

**ABC READER'S OUTLINE**  
***Who Moved My Cheese? For Kids An A-Mazing Way to Change and Win!***  
*By Spencer Johnson, M.D. and Christian Johnson*

Topic	Details
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will learn that change happens to everyone.</li> <li>• Help students understand that people handle change in different ways.</li> <li>• Teach students the different ways to deal with change.</li> <li>• Discuss ways to build resiliency when experiencing change.</li> <li>• Teach students that they control their reactions to change.</li> <li>• Explore the move to middle school – what will be different, what will be the same, and how do they feel about the changes?</li> </ul>
Preparing for Lesson (45 minutes)	<p><b>Review lesson plan and read the book at least once.</b> Contact teacher to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a book for graduating students moving to middle school and about change.</li> <li>• See if teacher wants to address any specific concerns of students.</li> <li>• Be aware that these students may still be experiencing the consequences of Covid 19, effecting their mental and physical well-being.</li> <li>• The world we live in also has been experiencing an uptick in school violence and climate change. Students are inundated with information from social media and may feel overwhelmed.</li> </ul> <p>Prepare a <b>Parent Letter or Email</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a short personal email to send to every parent and attach parent letter.</li> <li>• Attach a copy of the ABC Toolkit (from website).</li> </ul>
Conversation Starters (5-10 minutes)	<p>Don't be surprised if students listen more than talk at first. Students may also need time to debrief the past few years. If students start to talk about their experiences, your best reaction is to listen and encourage the discussion. It is ok to debrief with them their feelings about all the changes in their world and not do the lesson as planned. It might be necessary to read the lesson at another time or have the teacher read it instead.</p> <p><b>Listen to Your Body</b> Explain to students that with the many changes going on, we may feel stress or anxiety without realizing what is happening. It is important to realize the signs of stress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> </ul>

- Irritability
- Inability to sleep or wanting to sleep all the time
- Feeling angry without knowing why
- Loss of interest in school or activities

Have the students take a moment to think about whether or not they have been experiencing any of the above. Reassure students that there are steps they can take when they are feeling anxious. Try these:

- Take some slow, deep breaths, in for a count of 4 and out for a count of 4. Try to breathe from your belly.
- Be mindful. Focus on what you see, smell and hear now. Be present.

### **Mindfulness**

In addition to feeling a bit worried or anxious, you may also be dealing with frustration and disappointment due to changes brought on by the pandemic and other world situations. You can see where you want to be, but can't get there yet. Handling these emotions can be challenging. Here are some ideas to address frustration and disappointment:

- Try to keep emotions in check with deep breathing or movement activities (see self-care techniques above).
- Go for Plan B by finding something to be grateful for, even in tough situations or by journaling.
- Encourage the sharing of feelings. Find someone you who will listen to you.
- *Let it go* and focus on what you can do.
  - (Remember *Simon's Hook* and the hula hoop? Standing in the hula hoop reminds you that you can only control yourself and your reaction to things.)
- To encourage the skill of *letting it go* try this mindful activity.

### **Blowing Bubbles**

Materials: bubbles and bubble wand for each student

1. Have students think about a feeling they need to *let go*.
2. Then, take a deep, slow, breath and exhale steadily to fill the bubble.
3. Encourage the students to pay close attention to the bubbles as they form, detach, pop or float away.
4. Let that feeling of disappointment or frustration drift off just like a bubble.
5. Have everyone blow a few bubbles.

Debrief:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How were you feeling before blowing bubbles?</li> <li>2. What feelings did you let go?</li> <li>3. How do you feel now after blowing bubbles?</li> <li>4. What was it about blowing the bubbles that tapped into a <i>letting go feeling</i>?</li> </ol>
<p>Introduction to Book and Reading (15 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Before you read the book or show the video:</b> Mention that the author’s 12-year-old son had the idea for creating a kid version of his dad’s bestselling book for adults and helped his dad write this book.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define Hemming and Hawing: “being hesitant and indecisive” (give an example). Tell the students: “We’ve talked about how we react to change, now let’s watch how the characters of this book react to change.”</li> <li>➤ Consider showing this short 2-minute animated clip if you don’t have a copy of the book: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C0M2CL9TJE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C0M2CL9TJE</a> .</li> </ul>
<p>Discussion Questions (5-20 minutes)</p>	<p>More questions for the discussion can be found on page 61 of the book.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did the characters have to change?</li> <li>• How did each character feel and/or react?</li> <li>• Which mouse showed the most resilience? Which showed the least?</li> <li>• Think about the mice. Are you like Sniff, Scurry, Hem, or Haw?</li> <li>• What do you do when your cheese is moved?</li> <li>• How does self-care help in dealing with worries?</li> </ul> <p>(Please note, all students are not going to the same middle school and this can be a sensitive issue.)</p>
<p>Group Activity Option 1: (30 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Pros/Cons with Feelings Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a chart like the one below on the whiteboard or poster board.</li> <li>• Discuss with the students the pros and cons of going to middle school.</li> <li>• While discussing each pro and con, capture the feeling associated with the statements.</li> <li>• In order to more easily accept change, it’s critical to understand the pros/cons as well as the feeling associated with each.</li> <li>• Ask the students, “Are there any other pros and cons?” and keep asking until the answer is no.</li> </ul>

<p>Group Activity Option 1: (30 minutes)</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Pros of Middle School</th> <th>Pro Feelings</th> <th>Cons of Middle School</th> <th>Con Feelings</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If some students are overwhelmed by this discussion because of all of the change they will be facing soon, please bring up the concept of “shrinking the change”. This is from the book <i>Switch</i> by Chip Heath and Dan Heath. Have them think about just one part of their change to middle school and let the others go for a while. For example - focus on just the first day of school and what that means to them, on the first week, etc.</p>	Pros of Middle School	Pro Feelings	Cons of Middle School	Con Feelings												
Pros of Middle School	Pro Feelings	Cons of Middle School	Con Feelings														
<p>Group Activity Option 2: (15-20 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Self-Care Techniques</b></p> <p>Big changes can lead to worry and anxiety. Going to middle school is a big change, but remember that in this past year you have dealt with many changes. Take a moment to consider what techniques you have used to take care of yourself as you’ve faced all the changes. Take a poll with students. Have them close their eyes and give a thumbs up when you ask: Which of these self-care techniques would you like to use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deep breathing</li> <li>• yoga</li> <li>• sleeping 7-8 hours a night</li> <li>• taking a nap</li> <li>• physical activity such as: dancing, riding a bike, walking, running, hiking</li> <li>• talking/texting/zooming with a friend</li> <li>• listing what you are grateful for</li> <li>• practicing mindfulness/meditation</li> <li>• keeping a journal of how you are feeling.</li> <li>• talking to someone. Share feelings with a parent, teacher or friend. You may find others share your concerns.</li> </ul> <p>If time allows, do a few deep breaths with the students, play an episode from an app, or show them some yoga poses to help everyone de-stress and focus on the lesson.</p>																
<p>Closing (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Watch the video, <i>Getting Ready for Middle School</i>:</p>																

Three Minute Huddle  
(3-5 minutes)

<https://youtu.be/C1feLS0l4Yw>

Today's lesson talks about change and the different ways to manage it. It is important to be resilient and bounce back from adversity. Remember:

- Change happens to everyone.
- People handle change in different ways.
- Learning different ways to handle change makes us more resilient.

Everyone has an initial reaction or response when change occurs, but we may react some ways sometimes and other ways other times, depending on other things that are going on in our lives. All of these reactions are OK. Just some are more effective for dealing with change.

Recognize yourself – be aware of how you're reacting – are you acting like Sniff, Scurry, Hem or Haw? Think about the ABC tools you have learned in elementary school. Pack them up and bring them in your middle school backpack!

YOU have the control over how you react. You don't have to follow your first instinct. Choose to react in ways that will let you deal with change most effectively.