

Imagining Possibilities

FOCUS QUESTION

How can imagination help people deal with challenges?

NOTICE AND WONDER

Look at the three parts of the story you will read in this lesson. What do you notice? What do you wonder? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

WHAT IS IMAGINATION?

Choose one of the words below. How is the word connected to imagination? Explain your ideas to a partner.

possible

mind

create

idea

picture

dream

exists

reality

The word ___ means ___.

I think ___ is related to imagination because ___.

**from *Zoe in Wonderland*,
Parts 1–3**

by Brenda Woods



from Zoe in Wonderland

by Brenda Woods

Part 1

Eleven year-old Zoe Reindeer lives with her parents, sister, and brother in Pasadena, California. She helps out at her family's business, Doc Reindeer's Exotic Plant Wonderland, where they grow and sell plants.

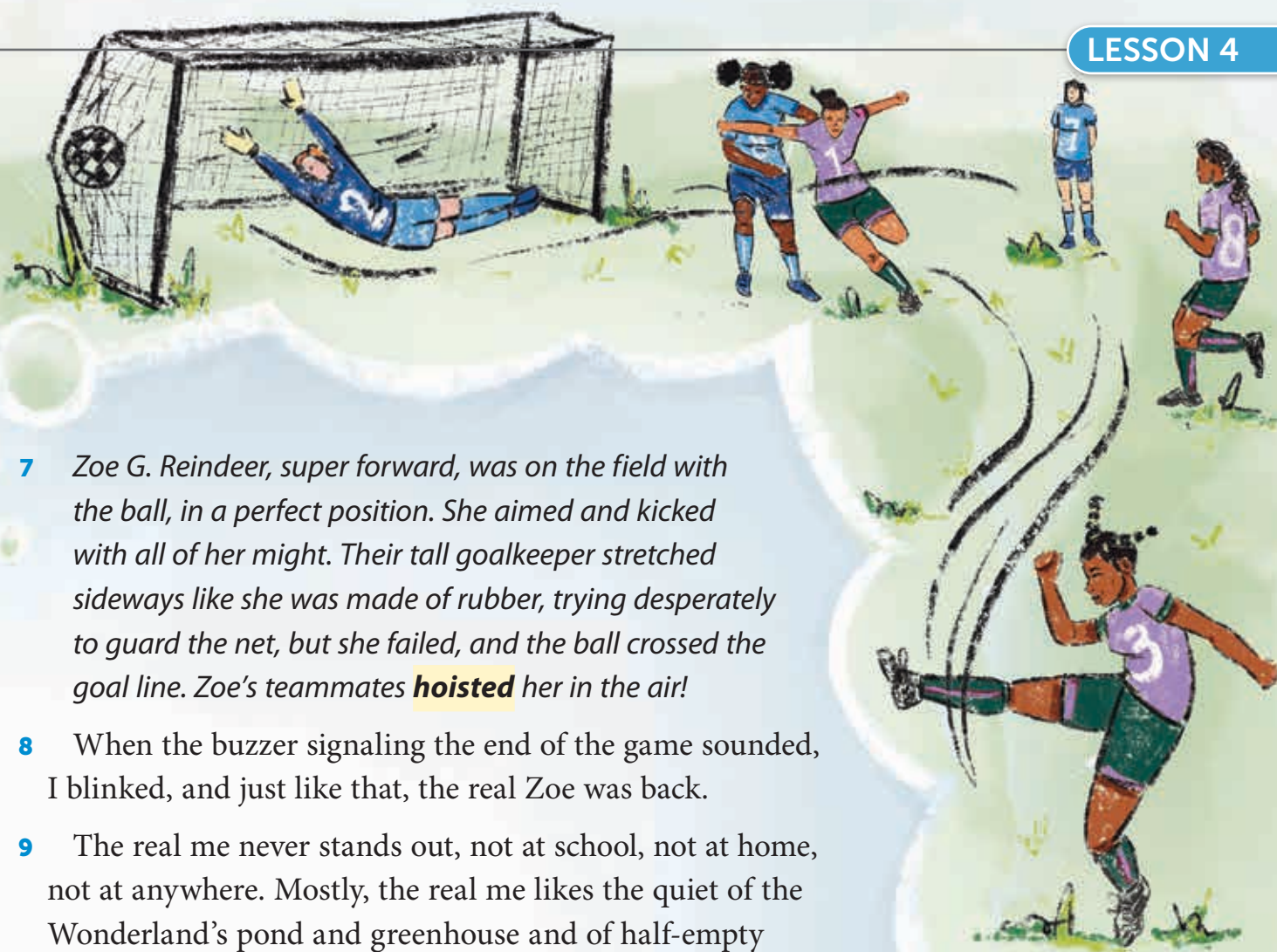
- 1 Sort of like a seed, there's this thing inside of me that's nothing like my outside, and it's alive.
- 2 Some days it comes alive a lot, and other days it happens maybe only once or twice, kind of like a sneeze or hiccup.
- 3 I really never know when it's going to come alive, but once it gets going, it's kind of like a bowling ball that's rolling faster than fast down the lane toward the pins—impossible to stop.
- 4 Like yesterday, for example.
- 5 After school, I was walking home past the park where a girls' soccer game was being played. I was on a soccer team once, but I quickly found out that I stink at sports. But sometimes it's fun to watch, so I stopped and stared through the chain-link fence.
- 6 And suddenly, it—the thing that's inside of me, which I guess you could call my wild imagination—came alive and she—*Imaginary Zoe*—appeared.

Stop & Discuss

What does Zoe think is like a seed? How is it like a seed?

Underline a sentence that supports your answer. Then explain your answer to a partner.





- 7 Zoe G. Reindeer, super forward, was on the field with the ball, in a perfect position. She aimed and kicked with all of her might. Their tall goalkeeper stretched sideways like she was made of rubber, trying desperately to guard the net, but she failed, and the ball crossed the goal line. Zoe's teammates **hoisted** her in the air!
- 8 When the buzzer signaling the end of the game sounded, I blinked, and just like that, the real Zoe was back.
- 9 The real me never stands out, not at school, not at home, not at anywhere. Mostly, the real me likes the quiet of the Wonderland's pond and greenhouse and of half-empty movie theaters. If they gave awards for being boring, I'd get a gold medal.
- 10 But *Imaginary Zoe* is everything the real me isn't. Instead of being eleven years old, she's already a teenager and even has her driver's license. Plus she doesn't stink at sports.
- 11 Sometimes I try very hard to keep *Imaginary Zoe* from disappearing, but because my real world keeps interrupting with all of its stuff like chores and homework and getting annoyed and having to brush my teeth and sometimes being forced to eat pickled beets, *Imaginary Zoe* vanishes.
- 12 Now that I've explained how I'm sort of like a seed and also about *Imaginary Zoe*, I can tell you about the real seeds. 🖐️

hoisted = lifted

Stop & Discuss

How is real Zoe different from *Imaginary Zoe*?

Support your answer with details from the text.

Real Zoe __, but
Imaginary Zoe __.

Unlike real Zoe,
Imaginary Zoe __.



Describe Characters

- Looking at what a character says, does, and thinks can help you understand a character, including how they feel and what their motivations are.
- **Motivations** are the reasons why characters act the way they do.

Reread/Think

Reread Part 1 of *Zoe in Wonderland*. Explain what each piece of text evidence in the chart shows about the real Zoe's feelings and motivations.

Text Evidence	What It Shows
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I quickly found out that I stink at sports. . . . But sometimes it's fun to watch, so I stopped and stared . . ." (paragraph 5) • "<i>Zoe G. Reindeer, super forward, was on the field . . . [her] teammates hoisted her in the air!</i>" (paragraph 7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though Zoe does not play soccer anymore, she thinks its fun to watch. • Zoe imagines she is good at soccer and wishes she was the star of the team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The real me never stands out, not at school, not at home, not at anywhere. Mostly, the real me likes the quiet . . ." (paragraph 9) • "If they gave awards for being boring, I'd get a gold medal." (paragraph 9) 	
"But <i>Imaginary Zoe</i> is everything the real me isn't." (paragraph 10)	
"Sometimes I try very hard to keep <i>Imaginary Zoe</i> from disappearing, but because my real world keeps interrupting . . . <i>Imaginary Zoe</i> vanishes." (paragraph 11)	

from Zoe in Wonderland

by Brenda Woods

Part 2

A tall man from Madagascar comes to Wonderland, Zoe's family business, looking for a baobab tree, but Zoe tells him the shop doesn't have any. He invites her to an open house at the lab where he works as an astronomer. When he leaves, Zoe and her friend Quincy research baobab trees.


endangered = at risk of dying out because there are so few left

environmentalist = a person who works to protect nature


Stop & Discuss

What does Zoe imagine in this part of the story? Why?

Underline a sentence that shows what *Imaginary Zoe* accomplishes. Then describe the scene in your own words.

- 1 With Quincy sitting beside me, I looked up *baobab tree* on the computer. Unexpectedly, there were a bunch of sites. I popped on one that called it “the tree of life” and a photo came up of about thirty baobab trees growing in a grassy Madagascar plain. The clear blue sky behind the trees made them look strangely beautiful. “Wow!”
- 2 I studied the tall, fat trunks and leafy branches closely.
- 3 Quickly I began to read. “Says they can live for thousands of years and that there are nine species.”
- 4 “And it’s one of the top **endangered** trees in the world,” he read.
- 5 Abruptly, I stopped reading. “Endangered?” I repeated.
- 6 Zoe was standing at the podium. The auditorium was packed and reporters pointed video cameras at the guest of honor: **environmentalist** Zoe G. Reindeer. At the end of Zoe’s inspiring speech, people clapped and began popping up around the room like popcorn until finally everyone was standing. Single-handedly, Zoe had saved the baobabs from certain extinction. 

Inspired by her research, Zoe orders and plants baobab seeds in coffee cans. When she is working at Wonderland, the tall man returns.

- 7 The tall man smiled, showing both his top and bottom teeth. “Hello again, young lady.”
- 8 Young lady is not a name, I thought. “Zoe,” I informed him.
- 9 “Hello, Zoe. I’m Ben . . . Ben Rakotomalala.”
- 10 I’d never heard a last name like that before.
- 11 “Actually one of the shorter names in Madagascar and quite common. Most people call me Ben.”
- 12 Seeing him again made me instantly un-forget about the baobabs. Since the day I’d planted the seeds, I’d completely ignored them. . . . As soon as the man leaves, I promised myself, I’ll head to the greenhouse. “We still don’t have any baobab trees,” I told him. “And I asked my daddy, but he didn’t want to buy any, so my friend and I bought some seeds and I planted them, so we should have some pretty soon, maybe.”
- 13 “So Zoe is an **entrepreneur**?”
- 14 I didn’t know what an entrepreneur was, but I felt ashamed to ask, so I just shrugged. “Spoze so?”
- 15 “Didn’t see you at the open house we had at JPL last week.”
- 16 “Oh. I forgot all about it, plus I’m not really into science. My brother, Harper, he’s the scientist. He knows a whole bunch of stuff.”
- 17 “But you’re the imaginer?”
- 18 Because he was right, I nodded. 



entrepreneur = someone who starts or organizes a business

Stop & Discuss

How does Ben describe Zoe? How does this compare to the way she describes herself?

Support your answer with details from the text.



Stop & Discuss

What characteristics do you think adventurers, explorers, inventors, dreamers, and imaginers have in common? Does Zoe share those qualities?

Explain your answer to a partner, using details from the text.

19 “Imagination is sometimes more valuable than having a head full of facts. Without imaginers, it’s likely we’d still be living in caves. Imaginers and adventurers can change the world.”

20 “But I’m not an adventurer,” I told him.

21 “I’ll be right back. I have something for you!” he exclaimed as he dashed outside.

Seconds later, he slammed the trunk closed, and quickly, his long-as-stilts legs brought him back to where I was standing. He was holding a book. He handed it to me. “A small gift for you.”

22 I took it from his hand and read the title. *Adventurers, Explorers, Inventors, Dreamers, and Imaginers: People Who Changed Our World.*

“I hope this will open your mind, Zoe,” he said. “And that your life will be a marvelous adventure,” he added.


23 “Thank you.”

24 “You are very welcome, Zoe. Time for me to go.” Before he ducked outside, he told me, “Promise you’ll save one for me.”

25 “One what?”

26 “Baobab.”

27 “I promise.”

28 I stared at the picture of the telescope on the back of his T-shirt as he walked away and wondered exactly how far away you can see with one. I studied the cover of the book again, then gazed up at the sky. 



Describe Characters

- Examining what a character says, thinks, and does helps readers understand the character's traits. **Traits** describe a character's personality, or what the character is like.

Reread/Think

Reread Part 2 of *Zoe in Wonderland*. Explain what the text evidence in the chart shows about Zoe's traits.

Text Evidence	What It Shows
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I looked up <i>baobab tree</i> on the computer." (paragraph 1) "I studied the tall, fat trunks and leafy branches closely. . . ." (paragraph 2) "Quickly I began to read." (paragraph 3) 	curious, interested in learning new things
"Abruptly, I stopped reading. 'Endangered?' I repeated." (paragraph 5)	
"Single-handedly, [Imaginary] Zoe had saved the <i>baobabs</i> from certain extinction." (paragraph 6)	
"We still don't have any baobab trees . . . so my friend and I bought some seeds and I planted them, so we should have some pretty soon . . ."	
(paragraph 13)	
"I stared at the picture of the telescope . . . and wondered exactly how far away you can see with one. I studied the cover of the book again, then gazed up at the sky." (paragraph 31)	



Talk

Think about what you have learned about Zoe. Discuss the traits you identified in your chart. Use details from the text to support your ideas.

One of Zoe's traits is ____.

I know this because the text says ____.

Write

Explain two of Zoe's traits that best describe the character. Use details from the text to support your response.

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I described two of Zoe's traits.
- ☐ I used details from the text to support my response.
- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



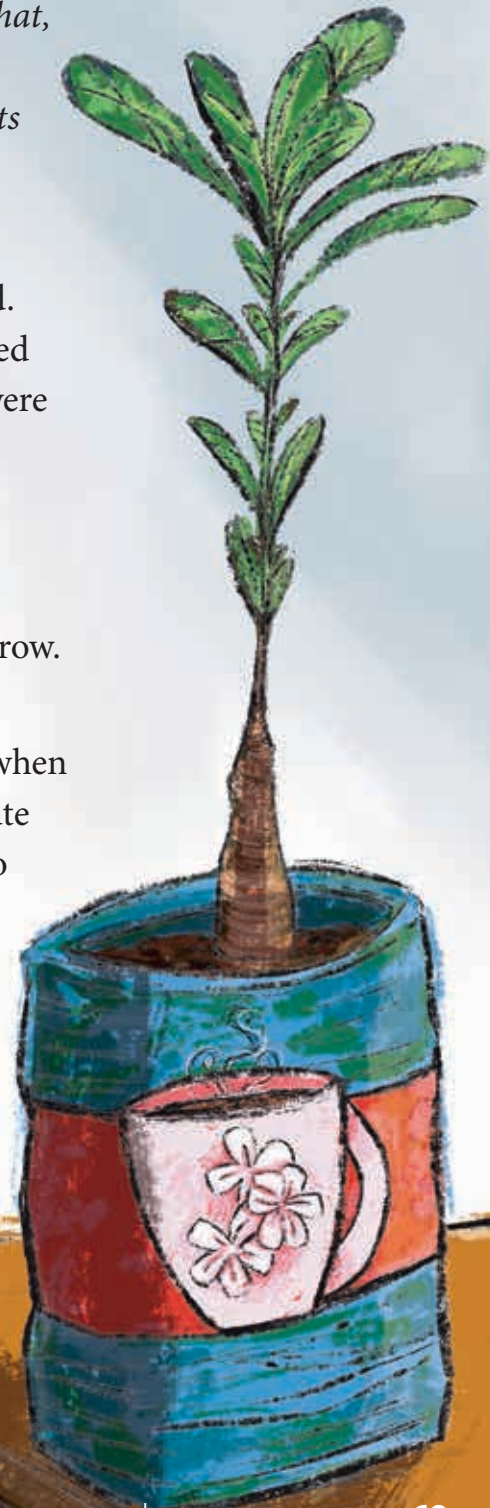
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Part 3

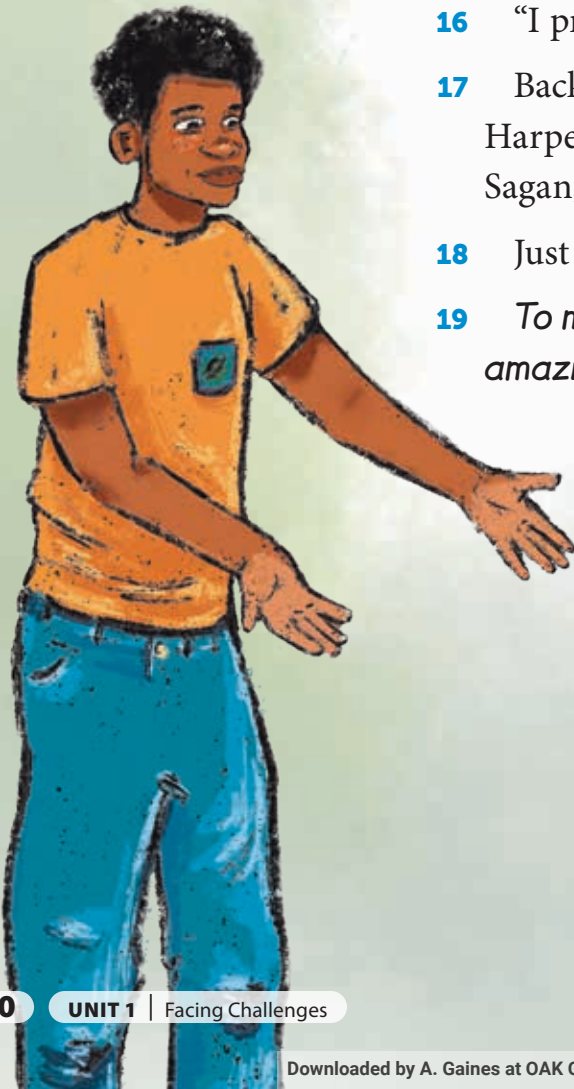
Ben stops by the store to give Zoe another book. Shortly after that, a fire at Wonderland destroys everything except one baobab sprout. Zoe's family decides to sell the land and move. Ben visits the apartment where Zoe's family is staying until they move.

- 1 “How did you find us?” I asked.
- 2 “The man who bought the Wonderland told me,” he replied. “I came to express my sorrow and to replace these.” He handed me copies of the two books he’d given me. “I assumed they were lost in the fire.”
- 3 I took them from his hand. “They were . . . Thank you.”
- 4 Daddy got tears in his eyes. “You’re a kind man, Ben.”
- 5 “We’re moving to Kauai in Hawaii. Our plane leaves tomorrow. We bought a flower farm,” I blurted.
- 6 “The Garden Isle, they call that one. I was there years ago when I worked on the Big Island at the University of Hawaii Institute for Astronomy. If you ever get to the Big Island, you’ll have to make sure you visit the Mauna Kea Observatories. By 2022, the island will be home to the world’s biggest telescope, allowing scientists to see thirteen billion light-years away. Well, it’s time for me to say my good-byes,” the tall man said. His words had a little sadness sprinkled on them.
- 7 “Bye, and thank you for the books,” I told him.
- 8 He said good-bye one last time and turned to leave, heading toward the elevator.





- 9 Suddenly, I glanced at the baobab seedling in the Kona coffee can that was sitting on the table.
- 10 “Daddy?” I picked up the baobab. “Can I give this one to Ben? Please? I promised him.”
- 11 “Ben!” Daddy called out. “Hold up! My Zoe has a gift for you.”
- 12 I flew down the hallway to Ben Rakotomalala. “It’s a baobab. For you.”
- 13 He took the can from my hand. “Thank you, Zoe!”
- 14 “Don’t water it too much or it might die,” I warned him.
- 15 The elevator door was closing when he stopped it with his hand and it reopened. Ben stared into my eyes. “One more thing, Zoe. Promise you’ll put that wonderful imagination of yours to good use.”
- 16 “I promise.”
- 17 Back inside the apartment, I plopped on the sofa beside Harper and together we flipped open the book by Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*.
- 18 Just like before, Ben had written on the first page:
- 19 *To my friend Zoe Reindeer—May your life be an amazing adventure.*





Respond to Text

Reread/Think

Reread Part 3 of *Zoe in Wonderland*. Choose the best response to each question.

1. PART A

Which of these **best** describes why Ben comes to visit Zoe and her family?

- A. He is eager to see Zoe's little baobab tree.
- B. He is disappointed that Zoe and her family are leaving.
- C. He feels a duty to help Zoe and her family move to Hawaii.
- D. He is a thoughtful person who wants to help Zoe.

PART B

Which of Ben's actions **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. He learns Zoe's location from the man who bought the Wonderland.
- B. He brings Zoe new copies of the books he had given her before.
- C. He tells Zoe she should visit the Mauna Kea Observatories on the Big Island.
- D. He says goodbye one last time to Zoe and her family before leaving.

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

"I **assumed** they were lost in the fire."

What does *assumed* mean?

- A. discovered
- B. told someone
- C. believed to be true
- D. heard from someone

3. What do paragraphs 10–14 show about Zoe?

- A. She forgets things easily.
- B. She is not careful with plants.
- C. She keeps her promises.
- D. She does not trust people.



Reread/Think

4. In paragraph 15, what does Ben mean when he tells Zoe to put her imagination “to good use?”
- A. He wants her to use her imagination to think about astronomy.
 - B. He wants her to use her imagination less and think more about real things.
 - C. He wants her to use her imagination as an escape from her real life.
 - D. He wants her to use her imagination to explore and change the world.

Write

By the end of the story, how has Zoe changed because of her imagination? Use details from the text to support your response.

has changed with
the help of her
imagination.

- ☐ I used at least 1
details from the
to support my
response.
- ☐ I used complete
sentences.
- ☐ I used correct
spelling, punctuation
and capitalization.

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I explained how Zoe has changed with the help of her imagination.
- ☐ I used at least two details from the text to support my response.
- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



Respond to the Focus Question

How can imagination help people deal with challenges?

Reread/Think

Revisit Parts 1–3 of *Zoe in Wonderland*. How does Zoe use her imagination in the story? How does it help her? Complete the chart with details from each part.

How Zoe Uses Her Imagination	How Zoe's Imagination Helps Her
Part 1	
Part 2	
Part 3	

Talk

With a small group, discuss how Zoe's imagination helps her throughout the story.

In the beginning/middle/end, Zoe imagines ____.

Zoe's imagination helps her ____.

Write

How have you used your imagination to face a challenge or solve a problem?