

The Group With the Blue Folders



Nussbaum Mind

Illustration coming soon

Ages 6-9



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Chapter 1: Two groups

In Rabbi's class, reading time has two groups.

The green folders sit at the front table. The blue folders sit at the back. Zevi is in the green group. His friend Avrumi is in the green group too.

On Monday, Rabbi stands by the board and reads from a list.

"Avrumi, please bring your folder to the blue table. You are ready for the next group."

Avrumi grins. He grabs his folder and walks past the front table.

Zevi watches him go.

Chapter 2: The empty chair

Zevi sits at the green table with the empty chair beside him.

The words in his book look the same as they did on Friday. They are small and a little jumpy. He reads slowly, one finger under each line.

At the back, the blue group laughs about a funny part in their story. He can hear it from across the room.

His throat feels tight. He wants to say something mean about the blue folders. He wants to say reading is boring anyway.

He keeps his mouth closed and stares at the page.



Chapter 3: At the door

At dismissal, Avrumi waits for him by the coat hooks.

"Want to walk out together?"

"I don't care," says Zevi, and he pulls on his coat too hard.

Avrumi looks surprised. "Are you mad?"

Zevi shrugs. His eyes sting. "You got the blue folder."

"I know. I'm sorry it feels weird."

"It isn't fair," says Zevi.

Avrumi does not argue. He stands there holding his backpack, and for a moment neither of them says anything.

Chapter 4: Rebbi

Rebbi is still in the classroom, stacking folders.

"Zevi, do you have a minute?"

Zevi nods slowly.

"I saw your face this morning. Moving to a new group can feel like a ladder with someone else already at the top."

"I want the blue folder."

"I know you do. Do you want to know what steps get you there?"



Zevi thinks about this. His chest is still heavy, but a small, curious part of him wants to hear.

"Yes," he says.

Chapter 5: Three steps

Rebbi takes out a card and writes three lines.

"One: read a page aloud, slowly, every evening. Two: when you get stuck on a word, point and ask instead of guessing. Three: come show me on Fridays and we will check."

"That's all?"

"That's all. It is not magic. For some children it takes a couple of weeks, for some longer. Everyone is different."

"What if it doesn't work?"

"Then we look at the card again and change one step. A card is only a plan, and we can keep changing it together."

Zevi takes the card. It is a little crumpled, because he squeezes it.

Chapter 6: Practice

That evening, Zevi sits on the couch with his book and Mommy.

He reads one page aloud. He gets stuck on the word "journey" and points to it.



"Jour-ney," says Mommy.

"Journey," says Zevi. He reads the sentence again.

When he finishes, he checks the first box on the card.

His brother makes a face. "Why are you reading so quietly?"

"I am reading with Mommy," says Zevi, and keeps going.

Chapter 7: The first Friday

On Friday, Zevi shows Rebbi the card with five checks.

"Good start," says Rebbi.

Avrumi stops by his desk at recess. "Do you want to hear what the blue group is reading? There's a dragon."

"Maybe later," says Zevi. "I'm still finishing my page."

He is not ready for the blue folder yet. But the card is full of checks, and he knows what comes next.

Under his desk, he opens the green folder and starts to read, one finger under each line.



Folder order

Number the cards in story order.

Zevi shows Rebbi a card with five checks.

Rebbi asks Avrumi to bring his folder to the blue table.

Rebbi writes three steps on a card.

Zevi tells Avrumi it is not fair.

Zevi reads one page aloud and points at a hard word.



Event or feeling?

Mark EVENT for what happens. Mark FEELING for how Zevi feels inside.

Story statement	EVENT	FEELING
Rebbi asks Avrumi to bring his folder to the blue table.	☐	☐
His throat feels tight.	☐	☐
Rebbi writes three steps on a card.	☐	☐
His chest is heavy.	☐	☐



What can Zevi say?

Choose the sentence that says what is true without being mean.
Rewrite one other sentence in your own words.

Sentence	Kind and true?
☐ I want the blue folder.	
☐ You are a bad reader and I am not.	
☐ What are the steps?	

One sentence in your own words



Steps on the card

Draw a path through the steps that help with practice.

Start

Read a page aloud.

Say something mean.

Point and ask about a hard word.

Show Rebbi on Friday.

Quit reading.

Change one step if it does not work.

A helpful next step



My step card

Use a fictional child. Write three small steps for something hard.

A fictional child's goal

Three small steps

Who could help check



Small steps

Read the reminders with an adult. Choose one that fits. Final stickers are 2 1/4-inch squares.

**Small steps
count**

**Ask about a
hard word**

Hurt is allowed

**Mean words are
not**

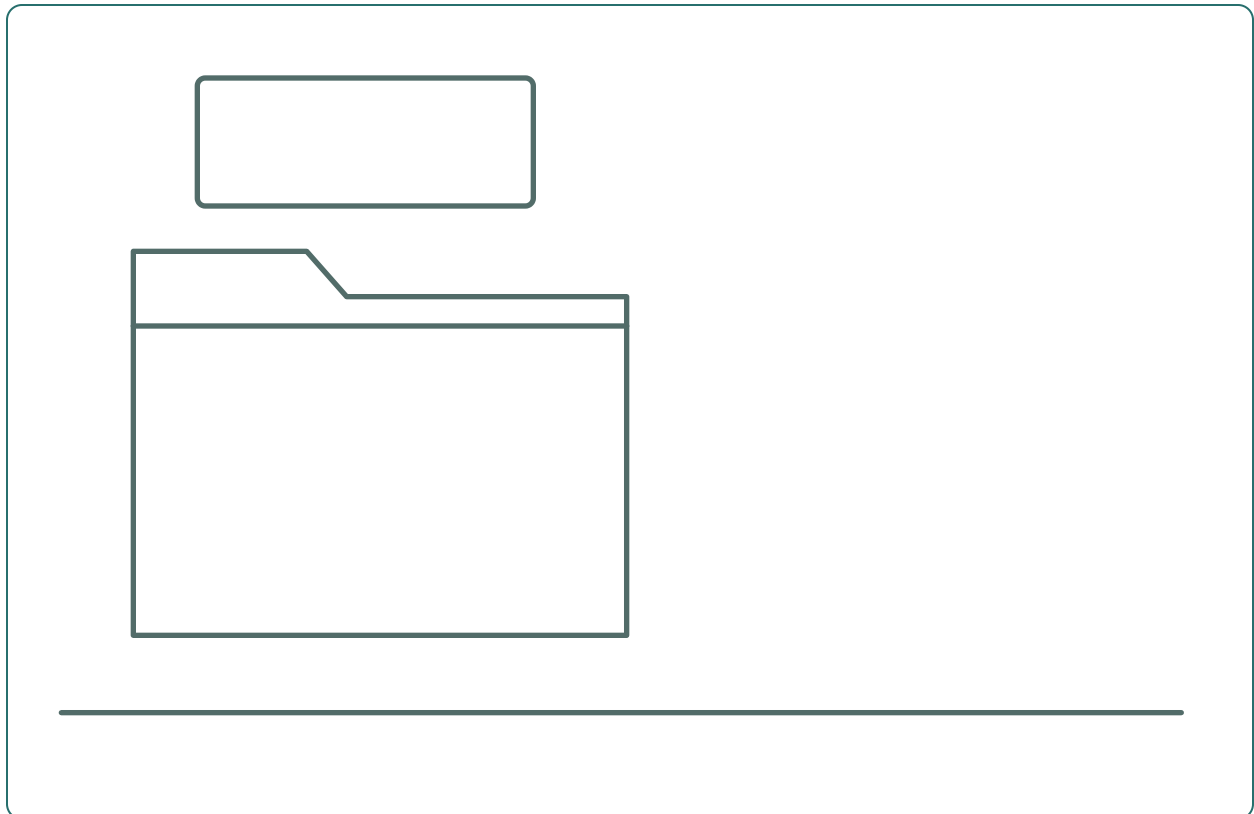
**A card can
change**

Keep going



Green and blue

Draw two folders, one green and one blue, on a table. Add a card with three check boxes beside the green one.



A detail I add to the folders or card



Find the practice words

Find GREEN, BLUE, READ, CARD, STEPS, POINT, ASK, KEEP.
All go left to right. Tell one word's part in the story.

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

GREEN
STEPS

BLUE
POINT

READ
ASK

CARD
KEEP

One word's part in the story



Parent notes and answers

Discussion questions:

How did Zevi feel when Avrumi moved to the blue group?

What did he want to say, and what did he do instead?

What three steps did Rebbi write?

What did Rebbi say about how long it takes?

What did Zevi do that evening and on Friday?

Parent tool: Hurt about a friend moving ahead is common. Name the feeling, avoid mean words and look for small steps. Do not promise a date or guarantee a move. A card of steps can be changed. The friend does not need to apologize for doing well.

1. Listed order 5, 1, 3, 2, 4.

2. EVENT: Rebbi asks Avrumi to bring his folder to the blue table; Rebbi writes three steps.
FEELING: his throat feels tight; his chest is heavy.

3. Kind and true: I want the blue folder; I feel hurt; what are the steps? Mean: you are a bad reader and I am not.

4. Useful nodes: Read a page aloud; Point and ask about a hard word; Show Rebbi on Friday; Change one step if it does not work. Not useful nodes: Say something mean; Quit reading.

5. Open. Example: practice a little each day; ask about hard parts; check with a helper on Fridays.

6. Open. No date is promised; steps can change.

7. Open. No people needed.

8. GREEN: row 1, column 1, right; BLUE: row 2, column 2, right; READ: row 3, column 2, right; CARD: row 4, column 2, right; STEPS: row 5, column 2, right; POINT: row 6, column 2, right; ASK: row 7, column 2, right; KEEP: row 8, column 2, right