

The Borrowed Desk

Eight activities

Activity 1: Remember the story

1. How are the late slips filed, and what does Malki do to them on Monday?
2. What happens on Tuesday when a mother comes for early pickup?
3. What rule does Malki make for herself, and what goes in the blue notebook?
4. What does the secretary decide about the dismissal binder, and why?

Activity 2: Fact or guess

1. The late-slip book is organized alphabetically when Malki arrives. Fact / Guess
2. Malki re-alphabetizes the late slips on Monday. Fact / Guess
3. The teacher says the door order exists because of dismissal crowds. Fact / Guess
4. The secretary refuses to consider any of Malki's ideas. Fact / Guess

Activity 3: Think and write

1. Malki's alphabetizing was neat, careful, and wrong. What was missing from her thinking?
2. "The clutter is load-bearing." What does Malki mean? Give an example from the story.
3. The history teacher says, "She'll never change it." Why does that stop bothering Malki?

Activity 4: Apply it - Tirza's week on the chore wheel

Malki's rule is: run the borrowed system the owner's way; write every improvement idea down for the owner instead of enacting it.

1. (a) Tirza borrows her camp bunk's chore wheel for one week while the bunk head is away. She sees three things she would change. Under Malki's rule, what does she do on day one, and what does she do with the three ideas? (b) The chore wheel has a rule Tirza thinks is silly: the garbage person also stacks the chairs. What does the late-slip episode suggest Tirza should do before touching that rule?
2. Malki says, "An idea in a notebook is not lost. It is just waiting for the person whose idea it has to be." Explain in your own words.
3. When is it right to ignore Malki's rule and fix a borrowed system immediately?

Activity 5: Scrambled words (from the story)

1. LISPS

2. RINDEB
3. REWARD
4. RECOUNT

Activity 6: Word work

Match each word to its meaning from the story.

1. redundancy a. to make something into law or action
2. load-bearing b. carrying real weight; holding something up
3. enact c. an extra backup that seems unnecessary until it saves you
4. landmark d. a fixed point you navigate by

Activity 7: Word search

Find the eight words hidden in the grid. All words run left to right.

```

S L I P S V W B F Y
N O T E B O O K R S
B I N D E R Q Z X J
C O U N T E R H U P
D O O R R S T C D E
D R A W E R K V W B
I N I T I A L S N O
B A N D A G E I Q Z
X J K V W B F Y G H
U P L M N O R S T C

```

The eight words: SLIPS, NOTEBOOK, BINDER, COUNTER, DOOR, DRAWER, INITIALS, BANDAGE.

Activity 8: Your turn - a system that isn't yours

Think of one system in your life that belongs to someone else - a family kitchen, a class job, a club's way of doing things. Write five lines: what you would change, whose it is, and what you would want to learn before changing it.