

The Zax, by Dr. Seuss: **Making a Character Connection**

Discussion 1: Empathy, Sympathy, and Apathy: Reading as the Character

Empathy:

If you watch a loved one walk into a door and bang their head, how do you react? You are apt to begin showing similar physical muscular movements as the person who is hurt. Likely you **cringe**, perhaps hold tightly on to your own head at the same spot as their injury. You may even **exhibit** similar cawling sounds as the injured person. Ouch, you shriek as you rush to comfort.

If this has happened to you, you have demonstrated empathy. The ability to understand another's situation; this similarity of feelings and expression is known as empathy.

Sympathy:

If you read about a stranger who has experienced a tragedy, how do you feel?

Beyond feeling sorry for someone in physical pain, you have probably, on occasion, read a sad news article or watched a distressing or heartbreaking news report and felt genuine grief for those affected, even though they are strangers, and even though you have never experienced such **anguish** in your life.

Sympathy is a common feeling we share for one another, most often in support for each other.

It is critical to not use empathy and sympathy interchangeably.

Apathy:

Have you ever witnessed someone in **peril**, but did nothing to help, and further didn't even stop to think about their bad situation?

The suppression of emotion or the feeling of **utter** indifference marks the traits of one who is apathetic.

Project:

1. After reading "The Zax," compose a paragraph detailing all the traits of the each Zax, and write about your feelings while reading; when you were Empathetic, Apathetic, and Sympathetic for one or both Zax.
2. Write a paragraph describing a time when you were in the "Prairie of the Prax" just like the Zax. Perhaps a time when you did not agree with someone and both of you refused to give in.

Words from this lesson to Look Up:

Cringe

Exhibit

Anguish

Interchangeably

Peril

Utter