

# From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler



by **E.L. Konigsburg**

## Lit Link Grades 4-6

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**Illustrated by S&S Learning Materials**

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❁ • Chapter 1 • ❁

**Before you read the chapter:**

Careful planning is usually critical to success. An ancient proverb says: “He who fails to plan, plans to fail.” Describe a time in your life (or that of a friend) when careful planning played an important and memorable role in the achievement of success.

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**Vocabulary:**

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

<b>fiscal</b>	<b>erupt</b>	<b>tyranny</b>	<b>refined</b>	<b>mutual</b>	<b>casual</b>
<b>venture</b>	<b>despised</b>	<b>intended</b>	<b>specialized</b>	<b>elegant</b>	<b>monotony</b>

1. Despite the circumstances, Sarah had never \_\_\_\_\_ for her mother to find her.
2. He is a very timid boy and it is doubtful whether he would \_\_\_\_\_ out on his own.
3. The worst part of the job is the \_\_\_\_\_ of working on an assembly line for eight straight hours.
4. It was most obvious that all of the children \_\_\_\_\_ the new principal.
5. “I never realized your company \_\_\_\_\_ in such a product,” my aunt said in surprise.
6. After attending finishing school, Claudia was a most \_\_\_\_\_ young lady.
7. Before being of much value, the ore has to be \_\_\_\_\_ into gold.
8. Despite the fact that he is an accountant, his ideas don’t make a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ sense.



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9. The scientists were afraid that Mount Etna was going to \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Buying a car together will be for their \_\_\_\_\_ benefit.
11. If that horrible man takes over as president, the people can expect years of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. It's hard to believe you could have such a \_\_\_\_\_ attitude about something so serious.

## Questions:

### Part A:

#### The Letter to Saxonberg

This novel is written from a most unusual and unique perspective. Mrs. Frankweiler's letter to her lawyer, Saxonberg, at the beginning of the novel, provides the reader with a good deal of mystery and suspense. While reading this puzzling letter, the reader wonders why she was writing to her lawyer and what it was that caused her to change her will. No doubt these mysteries will be revealed as the plot unfolds.

1. From this letter, what impression do you get of Mrs. Frankweiler's personality?

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2. What was she sending along with the letter to Saxonberg?

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**Part B:**

1. Describe the setting of the story. Remember, setting includes both time and place.

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2. Match each of the four Kincaid children with the correct description:

- |            |                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| a) Claudia | • Left a messy basket on purpose |
| b) Steve   | • The chosen brother             |
| c) Jamie   | • Six years old                  |
| d) Kevin   | • Straight-A student             |

3. Claudia mentions that she would like to bring Jamie's transistor radio along on their trip. Why would this item be useful?

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4. Describe how Claudia came up with a free train pass. Why was this so important to her plans?

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5. a) What card game did Jamie and Bruce enjoy playing on the bus.

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b) What did Claudia find disgusting about their daily routine?

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c) How did this card game come to benefit Claudia's plans?

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6. What was the “lever” that Claudia used in convincing Jamie to join her plan?

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7. What does the fact that Claudia and Jamie planned on packing extra clothes tell you about her plans? How might this complicate things?

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### Language Activities:

#### Prefixes

In Chapter 1, Jamie has difficulty using the proper prefix with the word **decent**.

A prefix is defined as *a syllable or syllables put at the beginning of another word to change its meaning*.

An example would be **dislike**, where the prefix **dis** is added to the word **like** to radically alter the original meaning.

Below are five words with prefixes found in Chapter 1. Beside each word, write the root word from which it is derived, then choose one of the words and use it in a sentence that demonstrates its correct meaning.

1. discomfort \_\_\_\_\_
2. inconvenient \_\_\_\_\_
3. injustice \_\_\_\_\_
4. indecent \_\_\_\_\_
5. impatient \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_