

# Rules

Grades  
4-7

## • Library Lessons •

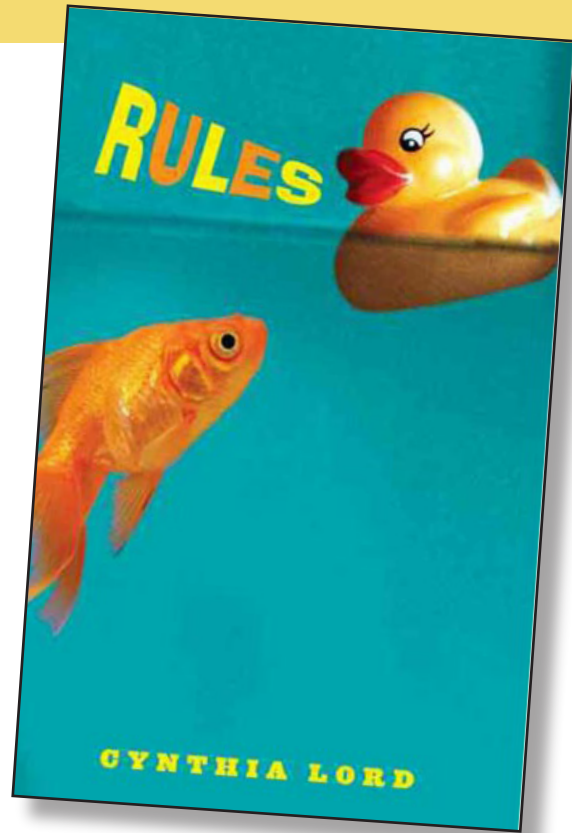
by | Lynne Farrell Stover

### Story Synopsis

Catherine, the twelve-year-old narrator of this heartwarming story, struggles hard to help her autistic younger brother, David, cope with the world around him. Though his behaviors sometimes embarrass her, she has assigned herself as David's protector and feels responsible for him. She gets distressed when people are unkind to David and is constantly adding to a list of rules she keeps in the back of her notebook to help him appear "normal" in social situations. Catherine is an artist and enjoys going to David's occupational therapy clinic appointments because of the scenic ocean shoreline drive and the time she can spend talking with her mother. It is at this clinic that she makes friends with wheelchair-bound Jason Morehouse, a teenager who communicates by pointing to words on cards. A friendship is established when Catherine volunteers to add to Jason's vocabulary by making new word cards for his communication book. Catherine, while wanting acceptance by her peers, learns through a series of events, that loyalty and kindness are more important than a list of rules dictating specific behavior.

### Lesson I: Writing Rules

Cynthia Lord's Newbery Honor book, *Rules*, would make a very good classroom read aloud. Each of the short chapters begins with one of the rules Catherine has written in her notebook for her younger brother David. These rules could serve well as an anticipatory set to stimulate discussion as to what could happen in the chapter.



**Time Required:** 25–30 minutes

**Objectives:**

- The students will use knowledge of literary characters in a creative writing project.

**Materials:**

- No Toys in the Fish Tank visual (page 4)
- Writing Rules activity (page 5)
- writing tools
- *Rules* by Cynthia Lord (*optional*)

**Procedure:**

1. Prepare materials prior to class.
2. Introduce the lesson by reading "Rules for David" found in the front of *Rules* by Cynthia Lord. Explain that these rules are very important to the characters in this book and that the students will be writing rules for other literary characters in this lesson.

## Library Lessons

3. Display the visual and read the information to the students.
4. Pass out the activity sheet. (Note: This may be made into a visual to help facilitate reviewing the instructions.)
5. Review the activity with the students. Explain they may make rules for either member of the literary pair. Students may work independently or in groups.
6. Encourage students to display knowledge of the literary character of their choice. For example, the Cowardly Lion's rules for Dorothy may be: 1. Always run away; 2. Hide behind the Tin Man every chance you get; 3. Never fight with Winged Monkeys; 4. Cry and scream "Auntie Em" when you are frightened.
7. Suggest students share their creative list of rules with their classmates.
8. Discuss with the class the rules that seemed to fit the literary characters best.

### Lesson 2: Remarkable People Research

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In *Rules*, Catherine wishes there was a pill her brother could take to make his autism go away. However, she knows this is not possible. She asks herself the question, "How can his outside look so normal and his inside be so broken?" Through the course of the novel Catherine learns normal is a difficult condition to define and that even a "broken" person is capable of outstanding things.

**Time Required:** 30–40 minutes

**Objectives:**

- The students will use the appropriate reference tools to research prominent people who have overcome personal challenges
- The students will complete a fact sheet concerning a selected person

**Materials:**

- Remarkable People Research visual (page 6)
- Remarkable People Research activity (page 7)
- writing tools
- reference tools—encyclopedias, biographies, Internet access

**Procedure:**

1. Prepare and collect materials prior to class.
2. Introduce the lesson by reading the above lesson introduction to the class.
3. Display the visual with a sheet of paper covering everything but the introduction. Read the introduction to the students then reveal the information concerning this specific "Remarkable Person" one fact at a time.
4. Emphasize the "A good rule for me would be" section of the worksheet. Explain that this, like Catherine's rules for David, is something that the student THINKS might be a good rule for this person.
5. Ask the students if they were able to discover who this person was before the answer was uncovered and, if so, what was the fact that helped them.
6. Pass out activity sheets. Explain that the students may choose a person from the list and use the available reference tools for research. (This is an excellent time to pull out the "dusty" sets of encyclopedias. Students choosing more contemporary figures may need to use the Internet.) Students may work independently or in pairs.
7. Allow students to complete their research and share their results with the class.

### Lesson 3: Character Quiz

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*Rules* is a character-driven story. Students should be able to make comparisons between the people in their lives and those in Catherine's life. Note: This activity is intended for use upon the students' completion of *Rules* by Cynthia Lord.

**Time Required:** 15–20 minutes

**Objectives:**

- The students will display knowledge of a story's main characters

**Materials:**

- Rules: Character Quiz activity (page 8)
- writing tools

**Procedure:**

1. Prepare materials prior to class.
2. Introduce the lesson by explaining that *Rules* was a story that focused mainly on the complex characters. Tell the students that while the plot was interesting, it was not action packed. And it was nice that the setting was by the ocean in modern times, but it could just have easily taken place in a big city twenty years ago. Ask the students if they agree or disagree with you. Encourage discussion.
3. Pass out the character quiz explaining to the students that this is a tool to see how well they understood the characters.
4. Read the directions to the class.
5. Check for understanding when students have completed the activity.
6. Answers: Part I—1. E, 2. A, 3. D, 4. C, 5. B. Part II—6. piece of chewing gum, 7. Harry Potter's invisibility cloak, 8. the pond, 9. guitar, 10. Barbie doll.

**McREL Standards****Language Arts****Reading**

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process. Understands the use of specific literary devices (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback).

**Listening and Speaking**

- Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

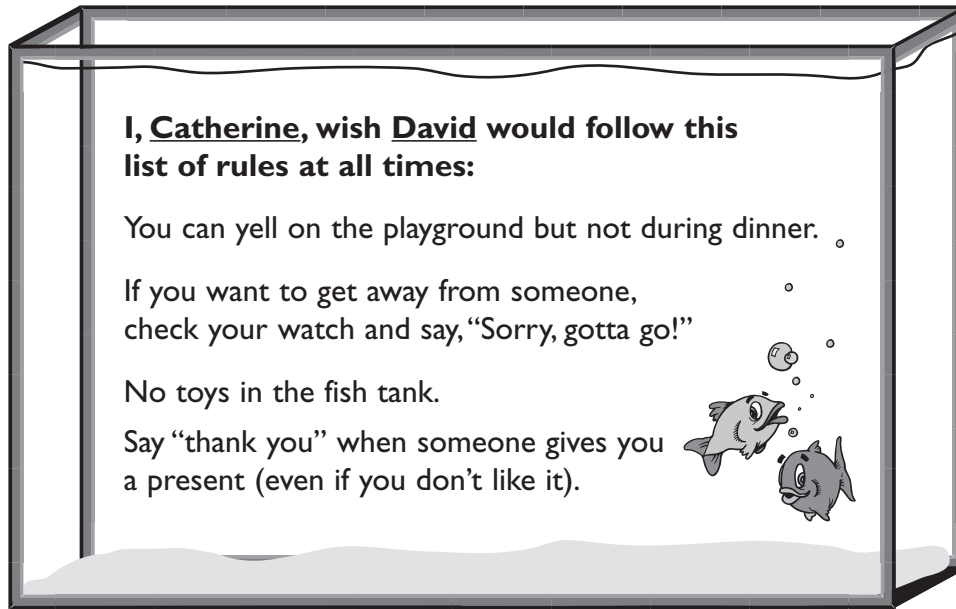


Lynne Farrell Stover has over thirty years of experience as an educator and is currently a Teacher Consultant at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. She has taught many teacher workshops and won Teacher of the Year in 1999 from the Virginia Council of Economic Education and from the Virginia Association for the Gifted. *She is the author of Magical Library Lessons, More Magical Library Lessons, Magical Library Lessons: Holiday Happenings, and From Snicket to Shakespeare from UpstartBooks.*

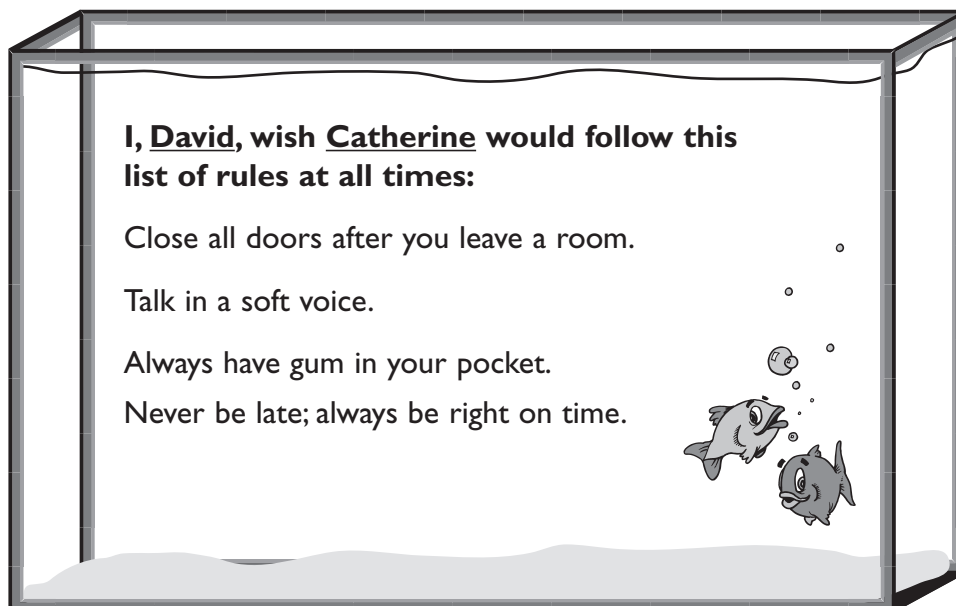
# — No Toys in the Fish Tank —

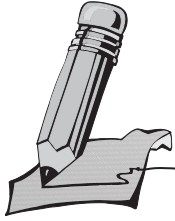
In the book *Rules* by Cynthia Lord, Catherine is constantly making up rules for her younger brother David. She wants him to act “normal” and not to embarrass her in public.

Here are some of the rules Catherine would like David to follow ...



What if David could write down some rules he wanted Catherine to follow? His list might look like this ...





# Writing Rules

Catherine is constantly adding to a list of rules she has created for David. She has two motives for this list. The first is to help David's behavior be more acceptable while he is around other people. The second is to make her life easier and less embarrassing.

Choose a pair of literary characters and create a list of rules one character might wish the other would follow. You may use the list below or select a pair from another book. Your list must contain at least four rules. Be prepared to share your work with the class.

## Literary Pairs

Alice—Queen of Hearts

Charlie Bucket—Willy Wonka

Cinderella—Wicked Step Mother

Dorothy Gale—The Cowardly Lion

Little Red Ridding Hood—Big Bad Wolf

Matilda Wormwood—Headmistress Agatha Trunchbull

Peter Pan—Tinker Bell

Peter Pevensie—The White Witch

Violet Baudelaire—Count Olaf

Wilbur the Pig—Charlotte the Spider

*Your Choice (with permission)*

I \_\_\_\_\_ wish \_\_\_\_\_ would follow this list of rules at all times:

1.

2.

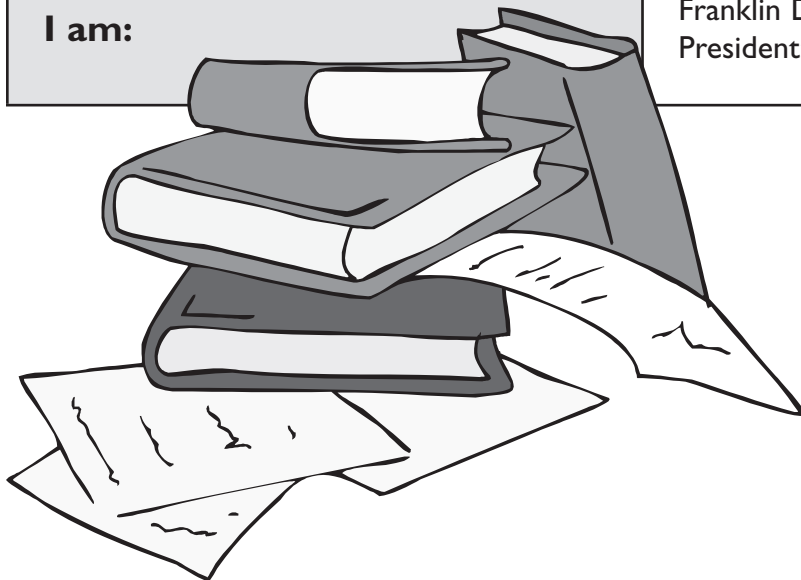
3.

4.

# Remarkable People Research

Throughout history people have overcome personal challenges to accomplish remarkable things. Can you tell who this person is as the information is revealed?

<b>My beginnings:</b>	I was born in 1882 at Hyde Park, New York. I was an only child.
<b>My physical challenge:</b>	At the age of 39 I contracted polio and was never able to walk on my own after that.
<b>My accomplishments:</b>	I helped America out of the Great Depression by creating the New Deal.
<b>Some interesting facts about me are:</b>	My cousin was the twenty-sixth president of the United States. I was the first U.S. president to ever appear on television.
<b>A good rule for me would be:</b>	Always appear strong.
<b>I am:</b>	Franklin D. Roosevelt, United States President: 1933–1945



# Remarkable People Research

Choose a Remarkable Person from the list below. Research this person and complete the information grid. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

<b>My beginnings:</b>	
<b>My physical challenge:</b>	
<b>My accomplishments:</b>	
<b>Some interesting facts about me are:</b>	
<b>A good rule for me would be:</b>	
<b>I am:</b>	

- 1) Jim Abbott
- 2) Muhammad Ali
- 3) Hans Christian Andersen
- 4) Ludwig van Beethoven
- 5) Louis Braille
- 6) Chris Burke
- 7) Ray Charles
- 8) Thomas Edison
- 9) Lou Ferrigno
- 10) Michael J. Fox
- 11) Billy Graham
- 12) Stephen Hawking
- 13) Helen Keller
- 14) Frida Kahlo
- 15) Juliette Gordon Low
- 16) Marlee Matlin
- 17) John Milton
- 18) Lord Horatio Nelson
- 19) Itzhak Perlman
- 20) Christopher Reeve
- 21) Harriet Tubman
- 22) Stevie Wonder

# Rules: Character Quiz

## Part I

- Match the rule to the person who would most likely MAKE that rule for himself or herself.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| ___1. Kristi    | A. Tease and torment David every chance you get          |
| ___2. Ryan      | B. Protect David from bullies                            |
| ___3. David     | C. Learn to communicate with other people                |
| ___4. Jason     | D. Find interesting things to put in the fish tank       |
| ___5. Catherine | E. Dress in cool clothes and hangout with popular people |

- Using the words and phrases in the word bank below, answer the following questions.

6. What would Ryan not give David? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Catherine wished she had? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Kristi not like? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What did Jason want his mom to get him at a yard sale? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did David put in the fish tank? \_\_\_\_\_

