

3–7 Grade ELA Lesson Plan

Last Day Pool Party by Emma Steinkellner

Grade Levels

3–7

Time

45–60 minutes

Common Core State Standards (CCSS ELA)

- **RL.3–7.1:** Ask and answer questions using evidence from the text.
 - **RL.3–7.2:** Determine the theme or central message.
 - **RL.3–7.3:** Describe how characters respond to challenges and change over time.
 - **RL.3–7.6:** Explain how different characters' points of view contribute to the story.
 - **RL.3–7.7:** Analyze how illustrations contribute to the mood, humor, and meaning of the story.
 - **W.3–7.3:** Write narratives using descriptive details and clear event sequences.
 - **SL.3–7.1:** Participate effectively in collaborative discussions.
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Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how multiple characters experience the same event from different perspectives.
 - Identify themes of friendship, change, self-confidence, and growing up.
 - Use evidence from both the text and illustrations to support their ideas.
 - Examine how graphic novels use multiple storylines to develop plot and character.
 - Write a narrative that explores an important life event from a unique point of view.
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Essential Questions

- How do different people experience the same event in different ways?
 - What makes a good friend?
 - Why is change sometimes difficult?
 - How do illustrations help readers understand characters' emotions?
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Materials

- *Last Day Pool Party* by Emma Steinkellner
 - Character Perspective Organizer
 - Sticky Notes
 - Chart Paper
 - Writing Journals or Notebook Paper
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Vocabulary

- Perspective
 - Friendship
 - Conflict
 - Resolution
 - Self-confidence
 - Empathy
 - Theme
 - Inference
 - Graphic Novel
 - Character Development
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Before Reading (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask students:

- How do you usually feel on the last day of school?
- Have you ever been nervous about a party or social event?
- How can friendships change as you grow older?
- Have you ever discovered that someone else experienced the same event differently than you did?

Students complete a **Think-Pair-Share**, then discuss responses as a class.

During Reading (25 minutes)

Character Perspective Tracker

Students follow several characters throughout the story.

Character	Goal	Challenge	How They Change
Rose			
Liv			
Juhi			
Maya			
Paul			

Encourage students to notice:

- Facial expressions
- Dialogue
- Body language
- Humor
- Background details
- How each character reacts differently to the same events
- Visual clues that reveal emotions

Class Discussion

Discuss:

1. Why is the pool party important to each character?
2. How do the characters' goals differ?
3. Which character changes the most by the end of the story?
4. How do the illustrations help readers understand each character's emotions?
5. What lessons do the characters learn about friendship and growing up?

Mini-Lesson

Multiple Perspectives

Explain that one event can feel very different depending on who experiences it.

Readers should ask:

- What does this character want?
- What is this character worried about?

- How does this character solve problems?
- How do the illustrations reveal feelings that aren't directly stated?

Discuss how Emma Steinkellner uses multiple viewpoints to build both humor and empathy.

Collaborative Activity (10–15 minutes)

Walk in Their Shoes

Assign each group one character.

Groups discuss:

- What does your character want most?
- What obstacles stand in the way?
- What advice would you give them?
- What lesson do they learn?

Groups create a small "Character Advice Card" and present it to the class.

Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Writing Prompt

Everyone experiences important events differently. Write about a memorable school event, celebration, or party from your own life, or imagine you are one of the characters at the Last Day Pool Party. Describe what happens from your point of view, the emotions you experience, the challenges you face, and what you learn about friendship, confidence, or growing up. Include descriptive details, dialogue, and sensory language to bring your story to life.

Extension Activities

Grades 3–4

Character Comic

Choose one character and create a four-panel comic showing:

- Their goal
- A challenge

- A funny or surprising moment
- What they learn

Use captions and speech bubbles.

Grades 5–7

Perspective Writing

Rewrite one important scene from another character's point of view.

Explain how the same event feels different depending on who is telling the story.

Friendship Web

Create a visual map showing how the main characters are connected.

Include:

- Friendships
 - Conflicts
 - Changes
 - Important events
 - Lessons learned
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Assessment

Formative

- Participation in discussions
 - Character Perspective Organizer
 - Group collaboration
 - Reading observations
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Summative Writing Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Ideas	Thoughtful and detailed	Clear	Developing	Limited

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Organization	Well organized	Mostly organized	Some organization	Difficult to follow
Text Evidence	Strong support	Some support	Minimal support	No evidence
Conventions	Few errors	Some errors	Frequent errors	Many errors

Exit Ticket

Students answer one question:

- Which character changed the most? Why?
- Which friendship surprised you the most?
- How did the illustrations help you understand the characters' emotions?
- What advice would you give Rose before the pool party?

Differentiation

Support

- Partner reading
- Graphic organizers
- Sentence starters
- Teacher-guided discussion
- Visual vocabulary cards

Extension

- Compare *Last Day Pool Party* with another coming-of-age graphic novel, focusing on friendship and character growth.
- Create a "Day After the Pool Party" comic showing what happens next for one or more characters.
- Write a diary entry from the perspective of Rose, Liv, Juhi, Maya, or Paul reflecting on what they learned after the party.

Cross-Curricular Connections

Art: Design a graphic novel page that uses facial expressions, body language, and panel layout to show different emotions experienced during the same event.

Health/SEL: Discuss healthy friendships, navigating social situations, handling peer pressure, and coping with changes during the transition to a new school year.

Drama: In small groups, role-play a scene from the story, then perform it from a different character's perspective to demonstrate how point of view influences understanding.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Connection

Students reflect on:

- Self-awareness
 - Empathy
 - Friendship
 - Communication
 - Resilience
 - Respect for different perspectives
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Big Idea

Last Day Pool Party reminds readers that everyone brings different hopes, fears, and expectations to the same experience. By seeing the story through multiple perspectives, students learn that empathy, honest communication, and acceptance help strengthen friendships and make the sometimes messy process of growing up a little easier.