

Perspectives T-chart for “Thank You, Ma’am”

As you reread “Thank You, Ma’am” by Langston Hughes, chart the events of the story from Mrs. Jones’ perspective in left-hand column and the events from Roger’s perspective in the right-hand column.

Mrs. Jones	Roger
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Jones walks home alone at 11:00 pm at night. • She is a big woman who carries a large, heavy purse with a strap across her shoulder. • When the boy grabs her purse and falls to the ground, she turns around, kicks him on his rear end, picks up him up by the collar and shakes him. • She does not seem frightened at all by this attempted robbery, instead she fusses at him and makes him pick up her pocket book. • As she holds him she notices his face is dirty and drags him to her house. • She thinks if he were her boy, he would know right from wrong. • When she hears that Roger does not have anyone at home to tell him to wash his face or eat dinner with, she has him wash and fixes him supper. • As the boy changes his attitude, she gives him ten dollars and tells him to be good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boy sees an older woman walking home alone at night. • He tries to grab her purse but the strap breaks and he falls. • The woman kicks, grabs and shakes him. • He asks her to let him go, but she just drags him to her house. • In the house she finally lets him go and tells him to wash his face. • He looks to the door to run but ends up washing his face. • He tells her there is no one at home at his house for supper. • When he tells her he tried to talk her purse to buy blue suede shoes, she tells him he could have asked her. • She then starts to cook for him and leaves him alone. • She tells him that she, too, has done things that she is not proud of. • Roger wants to Mrs. Jones to trust him so he sits where she can see him and asks if she needs help with shopping. • After dinner she gives him money, he wants very much to say more than “Thank you” but that is all that comes out.
What is the effect of the combination of perspectives in “Thank You, Ma’am”?	

The combination of the adult and child perspectives helps the reader get the theme of the story. The reader sees both Mrs. Jones' reasons for her kind actions and the effect her kindness has on Roger. The reader is then able to understand that forgiveness, kindness and empathy can have a positive impact on another person.