

*Young cat, if you keep your eyes open enough,  
oh, the stuff you would learn. The most wonderful stuff!*

– Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut*

## Chapter 7

# FIRST Lessons: Spy Eye Tasks

Spy Eye tasks focus on the most elemental — but still very complex — Social Thinking concepts. They provide an entry point for the more sophisticated social thought addressed in Detective Head and Me Too! tasks. Spy Eye tasks explore context and the thoughts, feelings, and plans of individual characters within the context. By using Spy Eye tasks, you encourage students to practice thinking with their eyes about what’s going on around them and using basic perspective taking skills to read the minds of others.

These tasks work well with a wide range of Mindreaders, preschool through high school. Teachers who incorporate Movie Time Social Learning into a broader program to encourage better social learning may need to remind students of the Social Thinking concepts and vocabulary mentioned below prior to talking about them in movie sessions. If Movie Time Social Learning is a stand-alone program, verify that students understand these basic concepts and have these emerging skills.

If not, pre-teaching of the concepts and vocabulary should be done first. There’s nothing worse than playing a movie scene and encouraging discussion only to be met with blank stares from students because there has been no prior teaching of Social Thinking beforehand.



### **Thinking with your eyes:**

Using your eyes to interpret a situation and the nonverbal messages others are sending as well as to show others you’re thinking about them (Winner, 2000).

For many children, these Spy Eye activities mark the first time they've thought and talked about movies with this kind of focus and depth. The social tasks in Spy Eye activities vary in complexity depending on the Mindreader level and include:

- Using contextual cues to identify the “where” and the “what’s happening”
- Understanding visual gaze and referencing
- Reading a single character’s basic body language (e.g., hands on hips when angry)
- Projecting what a single character is thinking, feeling, and what the character’s next action might be
- Extrapolating feelings (e.g., happy, sad, mad/angry, afraid/scared, surprised)

This chapter describes the components of Spy Eye tasks for each Mindreader group and suggests strategies to use with each group.

The following are some examples of suggested discussion questions to use during Spy Eye tasks. They pertain to scenes in three movies, with each movie intended for a different group of Mindreader. (Chapters 8 and 9 include the suggested Detective Head and Me Too! discussion questions for each of these same scenes.) A full lesson plan for each of these movies is included in the Downloadable Resources. You can use these questions as a model as you prepare to show scenes from other movies to students.

### **Scene from *No Roses for Harry***

Spy Eye Questions for Junior Mindreaders

- What’s Harry thinking and feeling when he hears Grandma is coming to visit?
- What’s Harry thinking and feeling as the family searches for the sweater? What are the family members thinking and feeling?
- When you first see Grandma, do you notice something special about her?
- When Harry is barking and looking up in the tree, what’s he looking at? How does he feel?
- How do the children and Grandma feel when they see the nest?
- How does Harry feel about the new sweater? Why?

### **Scene from *The Indian in the Cupboard***

Spy Eye Questions for Moving Up Mindreaders

- When he wakes up, what are Omri’s thoughts, feelings, and plan as he walks toward the cabinet?
- When he’s at school, how is Omri feeling? What’s his plan?

### **Scene from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix***

Spy Eye Questions for Varsity Mindreaders

- Where is this? What is the setting here?

- What's the mood of the class before Umbridge comes in?
- What do we already know about Professor Umbridge?
- How does her cheerful disposition hide her true intentions?
- As she comes up the aisle, what are the students thinking?
- As the students look at their books, what are they thinking?
- Why does Umbridge laugh at the end of the scene — how is she feeling?

## Spy Eye Tasks with Junior Mindreaders

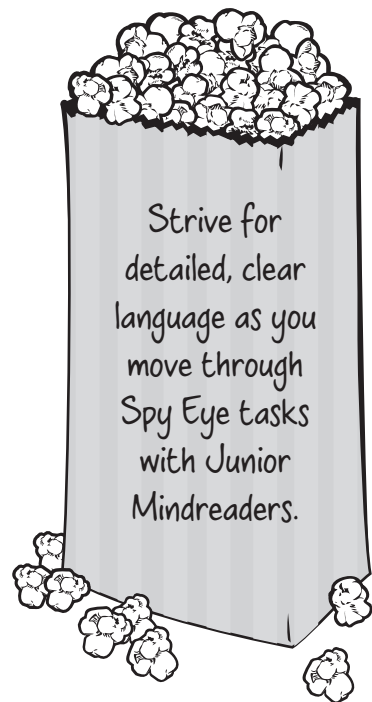
Spy Eye questions are important but not always easy for this group. Expect that Junior Mindreaders will spend a lot of time on Spy Eye activities.

### Importance of Language

Because Junior Mindreaders usually exhibit language delay, strive for detailed, clear language as you move through Spy Eye tasks with this group of children. One goal of these activities is to help students expand their language along with their social understanding.

Students respond to Movie Time Social Learning prompts for contextual information with answers that show a wide range in specificity—for example, if I ask “Who?” about a character, a child may answer “he,” “man,” or with more contextual information, “the dad.” If I ask, “What’s happening?,” a child might just answer “cooking,” “cooking soup,” “The man is cooking,” or a statement with more contextual information, such as “The dad is cooking dinner” or “The boy is waiting for the man to cook him dinner.” More sophisticated linguistic form and syntax reflect deeper conceptual understanding. Encourage children to give more than a one-word answer. You can cue them to notice and respond to important details in the scene by pointing, tapping, or running your finger on the screen.

In the following example of a Spy Eye task, I worked with a student on creating social narrative around an unfamiliar scene. The use of silence and gesture was all seven-year-old Alexandra needed to substantially increase her language expression.



In *Pooh's Grand Adventure: The Search for Christopher Robin*, acorns are starting to rain down and make a big pile that will ultimately pick up the characters and carry them down the road. I stopped the video on a wide shot of characters with the acorns coming down on them and started with an open-ended question to establish context.

Anna: What's happening?

Alexandra: The acorns get big... (*looking confused*)

Anna: But the acorns are still small... (*I look somewhat confused and gesture to indicate a small size.*)

Alexandra: The acorns, the acorns ... they gonna ... gonna... (*looks confused, starts gesturing: pointing, moving arm up, shaking wrist like the falling acorns*) All the acorns ... down... (*gesturing down, gesturing up and down with hands, turning palms down*) The acorns, all the acorns falling down and there's, there's gonna be a pile. (*gestures big pile, pauses, looking at the frozen image on the screen*)

Anna: (*nodding*)

Alexandra: They're gonna fall in a big, big pile, and they go on Winnie the Pooh and everybody — it's so funny! (*Alexandra seems very pleased with herself, as if I was the one who had been confused.*)

By allowing Alexandra to work through this process, which took two to three minutes, she came up with her own original thought. Her final language came out easily and smoothly compared to her initial description, reflecting how far she'd come in complexity of thought and language. When her mother came to pick her up, we replayed the scene and Alexandra described it again, labeling it her "favorite."

### Exploring Context with Junior Mindreaders

Spy Eye tasks begin with identifying the "where" of a social event. Mindreaders of all levels, but especially Junior Mindreaders, often focus on irrelevant details in identifying context. Identifying the "where" involves:

- Scanning environments quickly
- Sorting relevant from irrelevant details

- Thinking about their own experiences to make generalizations about context (e.g., “That kinda looks like the place I shop with Mom — I guess it’s a store.”)
- Making semantic judgments about characters (e.g., “Is that a mom or a teacher?”)

While these steps seem easy and logical to most neurotypical people, they’re difficult for children with social cognitive differences, many of whom are detail thinkers. Often you’ll need to begin by asking the students to identify a more accurate understanding of the “where.” It may be necessary to use gestures and point to important aspects of the scene slowly, allowing children’s understanding to develop over time. When children focus on irrelevant information or are imprecise in determining context, you can use several strategies, including the following:

- Deconstruct why the answer isn’t a “smart guess.” Probe for more information about why they answered as they did, which will give you a sense of what personal experiences and memories they used as a basis for their opinion. Try to understand why they’ve made the error, and move them forward from that point. Let them know you understand (at least somewhat) why they made the choices they did.
- Stress what was correct about the answer, compliment them for coming up with an answer, and work together to identify what another answer might be.
- Try using additional or different mediating tools, as described in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Pointing can be an effective prompt to cue visual attention.

Figuring out the setting is crucial to determining what’s expected of the characters in that situation. With Spy Eye tasks, you challenge Junior Mindreaders to explore new degrees of flexibility and generalization as they identify where the characters are and what they’re doing there. To do this, they need to think with their eyes, use their social memory to incorporate their own world knowledge and then expand on it to include similar but different experiences.

For example, if a movie shows part of a living room that includes a staircase going up and shag carpeting everywhere, viewers need to draw on their general experiences of living rooms to recognize the one in the movie for what it is, even if they’ve never seen a living room exactly like it.

For neurotypical brains, the formula (front door + couch + tables + lamps = living room) is easily recognized. For children with social learning differences, however, these generalizations can be difficult to make and require sufficient processing time. They struggle with seeing the big picture and forming a concept (a living room) from those details (central coherence challenges). Their initial response is often marked by confusion: “How is

*that* a living room? *I've* never been in a house that looks like *that* ... ." It becomes a living room only when they generalize the commonalities with other living rooms. Your goal is to help them develop the fundamental social learning skills from which generalization will arise and improve. Be patient; this type of social learning doesn't happen overnight and often requires lots of practice.

Correctly identifying context is key to understanding whatever social interaction takes place in a scene. For example, in the movie *Frog Goes to Dinner*, if the children don't correctly interpret that the boy and his parents are returning home, their understanding of the entire scene will be limited. Note the difference between the following two statements:

"They are coming *in* [the door]."

"The *family* is coming *home*."

While both statements are true, only the second one gives a sense of event. By specifying that the context is home, "they" becomes a family returning — a unit, rather than random individuals — and the children can interpret upcoming events based on the concept of family.

The makeup of a scene — the individuals (the "who") and the environment in which they find themselves (the "where") — lays the foundation for the action (the "what") that transpires. Spy Eye tasks slow down the action to allow careful processing of contextual information to take place so students can then make sense of what occurs in the relationships.

### **Jump Cuts: Complicating Context**

We all frequently enter a situation where others are already interacting and we don't know what has already occurred. Or, during an interaction, we may turn away for a few minutes, missing some of what's been done or said. We need to use efficient social processing to understand what's gone on and act appropriately.

Movies allow many opportunities to practice this type of processing, with rapid "jump cuts" within a scene or from one scene to the next that delete obvious information. "One second your character is just sitting down; the next second he's seated, with a cup of coffee in his hand. ... The viewer doesn't actually need to *see* the man finish sitting down, pour himself a cup of coffee, stir in sugar, then start sipping it. You can jump right from sitting to sipping, and the viewer's brain will fill the rest in" (Snider, 2010).

Junior Mindreaders aren't able to easily or speedily fill in gaps and moments they miss, whether in their everyday lives or on the screen. When children seem confused by a jump cut, it's usually about sequencing events and identifying missing information. If

children have difficulty with jump cuts in Spy Eye activities, you can:

- Go back to the previous scene to ascertain where the action was taking place
- Check previous scenes for a quick set of transitional frames that may pass rapidly but show the context changing (e.g., a quick shutting of a car door as the character arrives at a new location is meant to communicate that he's gone somewhere new)
- Contrast the “where” of the previous and current scenes using sketching or writing as visual supports
- Work with the students to note differences in contextual details (Is the furniture the same? Which characters are present?)
- Encourage the students to play a “spot the scene change” game, challenging them to notice when the action shifts to a different location

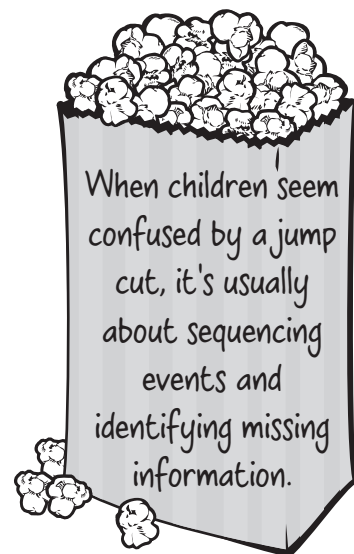
### Thoughts and Feelings Lead to Action

In Spy Eye activities, you take Junior Mindreaders through a step-by-step understanding of how characters in movie scenes experience feelings based on where they are and what's happening, form opinions based on those feelings, and then translate those thoughts and opinions into plans. This process is at the core of Spy Eye tasks.

Once children have identified context, they begin to consider the thoughts, feelings, and ultimately, the actions of the characters. They note where the characters are looking and figure out what's being communicated by their facial expressions, body language, and words. You'll want to:

- Help children focus on who the characters are, what object or person the characters are thinking about, what the characters are thinking about that object or person, and how the characters might be feeling
- Expand how children identify and talk about feelings
- Help develop children's ability to remember and access their prior knowledge of the characters
- Support children in figuring out what the character's next action might be

As you work on Spy Eye tasks to identify thoughts, feelings, and plans with Junior Mindreaders, remember to use visual aids. For children with only a developing ability to identify emotions in others, the ability to point to a correct feeling picture is progress. With younger children, you may need to start with happy, sad, angry, and okay and then add afraid



and excited when appropriate. Combining multiple visual supports works well with Junior Mindreaders, such as creating both simple sketches of characters’ expressions and thought bubbles to show differing perspectives and feelings of characters.

When the students identify thoughts and feelings, some may first relate a character’s thought while others will first talk about the character’s feeling. In teaching Social Thinking, we help students appreciate that everyone has thoughts and feelings, and that thoughts and feelings are connected to what’s happening around them. What the children give you may not be exactly in this order or what you’re looking for, but it’s still information you can work with. The following table shows the type of statements Junior Mindreaders might make to describe characters’ thoughts and feelings during Spy Eye activities and possible strategies you can use.

|                                     | A student might say. . . | Your prompt might be to. . .  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Student expresses the feeling first | “He’s mad.”              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw a feeling bubble.</li> <li>2. Point to the object or event causing the feeling.</li> <li>3. Say “Maybe he’s mad because. . .”</li> <li>4. Say “I wonder why he’s mad?”</li> </ol>  |
| Student expresses the thought first | “He wants the cookie.”   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw a thought bubble.</li> <li>2. Point to the character’s expression.</li> <li>3. Offer picture choices of feelings (such as emotions strips).</li> <li>4. Say “He wants the cookie, so maybe he’s feeling. . .”</li> <li>5. Say “It looks like he’s feeling. . .”</li> </ol> |

Figure 7.1. Possible options to expand statements by Junior Mindreaders

Helping children build connections between thoughts and feelings can be challenging. In the example below, I worked to mediate a thought bubble with a Junior Mindreader while watching *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. I went in circles for a bit using open-ended questions before I switched the type of prompt. Once I found the right prompt for the child in that *moment*, the answer wasn’t hard to elicit.

**Anna:** Let’s think of a thought bubble for Sylvester’s mom and dad. What’s your idea?



Eli: They are sad.

Anna: I think so, too; that's how they are feeling. What are they thinking?

Eli: They are looking out the window.

Anna: Well, that's what they are doing. What are they thinking?

Eli: They are sad.

Anna: You think they are feeling sad. They are feeling sad because... *(This proved to be an effective strategy.)*

Eli: Because Sylvester is lost.

You may find that Junior Mindreaders can identify what a character is thinking about but are unable to take the next step to accurately discern a character's opinions or plans. It's a big leap in social processing, and understandable! For example, a child might say "a dog is thinking about a sweater" yet be unable to say more. When that happens, you can choose from these strategies:

- Watch the scene again.
- Use more visuals.
- Review what you know about the character.
- Involve the children in acting out the scene.
- Move on!

Some children will "get" more of the movie than others. You're looking for improved understanding, not immediate and total comprehension. Recognizing and verbalizing a thought is a challenging task. If you ask a young child with social cognitive differences to share his thoughts on a given subject, you'll often get no response or "I don't know." Yet sharing thoughts is what allows people to have conversations using a Social Thinking strategy known as "add a thought" (Winner, 2002).

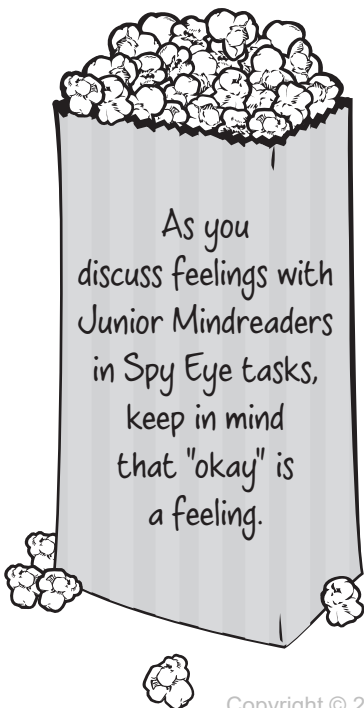
If I say, "That coffee smells great" and you say, "Mmm, sure does," our individual thoughts about the coffee initiated our statements, which we then shared with each other. That exchange is how we come to know that we have pretty much the same opinion about the coffee. Children with social learning differences have trouble developing this ability.

Plan is a difficult concept that hinges on several variables: the character’s thoughts, the context of the setting, what has happened in the scene up to that point, and the influence other people in the scene — with their own thoughts and feelings — exert. It’s much easier for children to identify what someone might be thinking about than it is to recognize what the character wants to do next. I’ve struggled many times to help a child get to that level of understanding.

Some plans are obvious and easy to figure out when they relate to personal experiences, such as “I’m thinking about the cookie — I want to eat it.” Or “It’s raining — I’m thinking about going inside or getting my umbrella.” Plans involving an opinion are more difficult; for example, “I like my frog — I’m going to take it to the restaurant with me” or “I don’t like spinach — I’m not going to eat my serving.”

To help Junior Mindreaders begin to talk about identifying a plan in a Spy Eye activity, you can try the following strategies:

- Use different words. (For example: What does the character want to do with X? What will he do now or next? What is he thinking about X?)
- Work with the concept of “like versus don’t like.” Children with social learning differences have difficulties forming opinions. The game Whoonu (Cranium Games) has a large number of cards listing objects and experiences children can practice sorting for themselves (e.g., “I like pancakes but I don’t like hot tubs”).
- Use visuals to elicit *details* about a plan. Draw descriptive pictures or write down any words the children say to expand the thought. (For example, if a child says “baseball... get baseball ... wants it,” you could write that down and add the prompt “because...” to elicit a detailed plan: “The girl wants the baseball because she likes it.”)



Remember that following the social thoughts of a character is a difficult task. You’ll want to support this complicated thinking in as many concrete ways as you can to help you and the students stay on track.

Whenever possible, encourage the children to verbalize the specific reason for a plan but accept a simplified plan if that’s all they currently are able to formulate (“He’s gonna eat the cookie”).

As you discuss feelings with Junior Mindreaders in Spy Eye tasks, keep in mind that “okay” is a feeling. In our

efforts to teach about feelings to children with social learning differences, we may sometimes stress what we consider to be “real” feeling words, such as happy or afraid, even though often during the day *we* feel “just okay” instead of happy, sad, frustrated, or angry. Exposing children to the label for that neutral feeling zone is as important as teaching them to distinguish between emotions such as annoyed and furious.

Remember that helping children build connections between thoughts and feelings can be challenging work. Many of these tasks are harder than you might expect.

## Spy Eye Tasks with Moving Up Mindreaders

Many of the simpler Spy Eye tasks aren’t terribly difficult for Moving Up Mindreaders; they have relatively strong competencies in establishing context and reading minds when situations aren’t overly complex or out of their comfort range. However, they can still find it difficult to identify a context out of their own experiences, recognize the “why” behind a character’s specific thought or plan, or identify a more complicated feeling state.

### Language and Moving Up Mindreaders

As they work through Spy Eye tasks, Moving Up Mindreaders will continue to develop their social cognition and perspective taking skills to use them more fluidly and without as much processing time. As they become better at using their social minds, their language skills will also improve — with your help, of course — especially their abilities to formulate complex sentences and to express a clear narrative by linking complex sentences together in logical ways. Many things happen in the movies they watch, and often relatively quickly. Unlike the language skills expected of Junior Mindreaders, Moving Up Mindreaders can be prompted and taught to use more than simple sentences to describe context.

For example, as he viewed *The Pink Panther*, William worked hard to describe a scene. He had some trouble getting going with his language formation, although this was a very good start and demonstrates his emerging sequencing skills: “At first they were cheering with the anticipation of the game, but when they saw the kiss, *suddenly* and their attention was changed *suddenly* ... Do you not disagree?” William’s rising intonation on the last “suddenly” indicated that he hadn’t finished his thought. If his intonation had fallen, he actually would have had a good explanation, albeit one that omitted information about the new object of their attention. In this case, further mediating strategies, such as sketching out the sequence he was struggling to explain or writing out his language so he could keep track of where he was going verbally, could have helped him formulate a more complete explanation.

As students develop a more nuanced level of social cognition, their need for more complex language grows with it. Consider an event from *Like Mike*, a movie suggested for

**Moving Up Mindreaders.** The movie features Tracy, a professional basketball player, and his friend Calvin, a young orphan whose newly acquired magical shoes have allowed him to be on a professional team. Tracy jokingly tells Calvin not to put paint on the window, but Calvin does (he can tell Tracy won't really mind). Most Moving Up Mindreaders are still developing their ability to use some of the complex social processing required to accurately interpret this scene: understanding context, picking out relevant visual cues, understanding friendly humor, and interpreting motives and intent. Those who are actively becoming more proficient in using these thinking skills will want more complex language to explain their ideas. As mediator, you can recognize and capitalize on these advanced learning opportunities! The tasks in Movie Time Social Learning provide rich yet structured opportunities to work on language skills that go hand-in-hand with expanding social competencies.

### **Exploring Context with Moving Up Mindreaders**

Moving Up Mindreaders work with movies that are set in a wide range of places. In the two Moving Up Mindreader movies presented in this book, contexts include: on an airplane, at a hotel, at a pharmacy, in a school hallway, on a busy urban street, and at a skateboard park. Before embarking on identifying thoughts and feelings of characters, it's wise to take a moment to confirm that the correct context has been identified. After all, the judgments Moving Up Mindreaders will be making in *Spy Eye* (and *Detective Head*) tasks hinge on knowing where the action is taking place and what behaviors might be expected there.

As with *Junior Mindreaders*, Moving Up Mindreaders can find jump cuts challenging, with transitions between contexts marked with very fleeting images. (See the discussion in "Jump Cuts: Complicating Context" earlier in this chapter for addressing difficulties in processing jump cuts.) Such jump cuts remind us that, although a shot may not contain characters, it nevertheless gives us important information about the characters and is worthy of notice. If children don't process these cuts, it will be difficult to make sense of what follows. You may want to review the shift in context by watching it several times slowly, talking them through the cut, or even taking photos of the two contexts so you can discuss them side by side.

### **Exploring Thoughts, Feelings, and Plans**

Once they've identified the context, students can consider the expected behaviors in that situation as they work to identify the thoughts of multiple characters at the same time. What makes viewers laugh in *Like Mike* when Calvin races around the hotel room like a tornado is that we understand that is unexpected behavior in a hotel. Shared knowledge of expected and unexpected behavior is often what supports the "why" behind thoughts.

In Spy Eye activities, Moving Up Mindreaders are asked to identify the thoughts of multiple characters at the same time. Especially when students are new to Movie Time Social Learning, it's best to slow down your pace, break a scene into discrete character elements, use silence to give students time to think about the various characters and their thoughts, write things down, and speak slowly with plenty of pauses.

Moving Up Mindreaders have a lot to think about and can process information slowly. As they work on identifying the feelings of characters and the reasons behind those feelings, Moving Up Mindreaders are exposed to new emotional territory. For these students, it's important to work on:

- Broadening their ability to talk about feelings in general
- Exposing them to more finely tuned emotional labels (“annoyed” instead of just “mad”)
- Attending carefully to why an emotional reaction takes place
- Preparing them to juggle different emotional reactions by different characters to the same event (required in Detective Head tasks discussed in the next chapter)

Many of the same tools used for context identification — especially working slowly and providing a lot of silent time for processing — will be useful here.

In the movies discussed in this book, Moving Up Mindreaders learn that words don't always communicate the actual truth — sometimes true intent is revealed through tone, facial expression, or even by what is *not* said. Characters begin to give “mixed messages,” which need to be sorted out.

In the example below, William tried to make sense of such a discrepancy in a scene from *The Pink Panther*. He realized his initial answer wasn't correct and almost gave up but then suddenly came up with a smart guess that used more of the information on screen and gave interesting information about the Chief Inspector character. William's answer also shows how his social cognition was moving forward, especially when he had time to think. At the end William used a conjunction ('cuz) that shows he finally made the connection between the smile and the feeling state it reflects.

**Anna:** The Chief Inspector has been nominated seven times, and he's never won. How is he feeling about that? (*an open-ended question*)

**William:** Very sad.

- Anna: He is saying “I have never won,” but he’s smiling. Why is he smiling?
- William: He’s amazed. He sounds amazed.
- Anna: But why is he *smiling?* (*emphatic intonation*)
- William: Um, uh, um, he’s trying to tell us that it’s really funny.
- Anna: Is it funny?
- William: No. No, it’s not funny. I don’t know. I absolutely don’t know. (*six-second pause*) ’Cuz he’s embarrassed.

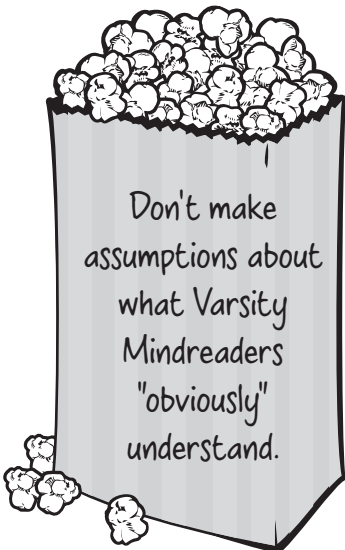
## Spy Eye Tasks with Varsity Mindreaders: Checking Fundamental Skills

Compared with Junior Mindreaders, Varsity Mindreaders are far ahead in their abilities to identify thoughts, feelings, and plans. However, they still need to review at least some Spy Eye activities. Don’t make assumptions about what Varsity Mindreaders “obviously” understand.

### Language Skills

The language of Varsity Mindreaders is more developed than that of the other two groups, although completeness and attention to personal relationships often are still issues. With Spy Eye tasks, your focus will be on checking basic social understanding before moving on to clear and complete language. Writing out the narrative (for example, as a paragraph on the dry-erase board) will allow children to add new and important thoughts (as phrases). Keeping track of ideas can be tricky because the students may go down a dead-end thought path and need to start over, make self-corrections by rephrasing, or expand narrative given the opportunity to read over what they’ve already formulated.

Although they’ve qualified to be Varsity Mindreaders, these students still have social learning differences. Many of them rarely speak with the complexity you hear after you mediate their explanations. However, all of the tasks in Movie Time Social Learning give them chances to formulate a chunk of language and be successful at explaining their social perceptions.



## Context Shifts

Although many Varsity Mindreaders can keep up with context shifts, don't assume that they're competent in this skill until you've checked several times. In the next example of a Spy Eye activity with a Varsity Mindreader, Eli was asked to identify a scene in *The Pink Panther*, but he didn't notice critical contextual information.

Clouseau has been dropped off by his partner on a residential street. He walks up to the front door to the building, unlocks it, and goes up the stairs to his apartment. Clouseau is on the landing in front of the door, which is ajar. He's suspicious that someone has broken in and is checking for his spare key. Eli responded: "He's at the police headquarters. I think he's sneaking into the Chief Inspector's office."

Eli totally missed the contextual information in the jump cut that told him Inspector Clouseau had arrived at the building where he lives. While the front door in the movie is similar to one you might see at a police station, Clouseau's approach, the appearance of the building and staircase, and the fact he's looking for a key all provide crucial information to determine his location. Because Eli missed this information, he lacked information needed to understand the next scene.

While some Varsity Mindreaders won't have to spend much time on fundamental Spy Eye tasks such as basic context shifts, others like Eli need practice noticing and making social sense of the information in movie scenes when the group is moving along at a quicker pace. If you find children need practice keeping up with rapid scene cuts, you may want to:

- Review the previous scene and establish accurate context
- Work to establish whatever "hints" were provided of the change, no matter how fleeting (such as the quick shot of Clouseau and his partner in the car on the street)
- Review the new scene shots, with careful examination of details to identify differences from the previous context

## Thoughts, Feelings, and Plans

Like Moving Up Mindreaders, Varsity Mindreaders are asked to think about the thoughts, feelings, and plans of multiple characters. Plans may be formulated, played out, and perhaps revised as the movie progresses. While much of the work on thoughts, feelings, and plans is done at the more socially complex Detective Head level (the tasks focusing on how characters influence each other), Spy Eye tasks provide opportunities for Varsity Mindreaders to check their foundation of social understanding.

In the next example, a student re-evaluates his initial answer and proposes a second, accurate explanation about the "why" behind a discrete behavior — the Minister in *Harry*

*Potter* rapidly inhaling because he's shocked at what he sees. Initially, Tucker admitted he hadn't noticed it at all. More important, once it's pointed out, he struggled to make sense of the action and mistakenly indicated he thought the Minister had blown out rather than inhaled. Explaining the Minister's quick intake of air, just a split-second shot, provided information as to what the character is thinking and feeling. (I used restating and an open-ended question as strategies here.)

**Anna:** Now, initially you thought that maybe the Minister did something with air to get rid of Voldemort. What do you think about that now?

**Tucker:** I don't think that was right. I know that wasn't right. I think he was gasping because all of a sudden Voldemort is standing there and there's a dead kid on the ground and he thought Voldemort was gone. He can't believe it. He's dumbfounded. He's gonna realize he was wrong the whole movie.

This example shows how discrete behaviors can reveal important information. Varsity Mindreaders are asked to make sense of mixed messages — times when words and non-verbal information don't match but accurate understanding of the real message is vital. Breaking down behavior can be helpful in understanding the true intent of characters as well as of people in real life. Here are some suggested ways to break down behavior, considering a range of possibilities and focusing on using information that's already known:

- Write down both the verbal and nonverbal behavior.
- Identify the feelings that go with each type of behavior.
- Review previous knowledge about the character (including plan and motive).
- Focus on figuring out what the character is *really* thinking (sometimes this means generating more than one thought).
- Look critically at the possible answers.
- Choose which answer is probably correct given all of what's known.

Whether you're working with Junior Mindreaders, Moving Up Mindreaders, or Varsity Mindreaders, Spy Eye tasks will establish the social foundation needed to explore what happens when these characters interact. Once students have developed a familiarity and facility with identifying a single character's feelings, thoughts, and predicted next actions, they're ready to look at how the feelings, thoughts, and plans of multiple characters make the social story much more complex. They'll then be ready to branch out to Detective Head activities.

