyes	police
friends	school
hallway	talk
Lena	told
lesson	truth
looked	wanted
looking	worked
Mr.	
Mrs.	
Ms.	

## Comprehension Questions

1. Why did the police think Jake was the hit-run driver? Find sentences in the book that tell you this. (Chapt. 1)
2. Look at the picture on page 9. How can you tell which person is Jake? What does the picture tell you about how he feels? (Chapt. 2)
3. Tell in your own words what Shane found out at Jay's Body Shop when he went to pick up his car. (Chapt. 4)

## ***Hit and Run Answer Key***

1. Jake was found in the general area of the crash (“We think we know who drove the car. We caught him six blocks from here.”)/A car like his was seen leaving the scene. (“His car was seen leaving here.”)/Jake wouldn’t tell the police anything about where he had been. (“He won’t speak about the crash. ... I just can’t get him to tell us about it.”)/Jake had been in trouble with the police before. (“He has been in jail before.”) (Chapt. 1, pp. 4, 5) (RL.1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1)
2. Jake is sitting at the table with his head in his hands, looking desperate. He is feeling upset/sad/confused/tearful. (Chapt. 2, p. 9) (RL.1.1, 1.7, 2.1, 2.7, 3.7)
3. Shane saw Jay working on an old blue Honda. Jay said it belonged to Jane Smith. The car was banged up. It might have had blood on it. Shane thought it could be the one that hit Ben. He was going to call Officer Lopez and tell him about the car. (Chapt. 4) (RL.1.2, 1.3, 2.1)

# Throwing the Game

## Challenge Words

basketball  
college  
colleges  
computer  
computers  
door  
doors  
gym  
keys  
Lena  
looked  
looking  
money  
Mr.  
Officer  
officers  
police  
school  
talk  
talking

## Comprehension Questions

1. Explain what the book's title means: "Throwing the Game." Find a sentence in the book that tells you the meaning of this phrase. (Chapt. 2)
2. What did both Lena and Shane find out about why Maleek's dad was in trouble? (Lena -- Chapt. 3; Shane – Chapt. 4)
3. Guided discussion topic: Contrast your views of Maleek at different parts of the book. What did you think of Maleek at first? What sort of person did you think he was? When it looked as if he threw a game, did your feeling about him change? How about when he stopped seeing Marta? What did you think at the end after you knew why he threw the game? (Chapters 1, 4, 5, 7)

**Throwing the Game Answer Key**

1. “Throwing the Game” means intentionally losing the game. (Another term is “fixing” the game.) (“People at Renco think that Maleek may be throwing the games—you know, trying to lose. They think a gang is paying Maleek to lose.”/ “Are you saying people are gambling on the basketball games? And paying Maleek to lose so they can win their bets?”) (Chapt. 2, pp. 12-13) (RL.1.1, 2.1, 3.1)
2. Lena saw an online poker game up on Mr. Carson’s computer (Chapt. 3, pp. 16-17); Shane hacked into Mr. Carson’s computer and found out he was doing a lot of online gambling and owed money. (Chapt. 4, p. 22). (RL.1.1, 1.7, 2.1)
3. There are no right or wrong responses. The goal of the discussion should be to illustrate how characters are developed in the course of a narrative: for example, how a character appears before he speaks, before he acts, then after his motivation for behavior is understood; and what makes a sympathetic character. The discussion can start with students listing words to describe Maleek at the 4 critical points in the story: The beginning of Chapter 1, before they know he has thrown the game; the end of Chapter 1, when it appears that he has thrown the game; when he dumps Marta (to protect her) at the end of Chapter 4; and after his motivation is explained. (Chapts. 5 and 7) (RL.1.3, 1.7, 2.3, 2.7, 3.3)