



# The Elf on the Shelf<sup>®</sup>

## TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER

### Fourth Grade

#### **Introduce and then understand-- The Elf on the Shelf<sup>®</sup>: A Christmas Tradition**

*CC standards:* Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

#### **Materials:**

- The Elf on the Shelf<sup>®</sup> Gift Box set (with Elf) wrapped with a bow and gift tag from “Santa”
- A white board, chalkboard, overhead projector
- Computer and printer

#### **Lesson:**

Bring a wrapped book to the class. Make sure to use glittered wrapping paper or a bow and play up the idea that the book is a present from “Santa” complete with Christmas Magic from the North Pole! Then ask the students “What do you think Santa sent to us?” You can even give them a hint after a few tries that it is a book. Let them guess again to build suspense. After a few more guesses allow a student to unwrap the “Gift from Santa.”

Use the cover of the box set to introduce the Authors and the illustrator and emphasize the roll of each: Authors write the words and tell the story. Illustrators draw the pictures to help tell the story. Remind children that the authors and illustrator actually “work for Santa.”

Then, based on the cover of the book only ask the students to volunteer some questions that they may have about the story.

Examples might be: What is the story about? Who are the main characters? Where does the story take place? What is an elf? Why does the elf sit on a shelf? What does the elf do?

Lead the students to ask some thought provoking questions and help support the main idea. The teacher should list some of the best questions on the board. Gather roughly 10 questions.

Then, read the story to the students aloud.

After you read, return to the board, and as a class determine if you were able to answer any of their questions. Write the answers on the board. The students should be able to point to text that “backs up” their answers. You should quote the story where applicable. If their questions were not answered by the book, can they infer an answer to any of their questions? If so, write the inferences down (use a different color marker to remind the students that they are inferring the idea.) Now, ask the students if they can tell you what the story is about. Lead students to the main idea: The story is about The Elf on the Shelf and how he watches during the day and reports back to Santa each night.



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Now, look back at your questions. Do any of the questions and answers offer supporting details? Some of them should. Circle the answers that support the main idea, and then list the main idea and supporting details in outline form showing students how to construct a summary paragraph.

Example:

*Main Idea:* The Elf on the Shelf is about an elf that reports back and forth to Santa Claus. "I laugh with my friends and report to St. Nick."

*Supporting details:* You give him a name and he gets Christmas magic "The first time I come to the place you call home you quickly must give me a name of my own. Once you are finished my mission can start..."

*Supporting details:* he flies to Santa each night with Christmas magic "...to Santa I'll fly to the North Pole right through the dark sky."

*Supporting details:* he/she tell him if you have been good or been bad "I tell him if you have been good or been bad. The news of the day makes him happy or sad."

The class should then, together with the teacher, construct a paragraph using their Main Idea, quotes and supporting details. Remember: The more details you have, the better your paragraph and summary will be.

Example:

The Elf on the Shelf<sup>®</sup> is a story about an elf that reports back and forth to Santa Claus. In fact, the elf says, "he laughs with his friends and reports to St. Nick." during nightly visits with Santa. When an elf first comes to your home, you have to give the elf a name so it can get Christmas magic for flying. Then, he/she will fly using Christmas magic each night to tell Santa if you have been good or been bad. According to the story, the news can make him happy or sad...

Finally, now that your class understands the story and all the rules, it's time to officially adopt your classroom elf. As a class nominate and then vote on names. Once you and your class have decided on a name for your elf, incorporate technology by logging onto the website [www.elfontheshelf.com](http://www.elfontheshelf.com) to register your classroom elf's name and receive a letter from Santa that you can print out about your elf.

Leave the elf in the box with the lid open, and when the students leave the classroom, "Free the elf!" He/She now has Christmas Magic and can start watching and reporting to Santa in your classroom. You can also construct a sign or draw on the board and leave a note from the elf that says his or her name.

#### **Activity/Follow up:**

Encourage the students to visit the website: [elfontheshelf.com](http://elfontheshelf.com) and write an email to Santa or their elf and ask the elf (using its new name) another question they might like answered.