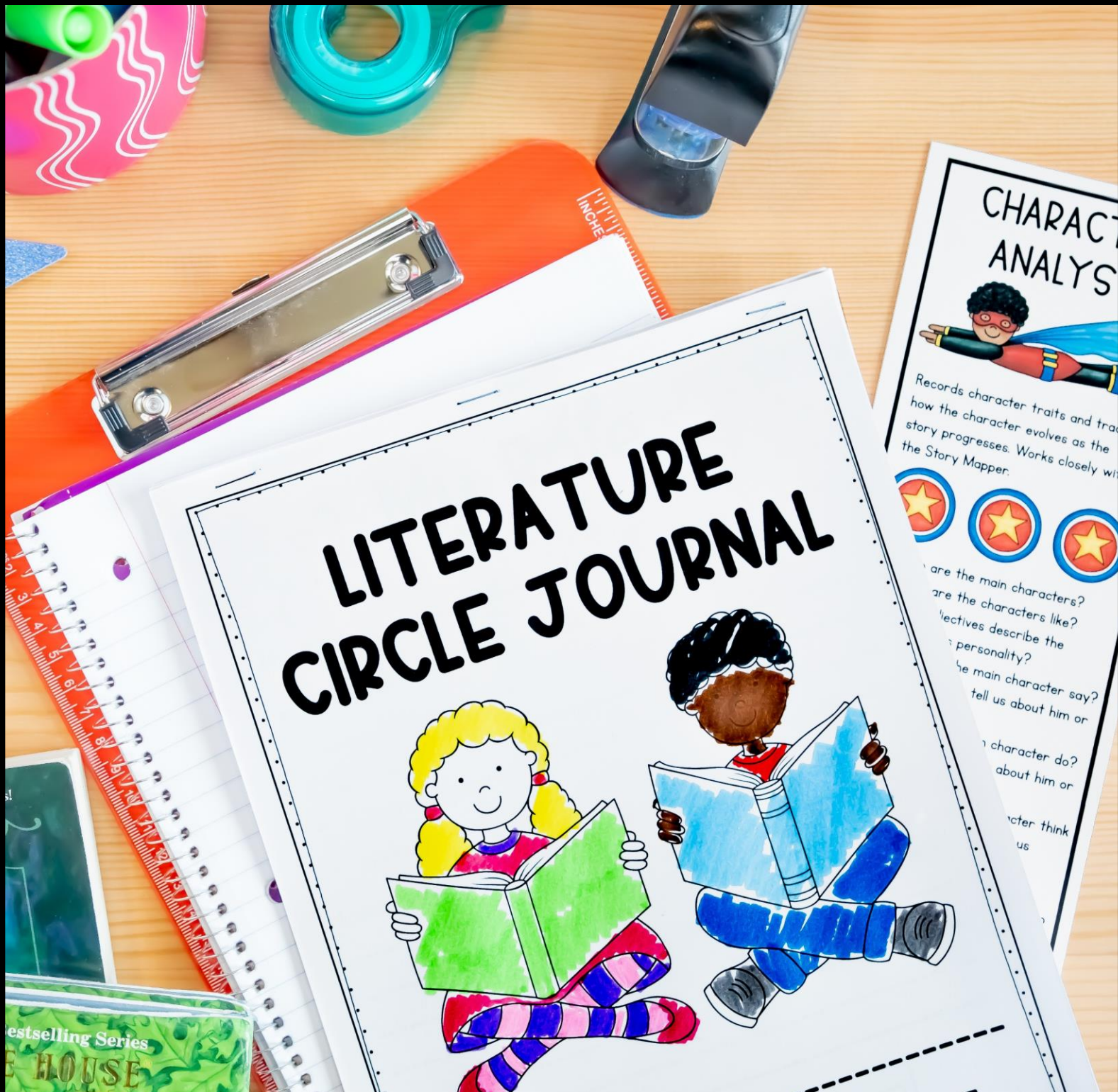


LITERATURE CIRCLES



Unit for Any Book



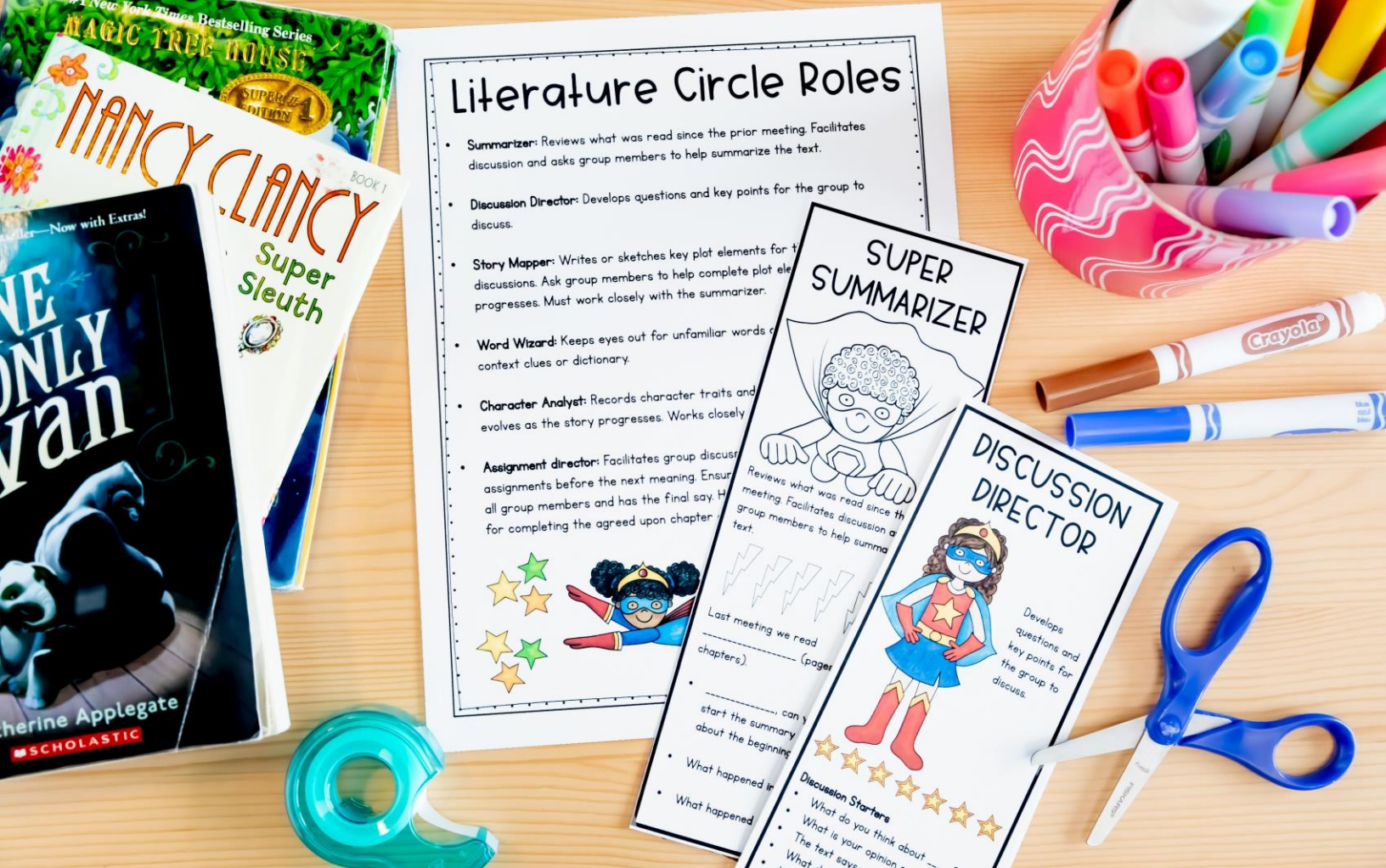
LITERATURE CIRCLES

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*This resource can be used with any books you choose for literature circles.

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Prompts for Elaboration & Clarity

- Can you elaborate on...?
- What do you mean by...?
- How does that connect to...? How so?
- I am a little confused about the part...
- What makes you think about that?
- Can you clarify the part about...?
- Can you be more specific?
- How/why is that important?
- Can you unpack that for me?
- I'd like to add...
- Another example is...



Prompts for Responding

- I believe that...
- I think you mean that...
- In other words...
- This is important because...
- This is similar to...
- I would like to add...
- To expand on your point...
- Then again, I think that...
- Another way to look at this could be...
- What struck me was...



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ACCOUNTABLE

Accountable Talk that is meaningful, respectful, and responsive to the speaker and listener.

Prompts for Responding

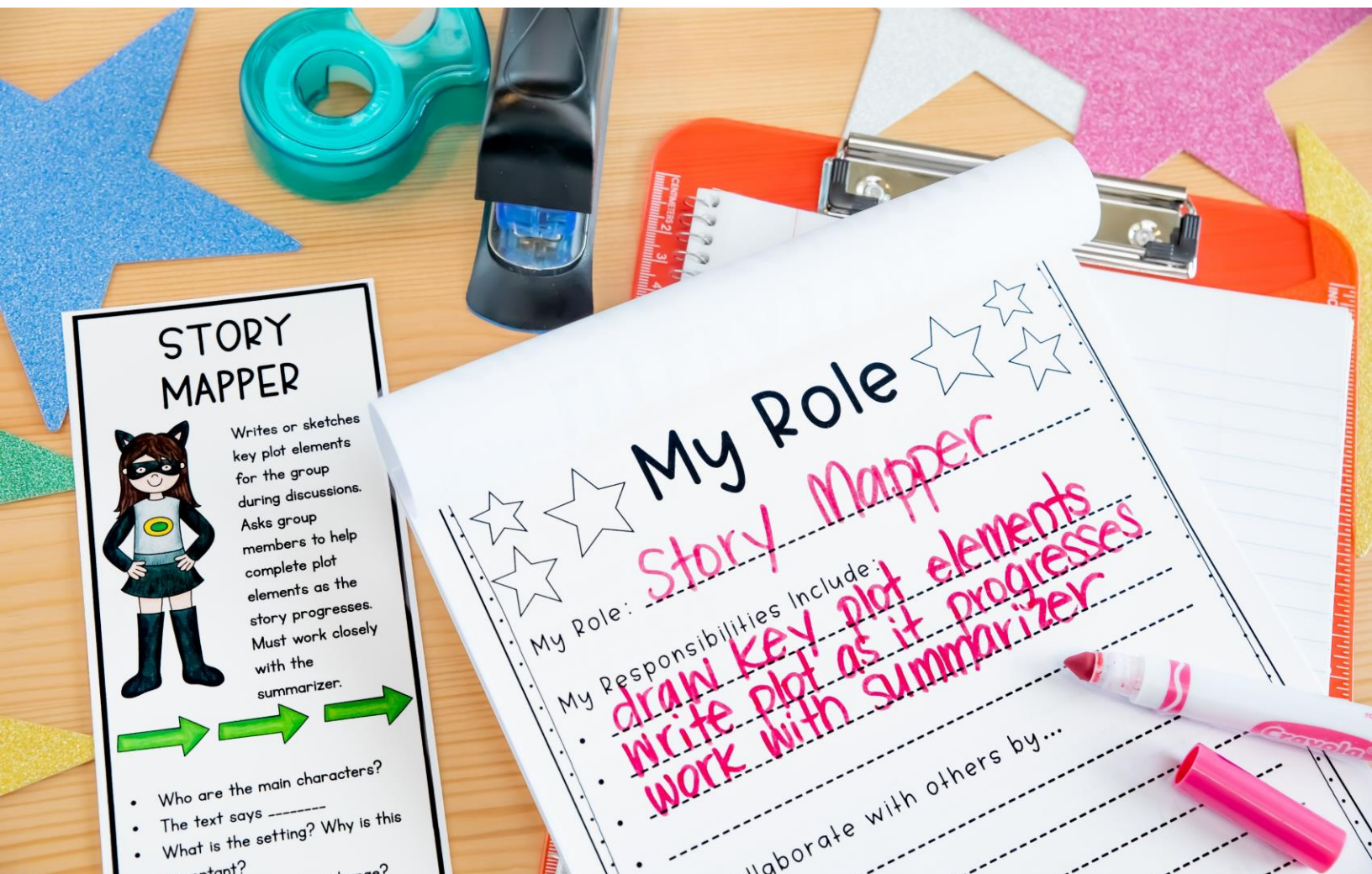
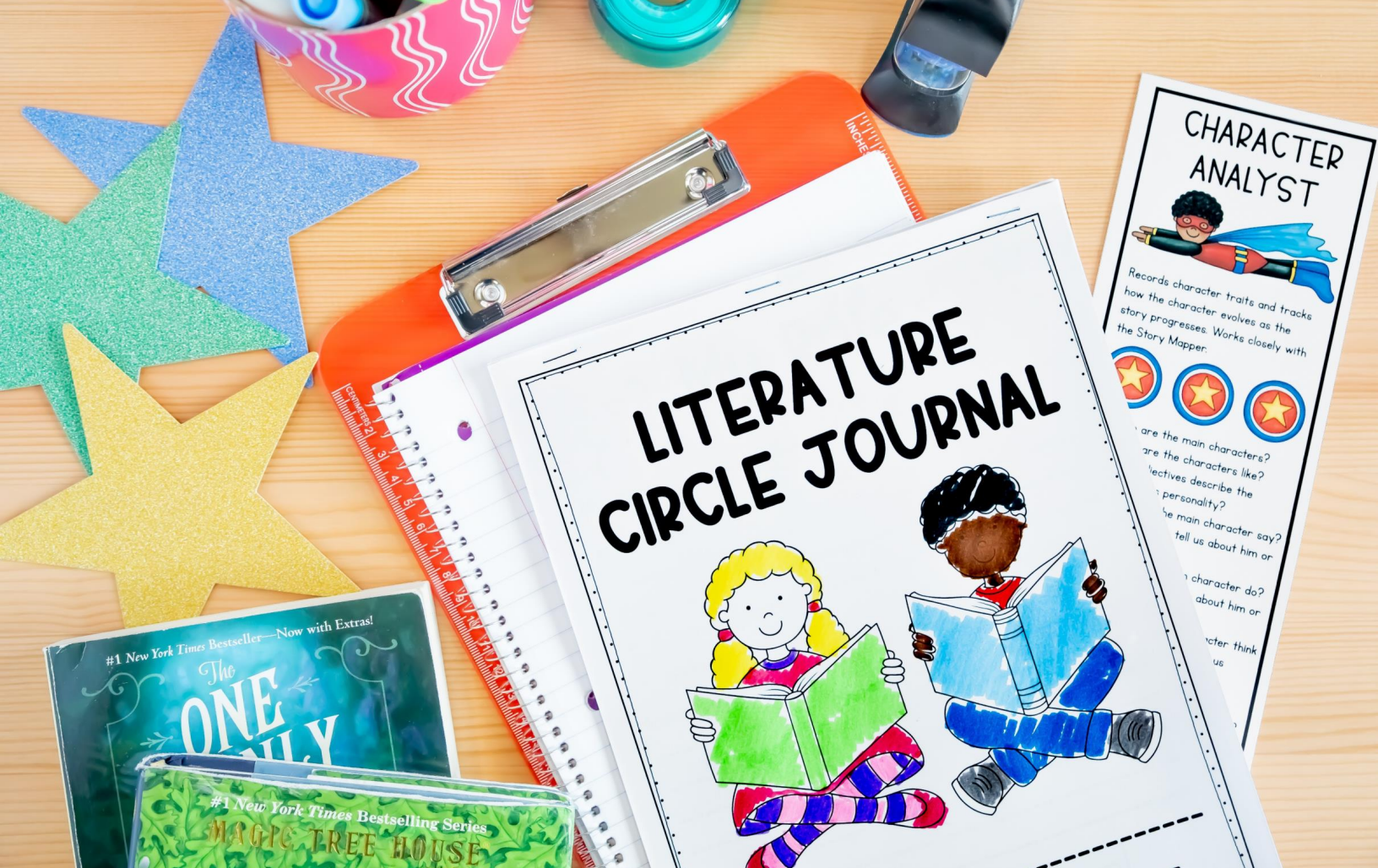
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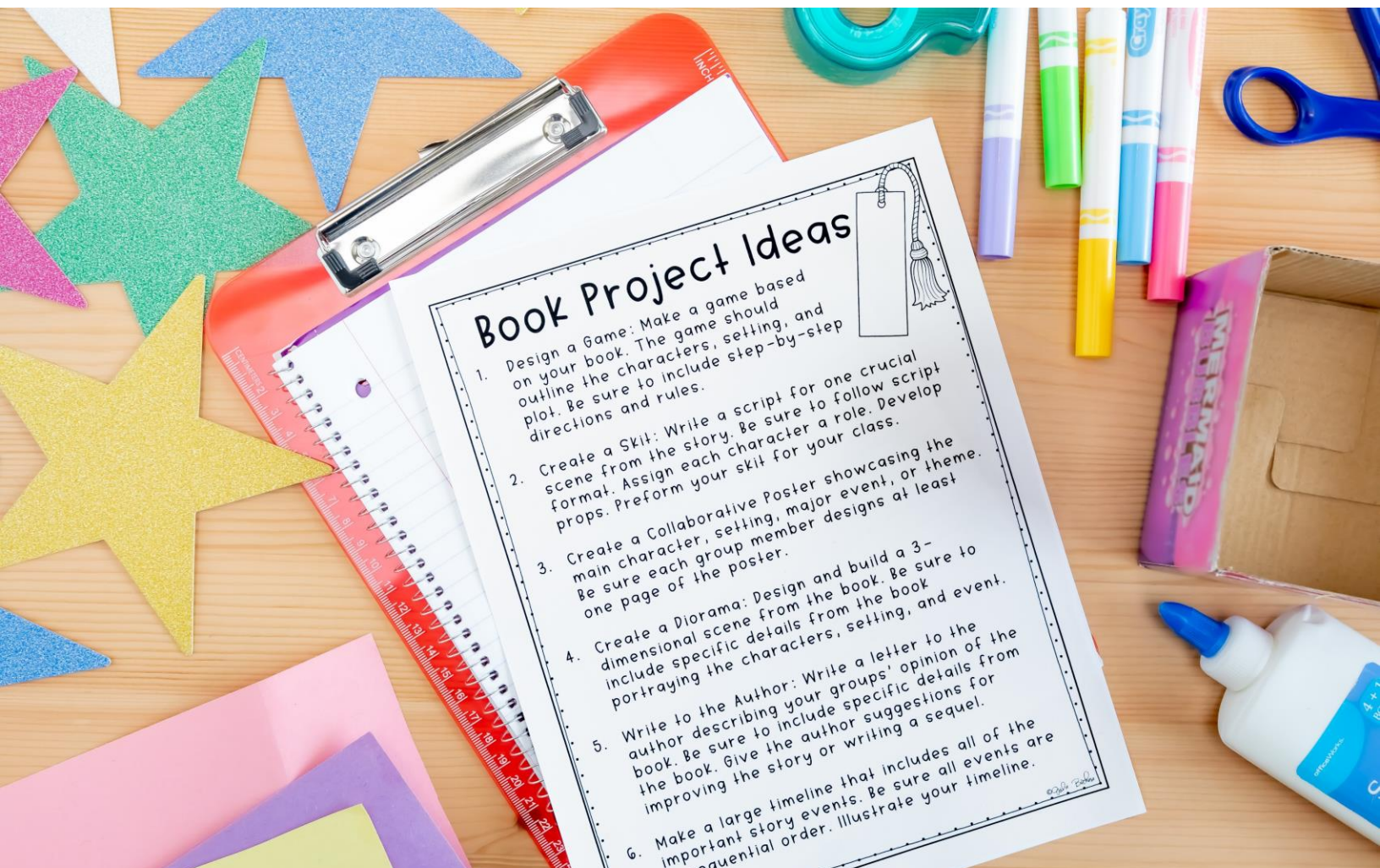
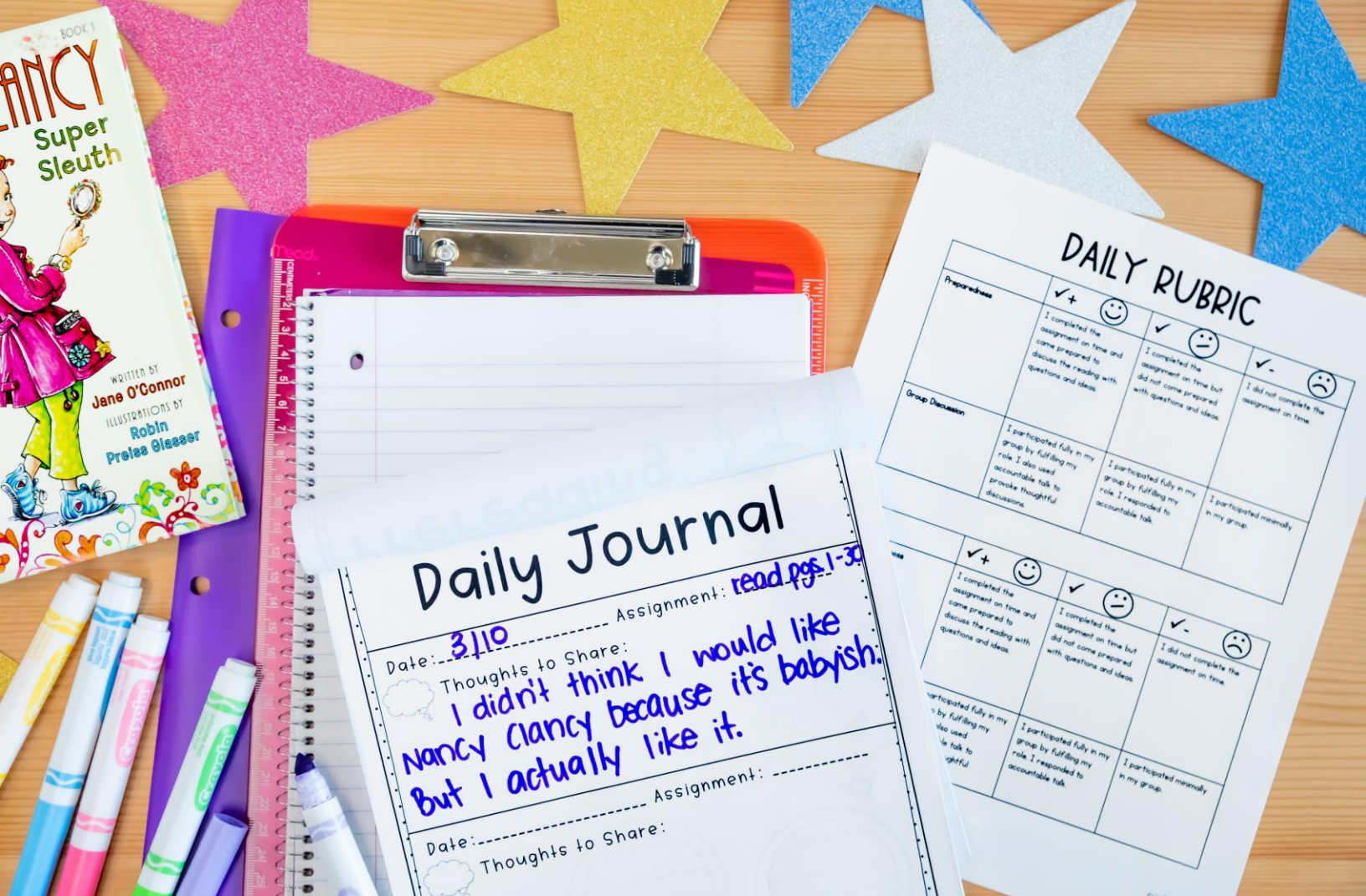
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Accountable Talk helps students reflect on their own thinking and the thinking of others.





Suggestions for Implementing Literature Circles

What are literature circles?

Literature circles are small groups of students who gather regularly to discuss a book in depth. The purpose of literature circles is to provide true-to-life reading experiences for students that get them excited about books, authors, and self-selecting text.

With the purpose in mind, teachers should work towards the goal of student independence. Eventually, the goal is for students to self-select books, voluntarily participate, and discuss books on their own time at their discretion. However, students need to be taught how to develop independence, and this resource will help you and your students begin.

Move from This → → →	To this
Teacher or text centered	Student centered
Groups formed by reading level	Groups formed by book choice
Assignments mandated by teacher	Assignments agreed upon by group members
Teacher or book-specific questions	Student-generated thoughts and questions
Isolated skills-based	Meaningful context
Round-Robin reading	Independent reading assignments
Structured	Fluid
Mandated jobs or roles	Everyone equally participating based on internal motivation.
Quizzes or tests to check comprehension.	Meaningful discussion to check comprehension.

When to Start

Often, literature circles are saved for upper elementary through middle school. While 4th grade and up is ideal for literature circles, I recommend implementing modified versions as early as second grade. Once students are able to read chapter books independently, they are ready to learn how to participate in a literature circle. That's not to say you cannot start with picture books even sooner. Keep in mind, students should not be actually reading the text together round-robin style. They should be reading independently and discussing later.

Suggestions for Implementing Literature Circles

How to Start

1. Begin with a book that is short and attainable, reading-level wise, for all group participants.
2. If it is your students' first exposure to literature circles in your classroom, I recommend beginning with Literature Circle Roles. Roles help students stay accountable while also ensuring no one is "left behind." Roles also help students learn the importance of every member's participation. I recommend reviewing all roles with the group, then allowing the group to select the roles they would like. As students have more experience, move away from structured roles and allow students to participate organically.
3. Initially, you need systems in place for the teacher to hold group members accountable to completing literature circle assignments. I recommend beginning with participation rubrics and a Literature Circle journal. Have students help you create the rubric. You can use the structured journal I have provided, or have students write open entries in a lined notebook. Eventually, as groups become more self-motivated and independent, move towards the latter.
4. Give students choice in projects they create to share with the class. Projects should draw on student talents and arts. Projects should not be drawn out and in-depth but should be a form of celebration for finishing their book and developing excitement about the book among fellow students. This is a great time to practice speaking, listening, and presentation skills!

Troubleshooting

Problem	Solution
Students are not completing agreed upon assignments.	Students do not get to participate in their group until they are "caught up." They must go read independently while their group meets.
Students argue about "roles."	This is natural. I typically try to let them work it out. Only intervene if absolutely necessary.
One group member is too "bossy."	Have a private discussion with the group member about the importance of listening over speaking.
Particular students are not participating in discussion.	Encourage other group members to ask ALL individuals questions and ideas.
Students are having difficulty reading the text.	Provide an option to listen to the book on audio.

Literature Circle Roles

- **Summarizer:** Reviews what was read since the prior meeting. Facilitates discussion and asks group members to help summarize the text.
- **Discussion Director:** Develops questions and key points for the group to discuss.
- **Story Mapper:** Writes or sketches key plot elements for the group during discussions. Ask group members to help complete plot elements as the story progresses. Must work closely with the summarizer.
- **Word Wizard:** Keeps eyes out for unfamiliar words and helps define using context clues or dictionary.
- **Character Analyst:** Records character traits and tracks how the character evolves as the story progresses. Works closely with the Story Mapper.
- **Assignment director:** Facilitates group discussions to decide the reading assignments before the next meeting. Ensures all assignments are feasible for all group members and has the final say. Holds group members accountable for completing the agreed upon chapter or page assignments.



SUPER SUMMARIZER



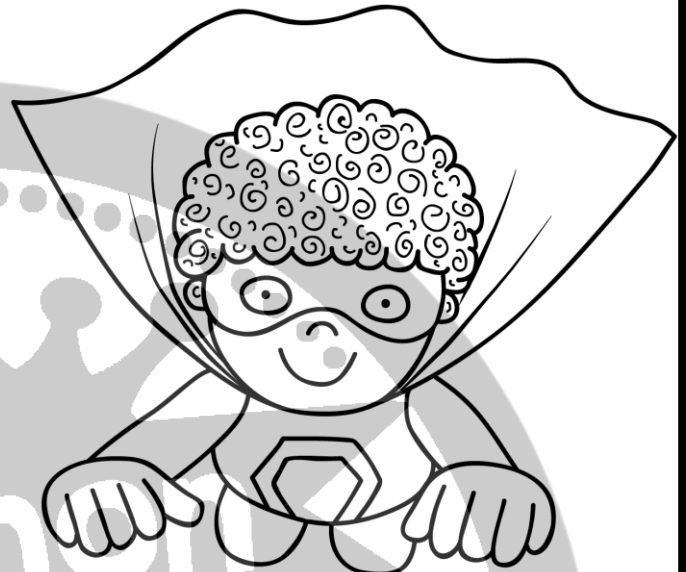
Reviews what was read since the prior meeting. Facilitates discussion and asks group members to help summarize the text.



Last meeting we read _____ (pages or chapters).

- _____, can you help me start the summary by telling us about the beginning?
- What happened in the middle?
- What happened in the end?

SUPER SUMMARIZER



Reviews what was read since the prior meeting. Facilitates discussion and asks group members to help summarize the text.



Last meeting we read _____ (pages or chapters).

- _____, can you help me start the summary by telling us about the beginning?
- What happened in the middle?
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LITERATURE CIRCLE JOURNAL



Name: _____

Date: _____

Daily Journal

Date: Assignment:



Thoughts to Share:

Date: Assignment:



Thoughts to Share:

Date: Assignment:



Thoughts to Share:

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