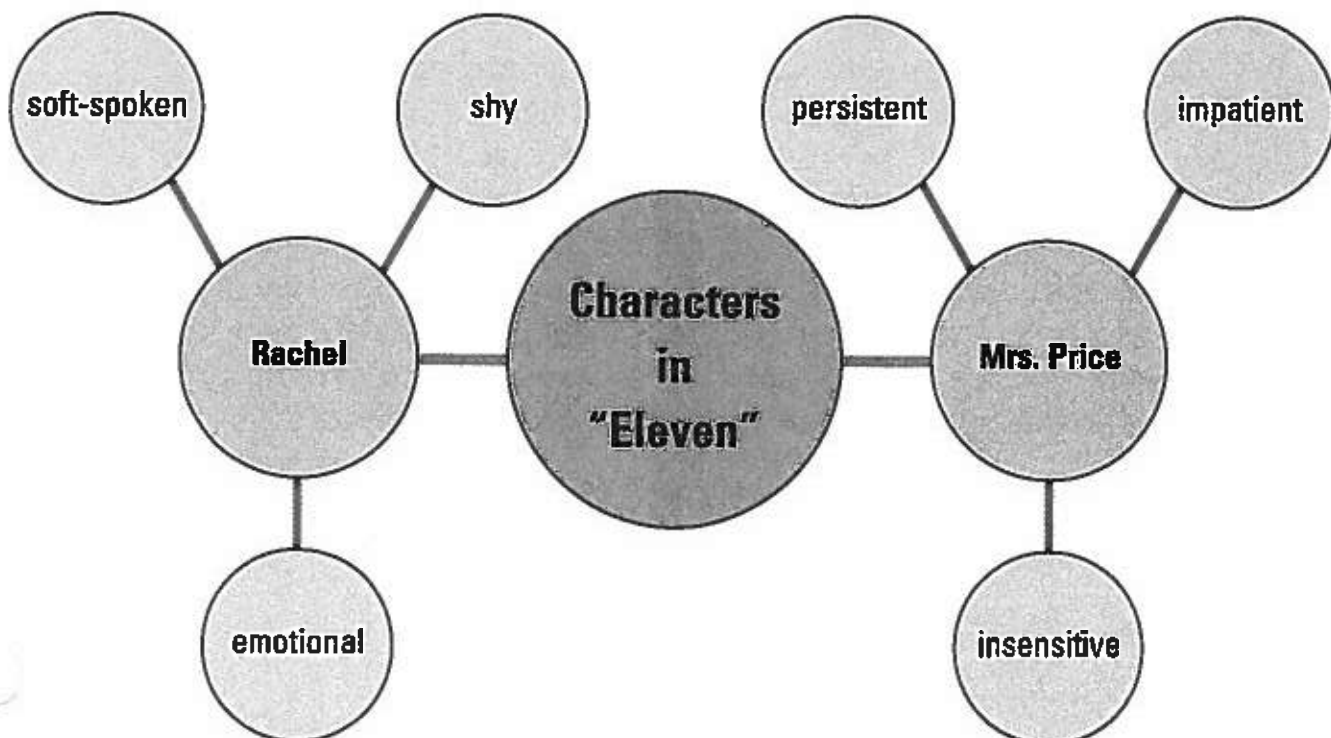


**PREVIEW****Eleven**

Sandra Cisneros

**Summary**

"Eleven" is about young Rachel, whose teacher finds an old, ugly sweater hanging in the classroom closet. Everyone else in the class says the sweater is not his or hers, so the teacher gives the sweater to Rachel. Rachel is too shy to say that the ugly-looking sweater is not hers either. Instead, she shoves the sweater to the edge of her desk. This causes the teacher to yell at her, and insist that she put the sweater on. Rachel pulls on the sweater, and begins to cry in front of everyone. Another student suddenly remembers that the sweater is hers. Rachel quickly gives it to her, but Rachel's teacher does not apologize for the mix-up. Rachel feels especially bad because the incident takes place on her eleventh birthday. It makes her feel much younger than eleven.

**Visual Summary**

## PREPARE TO READ

### LITERARY ANALYSIS

#### Characterization

Characterization is the art of creating characters. Authors reveal information about their characters through the character's words, thoughts, and actions. For example, in "Eleven," the author lets readers know that Mrs. Price is insensitive by the way she treats Rachel and by the things she says to her. Writers can also show what a character is like by what other characters say and think about the character. Sometimes writers make direct statements about a character; they tell you exactly what they want you to know. In this story, Mrs. Price is not characterized by direct statements. She is characterized by her words and actions.

Character	Mrs. Price
Words	"You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."
Thoughts	not given
Actions	Does not apologize for the mix-up

### READING STRATEGY

#### Recognizing Word Origins

Word origins tell you where a word comes from. English words often share origins with words from other languages. Some words used in English were borrowed from other languages, such as Spanish, French, and Italian. Many of these words have changed over time. Others are spelled and used in their original form, such as *pizza* from Italian. The chart shows English and French for some words you will read in "Eleven." Notice similarities that suggest shared origins or borrowed words. Look for the English words in the story.

English	French
button	boton
collar	colier
pencil	pincel

# Eleven

Sandra Cisneros

Rachel, a young girl who is turning eleven years old, says that we are never told that when we are a certain age, we are also all of the ages before that one.

♦ ♦ ♦

And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't.

♦ ♦ ♦

Rachel feels that when we do something that a younger person would do, it is because we don't feel our new age right away.

♦ ♦ ♦

Today I wish I was one-hundred-and-two instead of eleven because if I was one-hundred-and-two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

♦ ♦ ♦

Mrs. Price finds a red sweater in the coatroom and wants to find the owner. No one claims the sweater. Mrs. Price keeps asking who owns the sweater. It is ugly, with red buttons and a stretched collar, and Rachel knows that she wouldn't claim it even if it were hers.

Rachel is upset when one of her classmates tells Mrs. Price that the sweater belongs to Rachel. She is even more upset when Mrs. Price believes the girl. Mrs. Price puts the sweater on Rachel's desk. At first, Rachel is too afraid to speak.

♦ ♦ ♦

## ◆ Reading Check

How does Rachel feel about turning eleven?

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## ◆ Reading Check

The bracketed passage explains why Rachel is upset. To better understand her reasons, break down the two long sentences into shorter sentences.

I wish I was one-hundred-and-two instead of eleven.

I wish that because

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I would have told her

Instead I just

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## ◆ Reading Strategy

Many words about clothing came to English from French. Circle the words that come from the French words *bouton* and *collier*.



◆ Literary Analysis

What does the underlined passage reveal about Rachel's personality?

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◆ Reading Check

How is the mix-up finally resolved?

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"That's not, I don't, you're not . . . not mine," I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

"Of course it's yours," Mrs. Price says, "I remember you wearing it once." Because she's older and the teacher, she's right and I'm not.

◆ ◆ ◆

All at once, Rachel begins to feel sick. The part of her that's three wants to cry, but she doesn't. She closes her eyes and reminds herself that she is eleven. She tries to think about the cake her mother is making. She also thinks about her Papa coming home and everyone singing happy birthday.

◆ ◆ ◆

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater's still sitting there like a big red mountain.

◆ ◆ ◆

Rachel doesn't even want to touch it, so she moves it with her ruler. She also moves her pencil and the other supplies on her desk as far away as she can from the sweater.

◆ ◆ ◆

"Rachel," Mrs. Price says. She says it like she's getting mad. "You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense."

"But it's not . . ."

"Now!" Mrs. Price says.

◆ ◆ ◆

Rachel fights back tears as she pulls on the sweater. But she can't help it. She begins to cry. She wishes she were invisible. She feels embarrassed that she is crying in front of the entire class on her eleventh birthday. Just then, another classmate remembers that the sweater is hers.

◆ ◆ ◆

I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

♦ ♦ ♦

Today Rachel is eleven. She knows that her Mama is making a cake that the family will eat tonight. Everyone will celebrate Rachel's birthday, but she feels it is too late.

Rachel is eleven today plus all of the ages before eleven, but she wishes that she "was one-hundred-and-two."

♦ ♦ ♦

I wish I was anything but eleven, because I want today to be far away already, far away like a tiny kite in the sky, so tiny-tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

◆ Stop to Reflect

How could Rachel have acted differently?

What would you have done if you were Rachel?

## REVIEW AND ASSESS

1. What causes Rachel to become upset at school? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What does Rachel mean when she says "when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one"? \_\_\_\_\_

Name two events that support her theory.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. How is the mix-up straightened out? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. **Literary Analysis:** Identify some of the key words, thoughts, and actions used to reveal information about Rachel and Mrs. Price.

Character	Words	Thoughts	Actions
Rachel			
Mrs. Price			

5. **Reading Strategy:** If Rachel invited classmates to a birthday party, the invitation would probably say *RSVP*. Use a dictionary to find the **origin** (the place or language a word comes from) and meaning of this commonly used expression.

Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing

### Character Description

A character description is a written sketch of a character. It describes a character's personality. Write a description of one of the characters in "Eleven."

Begin by choosing a character. Write the character's name in the space provided in the chart. Review the story to find your character's three main personality traits, or qualities. List the traits in the chart. Then, record the words, thoughts, and actions that reveal those traits. Give at least one example for each trait.

<b>Character:</b>	
<b>Personality Trait</b>	<b>Example From the Story</b>

Write your description, using the three traits you listed above. Use your examples to support each of your points.

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