



Facilitator note: A fictional chain of small choices. Do not ask students to confess real mistakes or secrets in class; the planning activities use made-up cases. In this story, telling late is shown as better than telling later, and the technique is this family's way - a grandfather's unwinding - not a rule for everyone. Adults set consequences, and a sharp word to the wrong person is repaired directly. Anything involving safety always goes straight to an adult, immediately - that is not a chain to unwind alone.

Activity 1: The chain map

Draw Zelda's chain the way she draws it - five boxes, four arrows, in order, no skipping. Then circle the link that is still open when the page is drawn. It appears twice - circle both boxes. What makes that link different from the other three?

Activity 2: The sentence that leaves the house

In chapter 6, Zelda's mouth prepares two sentences. Write both: the softer one she lets go, and the true one she lets out. Then write one line about what each sentence would have made happen by Sunday night. Which one leaves the house, and why that one?

Activity 3: Three sentences to a brother

Zelda repairs the sharp voice her brother got. Write, in her own words, the three short sentences she says on the rug: what happened, that the sharp voice belonged to her, and the sorry. Keep them short enough for an eight-year-old to hold.

Activity 4: Money and days (all numbers made up for practice)

Suppose the repair costs \$18, and Zelda earns \$9 an hour babysitting - how many hours does the repair cost? Suppose she repays the \$18 in 4 equal installments - how much is each installment? The silence begins Friday and ends Sunday - how many days does it last?

Activity 5: A card for the desk

Zelda tapes a card to her desk: "Ask first. Pens live in cups. When a link is open, close it today." Write the card for a different case - a teen who keeps borrowing her sister's good scissors without asking. Three short lines, aimed at her first link, not her loudest one.





Activity 6: Draw the desk

Draw Tatty's desk: the cup, the drawer, the papers, and Zeldy's page with the five boxes. Only what can be seen - no labels for feelings. Faces and poses are your choice. Caption with one line from the story.

Activity 7: Unwind it - planning for a fictional case

A teen named Etty borrows her sister's good scissors without asking, leaves them on the porch overnight, and finds them rusted in the morning. She says nothing, and her sister needs them Thursday for sewing class. Write Etty's chain in boxes and arrows, circle her open link, and write the sentence that opens it. Then name one useful action after the telling.

Activity 8: Word grid

Find eight words left to right. Row/column numbering begins at 1.

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

CHAIN, LINK, PEN, ASK, TRUTH, TOLD, WASH, ORDER. Which word names what the pen went through, and which word names what Zeldy must do first next time?





Teacher answer key

1. Five boxes, in order: borrowed without asking; pocket instead of the cup; the wash; said nothing Friday; said nothing Sunday. Four arrows connect them. The open link is the silence, and it appears twice because it is the same link running twice - the first three boxes are sealed (she cannot un-borrow, un-pocket, or un-wash), but the silence is still happening, and anything still happening can still change. The map's whole use is finding where change is still possible.
2. The softer sentence: "maybe it fell somewhere, maybe it got mixed into things." The true one: "I borrowed the pen on Thursday without asking... I knew Friday, and I didn't say." By Sunday night, the softer sentence would have left the house searching wrong places, her brother still under a sharp voice, and one more thing for Zelda to unsay later - a sixth link. The true sentence leaves the house because it is the only one that stops the chain; the story counts letting the softer one go as a choice in itself.
3. Sample: "The pen was me - I borrowed it, and it went through the wash. You got a sharp voice for my link. I'm sorry." Short, in order, no explaining-away; the story shows he accepts it in the direct way of eight-year-olds and asks to see the dead pen.
4. $18 / 9 = 2$ hours of babysitting. $18 / 4 = \$4.50$ per installment. Friday to Sunday = 2 days of silence.
5. Sample card: "Ask before the scissors. Tools go back in the sewing box at night. If a link is open, close it today." The first line aims at the first link (the borrowing), the second at the second (where tools live); nothing on the card mentions rust or Thursday, because the loud links are consequences.
6. Open. The drawing should show the observable pieces: the cup, the drawer, the lease papers, the five-box page. Strong captions quote "in order, no skipping" or "Pens live in cups" - both literal lines from the story. Any honest rendering counts.
7. Eddy's chain: borrowed without asking; porch instead of the sewing box; the rain; said nothing in the morning; said nothing when Thursday was announced. Open link: the silence, still running. The sentence: "I borrowed your scissors without asking, they rusted in the rain, and I knew this morning and didn't tell you." Useful action: she offers her own money for new scissors before Thursday and asks her sister what else would help.
8. CHAIN row 1 columns 1-5; LINK row 2 columns 3-6; PEN row 3 columns 2-4; ASK row 4 columns 4-6; TRUTH row 5 columns 1-5; TOLD row 6 columns 3-6; WASH row 7 columns 2-5; ORDER row 8 columns 4-8. The pen went through the WASH; next time Zelda must ASK first.

