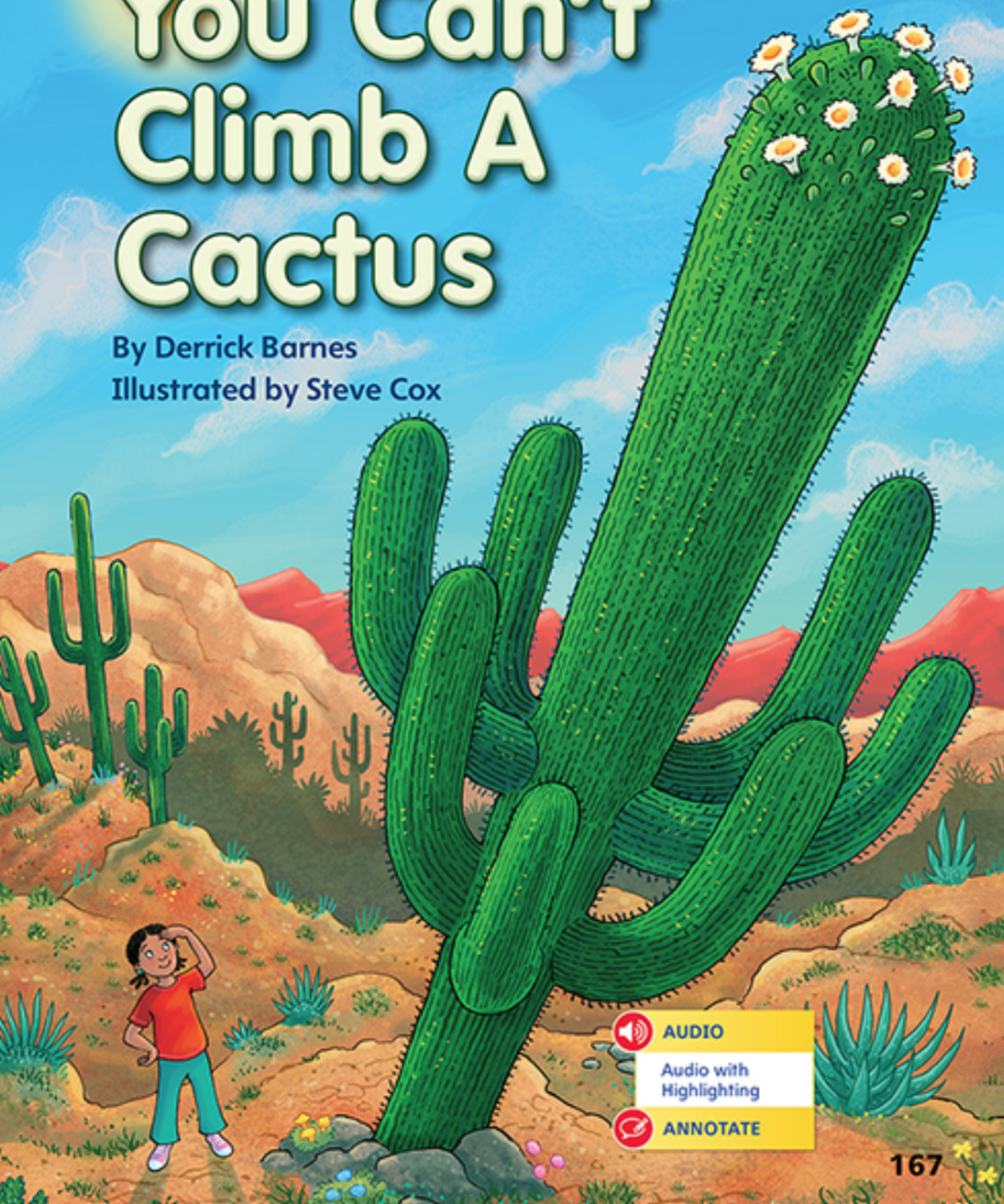




You Can't Climb A Cactus

By Derrick Barnes
Illustrated by Steve Cox



AUDIO

Audio with
Highlighting



ANNOTATE



excited thrilled;
looking forward to

favorite liked better
than others

- 1 Erica was **excited** about spring vacation.
- 2 She wanted to visit the new nature center near her home in Seattle.
- 3 It had plants and bugs, which were two of her **favorite** things in the world!





CLOSE READ



- 4 Her parents had different plans.
- 5 “Let’s take a trip to Arizona!” Mom said. “We can visit Grandpa Zack.”
- 6 Erica loved Grandpa Zack, but she did not want to visit Arizona.
- 7 She’d never been there. She knew it would be boring.

Describe and Understand Plot Elements

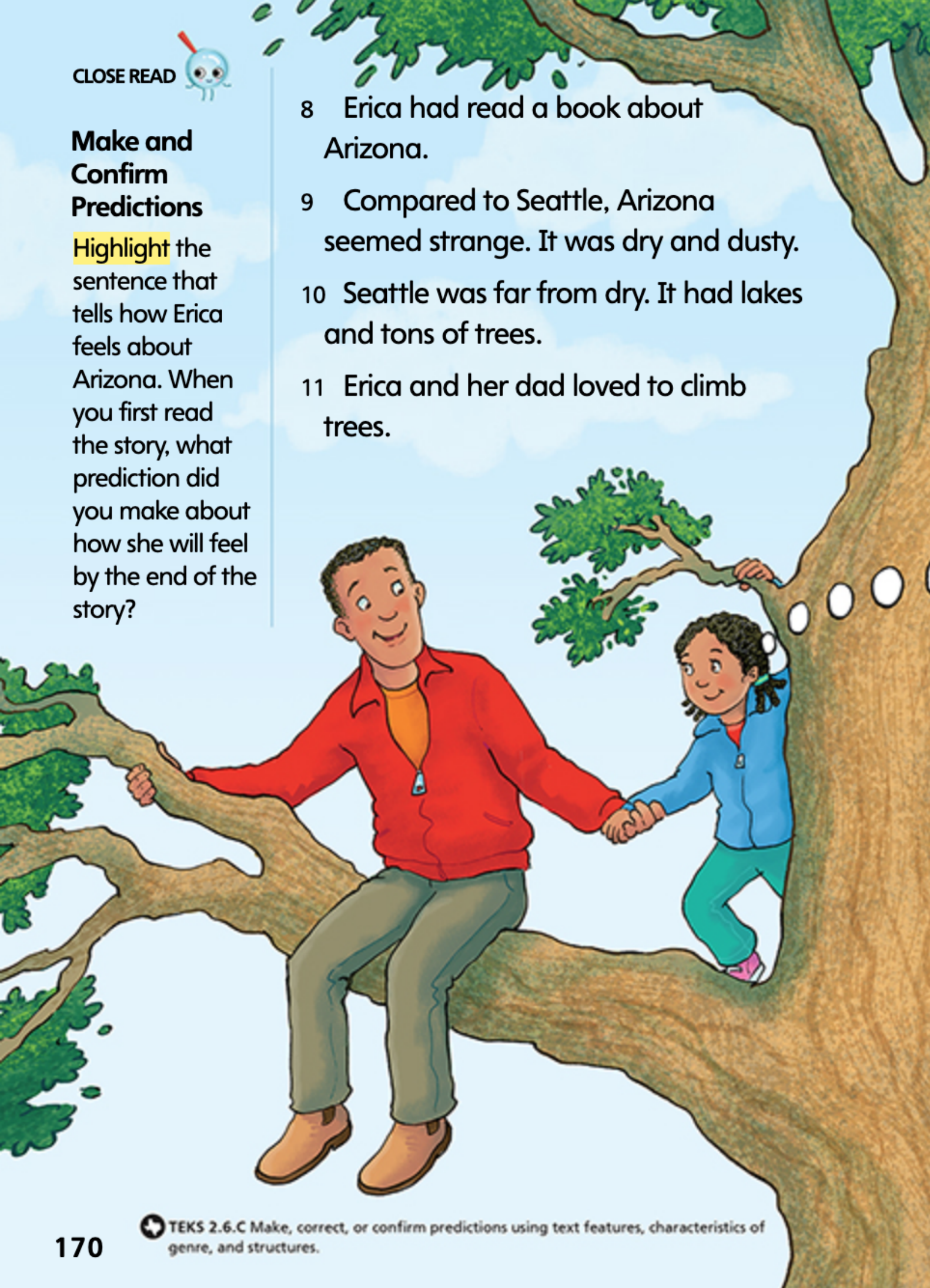
Underline the words that tell what problem Erica has with her parents’ plan.



Make and Confirm Predictions

Highlight the sentence that tells how Erica feels about Arizona. When you first read the story, what prediction did you make about how she will feel by the end of the story?

- 8 Erica had read a book about Arizona.
- 9 Compared to Seattle, Arizona seemed strange. It was dry and dusty.
- 10 Seattle was far from dry. It had lakes and tons of trees.
- 11 Erica and her dad loved to climb trees.



- 12 Arizona looked like one big empty desert with weird cactus plants.
- 13 Erica wasn't sure if Arizona had *any* trees.
- 14 "You can't climb a cactus!" she said to herself. "The sharp spines would really hurt!"
- 15 She wished she could stay home.





Vocabulary in Context

Look for clues to the meaning of an unfamiliar word in the words around it. Underline the words in the text that tell you what a **vulture** is.

- 16 As the plane started to land in Arizona, Erica looked out the window.
- 17 The desert was SO flat.
- 18 “Look!” she gasped, pointing to a huge bird far off in the sky.
- 19 “A vulture,” said Dad.





- 20 Grandpa met Erica and her parents at the airport.
- 21 “I have a surprise for you!” he told Erica, as they walked to his car.
- 22 From the car window, Erica saw a group of animals. “Look, Grandpa,” she said. “Pigs!”
- 23 “Javelinas,” said Grandpa. “They look like wild pigs. But they’re a different mammal that lives in the desert.”

Make and Confirm Predictions

Highlight the text that helps you understand that Erica will learn something new. When you first read the selection, what prediction did you make about the kind of surprise Grandpa has for Erica?





Make and Confirm Predictions

Highlight the sentences that tell what Grandpa's surprise is. Was your prediction correct?

- 24 Grandpa drove to a tall building. It was made mostly of glass.
- 25 "This is where I work now!" Grandpa said.
- 26 Erica read the sign. It said DESERT NATURE CENTER.





- 27 “Can we go in?” Erica asked.
- 28 “We sure can,” Grandpa said. “I’ll sign you up for a tour!”
- 29 Grandpa handed Erica a guidebook.
- 30 “It’s full of facts about the things you’ll see,” he said.
- 31 Then a guide took Erica and a small group of other children to explore the nature center.

tour a visit to see things

guide a person who shows people around

explore to look around a place to learn things



32 First, they went inside to see the animals.

33 Lizards scrambled up a glass wall. Scorpions and beetles crawled through the dirt.

34 The tour came to a family of javelinas.

35 “Yay!” squealed Erica as two baby javelinas scurried by. It was so cool to see them up close!

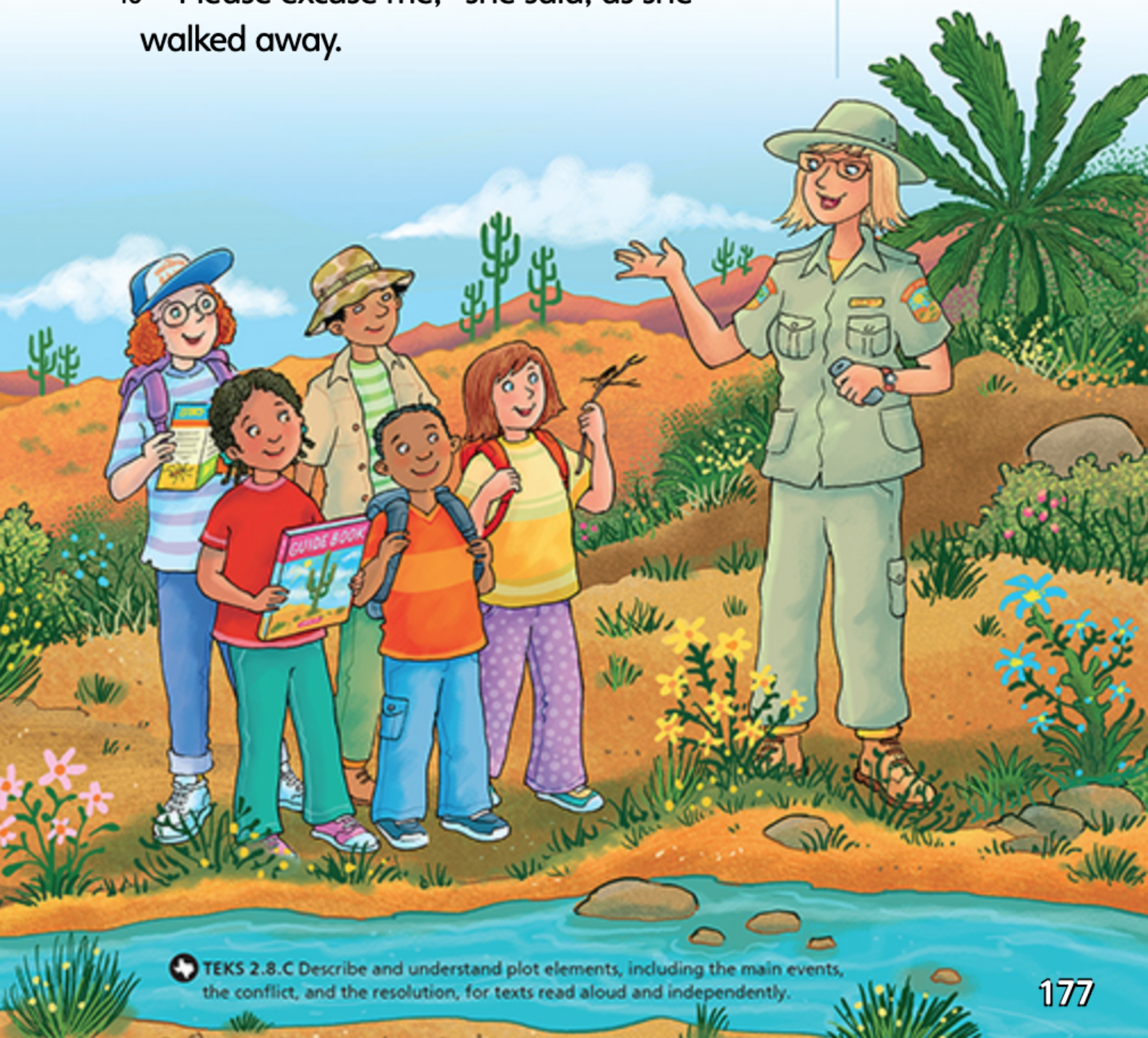




- 36 Next, the tour went outside.
- 37 They walked near a stream lined with colorful wildflowers.
- 38 Erica tried to match the flowers with the pictures in her book.
- 39 Then the guide's phone rang.
- 40 "Please excuse me," she said, as she walked away.

Describe and Understand Plot Elements

Underline the sentence that shows Erica was interested in what she saw.





- 41 While the guide was gone, Erica took over the tour!
- 42 She used her guidebook to share fun facts about the plants.
- 43 The other children loved learning from someone their own age.
- 44 When the guide returned, she let Erica finish leading the tour.
- 45 “You should be a guide,” she told her. “Why don’t you be my assistant?”

**Describe and Understand Plot Elements**

Underline the text that tells what Erica did during her week in Arizona.

- 46 The guide invited Erica back.
- 47 For the rest of the week, Erica went to work with Grandpa Zack.
- 48 While Grandpa did his job, she helped with the tours.
- 49 When it was time to go home to Seattle, the guide gave Erica a gift. It was a little cactus plant.



- 50 Back home, Erica missed Arizona.
- 51 She decided to make an Arizona corner in her room.
- 52 She hung photos from the trip.
- 53 Then she put the cactus on a little table.





- 54 Erica loved to look at her cactus.
- 55 It always reminded her of Arizona and the best vacation ever.
- 56 “It’s true you can’t climb a cactus,” she thought. “You sure can love one, though!”

Describe and Understand Plot Elements

Erica was unhappy about going to Arizona at first. Underline the text that shows she solved her problem.

