

No Fixed Address

Written by Susin Nielsen

Yearling

978-1-5247-6837-9 | Trade Paperback
288 pages | \$7.99 | Lexile: 620L



OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Susin Nielsen's *No Fixed Address* features a character, Felix, who is homeless. Felix's mother sometimes lies to him, and Felix describes her types of lies. In context, this forces readers to consider why a character might lie, and what motivates them. Using close-reading strategies, students will analyze lies to characterize Felix's mother, citing text evidence to support their claims.

LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will be able to identify a unique structure in storytelling
2. Students will be able to summarize important ideas in a text
3. Students will be able to infer character motive
4. Students will be able to make and support a claim about characterization with textual evidence

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *No Fixed Address* by Susin Nielsen
- You Are Lying Worksheet

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Students will be using a close read to examine a character's motivation and provide textual evidence to support their conclusions. They will begin by identifying the types of lies described by Susin Nielsen and complete the worksheet provided.

- Step 1:** Students should read pages 31-34 of *No Fixed Address* by Susin Nielsen
- Step 2:** Students should complete the You Are Lying! Worksheet

Finding Your Place in the World:

*Lessons for Reading
and Writing*



SUMMARY

Twelve-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia. His favorite game show is *Who What Where When*; he even named his gerbil after the host. Felix's mom, Astrid, is loving but can't seem to hold on to a job. So when they get evicted from their latest shabby apartment, they have to move into a van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and put in foster care. As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for a junior edition of *Who What Where When*, and he's determined to earn a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But things don't turn out the way he expects.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION (*cont'd*)

Key Ideas:

- The Invisible Lie
- The “Give Peace a Chance” Lie
- The “Embellishment” Lie
- The “No One Gets Hurt” Lie
- The “Someone Might lose an Eye” Lie

Step 3: Take the opportunity to discuss the different types of lies. Consider the following questions:

- Is it true that no one really gets hurt?
- Can embellishing be a problem?
- Why do people tell lies?
- What really motivates Felix’s mother to lie?
- How does Felix feel about the lies?

Step 4: Students will read pages 67-70, 151 and 251, identify the type of lie in the passage and justify it. They can complete this assignment individually, with a partner, or as a group.

Step 5: Once students have completed the assignment, they can share with the class or with a partner.

You are Lying! (A Character’s Motivation)

The main character, Felix, in *No Fixed Address* by Susin Nielsen takes a “pause” in the story to explain his mother’s lying, which typically protects their homeless status. He calls it, “Astrid’s Guidebook to Lies.” This is what he says:

“I suppose I need to pause here to explain that yes, on occasion, my mother lies. But it’s important to note that she has levels of lies, and rules surrounding each. Sort of like the Church of Scientology and their levels of Operating Thetans, her rationales don’t always make a lot of sense. But this is how I break them down in my head” (31).

Directions: Read pages 31-34 in *No Fixed Address*, summarize the five types of lies Astrid tells, and provide examples.

Type	Summary	Example

Your Turn: Directions: Read the assigned pages and decide the type of lie used. Consider why Felix’s mother might use this type of lie. What is her motivation?

Assigned pages	Type of Lie	Why? Evidence/Motivation
pp. 67-70		
p. 151		
p. 251		