



# Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon

by Paula Danziger



(G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 1994)

## Learning Goals

- Describe a character by examining her words, thoughts, and actions.
- Create a personality pizza to explore the traits that make a character unique.
- Show understanding of a character's feelings with slide-through character quotes.

Ever since kindergarten, Amber Brown and Justin Daniels have been a great team. These two best friends are practically inseparable as they help and watch out for each other, share cookies and games, and read each other's mind. But during their third-grade school year, Justin learns he must move away. That's when the fighting begins and the two stop talking to each other. Will these ex-best friends be able to work out their differences and renew the friendship before Justin goes away for good? Students will easily identify with the strong-willed, straightforward Amber Brown as they focus on how this character reveals herself in everyday situations.

### Before Reading

Have any students had to say good-bye to a close friend who moved far away? Invite them to share their experiences and emotions related to the event. Were they sad? Angry? Confused? Did they try to pretend the separation wasn't really going to happen? Or did they act out by picking a fight with their friend?

Ask students who have not had this experience to add their thoughts to the discussion. Afterward, show students the cover of *Amber Brown Is Not a Crayon*. Explain that this story describes how one third-grader handles the reality of her best friend moving away.

### After Reading

Ask students what they think of Amber Brown. Is she a character they would like to know? Would she make a good best friend? Why or why not? After students share their thoughts, help them focus on the traits that make Amber Brown a unique individual.

- On a sheet of chart paper, draw a circle with spokes extending from it. Write "Amber Brown" in the circle.
- Ask students to brainstorm words or phrases that describe Amber Brown, reminding them that a character's traits might be positive and appealing or they might be unattractive qualities. Write their responses on the spokes, adding more spokes as needed.
- When finished, invite students to group into pairs and use words from the character word web to describe Amber Brown to their partners.

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