ADVENTURE BUILDER

WriteShop

StoryBuilders

PRINTABLE WRITING PROMPT CARDS

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WriteShop Storybuilders Adventure Builder (E-book)

Design Credits: Layout: Becky Thomson Cover Design: Karah Fredricks

Introduction to StoryBuilders

StoryBuilders

What's this? A foolhardy treasure hunter goes on a quest through a stinky swamp? A nimble mountain climber in a skyscraper must save someone from danger? What kid wouldn't love to write a story filled with such intrigue, risk, or daring adventure?

Break up your routine or add punch and variety to writing lessons with StoryBuilders. Use them in addition to—or instead of—a daily writing assignment.

StoryBuilders may be used by students of various ages. Though they are **designed for grades 3-8**, younger children and even teens can enjoy them too.

Includes

- 1 deck (192) Adventure Builder StoryBuilders cards, black print
- 1 deck (192) Adventure Builder StoryBuilders cards, colored print
- Blank cards for creating your own
- Instructions and Ideas

Overview

Printable StoryBuilders card decks help jumpstart a creative writing project by providing children with the basic elements of a story—character, character trait, setting, and plot—laying a foundation for a joyful writing experience with some clever surprises thrown in along the way.

Using the StoryBuilder Cards, they'll develop their tales by picking one card from each category. *Does the hero save the day? Will the notorious bad guy learn a lesson?* And what twists and turns appear in the character's path? *A wild animal? An abandoned lighthouse? A runaway train?*

StoryBuilders give children opportunities to

- Use their imaginations to create fictional stories
- Express themselves both verbally and in writing
- Practice writing stories that have a beginning, middle, and end
- Incorporate character qualities and emotions into their stories
- Describe a story's setting

Tip

lends itself to dialogue, review the basics of writing dialogue with your students.

Because story writing

- WriteShop Junior Teacher's Guides offer helpful tips. See Book D (p. 85) or Book E (p. 67).
- Fold-N-Go Grammar
 Pack Level 2 includes a
 Dialogue Fold-N-Go.
- A good English
 handbook can also help.

Prepare and Store Cards

Print

This set contains two identical decks of printable cards from which to choose. When setting up your printer options, choose "Actual Size." **Do not choose "Fit" or "Fit to Page."**

Option 1: Print with Black Ink on Colored Paper

- Print only the cards containing **black text** (pp. 10-37).
- Print *each category of cards* on a different color of paper. Cardstock makes for sturdier cards than regular copy paper. These colors are merely suggestions.

Card Category	Paper Color
Character Cards	Blue
Character Trait Cards	Orange
Setting Cards	Purple
Plot Cards	Red

Option 2: Print with Colored Ink on White Paper

- Print only the cards containing **colored text** (pp. 38-65).
- Print *all cards* on white cardstock or copy paper.

Cut

Cut cards along dotted lines.

Laminate (optional)

If desired, laminate cards for durability.

Further expand story-writing options by using dry-erase markers on the blank, laminated cards to add your own vocabulary words. To reuse the cards, simply wipe clean with a damp paper towel.

Store

There's no best way to store or organize your StoryBuilders cards. Here are just a few creative suggestions to get you started.

- Keep cards in separate zip-top sandwich bags, one for EACH category: Characters, Character Traits, Settings, and Plots.
- Store cards in a small file box, separating them by category.
- Store each category of card in its own jar.
- Hole punch and assemble cards on a ring for each category. Hang them on hooks in your writing center.

Write the Story

A Word about Vocabulary

While StoryBuilders are fun for all ages, children—especially younger ones—will come across words with unfamiliar meanings. Either set these cards aside for now, or try one of the following suggestions to encourage vocabulary growth.

- Look up a word in the **thesaurus** and find a more familiar synonym to use instead. Write it beneath the unfamiliar word or on its own blank card (located at the end of each section).
- Look up each challenging word in the **dictionary** and choose one definition to write on the card. Then, try to include these new words in your story.

Young children may need your help using these reference tools.

Choose Story Elements

Children can use various methods for choosing one of each card. Then, based on the cards selected, they construct a story that can be fanciful, funny, or serious.

Here are three ways students can pick their cards:

Blind Pick

Draw one card from each category. No peeking allowed!

Example

Character trait: *scatterbrained* Character: *tightrope walker* Setting: *snowy forest* Plot: *faces the evil Owl King*



Roll the Die

- 1. Place 4 stacks of cards on the table, one stack for each category, with 6 cards in each stack.
- 2. First, the student picks a character card by rolling the die. If he rolls a 5, he must draw the fifth card in the stack. This becomes his story's main character.
- 3. Repeat to pick the character trait, setting, and plot.

You Decide

Let the student choose the character trait, character, setting, and plot he wants to write about.

Example

Character trait: *resourceful* Character: *sheriff* Setting: *Old West* Plot: *gets kidnapped*

Develop the Story

StoryBuilders open the floodgates for creativity! Once children have drawn or selected four cards, they can begin to plan and write their story. Try some of these ideas!

Pick-a-Plot

Draw a new card if a plot or problem seems too outrageous or doesn't make sense.

Get Moody

For an interesting twist, choose a mood/tone for the day's StoryBuilder activity before you draw your cards. Decide ahead of time whether your story will be funny, sad, mysterious, or scary.

Add-a-Card

If you want your story to take a different turn, draw one or more new cards to add another character or introduce a twist to the plot.

Two Is Company

Choose one Character Card for your main character. Then, choose a second character to join the main character in the story or adventure you create.

Double the Fun!

Choose **two** of each card. Challenge yourself to include the ideas from all eight cards in your story.

Plan it Out

Use a graphic organizer to plan the story before you write. Use (or reuse) one of your WriteShop graphic organizers. Alternatively, **Houghton Mifflin** offers free printables:

- Story Map 1
- Story Map 2
- Story Map 3

In the News

Newspaper articles tell the 5 Ws: *who, what, when, where,* and *why*. Imagine that you are a news reporter. Pick one of each card to start you off with who, what, and where. Then, when you write your news story, add your own information to give all the details, including when and why.

"Bad" Libs

Compose your story and then rewrite it, leaving out the words on the StoryBuilder cards you selected and replacing the words with blank lines. Trade papers with a sibling and and fill in the blanks using your own words in each other's story, Mad Libs style. Does it still work? Is it funny or outrageous? Discuss why.

Poetry Fun

Instead of a story, write a short poem.

Vocabulary Challenge

On several blank cards, add vocabulary words you are studying. Try to include at least one word in your story. Or, challenge yourself to use as many of the words as possible in a way that makes sense.

Dear Diary

Write a journal or diary entry using your 4 cards to guide you. Write in first person, pretending you are the person named on your Character Card.

Or, have your character write a letter to a friend instead. Draw a second Character Card to choose the identify of this friend.

Daily Timed Writing

- 1. Choose 4 cards, one from each category.
- 2. Set the timer for 5, 10, or 15 minutes.
- 3. Write till the timer goes off, even if it means stopping mid-sentence!
- 4. Write a little every day, adding details to your story. For extra fun, use the Add-a-Card activity on p. 4 to introduce new developments.
- 5. On the last day of the week, wrap up your tale with a conclusion.

Round Robin

A "Round Robin" is a good activity for a group of students or siblings to practice narrative or imaginative story writing. Remind them that even though they can have lots of fun with a topic, they should keep their writing gracious. Stories may be humorous but not crude, realistic but not graphic.

Directions

- 1. Have each child pick 4 StoryBuilder cards (1 card from each category).
- 2. Instruct students to print or write neatly and legibly, since others will be reading their work. If younger and older students are writing together, have everyone print rather than use cursive.
- 3. Set the timer for 2-3 minutes and let them write.
- 4. When the bell rings, it's pencils down. Students may finish the word but not the sentence.
- 5. Tell children to pass their papers to the person on the left.
- Set the timer again and tell them to add to the story that's before them. 6.
- 7. They will continue exchanging papers every 2-3 minutes for as many rounds as you decide (4-6 rounds work well).
- 8. Before they begin the last round, announce that it's time write a conclusion.



Consider increasing the time by 15-30 seconds each round. As the stories grow in length, children will need more time to read the story before they can add to it.

Ideas for Pre-writers

Let StoryBuilders inspire imaginative pre-writers by providing the main ingredients for their tales. The following activities are perfect for children who can't write well (or at all).

Narration

Invite children to narrate their story to you.

- 1. Write it down as they dictate.
- 2. After every sentence or two, stop and read what you've written . Continually reviewing the story as you go helps children remember what they've already said, keeping them more focused.

Recording Device

Show children how to dictate into a voice recorder.

Comic Strip

Give kids a comic strip panel and let them sketch out a story based on the StoryBuilder cards they choose. Find printable templates here:

- Free Printable Comic Book Templates | picklebums
- Printable Comic Strip Layouts and Cartoon Panels | DonnaYoung.org

Creativity in Action

Let pre-writers use mini figures or puppets to enact a story they create. They can either make up a story as they go, or they can enact one they already created.

Ideas for Oral Storytelling

Travel Game

Take your StoryBuilder deck on a road trip or vacation. Your family can make up stories orally, in Round Robin fashion (see p. 5).

Waiting Game

Keep an assortment of cards in your bag for times when you need to keep the kids occupied or want to encourage conversation. Put away the digital devices and pull out the StoryBuilders while waiting at a restaurant, having the car repaired, or sitting in the doctor's waiting room.

Bedtime Stories

Kids love bedtime stories, but sometimes it's hard to get creative night after night! Choose 4 cards and make up a bedtime story. Either the parent or the child can make up the story, or you can take turns adding details. Wrap up the story before lights out!

Lights, Camera, Action!

After writing their story, creative kids might enjoy taking it to the next level with one of these ideas:

- Act it out with mini figures and record a stop-motion animation movie.
- Use puppets to enact the plot.
- With siblings or classmates, dress up in costume and play the roles.

Expansion Sets

Make Your Own

Once students understand how StoryBuilders work, encourage them to create their own themed sets.

StoryBuilders Library

It's fun to mix and match WriteShop **StoryBuilders** sets. Expand storytelling options by adding to the sets you already own.

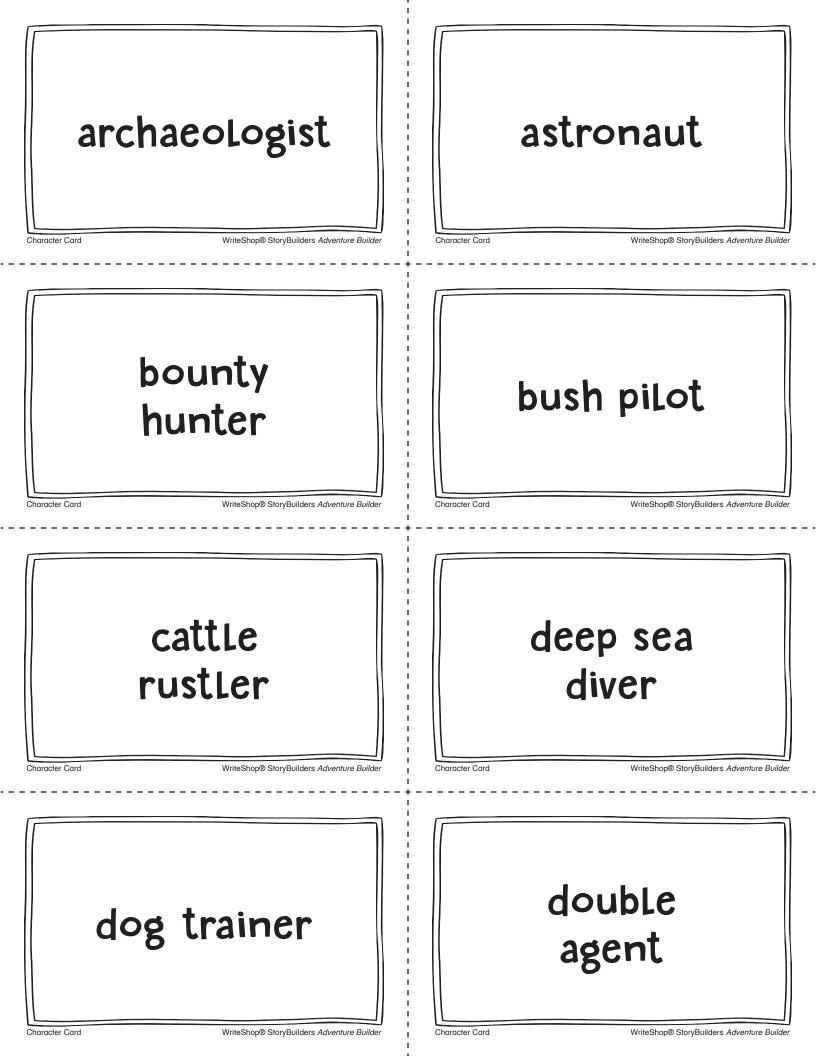
Editing and Grading

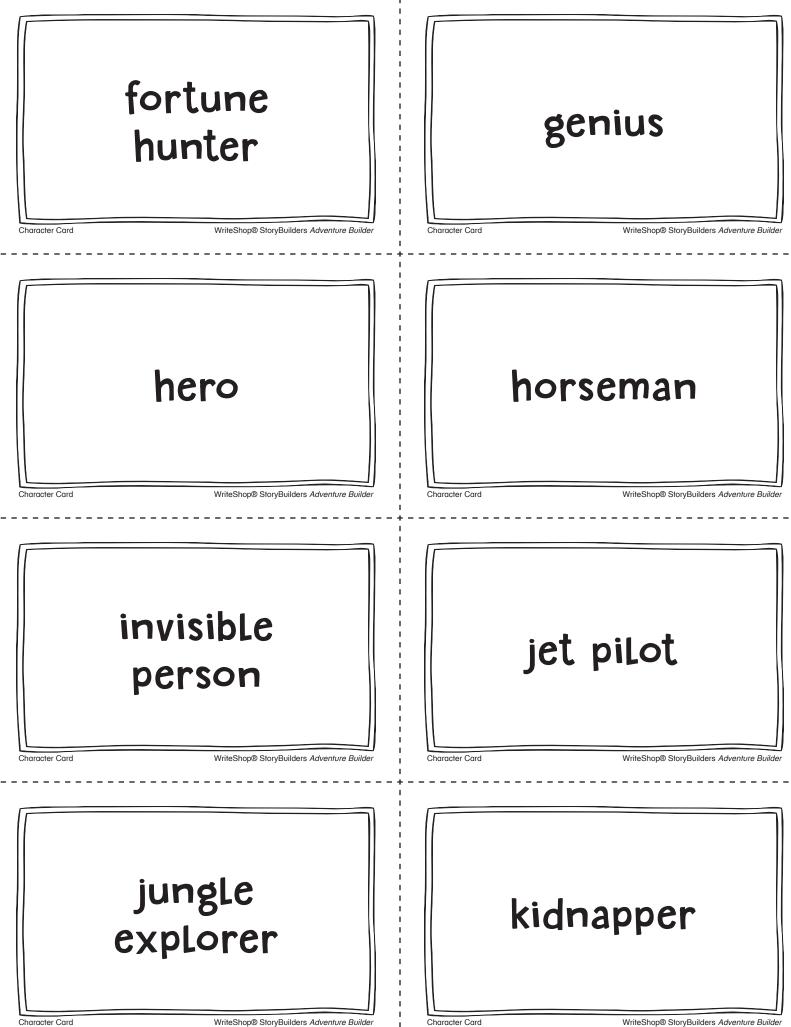
StoryBuilders lend themselves to freewriting for pure enjoyment, while formal writing lessons, history reports, and other assigned compositions are better suited for teaching writing skills.

That said, you may certainly require students to edit and revise their StoryBuilders tales with the understanding that their stories will receive a grade.

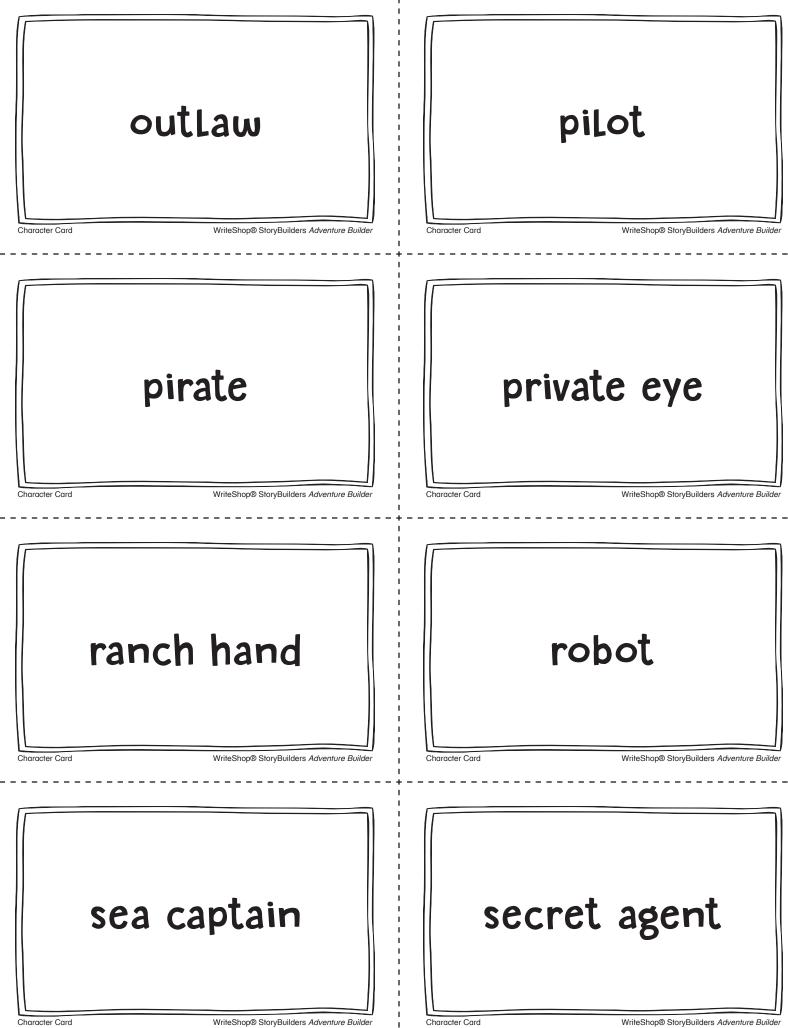
If you expect students to go through the stages of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, final draft), make sure to provide them with the tools they need to be successful.

- Guidelines and boundaries for their stories;
- Graphic organizers for story planning;
- Self-editing tools to help them look for ways to improve; and
- Objective teacher rubrics to help you evaluate the work.

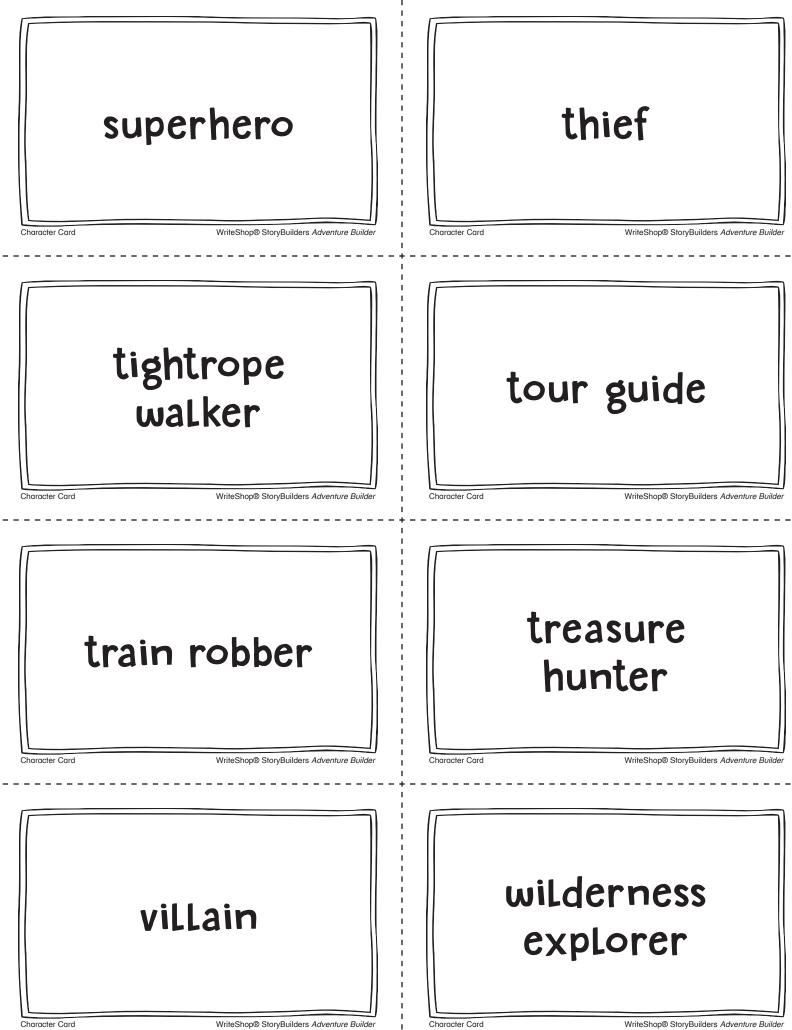


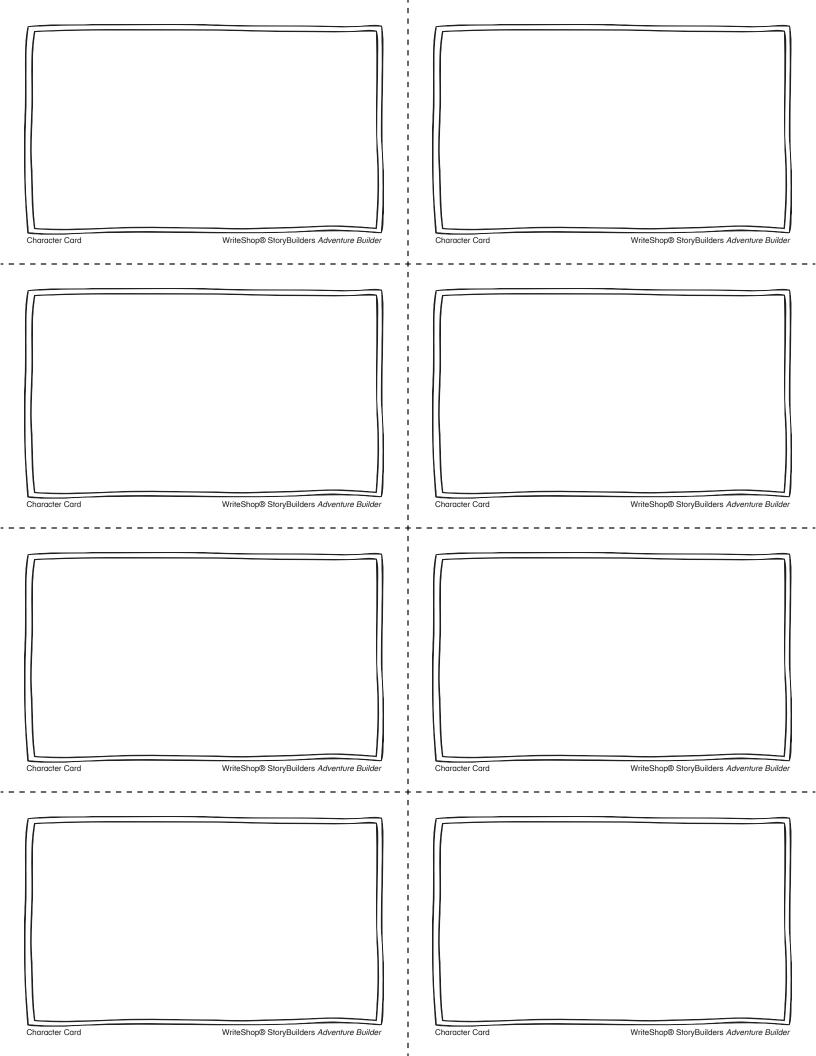


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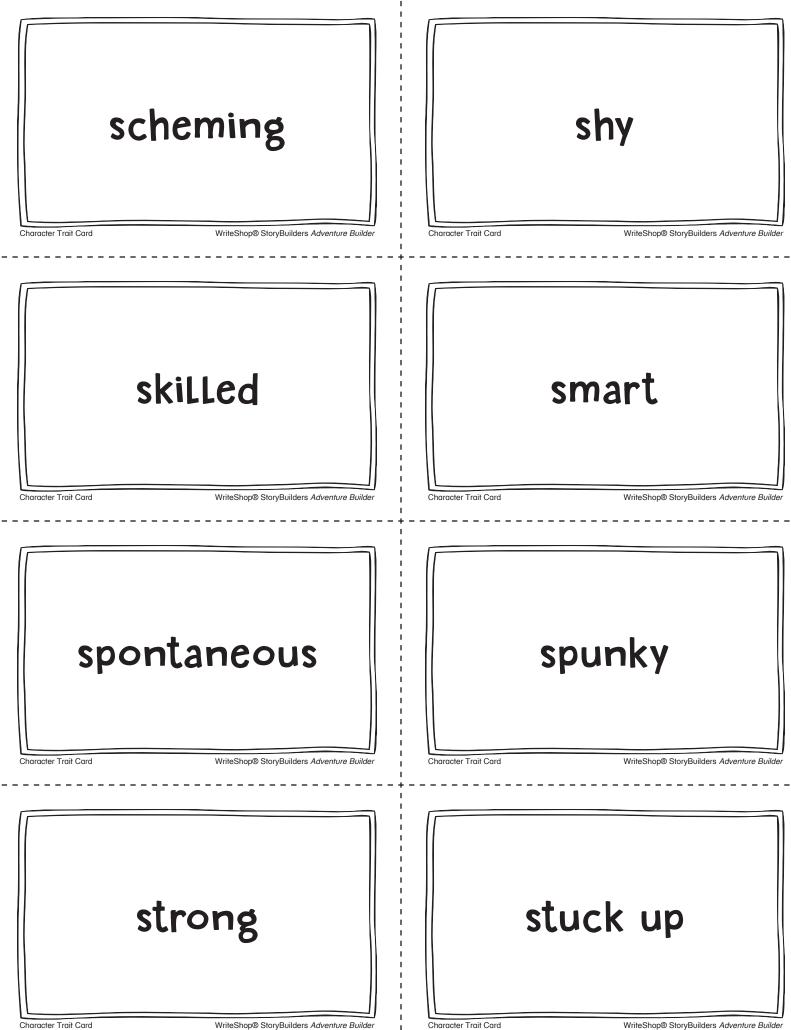


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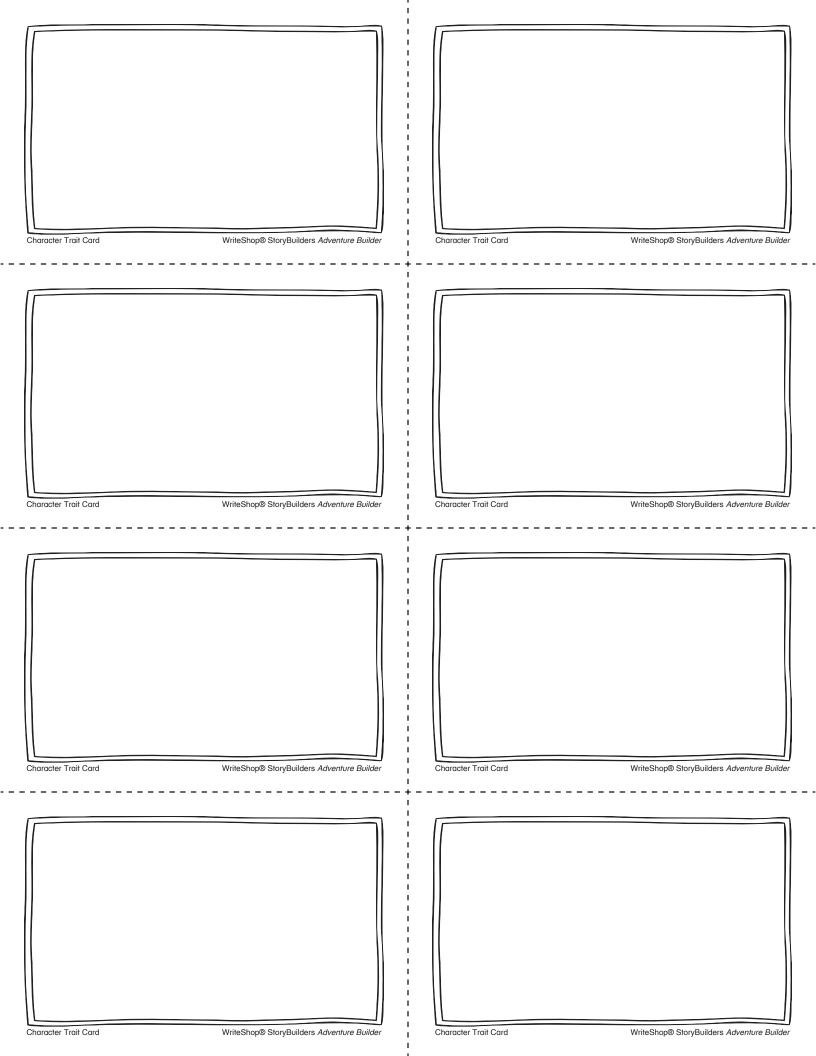
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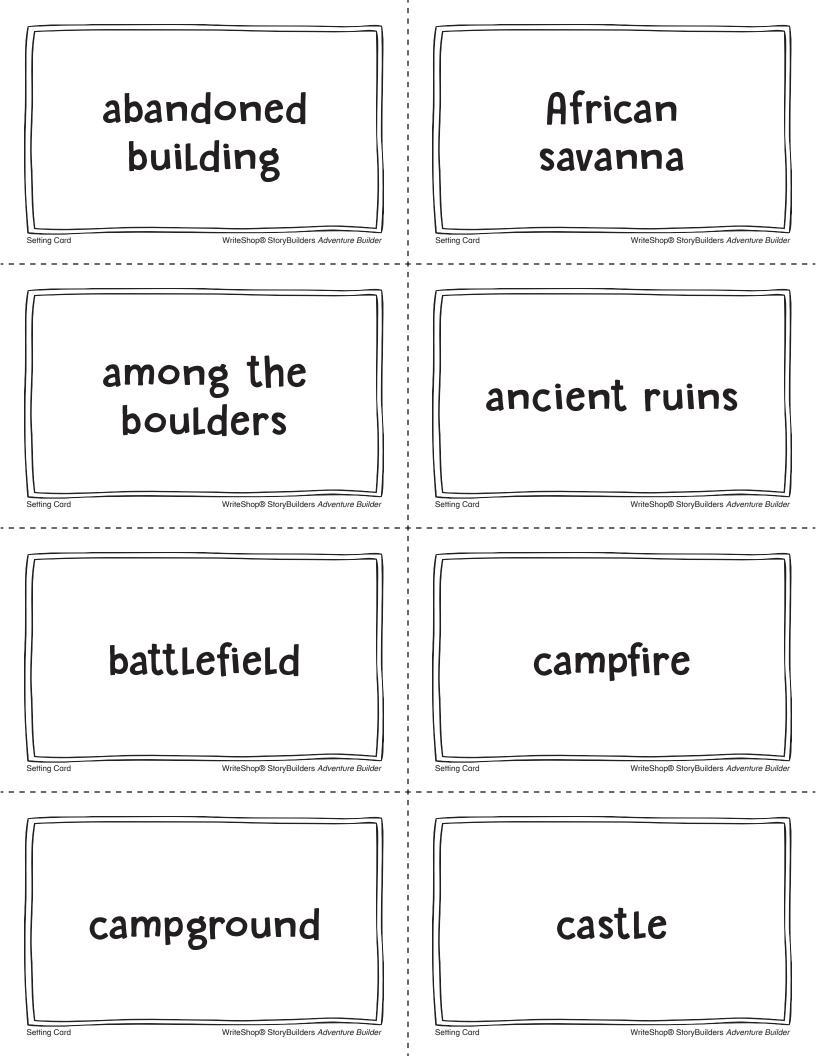
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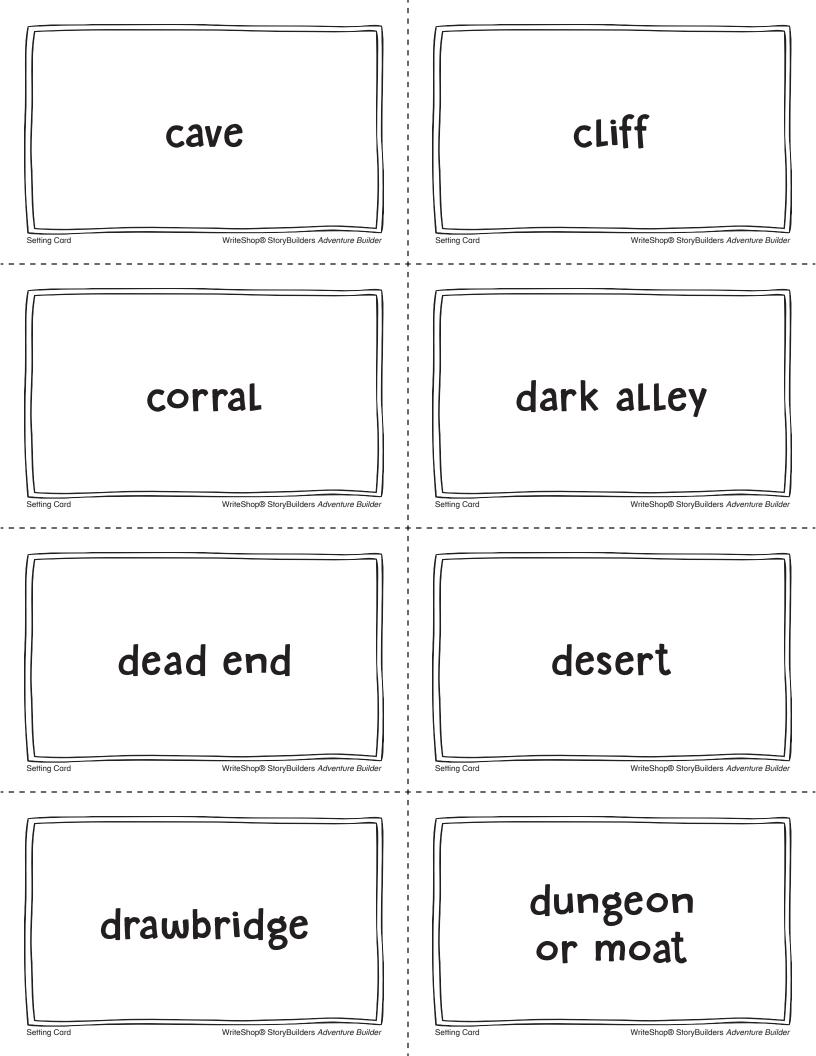
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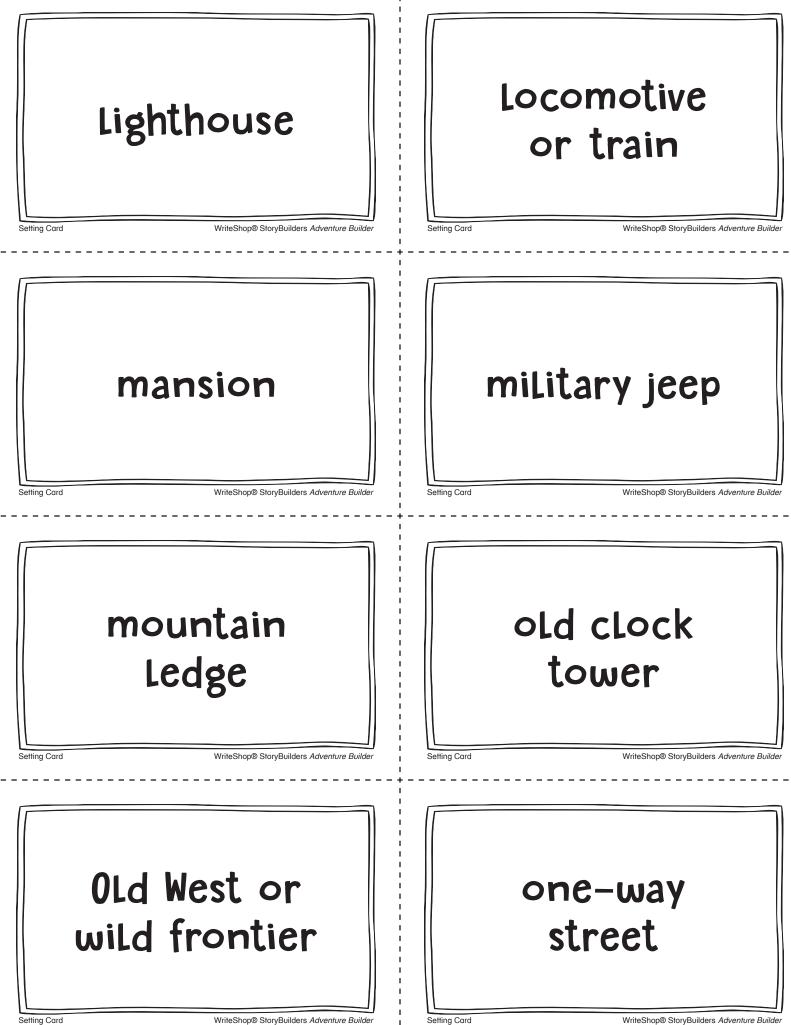
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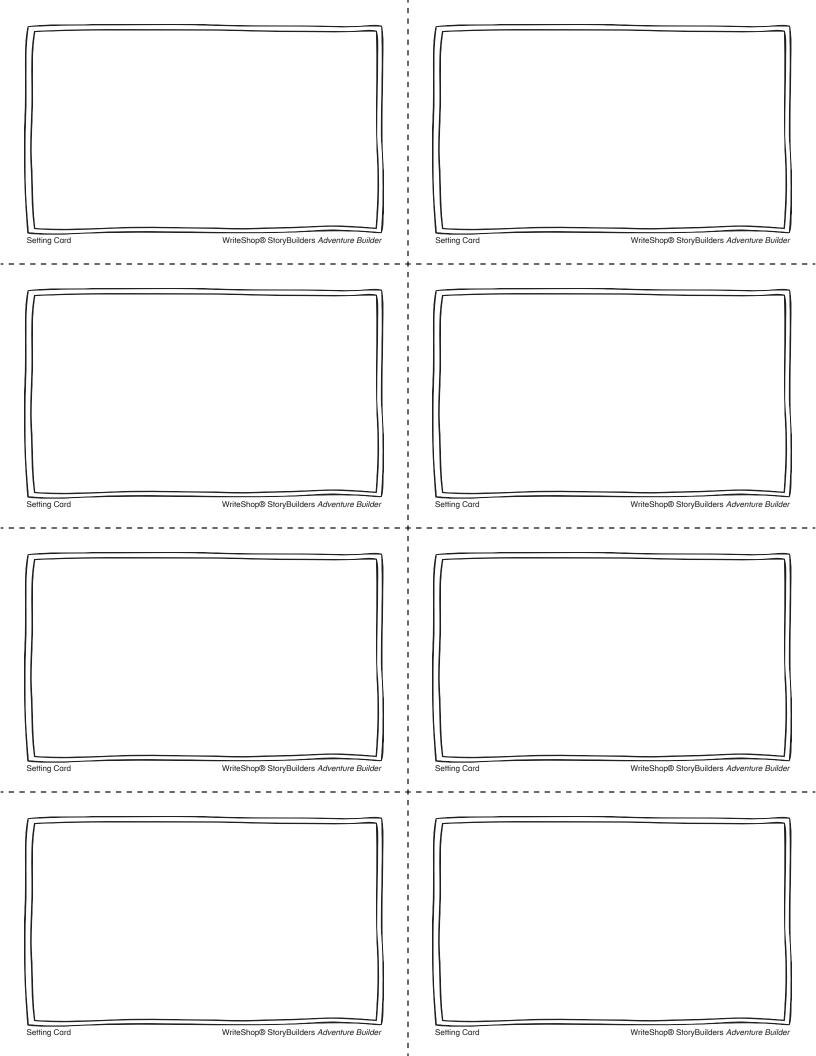


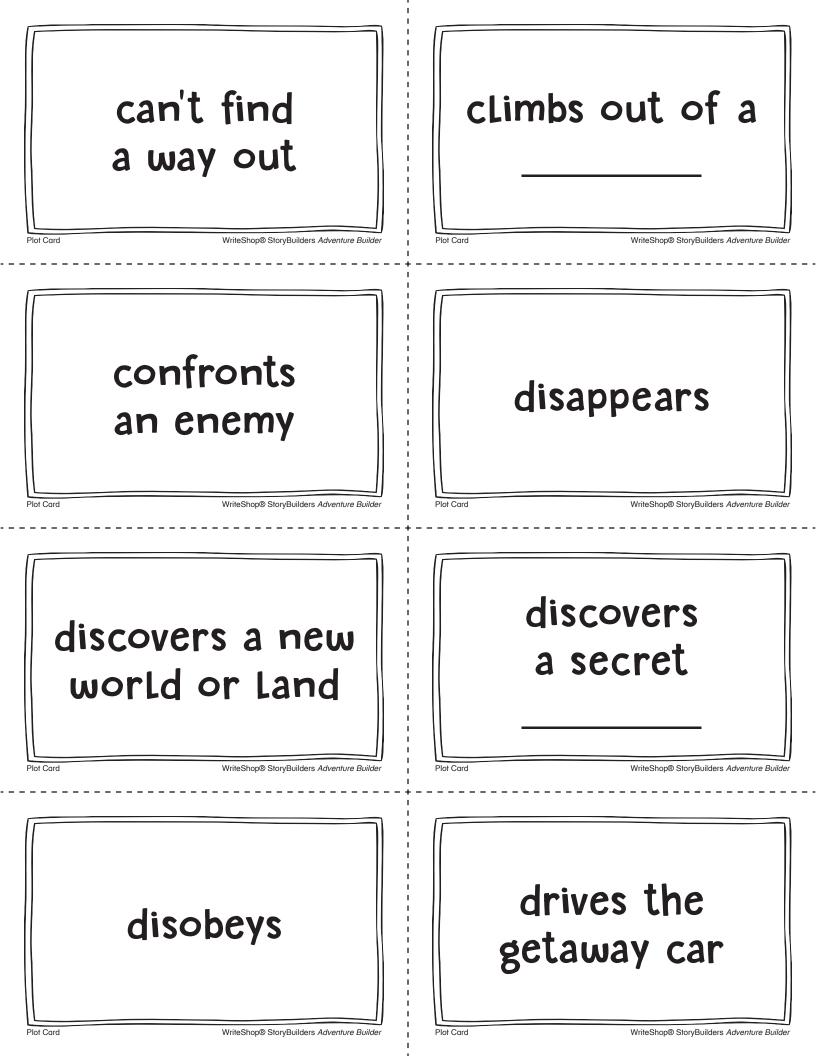
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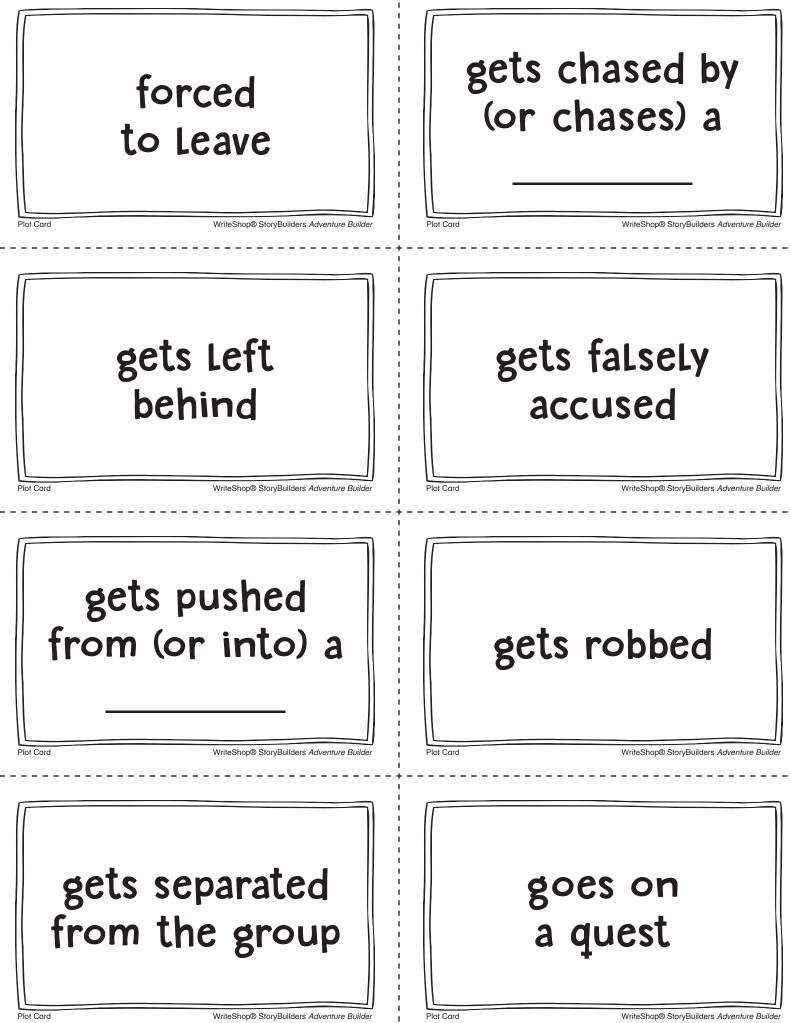
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rickety bridge	river rapids
round tower	secret Location

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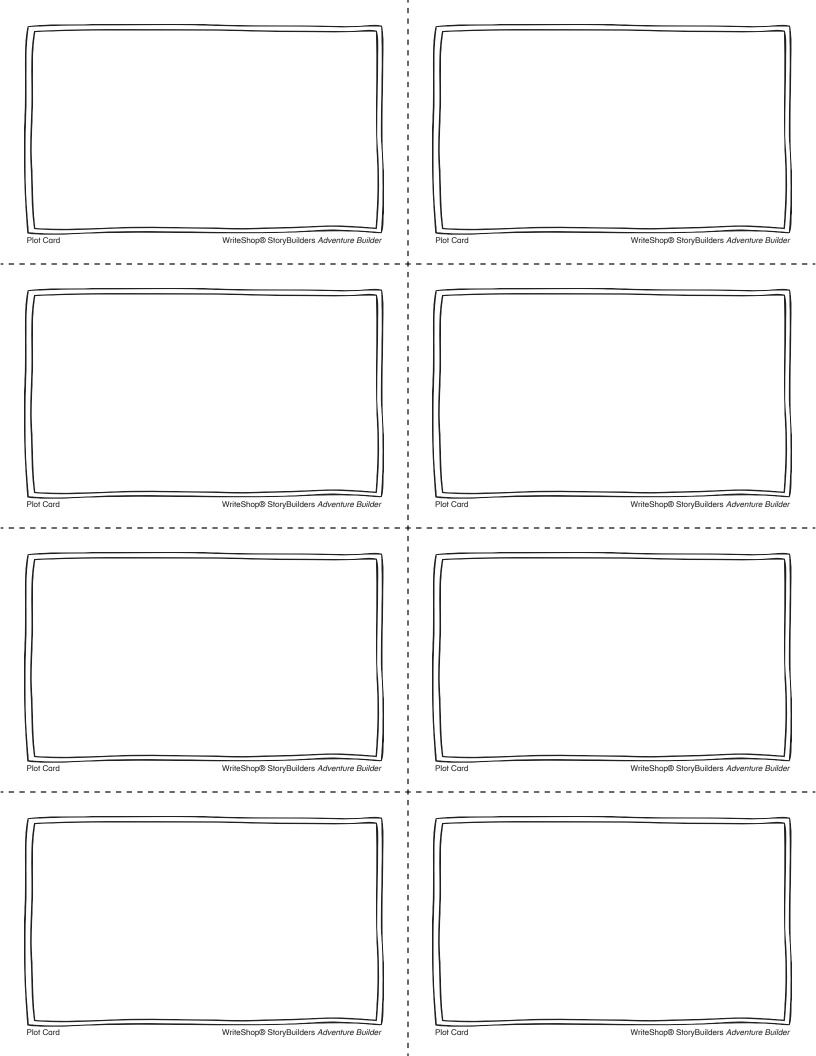


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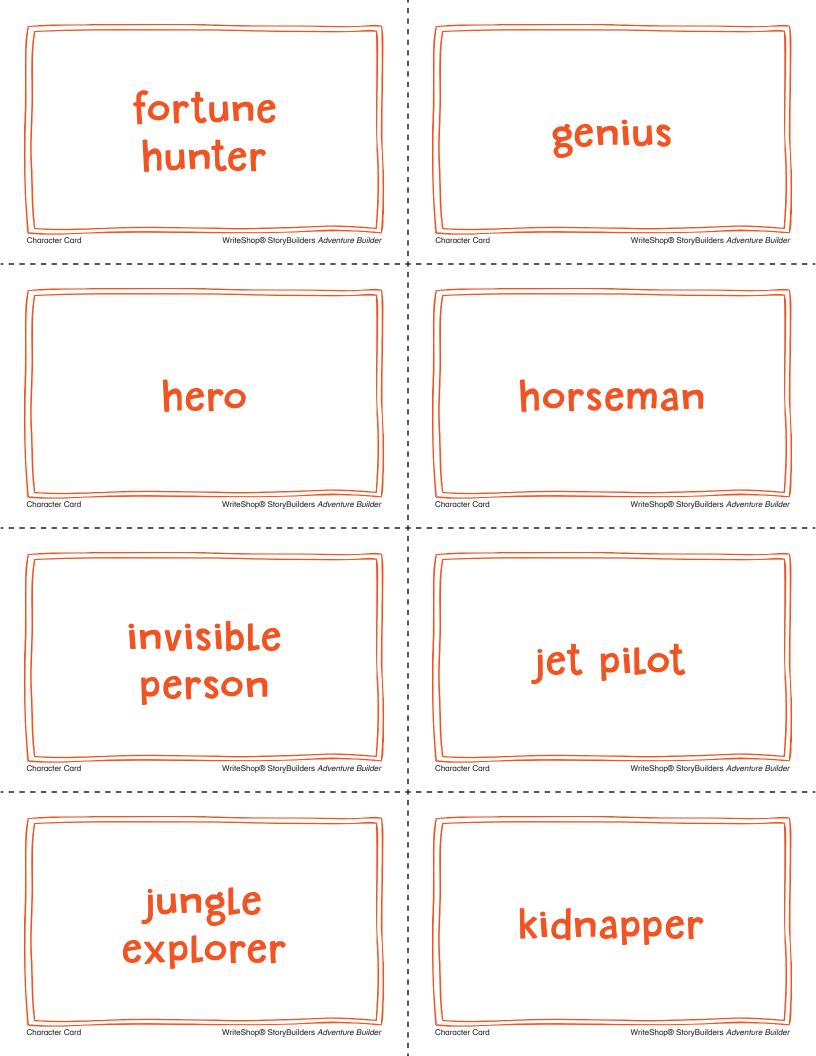


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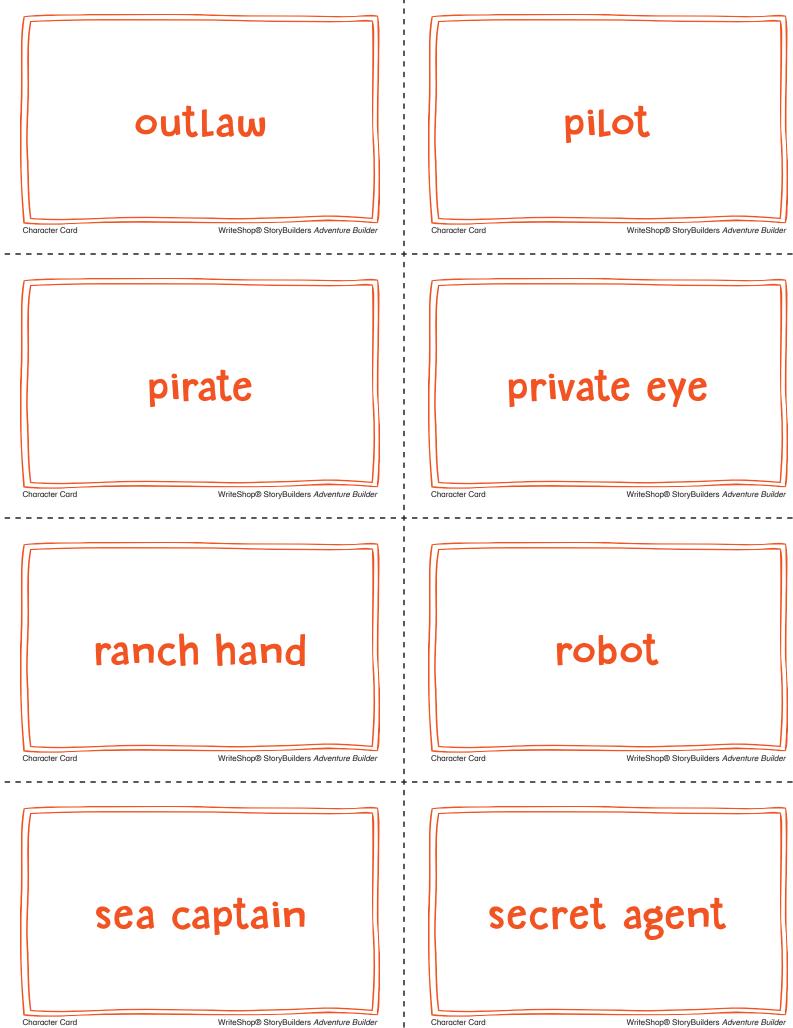
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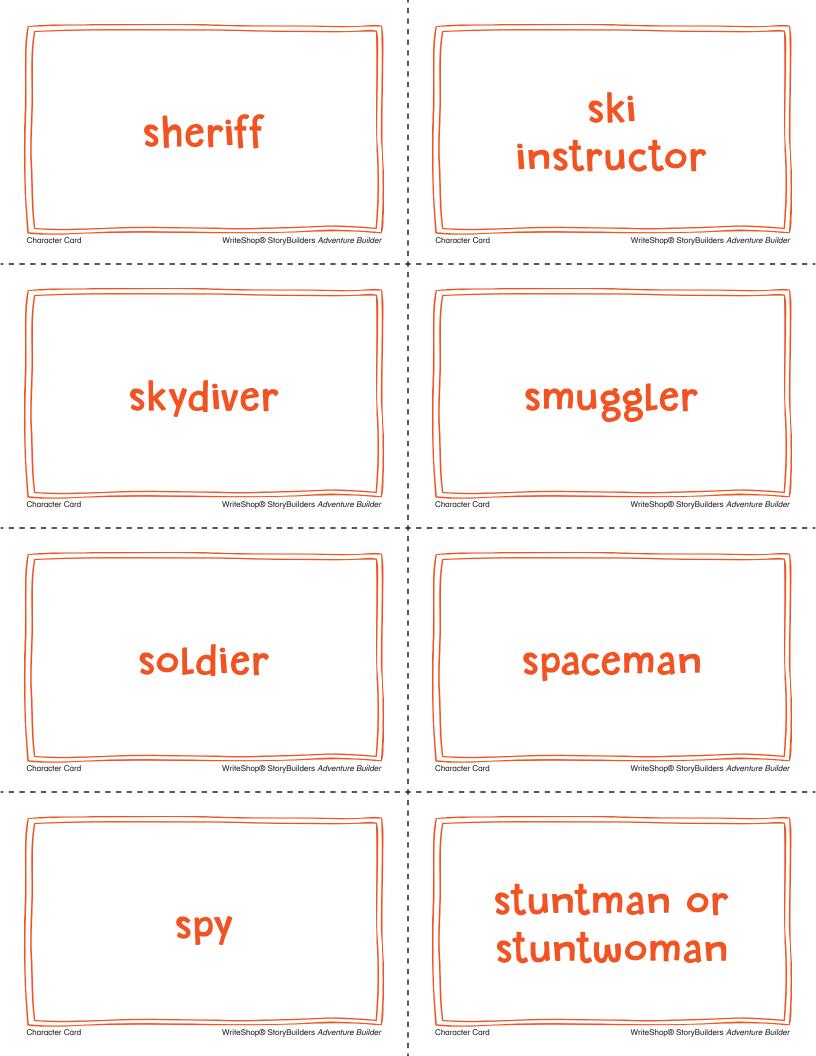


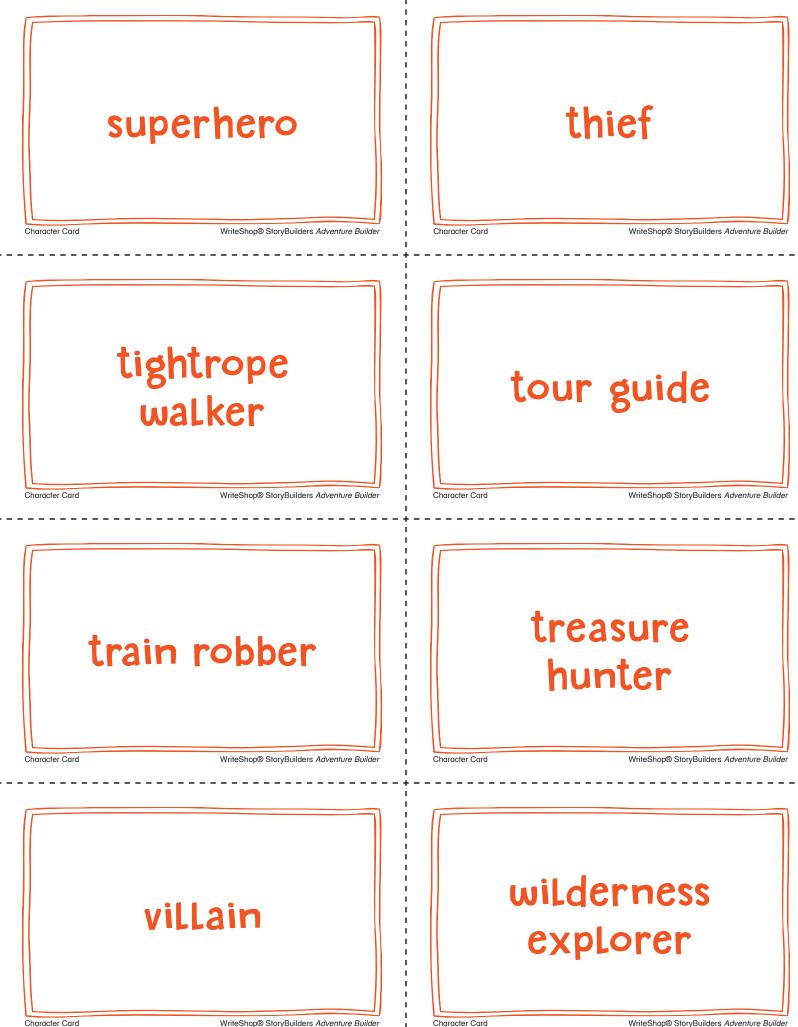


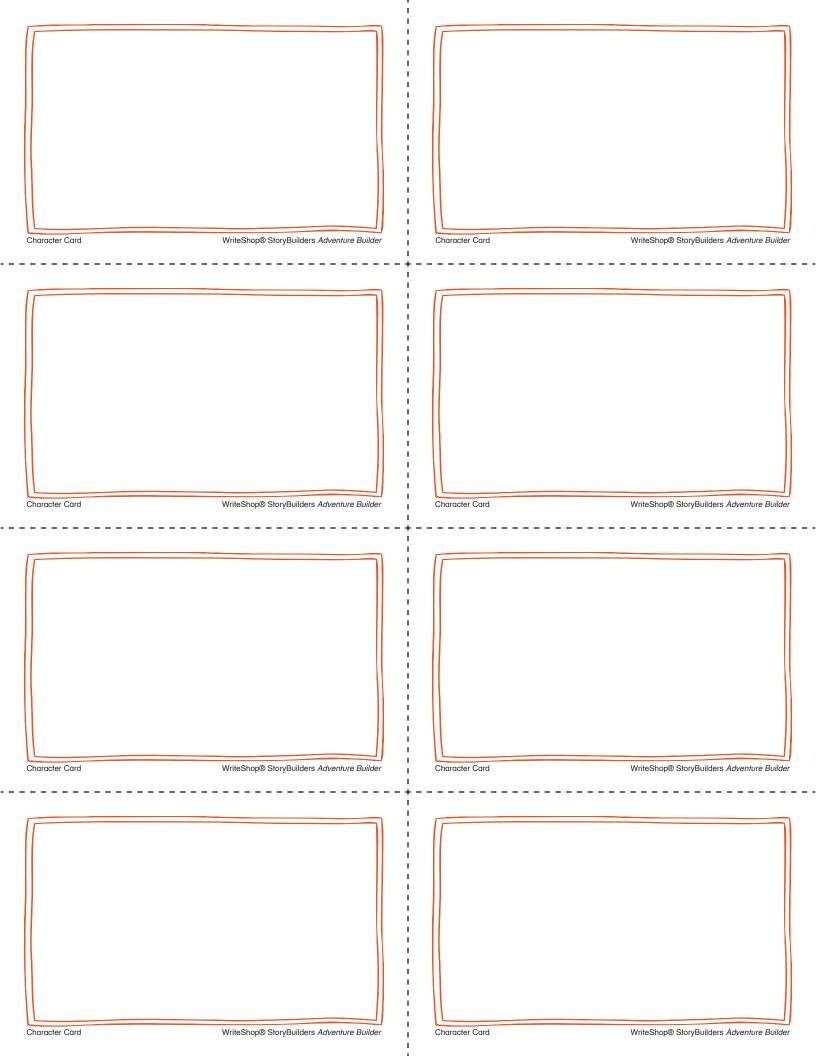


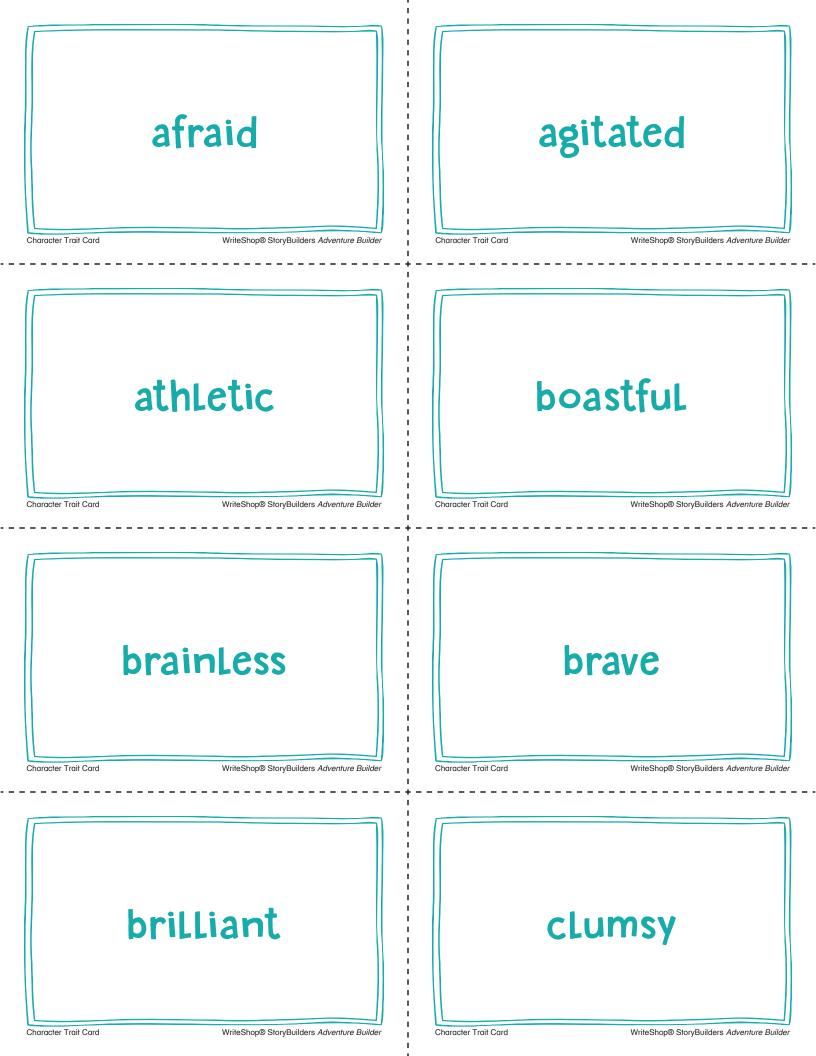


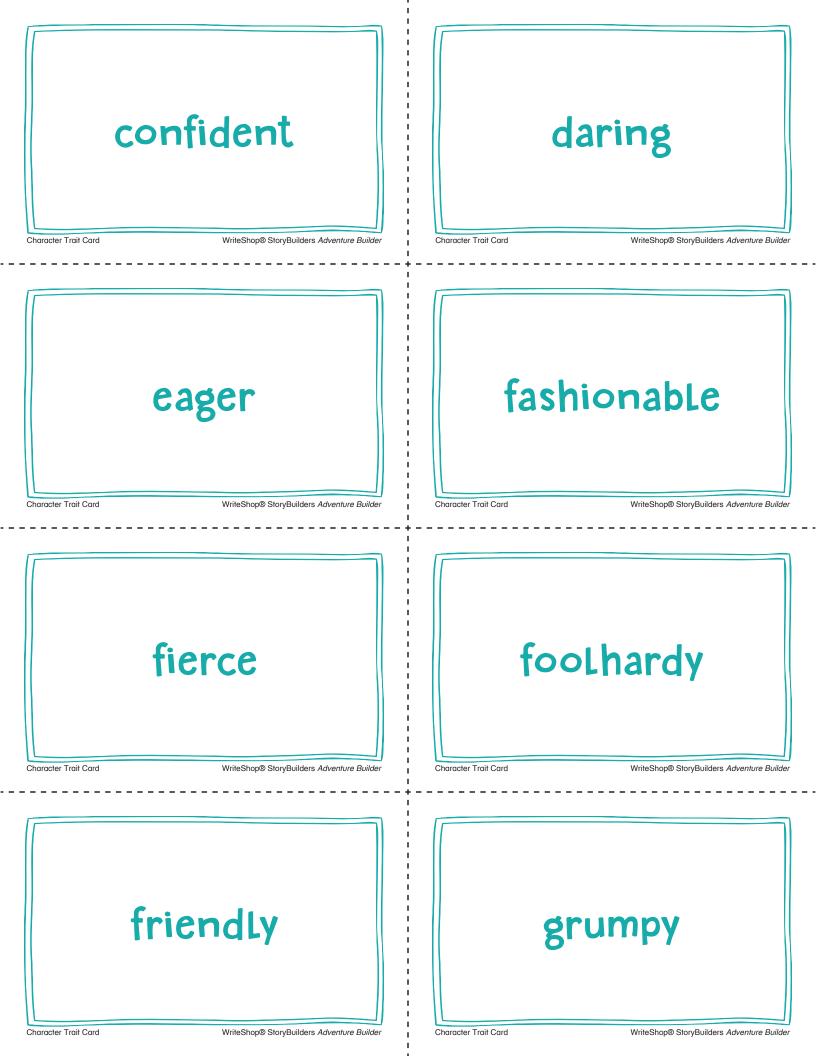


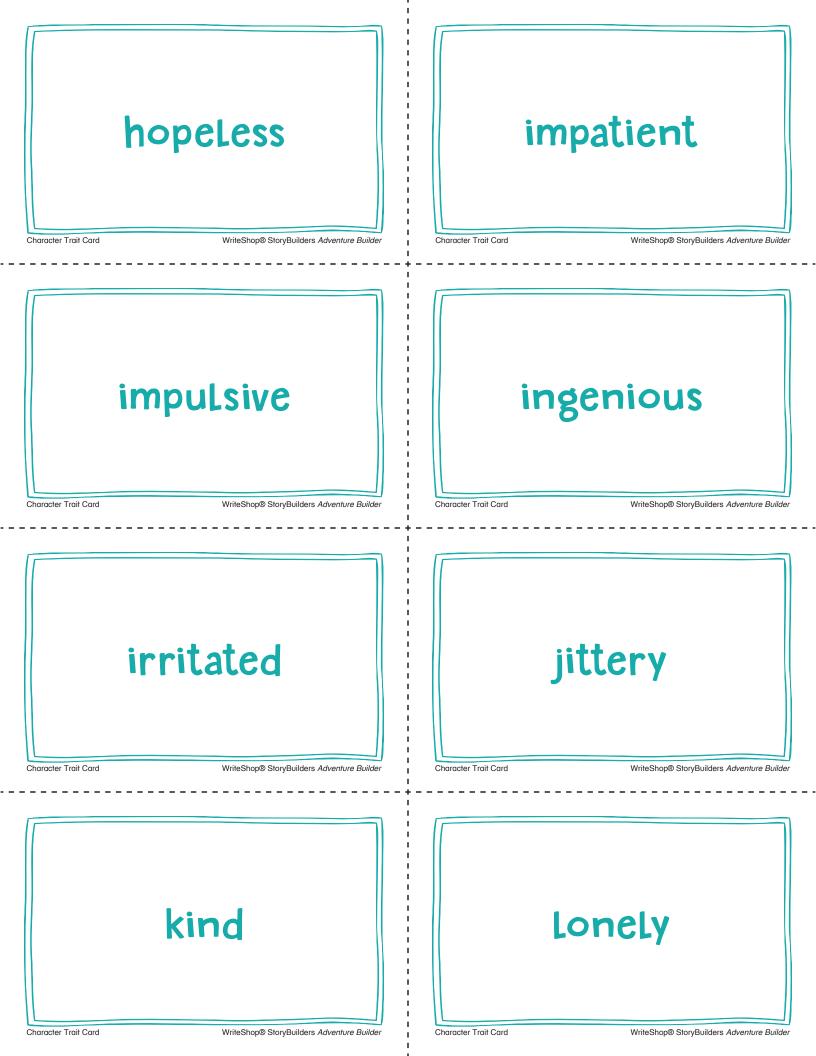




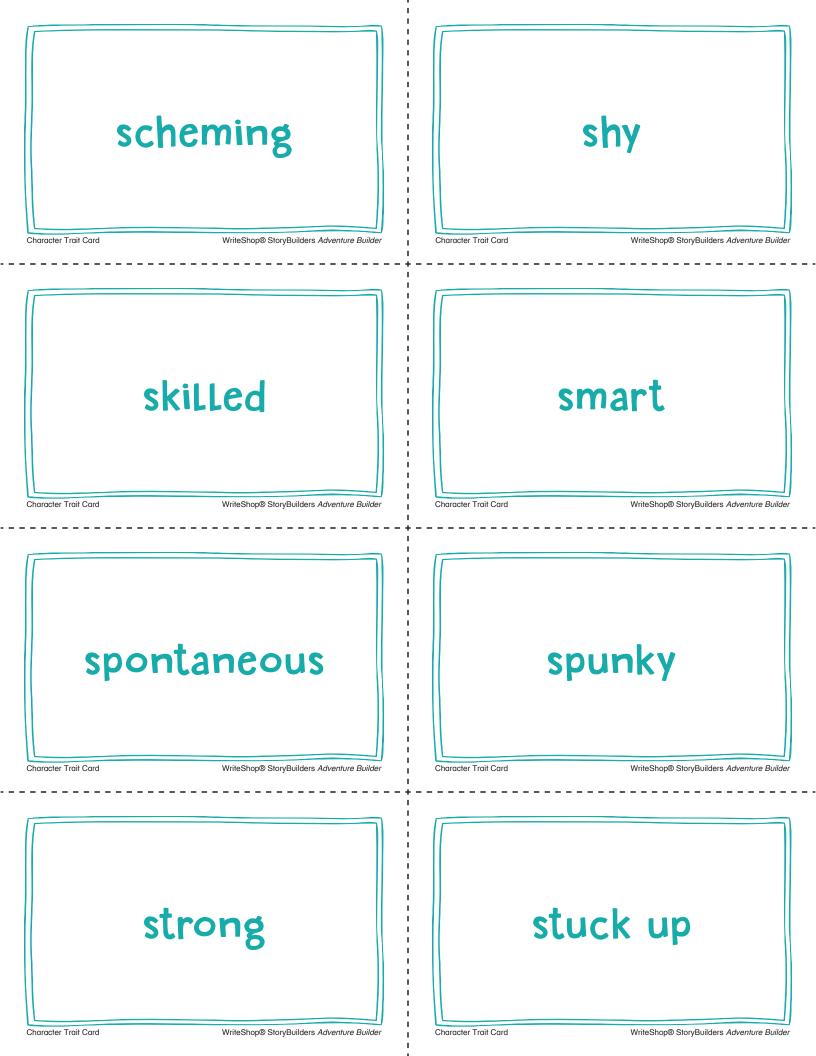




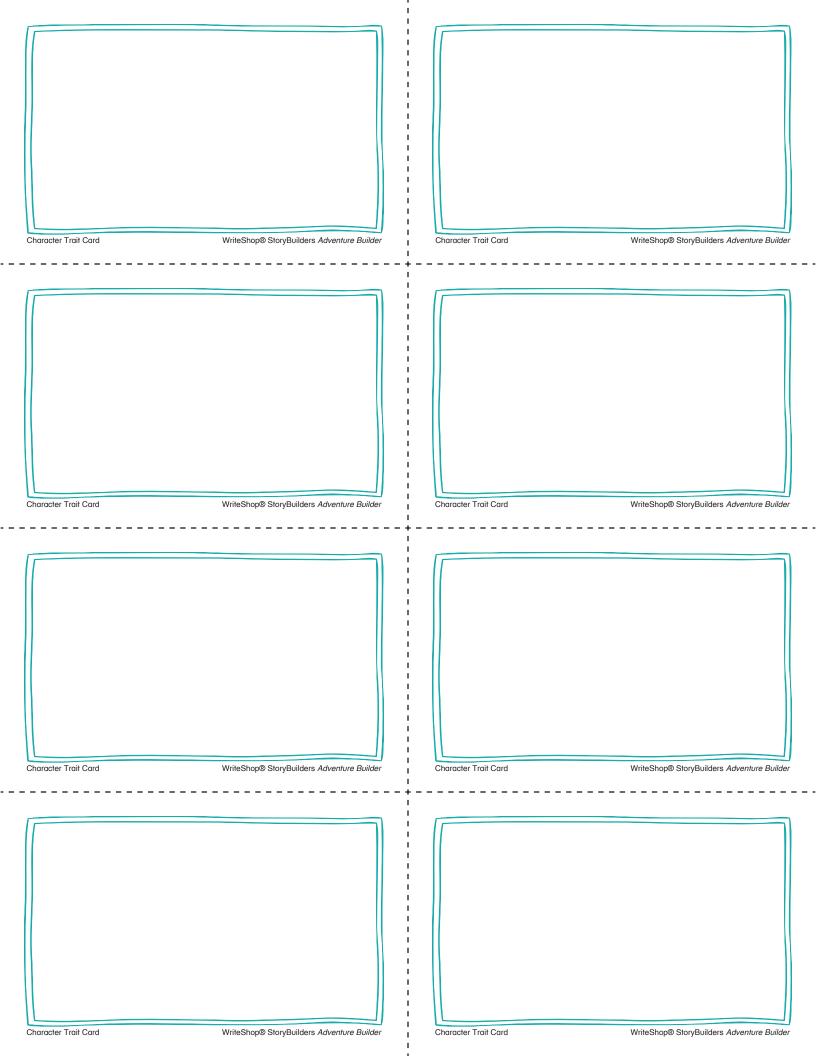








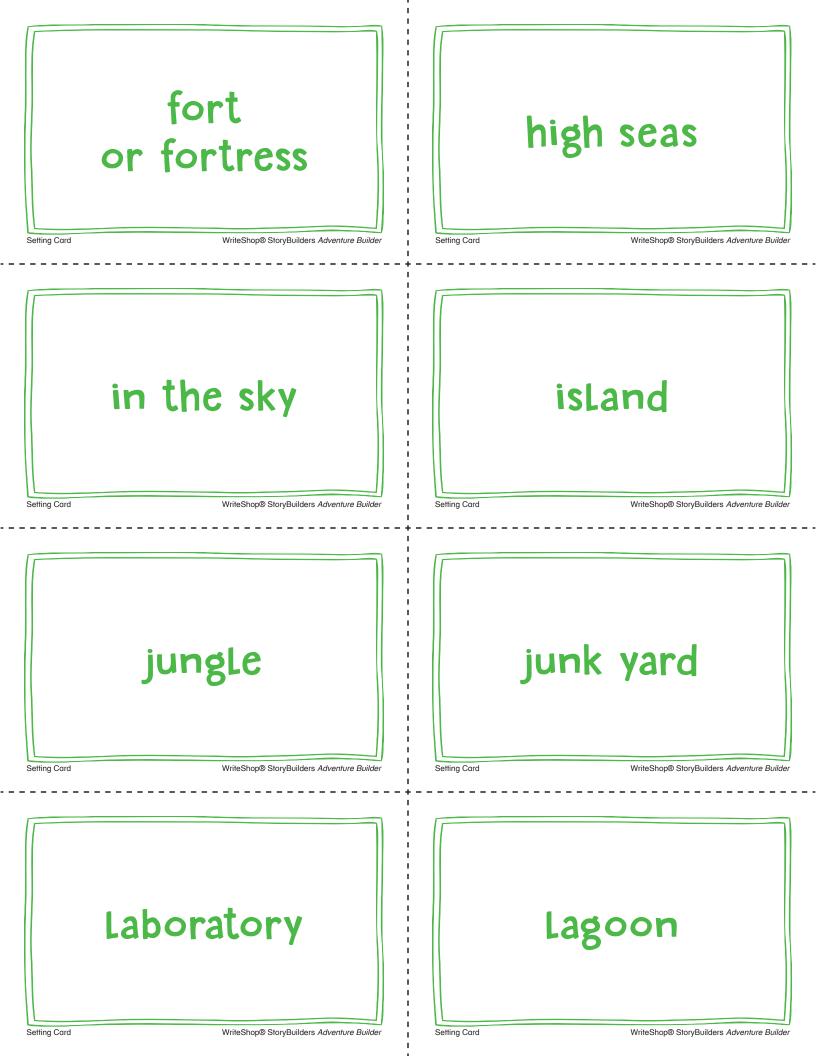


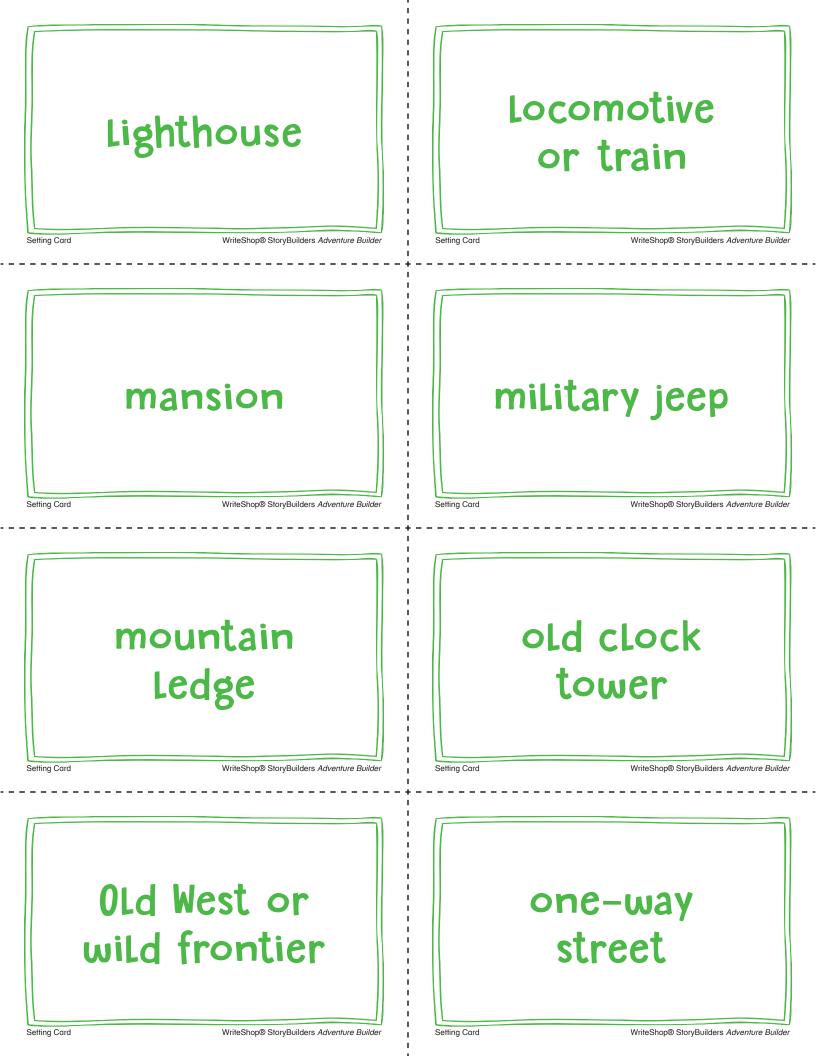


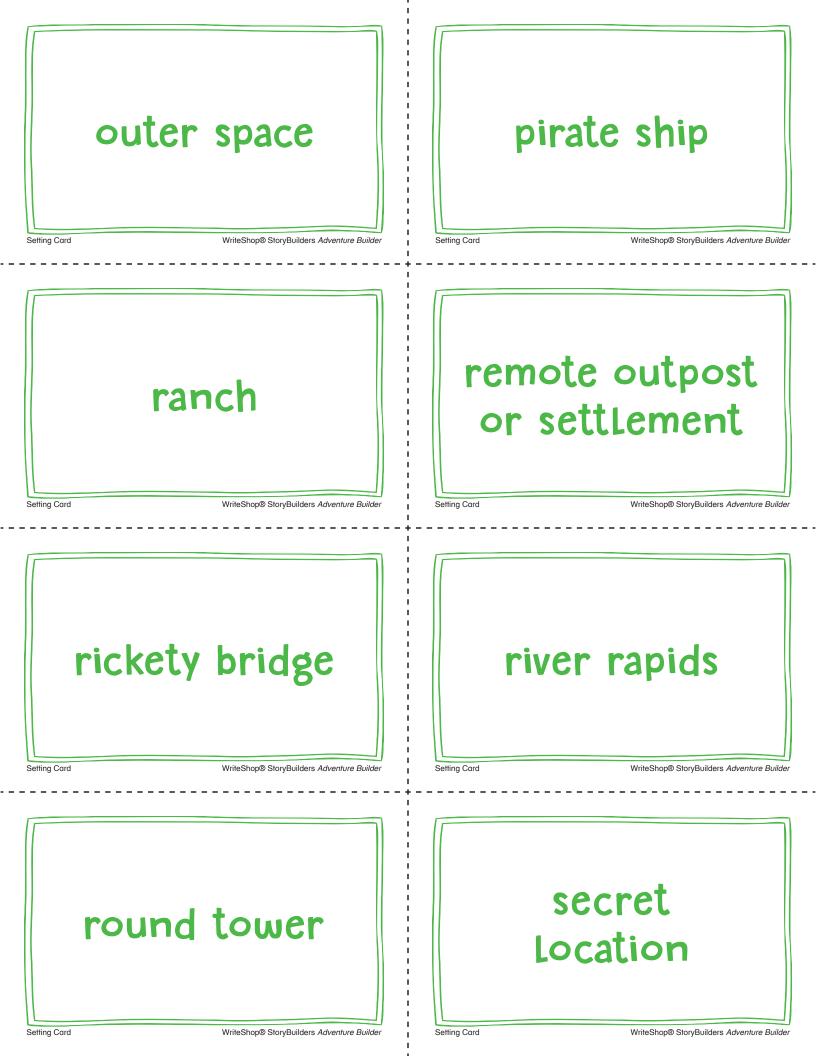
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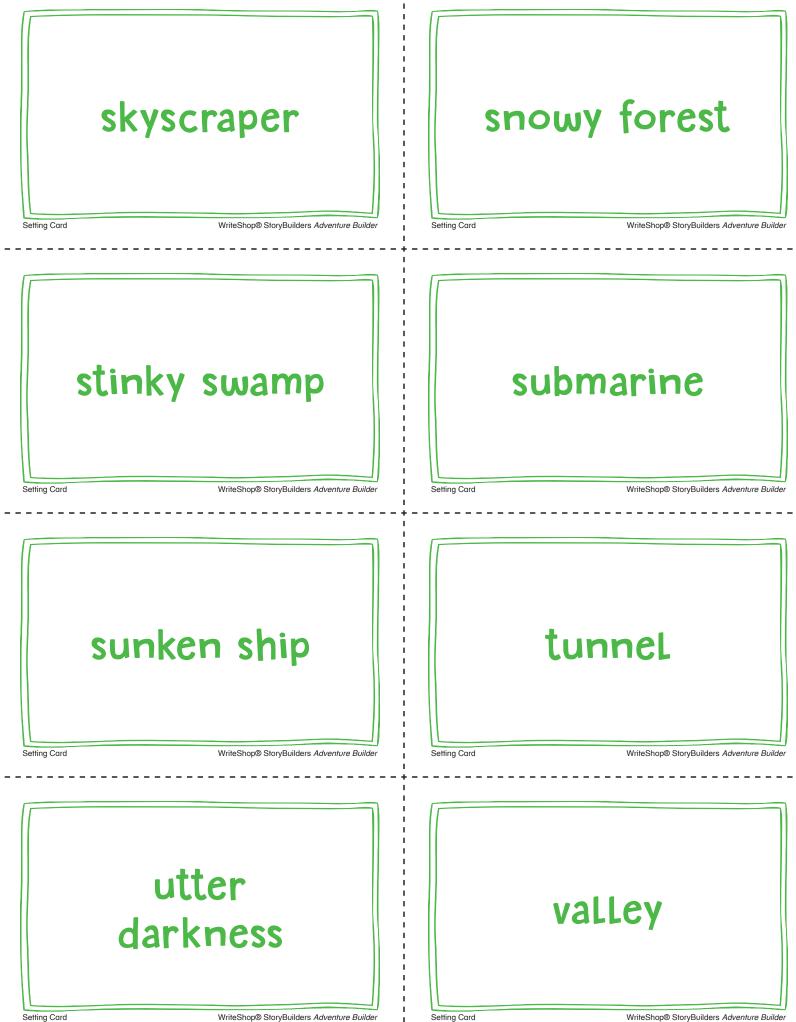
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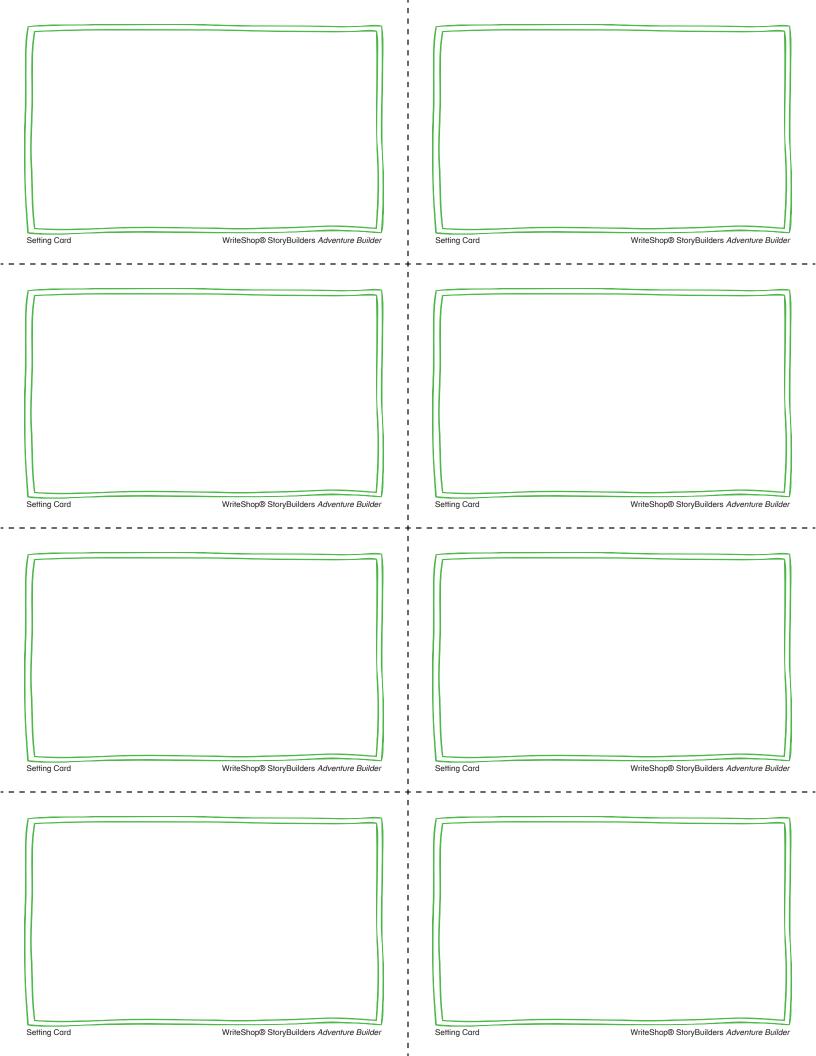


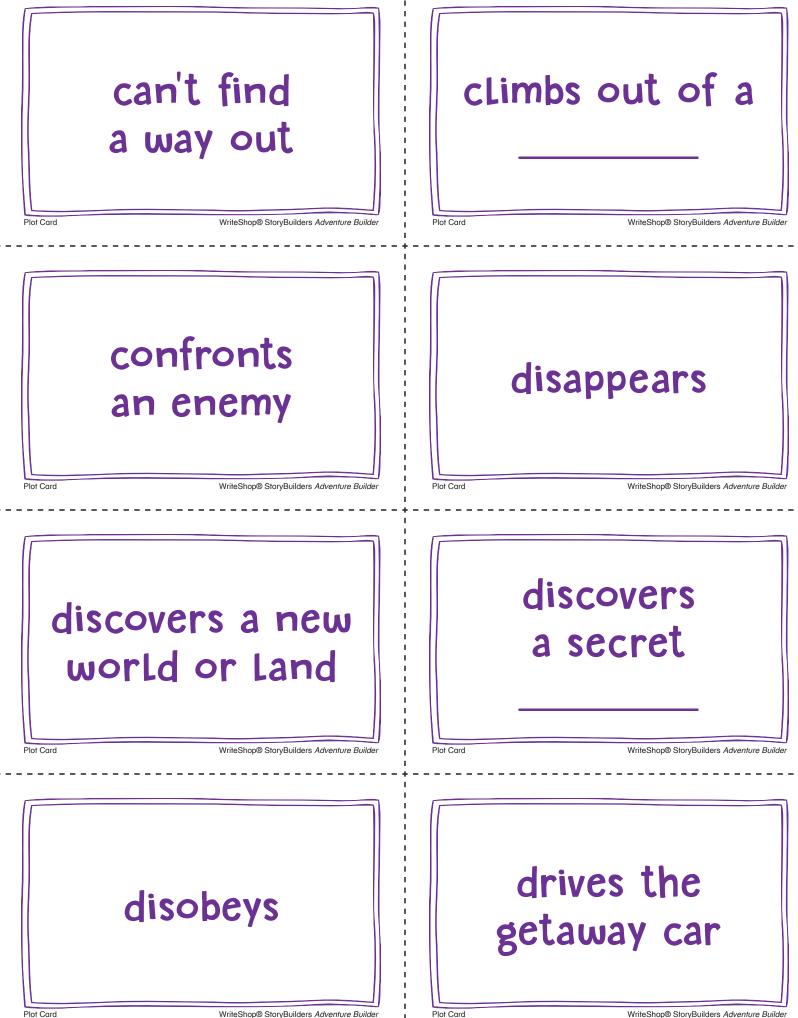






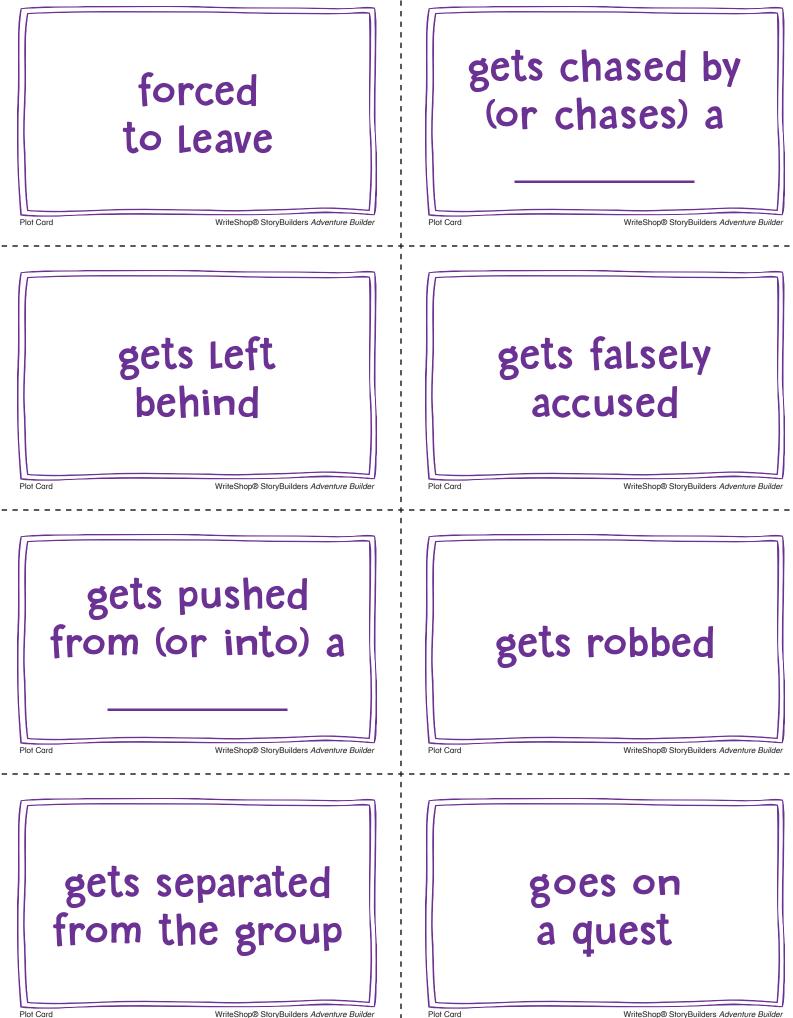






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