

TEACHERS' RESOURCE
for
Literacy Links Plus
Guided and Independent Reading

LEVEL 16



TEACHERS' RESOURCE

GUIDED AND INDEPENDENT READING

LEVEL 16

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A BALANCED LITERACY PROGRAMME

A balanced literacy programme encompasses a wide range of reading and writing experiences. It will include reading to children, reading with children, independent reading by children, and writing by children in a wide variety of forms and for many different purposes.

The skills of literacy are developed, practiced, and reinforced in the context of actual reading and writing, and it is important to expose children to a wide range of texts, including:

- Stories (Level 15 and 16 of this series feature chapter books representing realistic fiction, science fiction, fantasy and modern fairy tales)
- Short story collections
- Non-fiction including reports, recounts, explanations and procedural texts
- Traditional tales
- Poetry
- Plays

You will also want to include newspapers, magazines, and children's own published pieces to round out your balanced literacy programme. The range of materials in the literacy programme helps to build and sustain children's enjoyment and success as readers, and ensures that they have a wide range of models and sources of inspiration for their own writing.

You can ensure that children meet with success as readers and writers by:

- Fostering and developing a love of books and helping children to see themselves as readers and writers.
- Providing time and many opportunities

for reading and writing.

- Facilitating discussions that deepen children's understanding of books and of their own writing.
- Fostering effective reading and writing strategies.
- Helping children to cope with challenges in reading and writing, and fostering skill development in the context of the children's reading and writing.
- Using your knowledge of individual children to help match texts to children's abilities, interests and needs.
- Providing many opportunities for rereading texts, independently as well as with friends or at home.
- Continually observing and monitoring the ways in which children are developing as readers and writers.

THE BOOKS IN THIS SERIES

The books in this series have been carefully selected to build on and extend children's reading interests and abilities. With a balance of full-colour illustrated fiction, fascinating non-fiction and contemporary novels, the series is ideal for supporting the transition from *learning to read to reading to learn*, and from reading with support to reading with increased independence.

The books can be used in a variety of ways: for reading aloud, for guided reading, as a basis for building literature units and/or for independent reading, with children making many of their own reading choices.

Ideally, the books will be used to .

ensure that children experience a wide range of approaches to reading, while being encouraged to develop skills and confidence as independent readers.

Even when guiding the children through a book, it is a good idea to allow them to read several chapters independently before discussion and to encourage them from the start to form and express personal responses.

Allow the children to read and enjoy the books in a natural way, and encourage them to talk and respond in a personal and open-ended manner.

Through interaction with books, teacher, and peers, the children will extend and develop their understand of:

- The use of different writing forms for different purposes, and the effective use of language that is appropriate to the writer's purpose and audience.
- Aspects of writing such as point of view, fact and opinion, sentence structure and writing style, and use of description.
- Conventions of grammar and spelling.
- Different parts of books, such as chapters, tables of contents, indexes and glossaries, and blurbs: all of these provide models for children as they "publish" their own work.

Through their experiences with a variety of texts, the children will also develop strategies such as:

- Using a combination of cues (meaning, context and graphophonics) to deal with new vocabulary encountered in texts.
- Monitoring and self-correcting, when reading independently.

A FLEXIBLE RESOURCE

The books in this series are designed as a flexible resource. Teachers are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of the needs of individual children when choosing:

- Which titles to read, and in which order.
- What to focus on in reading and returning to the text, and in encouraging written responses.
- The appropriate approach to use (e.g. book-by-book or a unit approach, or a combination of both.).

To get the most out of our series, remember:

- Know each text well before introducing it to the children. Having a clear sense of the story line or the information in the text is essential when you come to setting the scene and assisting children's reading and responding. Your knowledge of the texts is also essential when you want to capitalise upon the opportunities for teaching skills and strategies.
- The children's enjoyment and success as readers and writers are paramount.
- Be selective in using the teaching ideas provided for each title. These are starting points, not prescriptions; the aim is to show how, over a number of titles, a range of activities is possible and desirable.

The books can be grouped in various ways that allow you to explore and take advantage of the links between titles.

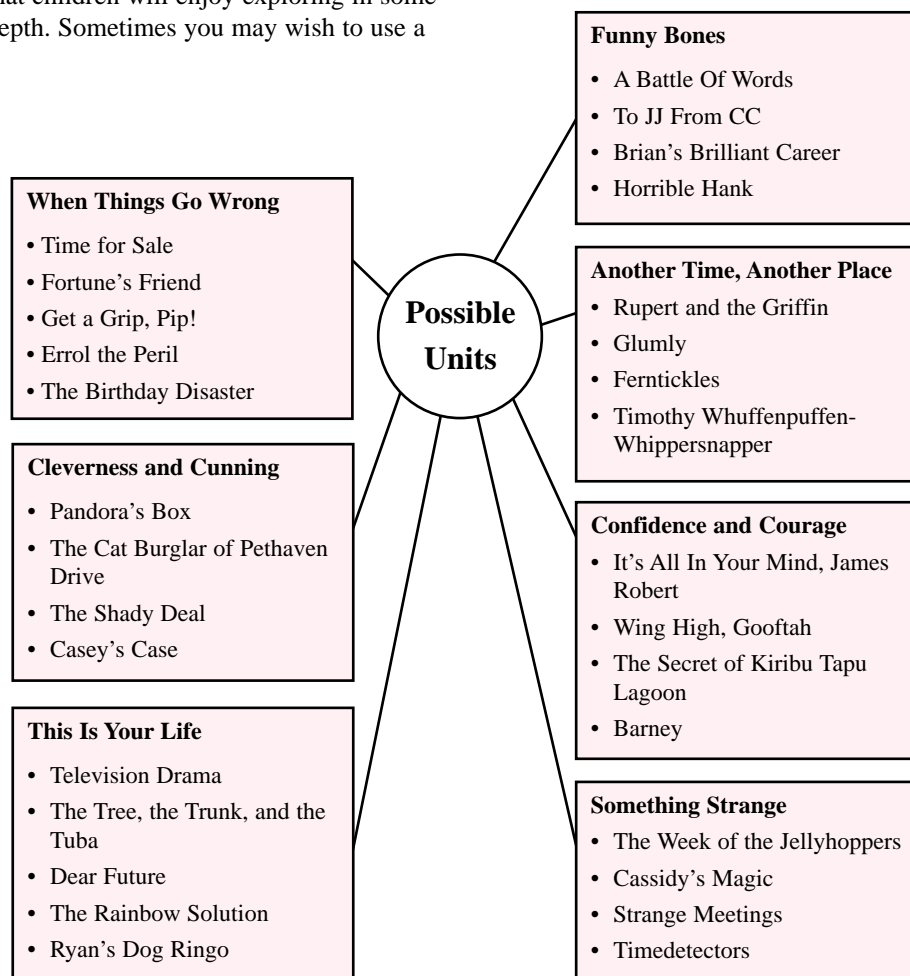
These include: links with the children's

own experience, links with authors' and illustrators' styles and techniques, and links between the themes and issues that the books explore.

SUGGESTED UNITS

The issues and ideas in the books are ones that children will enjoy exploring in some depth. Sometimes you may wish to use a

book-by-book approach, but at other times you may choose to explore and develop larger units that include several of the titles. For example, fiction titles in Levels 15 and 16 could be organised into units such as the following:



Linking a number of books in this way can help children deepen their thinking on issues that are not only relevant to their reading, but help to connect literature to their own lives. For example, the titles listed under *When Things Go Wrong* all feature major characters who discover fresh resources within themselves by overcoming fear, injustice, or a minor disaster. Although, as with real people in real life, they react to problems in different ways, all these characters become more aware of their own identities and can face the future with more assurance.

In discussing these books and comparing and contrasting their story lines and characters, children might explore questions such as:

- What causes things to go wrong?
- Is there always someone at fault when things go wrong?
- How can problems be resolved?
- Can a change of attitude help to resolve problems?
- Can problems be funny?
- Can opportunities grow out of disasters?

For each of the possible units listed on page 6, some suggested discussion points have been provided on Photocopy Masters, available as a free download from <http://www.kingscourt.co.uk>

The series also features an excellent selection of non-fiction titles. These can be linked and compared with one another to help children explore the many different ways in which factual material can be presented. The titles can also be linked with fiction titles to deepen and extend children's thinking about broader themes

and issues. For example, the biography entitled *The Matchbox*, the story of one of the courageous founders of the Amnesty International organisation, could be read and discussed in conjunction with fiction titles relating to confidence and courage.

HOW THE TEACHERS NOTES ARE ORGANISED

For each title, notes begin with a synopsis and then present a range of suggestions under the following headings:

- Setting the Scene
- Reading the Text
- Responding to the Text
- Structure and Strategies
- Write On

Setting the Scene

This is a brief, lively, sharing time before reading begins. It helps children "tune in" to the book they are going to read, and encourages them to draw on experiences and ideas of their own that may add to their understanding and enjoyment of the text. This introduction will depend on the purpose that the teacher has in mind when selecting the book; e.g. exploring a theme. Some strategies that can be adapted to suit many different titles include:

- Introducing a book by focusing on the title and cover illustration. Ask the children what they think the book will be about. Why do they say this?
- Asking children to survey the book and say what type of book they think it is; e.g. realistic fiction, fantasy, folk-tale, non-fiction. Why do they think this?

- Reading a portion of the book aloud to the children to stir emotions, curiosity or anticipation.

- If the book is non-fiction, examining the contents page, the index and the glossary to locate interesting ideas, help generate questions and acquaint the children with the various parts of the book.

- Asking open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and build anticipation of the story line or idea. This may include talking about real-life experiences that may relate to the book, or recalling other books the children have read.

The books in Levels 15 and 16 feature back cover information and also have special cover flaps with engaging previews of the stories and notes from the authors. These make ideal “appetizers”, and you could focus attention on some or all of these elements as part of *Setting the Scene*.

Reading the Text

How you guide the children through the reading of a book depends on the children, the book, and the purpose for reading. Having children take responsibility for their own reading is the prime consideration, and it is important for their reading to be as uninterrupted as possible.

If children are fluent readers, allow them to read the entire text on their own. Encourage them to discuss their reading at their own pace with a partner. After reading, you can encourage retellings, personal responses and discussion in small groups or as a class.

For children who need more guidance while reading, the teachers’ notes

often include specific suggestions for structuring reading and discussion around several sections of the book. You can use some or all of the suggested questions, as appropriate to individual children, building a supportive environment in which:

- You are able to model effective strategies for coping with challenges in the text.
- Children feel confident to express personal responses and form their own questions about the author.
- Children are encouraged to make predictions and read extended passages by themselves.

An excellent approach for all children is to encourage the use of reading logs or journals. For example, the children might use reading journals to record questions they have as they read, to note ideas about characters and events, to write down opinions and reactions that they would like to share with friends and to record new or interesting vocabulary.

Responding to the Text

Suggestions in this section encourage the children to talk collaboratively about the book and share their responses. This immediate follow-up to the actual reading helps to make the reading meaningful and memorable; it helps children to clarify their understanding, enhance their enjoyment, and deepen their sense of themselves as readers.

Depending on the text, discussion points may focus on plot, theme, characters, point of view, the author’s style or a combination of these. Sometimes you may wish to have children select and retell

specific parts of the story that they have found particularly memorable or in which particular issues are highlighted, or they might respond through role-play, dramatisation, or debate. Be selective in choosing from the “menu” of suggestions and ensure that you build a lot of variety into the kinds of responses encouraged over a number of texts.

As appropriate, you can also take advantage of the many opportunities the books provide for focusing on particular aspects of language, such as:

- Genre and text structure.
- The use of first person/third person.
- Fact and opinion.
- Parts of speech and their functions.
- Figurative language.
- Sentence structure.
- Direct and indirect speech.

Suggestions for capitalising on the teachable moment are highlighted in the teachers’ notes under the heading *Structures and Strategies*.

Write On

It is not necessary to follow up every text with an activity other than rereading and discussion. However, a balanced literacy programme will encourage children to be confident and creative in venturing beyond the book, and in expressing themselves through a wide range of writing forms.

Building on ideas formed during the reading and follow-up discussion, children might go on to write their own stories or invent “sequels” using other media, such as audio recordings. They may design and conduct research projects, prepare and

present oral reports, create murals and displays or write and perform plays. The *Write On* section of the notes for each title provides some suggestions for possible starting points. Children should also be encouraged to suggest their own creative responses, to work cooperatively and to take pleasure and pride in selecting what to write and how to shape a piece for a particular audience and purpose.

As the children read and respond to the books in this series and use them as models for their own writing, you will have continual opportunities to monitor their progress and achievements in all areas of literacy: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Remember that:

- Even with children who are well on the way to reading with fluency and independence, guided reading continues to provide an ideal time for close observation of children’s reading behaviours and their strategies for working with text.
- It is important to allow time to review children’s reading journals with them, expressing an interest in their likes, dislikes, reading choices and opinions; helping them to express those opinions in speaking as well as writing; and noting any specific areas in which a child may need support.

- Anecdotal notes provide a simple and effective way of recording your precise observations of children, and reviewing these notes regularly will help you to select the books, and plan and implement the approaches to reading and writing that will be most appropriate for your students and their individual needs.

Set A



Fiction/Letters



Report



Folk-Tales



Realistic Fiction



Explanation

Set B



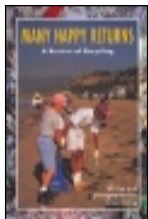
Explanation/Recount



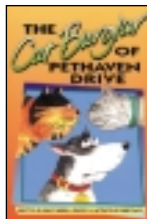
Biography



Report

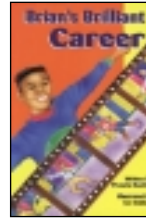


Persuasion/Instructions



Animal Fantasy

Set C



Realistic Fiction



Historic Fiction



Realistic Fiction



Realistic Fiction



Imaginative Fiction

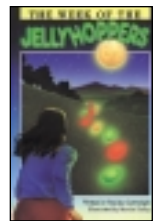
Set D



Realistic Fiction



Realistic Fiction



Science Fiction



Science Fiction



Fantasy

A BATTLE OF WORDS



Synopsis

Young P.S. McGinnity is new to the neighbourhood, and she wants to get along with her neighbour, C.V. Molesworth. Unfortunately, some accidents lead to misunderstandings. These two very different people exchange letters until P.S. decides that it might be better not to talk to her neighbour at all. Then, for once, C.V. Molesworth finds herself in the wrong instead of P.S. – and they finally begin to understand each other well enough to become friends.

Setting the Scene

- Discuss what the title could mean. Ask, *What are some arguments or disagreements you have had with other people?* Discuss non-violent ways to resolve conflicts.
- Have a child read pages 5 and 6 aloud. Ask, *From the way the letter sounds, how do you think C.V. Molesworth feels about what happened? What do you think C.V. Molesworth expects P.S. to do?* Discuss how the children think P.S. should respond to the letter.

Reading the Text

- The children could read *A Battle of Words* independently or in pairs. If you wish to break the story into smaller segments, the children could read and discuss each incident or episode, i.e., pages 5-8, 10-15, 16-19 and 20-30.
- The children could make notes on the characters and the letters in their reading journals.

Responding to the Text

- Have the children share their responses to the story. Discuss questions such as, *What do you think about the title of the book now? Why do you think P.S. and C.V. found it so difficult to get along? How important were P.S.'s parents in the story? Do you think they helped P.S. to solve her problems? How did the dog help?*
- Discuss why P.S. and C.V. got along better when they met than through their letters. Ask the children to build a description of what P.S. McGinnity was really like, using words from the book and their own ideas. Ask, *Would C.V. Molesworth have agreed with this description before she met P.S.? Why or why not?* The children could describe the personalities of C.V. and P.S. on copies of Photocopy Master 2, *Character Traits*. The children might also like to discuss and list some of the characters' similarities and differences: e.g., P.S. acts before she thinks; C.V. thinks before she acts; both characters like dogs.
- Encourage children to compare and contrast this book with other stories in the series. Use Photocopy Master 10, *Funny Bones*, to introduce some discussion points.

Structures and Strategies

- Reread page 16 and discuss the expression, *let sleeping dogs lie*. Discuss the meaning in the context of the story. Have the children think of similar sayings and record them on a chart (e.g., *two's company, three's a crowd; you can't judge a book by its cover; and a rolling stone gathers no moss*). Keep the chart posted for the children to add more proverbs or adages as they find them.
- Discuss formal and informal language. Have the children turn to the first letter again. Ask them if this is the sort of language we would use if we were writing to a friend. *What features of the language give it a formal tone?* The children could compare the tone of the early letters with the way in which P.S. and C.V. speak to each other later, when they have become friends. Discuss the way in which the children might vary the level of formality in their own writing, depending on the audience and the purpose.

Write On

- Discuss the form a letter takes, and list the elements that make up a good letter. Have the children think of a conflict in their lives that a letter might help resolve. Ask them to write a letter to this person, keeping in mind what they have learned about letter-writing, including a P.S. at the end.
- Ask the children to write their own "curriculum vitae", including information about their lives such as age, hobbies, clubs they belong to, etc. They could then write an accompanying

letter, applying for a job with the organisation of their choice. The children could write a non-fiction report about an accident they have had in the past, or that they have caused.

- Alternatively, they could use the incident as the central theme to write a story around.

THE RAINBOW SOLUTION



Synopsis

Riley Rainbow's family has a problem. Nothing seems to please Grandpa. In fact he is driving everyone crazy. Riley has his own problem. He wants a pet, but of course, Grandpa is against the idea. Grandma and Riley's dad decide that Grandpa is grumpy because he doesn't have enough to do, but one thing he loves is painting. The solution is to ask him to paint the house.

Enthusiastically, Grandpa paints the house all white. The Rainbows think that contrasting colours for the trim would be good, but they can't decide which colours. Riley has the solution – rainbow trim. As Riley, his sister, and Grandma finish the trim, the rest of the family comes home. Everyone loves the house – rainbow by name, and rainbow by habitat. Best of all, Dad has brought home a puppy for Riley, and even Grandpa seems happy.

Setting the scene

Discuss the cover of the book. Read aloud pages 4-8 and ask, *What two problems does Riley face?* Discuss pets and how pet owners in the classroom made their choices. Discuss older people. Do the children's grandparents ever seem to act like Riley's grandpa?

Reading the text

- Have the children read the book independently or with partners. If you feel some children need more guidance, divide the book into the following sections: pages 8-23, 24-37, and 38-47.
- Pages 8-23: Discuss Riley's feelings

toward his grandpa. Describe Riley's sister. Ask, *Why do you think Riley's decision about a pet is such a difficult one?*

- Pages 24-37: Discuss Dad and Grandma's diagnosis of Grandpa and their proposed solution. Ask, *Does it seem to be working? What evidence do you have? Why do you think the rainbows were having such a problem in deciding on colours? If your family has had similar problems where no one agrees, how did you solve it?*
- Pages 38-47: Discuss how the characters solved the story's three problems. Ask, *What surprised you most about the story's ending?*

Responding to the Text

- Working in pairs, children could role-play an argument in which Riley suggests various pets that he would like, and Grandpa has an answer for each one – about why it is unsuitable.
- Ask the children to read page 44 again. Some might like to draw a house, (or their own house) and then colour it to their own tastes. Underneath, they might list the colours used, giving them tempting names as in the story.
- Discuss the sarcasm, saying one thing when you mean the opposite. Ask the children, *Which character would you*

describe as sarcastic (Roxanne)? What evidence do you have?

- Use Photocopy Masters 4 and 5, *Inside Stories* or *Interview Chart*.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss past tense and the difference between past and present. Ask the children to look at a few pages in the book and find some past-tense verbs. Write them on a chart. Ask the children to supply the present tense of each one, and write that beside the past-tense forms. Look at the chart with the children and ask them what they notice about past-tense endings. Point out those which add an –ed to the present form. Discuss questions such as: *Which just add –d for the past tense? Which double the consonant before the –ed? Which don't seem to follow any rule at all (irregular verbs)?*
- Discuss figurative language, such as personification (e.g., *The sander roared into action, attacking the wall*, page 27), proverbs (e.g., *never look a gift horse in the mouth*, page 29, and similes (e.g., *like an enormous iceberg*, page 39). Have children find examples from other books or conversation, and discuss and identify the type of figurative language involved.

Write On

- Suggest the children write about a problem they have had that they thought they'd never solve.
- Invite the children to imagine and write about a world without colour.

- Ask, *What if Riley's pet leopard had not been just a dream?* The children could write about a most unusual pet, real or imaginary.
- This book could be linked with others in the series to explore ideas relating to how we get along with other people, and the importance of respecting different people's personal choices, Photocopy Master 11, *This Is Your Life*, provides some questions that children could write about and discuss.



Synopsis

The Royal Turnip

A poor man finds his generosity rewarded, while his rich brother finds that greed gets him nowhere.

The Magic Talisman

Rada’s cleverness and her mother’s gift of the magic talisman help her to find who stole the king’s gold – and to be rewarded with her own fortune.

The Storytellers

Storytellers Mustafa, Hassan, and Rassim hold a contest to find out who is the best. Though the men’s storytelling skill may be equal, Rassim’s cleverness wins the contest.

Fortune’s Friend

Ivan is an unselfish young man whose kindness and patience are rewarded.

Setting the scene

- Have the children read the subtitle: *Tales of Rivalry and Riches*. Discuss some characteristics that “tales” often have (e.g., good and evil characters, one person trying to do better than others, wealthy characters, poor characters who get rich).
- Read aloud the information about each story on the front and back cover flaps.

Reading the text

- The children could read independently or in pairs, and then meet to discuss these four stories in small groups. Encourage the children to record their personal responses in their journals and use these in the group discussions.

Another alternative is for small groups each to read a different story and then present the “tale” to the class through drama or retelling.

Responding to the text

- Have the children share personal responses from their reading journals. If the children read only one story, provide time for them to share stories with the other children.
- The following questions could be used to help elicit children’s ideas about the different stories:

The Royal Turnip

Why wouldn’t the rich brother share his riches with his brother? Why did he give his riches to the king later? What lesson can be learned from this story?

The Magic Talisman

Why did the king steal from the treasury? Who was clever in this story?

The Storytellers

Was the competition fair? Why did all the people come to hear the second half of Rassim’s story? Why wouldn’t the people give what the genie asked for in return for gold? Would you have given up something precious to you for gold? Do you think this was a real genie? What lesson can be learned from this story?

Fortune’s Friend

Discuss the idea of a moral or lesson. Ask

the children if they can remember morals from other fables (e.g., slow and steady wins the race or don’t cry wolf). What is the moral of this story? How did good fortune come to Ivan? How else could the story have ended?

- The children could debate the issue of whether or not particular characters were treated fairly (e.g., the rich brother who gave all his wealth to the king, or storytellers Hassan and Mustafa).
- The children could use Photocopy Master 3, *Comparing Stories*, to compare two stories from this collection.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss how the stories indicate direct speech and thoughts. The children can work in pairs to find examples of quotations. Discuss these examples and brainstorm some rules for writing direct speech; e.g., when to use and where to place a comma, period, or question mark; how to decide which words go within the quotation marks; when to use upper case. Compile these rules as a whole group, writing them on chart paper for posting in the room. The children may discover new rules as they read more stories.
- Begin a class chart for “said” words: words that indicate someone is talking and how (e.g., suggested, laughed, decided, cried). This can be an ongoing project that children can add to throughout the year, and which can help their own writing.

Write On

- The children could change a story into a play script, including stage directions, for later dramatisation.
- The children could use this collection of stories to tell orally to a younger class.

Alternatively, as a group, list some proverbs on the board; e.g., *too many cooks spoil the broth; waste not want not*. Invite the children to choose a proverb and write a short fable that illustrates this moral. Some of these might be read or told to a younger class.

- Have the children write about the qualities they have, or that their friends have, that they *wouldn’t* wish to change for ten caskets of gold.
- Discuss situations in which we might be tempted to let greed motivate our actions. Ask the children to write about one of these situations, explaining what might happen.



Synopsis

This book tells the fascinating stories behind many everyday inventions, from roller skates to the safety pin. All of these inventions have impact on the children’s lives. Seldom do we stop to think about who invented breakfast cereal, but someone had to think of it. Reading about inventors and their circumstances will lead to some lively discussions and may inspire some children to think of creative solutions for problems that they face.

Setting the scene

- Have the children look around the room for inventions. Ask, *What inventions do you see?* Encourage them to think about some of the everyday things that we might take for granted, and to list inventions they want to learn about; e.g., buttons, zips, Velcro, jeans, books, paper, ball-point pens.
- Ask the children to turn to the Contents page and guess the invention described by each title.
- Have the children look through the illustrations and photographs in the book. Discuss how the illustrations and photographs can prepare readers for what the words will say.
- Read the introduction aloud. Ask, *Have you ever had a problem that might need a brand new invention to solve it? Have you ever created an easier way to do something?*

Reading the text

- Children could read the book independently. Alternatively, they could

form small groups to read and discuss allocated sections of the book; groups can then take turns telling the rest of the class about the inventors and inventions they read about.

Responding to the text

- Allow time for the children to discuss the different inventions and how they came about; e.g., some were a result of solving a problem, some were the result of mistakes, and some were made by people who happened to be in the right place at the right time. Then work together to develop categories that could be helpful in charting the inventions; see example.
- The following are excellent additional books on inventions for the children to read: Bender, Lionel (1991), *Invention*, London: Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness Guides; Jones, Charlotte F. (1991), *Mistakes That Worked*, New York: Doubleday Books for Young Readers; Caney, Steven (1985), *Invention Book*, New York: Workman Publishing.
- Have the children think of a problem they have had, and design on paper an invention to solve the problem. Ask them to write the directions for making the invention and using it.
- Provide a “tinkering table”, stocked with simple machines, tools, and any safe “junk” you can find (e.g., gears, wheels, batteries, bulbs, and wires). Allow the

INVENTION	WHEN	WHERE	WHO / WHY	LATER / IMPROVEMENTS

children to create their own inventions, being as fanciful, or as serious, as they wish.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss the idea that language is constantly changing. Some words become outdated and are seldom used. Have children study the crossword puzzle on page 16, looking for any words they may not know. After looking up the meanings in a dictionary, they may ask adults such as teachers and parents if they know these words. Discuss why the words may not be well known.
- Children could make a blank copy of the puzzle on page 16, work out clues, and challenge other children to solve it.

Write On

- Children might like to make their own crossword puzzles. Remind them that it is acceptable these days to use more black squares than Arthur Wynne used.

- Make a “Did You Know?” display board. Ask the children to find interesting facts from the invention books they have read, and present these so that others will enjoy reading about them. The children could also develop a “Did You Know?” museum using actual items, models, and descriptive labels, then invite other classes to visit.
- Discuss how patents protect the inventor. The children could write a letter of application to the Patents Office for a patent for an imaginary invention or the one they put together in the classroom. They will need to include a clear description, and diagrams with clear labels.
- Alternatively, children might choose one of the inventions about which they have read, and, as the inventor, write an excited letter to a friend or relative, describing the invention. (They will need to remember that the recipient has never seen anything like this before).



Synopsis

This book provides a wealth of information about many species of frogs – their habitats, features, predators, food and life cycles. Some of these frogs live in lakes, ponds, and streams; others live in trees or in hot, dry deserts. The book also tells how some frogs are in danger of becoming extinct because their habitats are being changed or destroyed, and helps children to understand how the living things within an environment depend on one another for survival.

Setting the Scene

- Discuss the cover of the book and the questions on the front flap. Then work with the children to draw up a chart with three headings: What We Know, What We Want To Learn, What We Learned. List children's ideas and questions in the first two columns before they begin reading *It's a Frog's Life*.
- Discuss how non-fiction books organise information by main categories or features of the topic. Before opening the book, ask the children, *What main topics do you think you'll find in this book?* Have the children turn to the contents page and check their predictions.

Reading the Text

- The children could read the book independently or with a partner. They may read the sections of this book randomly or in order. Suggest the children write down in their journals anything that interests them about the book, and also any questions they may have; after reading they can share their

ideas and review their chart begun in *Setting the Scene*

Responding to the Text

- Allow time for the children to share their personal responses to the book and the information it contains. Ask them to point out pictures that they found especially interesting, and discuss questions such as, *Which frog do you think has the most unusual appearance? Habits? Which "frog fact" was most surprising?*
- Discuss all the different ways in which the authors present information within the text in each chapter; e.g., headings, body text, captions, fascinating facts. *How do these elements add to the interest of the book? Is a different style of language used in each one?*
- Continue work on the chart begun before reading. Ask, *Do we need to revise any of the ideas we wrote in the What We Know column? What new information did you find in the book? What questions do you still have that you might research further?*
- Divide the class into groups of two or more. Each group could choose two frogs mentioned in the book, and make a chart of how they are alike and different. Groups could then compare their findings.
- Review the book with the children,

looking for features that help to make a good nonfiction book or report. For example, begin with a general description and then break the text down into topics; use descriptive, but not flowery, writing, state the facts clearly.

- Write "A Report Is..." and list the children's suggestions. The children can add to or revise their list as they read other reports, and refer to it for "guidelines" as they write reports of their own.

Structures and Strategies

- Have the children reread page 8, *Habitats*, and find the verbs. Discuss present-tense verbs and ask the children to work with a partner to find examples of present-tense verbs on other pages of the text. Compile a class list. Children could categorise their examples into action verbs, and parts of the verb "to be" (is, are). You could also discuss the use of present tense as a feature of many nonfiction reports.
- Discuss how adjectives add description in reports. Have the children turn to pages 6 and 8 and find words that compare or qualify (e.g., drier, fatter), describe (e.g., warty, warm, damp, hot, dry), or tell how many (e.g., 3000). Working in pairs or groups, they could look for adjectives in the rest of the book, and cut out a large paper frog for recording the adjectives.

Write On

- Children could choose one kind of frog to research further, and write a report using subtopics such as habitats,

features, movement, predators, and food. Alternatively, they might research one of the habitats mentioned in the book; they could present a written or an oral report about other living things within that environment and ecosystem.

- Children could read fiction in which a frog is the main character, such as the fairy tale *The Frog Prince*. They could then write their own stories or plays with a frog as the main character.
- Take the children to visit a pond or boggy area. Look for tadpoles or frog spawn. The children could take notebooks, and write a habitat report.
- The children could write and illustrate a book of froggy words and phrases such as *playing leapfrog, a frog in your throat, a frogman (diver)*, etc. Discuss how these expressions might have come into our language.

THE CAT BURGLAR OF PETHAVEN DRIVE



Synopsis

Mr D, the top dog in the neighbourhood, has just waved goodbye to The Walking Dogfight – his old rival. He now has to contend only with his feline enemy, The Mean Monstrosity, or so he thinks. Then a new cat Sylvester Slink, comes to the neighbourhood; Sylvester is the unassuming, cultured cat that Mr D has always thought he'd like to have around. When various items of food are found missing, Mr D naturally assumes that The Mean Monstrosity is up to his old tricks. But all is not as it seems.

Setting the Scene

Have the children look at the cover and discuss what they think the book will be about. Look through the pictures inside the book together and encourage the children to make further predictions about the characters and situations they might meet in the story.

Reading the Text

- The children could read this story independently. If you wish to encourage discussion along the way and/or read the story aloud, you could build in time to talk about questions such as the following:

- After reading page 5: *Why might the animal in the moving van have been called The Walking Dogfight? What might have taken place?*

- After reading to the end of page 8: *Why does Mr D want to get back at The Mean Monstrosity? Ask, How might a dog get back at a cat?*

- After reading to the end of page 18: *Mr D believes he has all the proof he needs. Could he have it wrong? Why?*

- By about page 23, some children will be starting to suspect Sylvester Slink. Ask, *Why would Doggies have been taken?*

- On page 30, Mr D and The Mean Monstrosity plan to catch the real burglar. Ask, *How do you think they'll go about this?*

- After page 35, ask, *Can you guess Mr D's plan?* At the bottom of page 42, Mr D says he has the proof. Ask, *What might this proof be?*

- Finish the story and ask the children if the ending was what they expected.

Responding to the text

- Discuss why Mr D decides to help an enemy, The Mean Monstrosity. Ask, *Is this the right decision? Do you think he really has any choice?*
- Ask the children to recall parts of the story in which Mr D feels suspicious. *Are his suspicions right or wrong? The children could classify statements or situations in the following way:*

Situation	Fact or Suspicion	Reason
Chicken sliding through the dog flap.	Fact	Eyewitness
The Mean Monstrosity stole the family's Sunday lunch	Suspicion	No evidence

- Children could review incidents in their own lives when they were suspicious of someone, only to find out later that they were wrong.
- Use Photocopy Master 4, *Inside Stories*.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss onomatopoeia (the use or invention of words to convey the sound of the thing they describe). Throughout the story there is an exaggerated use of onomatopoeia in the sounds that the various animals make. Have the children find and list on a chart examples such as: *swofffffftt*, a cat running for cover, page 7; *Eeyowffttzz*, a cat yowling, page 8; *woo-wo-woof*, a dog threatening, page 17. Encourage them to add and discuss more examples of onomatopoeia found in further reading or used in their own writing.
- Children could also have fun inventing their own spellings for the sounds they hear - in the street, in the park, in the supermarket.

Write On

- Children could write about clever pets they know, listing the pet's cleverest attributes and writing anecdotes to illustrate these. Make a class book about clever pets. Illustrate it with photos or drawings.
- Have the children prepare a debate about the best pets – dogs or cats. They should work in teams of two or three representing each side of the argument.
- Ask, *What if Sylvester Slink takes revenge?* To present their ideas about what might happen, the children could write a story, an entry from Sylvester Slink's diary, or a step-by-step plan.
- This story is ideal for a number of possible conclusions, including the return of The Walking Dogfight. Invite children to add or change the ending.
- The children could have fun playing with words containing cat or dog (e.g., *catastrophes, catacombs, Katmandu, dogged, dogsbody*). They could draw and caption comical cartoons to illustrate some of the nouns; e.g., draw a Y-shaped stick and elastic propelling a cat over the fence – "Catapult".

THE MATCHBOX



Synopsis

This is a biography of Ginetta Sagan, daughter of two doctors (one Jewish, one Catholic), who grew up in Northern Italy during the time when the powerful German and Italian armies invaded weaker countries and killed millions of innocent people. Ginetta had a rich childhood, hiking in Switzerland, travelling across Europe and Africa, and helping the sick and the poor. But Mussolini's soldiers captured her parents. At eighteen she joined the resistance and worked as a researcher, a spy, a courier, a cleaning lady, and a smuggler – all to help fight for ideals she and her parents had always believed in. The soldiers finally captured Ginetta as she tried to find a way to free her friends. She had almost given up hope when someone smuggled in a matchbox to her, containing the word *Courage*. This gave her the strength needed until she was eventually freed. After the war, she and others started a group called Amnesty International to work for human rights. Ginetta won many awards for her work for peace, including the Albert Schweitzer Award and the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Setting the Scene

- Look at the cover with the children and survey the pages to guess the setting of this book. Tell the children that most of this story happened in Europe between 1937 and 1945. Have them find Italy and Switzerland on a map of Europe. Ask, *What was happening in the world during those years?* Discuss what children know about World War II.

- Read aloud the prologue on pages 4 and 5 and ask, *What do you think Ginetta will be stealing?* Now read page 6 aloud. Tell the children that this is a true story, a biography of Ginetta Sagan. They could brainstorm some of the kinds of information that they would expect to find in a biography; e.g., details of family and childhood; any special struggles and achievements.
- Explain that there will be some Italian words in the story. Ask the children to note the techniques the author uses to define these words in context.

Reading the text

- The children may read this book independently or with a partner. To encourage discussion along the way, you may want to divide the book into sections such as the following: pages 7–11, 12–16, 17–23, and 24–31. Use questions such as the following:
 - After pages 7–11: *How was Ginetta's life changing? What would it be like to live without freedom?* Note: Some children may be able to relate to being separated from parents or living without freedom. Allow them to share their experiences if they choose.
 - After pages 12–16: *How do you think Ginetta felt when she saw the towel? How would it be to live the life that Ginetta is living in the "underground" community? If you had been Ginetta,*

how would you have felt when the German soldier took the suitcase? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt the same way?

- After pages 17–23: *Why did Ginetta lie to the officials at the checkpoint about what was in her knapsack? What would it be like to live your life in such fear?*

- After finishing the book, ask, *How would you describe Ginetta? Why did the matchbox mean so much to Ginetta? Why did the officers who helped Ginetta drag her to the waiting car?*

Responding to the text

- Have the children freely respond to this biography in their reading journals.
 - Discuss features of the book that are typical of a biography; e.g., story told in third person, from childhood to adulthood, highlighting major accomplishments of the subject. The children could make a timeline of Ginetta Sagan's life.
 - The children could do more research on topics related to this book; e.g., Amnesty International, the awards listed on page 31, World War II, Mussolini, or the Holocaust.
 - If your library has a copy of Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars* (Houghton Mifflin, 1989), read it to the class. Have the children compare Ellen Rosen and Anne Marrie, fictitious characters, to Ginetta Sagan.
- Discuss with the children how they understood the Italian words. Find specific examples and have the children analyse the techniques the author used to avoid saying "This means..."
 - Have the children find examples of *foreshadowing*, where the author tells the reader something about what will happen in the future (e.g., the last paragraphs on pages 5, 9, and 13). Suggest the children might use the technique of foreshadowing in their own writing.

Write on

Structures and Strategies

IN SEARCH OF THE GREAT BEARS

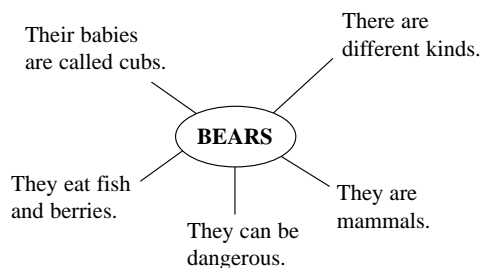


Synopsis

The grizzly bear is one of the earth's most impressive animals. *In Search of the Great Bears* unlocks some of their survival secrets and takes the reader into some of the world's most wilderness areas. Readers will discover how bears survive the freezing winter, how bears hunt, how their senses work, and many other fascinating facts. The contemporary theme of environmental awareness is also a part of this story, as children are encouraged to think about ways of protecting the remaining populations of grizzly bears.

Setting the Scene

- Have the children look at the cover. Ask the children what they know about bears. Make a web of their ideas on a chart, such as the one below:



- Tell the children that the book combines two styles of presenting information (explanation and personal narrative or recount). A clue is that the recounts are in italics.

Reading the Text

- The children may read this book independently or with a partner. Remind the children that there is glossary to use

- if they need it. Ask the children as they read to make notes in their reading journal that might help in adding information to the web. They could also use Photocopy Master 8, *Questions and Answers*.
- You may want to provide more guidance for some children. If so, ask the children to read chapters 1,3,5, and 7 before discussing. Then read the remaining chapters 2,4,6, and 8. Use questions such as the following:

- Chapters 1,3,5 and 7: Ask the children, *What facts would you like to add to the web?* Discuss these as you write them on the chart. Ask, *Are polar bears and grizzlies related? How do you know? What do bears eat? Why didn't Native Americans kill the grizzly? How did Native Americans show their respect for the bear? What has happened to the bear since the European people have migrated across North America?*

- Chapters 2,4,6, and 8: Discuss how these recounts are different from the other chapters they have read. Discuss questions such as, *What are some of the dangers that bears face? How are the bears like people? What are some characteristics of bears that you have learned about in these chapters?*

Responding to the text

- Allow time for the children to discuss the book generally, share sections that they found especially interesting, talk about favourite pictures and/or features of the book's design, and discuss any questions they may have. They can also add any additional information to their web.
- The children could plan and make a wall mural about bears. Have them copy the web in the centre of the mural and draw pictures to illustrate the facts. Superimpose this on a larger painting of bears in the wilderness. They will need to plan the larger painting so that they don't cover up something important with the web.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss the two genres used in this book: explanations and recounts. Ask children to make a list of the features of each genre. Ask, *How are they alike and different?* (e.g., The recount is a personal account told in narrative style. Both are factual).
- Discuss some of the features of the book's design or layout. Have children note the borders, the arrangement of the photos, and the boxed text on top of a picture. They could try some of the same techniques in their own work.

Write On

- The children could write a report on bears using headings such as habitats, features, food, mating, movement, and predators. Possible references for

additional research include Theresa Greenaway's *Amazing Bears*, an Eyewitness Juniors Book, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. Dorothy Hinshaw Patent's *The Way of the Grizzly*, New York: Clarion Books, 1987. Jean Craighead George's *The Moon of the Bears*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.

- The children could use notes, diagrams, and illustrations to help them figure out and show what might happen to a grizzly population over a given period. For example, have the children begin with fifty grizzlies – twenty-five males and twenty-five females, and figure how many grizzlies might be born in twenty years if all the females have cubs every time they can. (The children may need to refer to page 40 to gather more information for solving the problem). They could then consider the hazards that bears face, for example, four drowned, three were shot, five died of illness, ten cubs lost their parents and didn't make it through the first winter. Ask, *At the end of twenty years, what is the grizzly population?*
- Have the children write an explanation or a recount on topics of their choice, using some of the features they noted *In Search of the Great Bears*.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS



Synopsis

This report on recycling tells of the history of recycling, suggests the benefits of recycling, and helps children explore some of the problems with landfills. The book develops the idea that, in order to conserve our natural resources, we need to start thinking of waste as material that has ended up in the wrong place.

The step-by-step explanations of the recycling of aluminium, plastic, glass, and paper will help children understand how new products can be made from what might have been discarded as waste. Readers will learn the steps for making a compost pile or a worm bin. Finally, a recycling game lets children have fun making their own quiz cards.

Setting the scene

- Discuss recycling and list some of the different materials that children know are recycled at home, school, and in the community.
- Survey the book with the children and point out the procedural text included in the report. Have the children turn to pages 44-46 and read the directions to the game. Tell them to be thinking about the quiz cards they can make as they read. It may be helpful to discuss any words in the glossary that children think they don't know.

Reading the Text

- The children could read this book independently. If you wish to provide more guidance, select from the following questions:

- Pages 4-15: Discuss what things decay, and how Ask, *Why is throwing things like paper in the rubbish such a bad thing – won't it decay? If people have recycled for centuries, why is it such a problem to get people today to recycle? Why do people in developed countries throw more away than people in other countries?*

- Pages 16-33: Ask, *What are some steps you can use to help save resources? Have the children rank reduce, reuse, and recycle, according to which process would best help our environment. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using metal, plastic, and glass containers and packaging?*

- Pages 34-43: Ask, *Why do you think computers have increased our use of paper? What are the threats we face from cutting down trees for paper? What are the disadvantages to recycling? Do these outweigh the advantages?*

Responding to the text

- The children could follow the procedures to make a compost pile or worm bin for the school or home.
- Have the children make the game cards and make their own game boards. They may make up their own rules for their game.

- The children could plan a recycling programme (or look at ways of improving a current plan) for the school or your classroom. If your local area doesn't have a recycling programme, you could work with the children to develop some practical steps for helping to have one implemented.
- The children may want to become "garbologists" and monitor what is thrown away in your classroom, recording how much and what kind of material is thrown away in a week.
- Have children select one kind of store (e.g., toy, grocery, department store). After a visit to such a store, or through discussion based on children's experiences, brainstorm lists of packaging that could be classed as necessary, desirable or helpful, and unnecessary. The children could begin charts for each category and add to these as they find more examples. Discuss why we use packaging, what energy and resources are involved, and where the packaging ends up. *What alternatives are there?*

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss pages 20-21, 38-39, and 44-46, and the purpose of the text on these pages. As children talk about how the information is set out, focus on the way the text provides a clear set of instructions (a procedure) to follow. Work with the children to list some of the features that help make the instructions clear; e.g., using numbered points to present a series of steps.
- Draw on examples of captions in *Many*

Happy Returns to help children explore when and why captions are used. Discuss questions such as. *How do captions add to the book? How would you describe the style of writing in the captions? Could they be dropped out?* Encourage children to include captions where appropriate in their own nonfiction reports, and/or to write captions for pictures that might be displayed around the classroom.

Write On

- The children will want to try making their own paper. Plan a letter-writing project and make special stationery for the letters.

Have the children write on the topic, *Throw Away – Where's Away?*

The children could research more about topics such as local landfills, energy and water used in recycling, wastes produced by local industries, products made from recycled materials, ways to reuse machines and other products that are made to become obsolete. The children could write letters, make posters, and make presentations based on what they have learned.

SPIDER RELATIVES



Synopsis

Arachnids are a class of eight-legged creatures that many people associate with spiders, but not all arachnids are spiders. Even the common harvestman is really not a spider, but a spider relative. This book features many familiar and not-so-familiar spider relatives, in a first-person explanation of these creatures' fascinating features.

Setting the Scene

- Cover the book's title and have the children examine the cover photo. Ask, *What are these creatures?* Have the children count the legs and ask, *What has eight legs?* Explain that these are relatives of spiders – a type of harvestman. Ask one of the children to read the title and the back cover information aloud.
- Have the children read the headings on the contents page and guess which arachnids each heading describes. Ask the children to survey the book's photographs to see if they recognise any of the spider relatives.

Reading the Text

- Use the Photocopy Master 8, *Questions and Answers*.
- The children could read this book independently, but having children read with partners is likely to stimulate more discussion. Questions such as the following may help to guide their discussion and provide ideas that they can note in their reading journals.
- Pages 4-12: *How can you tell the*

difference between harvestmen and spiders? What questions do you have from reading? Cave-dwelling harvestmen don't have venom – what makes them fearsome?

- Pages 13-19: *What are some of the most interesting facts you have learned about crane-flies and scorpions?*
- Pages 20-31: *What questions do you have from your reading? Which of the spider relatives mentioned are common in your area?*

Responding to the Text

- Have the children make charts in their reading journals, or make a class chart, to compare the features and behaviours of spiders and some of the spider relatives.
- Have the children turn to page 4 and discuss the perspective from which this book is written. Compare this book with other non-fiction titles the children have read. How is it similar or different?
- Ask the children if they think any of the spider relatives would make good pets. Why or why not?

Structures and Strategies

- On page 6, the author has used a number of adjectives to describe harvestmen; e.g., jerky, clumsy, delicate. Ask the children to list these. Ask, *Would you be able to draw a picture of this creature*

just from reading these words? Discuss, and list, other words that could be used to describe this spider relative. Ask the children to find in the book a description of another spider relative in which the adjectives provide a contrast to those on page 6; e.g., page 18: huge, powerful, etc.

- On pages 8 and 9, and 20 and 21, there are a number of “action” verbs. Ask, *Does the author's choice of these verbs (e.g., slam, scurry, unfold) make the text interesting? How?* Ask the children to give examples of other action verbs that could be applied to spiders or spider relatives.
- Discuss the way information in the book is organised into paragraphs, each one having one main idea. The children could choose a double-page spread, and write a subheading for each paragraph.

Write On

- The children could go on to do more research on arachnids (or another class of creature) and present their findings in a written, oral, or multimedia report. Other classes might make interested audiences.
- Discuss fears about spiders and spider relatives. Children could write about some of the features that make arachnids scary but also present facts about arachnids that could help to dispel or relieve fears.
- Invite the children to write about and/or draw the view you might have of the world from a spider's viewpoint. Encourage imaginative responses; for example, ask, *If a spider can look scary*

to us, how do you think we look to a spider?

- Share some traditional stories or other books, which involve spiders. The children could also do a search for arachnid myths from many indigenous cultures, such as African, Native American, and South American. Encourage the children to write their own spider stories about spider relatives. They may also like to make and illustrate some spider posters for their own classroom or for younger classes; e.g., a “Did You Know” chart, or an illustrated poster version of “Eensy Weensy Spider”.

HORRIBLE HANK



Synopsis

Happy Hank became Horrible Hank the pirate to please his father, who had been a particularly nasty pirate. Unfortunately, Hank is not nasty enough to be a good pirate, and his ageing crew members are not much better.

After losing his glasses, engaging in a vain attempt to capture the “Fair Rose”, and running aground on an island, Hank and his crew meet Henrietta. Possessing all the confidence and toughness that Hank lacks, she soon has them changing their ways and finding a more profitable occupation.

Setting the Scene

- Study the front cover with the children and discuss the type of book they think it may be. Discuss what the words “horrible” means. *Does the person on the front cover look horrible?*
- Discuss the illustrations on pages 4-7. Ask, *Are these weapons all that Hank will need in his career as a pirate? How likely do you think it is that Hank will be a successful pirate? Why?*

Reading the text

- Children could read the book individually or with a partner.
- Write the name of each character on the chalkboard. Have the children form groups of eight; each child can take the part of a character and read the appropriate speech bubbles.

Responding to the Text

- Discuss questions such as the following:

In what way do things change after Henrietta’s arrival? How do you think Hank’s father would feel about him at the end of the story?

- Ask the children why they think the author used the comic book form. *In what ways is it appropriate for this story? How does a reading book like this compare with reading an ordinary narrative? Do you think it would be effective to tell a “serious” story in this way?*
- Discuss some of the comical features of the book; e.g., author’s notes during the story, use of slang, “sound” words such as *blah*.
- Encourage children to compare and contrast this book with other stories in the series. Use Photocopy Master 3, *Comparing Stories*, to introduce some discussion points.

Structures and Strategies

- Much of Polly’s speech is in the form of word play that involves switching sounds around, such as *Wolly Crants a Packer* (page 19), and *Mot a Wess* (page 28). Have the children find and discuss other examples, and make up some of their own.
- On page 18, there are a number of

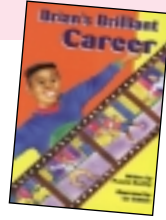
adjectives. Discuss their meaning, and then talk about synonyms and antonyms. The children can think of words that have the same meaning or an opposite meaning to the adjectives they have listed and make a synonyms/antonyms chart.

- Have the children rewrite the speech bubble text on page 33 in the way it would appear in a book without pictures. Say, *Remember to indicate who says what and how it is said.*

Write On

- Have the children write an alternative ending to the story supposing that Hank had not lost his glasses and had managed to capture the “Fair Rose”.
- Have the children create and illustrate their own menus for the “Smashing Grub”.
- The children could add to Judge Scrimshaw’s punishment book, assuming that Hank and his crew were guilty of piracy.

BRIAN'S BRILLIANT CAREER



Synopsis

When Brian and his classmates are working on their environmental project, a television crew comes to film the action. One crew member sees something special in Brian and invites him to an audition for work in commercials. He could get to eat ice-cream and wear great clothes – and be paid for it. Soon Brian is engaged in his brilliant career. But he quickly realises it isn't all glamour!

Setting the Scene

Read the title to the children, but do not show the cover. Brainstorm possible jobs that children could do. Then show the cover, and ask, *From the picture, what do you think Brian's career is likely to be?* Make a list of jobs that the children may associate with film or television work. Ask the children to revise and add to this as they read.

Reading the Text

- Read page 5 aloud. Ask, *How do you think Brian feels about his task?* Read pages 6 and 7 for the children to check their predictions. After this “appetiser”, the children could read the book independently and then meet in small groups for discussion. If you wish to provide more support for some or all of the children, you could:
- Have the children read chapters 1 to 3 independently. Ask *How does Brian's family feel about his chance of working in television? What sort of person is Brian? What are his feelings and attitudes about environmental issues and about being on television? What are*

some decisions that Brian's family have to make, and what do they decide to do?

- Engage the children in further discussion when they have read chapters 4 to 6. Ask, *How does Brian increase his chances of “winning” the audition? What are some of the possible disadvantages of doing an ice-cream commercial? How do Brian's feelings change when he finds out what he has to wear? Why does he go through with the commercial?*
- Have the children read chapters 7 to 9. Discuss questions such as, *How did Brian's family and friends react when they saw the department store commercial? Was Brian's decision to make another commercial a good idea? Do you think Brian will (or should) ever do another commercial? Why or why not?*

Responding to the Text

- Share and enjoy rereading parts of the story that children particularly enjoyed. Discuss the way in which Brian's use of exaggeration adds to the humour of the story and helps to convey his personality; e.g., *as if my face would crack cameras* (page 2); *enough huge plants to stock the average rain forest* (page 14).

- Discuss parts of the story that relate to the planning and making of commercials. Ask questions such as: *What is the aim of the commercial? What aspects of the commercial might persuade someone to buy the product? How truthful is the commercial?*
- Reread the description of the clothes on the bottom of page 39 and invite the children to draw a picture of Brian to match.
- Discuss the list of television-related jobs begun in *Setting the Scene*. Ask the children to talk about parts of the story that refer to the different jobs and what each one involves. *Which jobs do you think you would or would not enjoy?*
- Encourage children to compare and contrast this book with others in the series. They could use Photocopy Masters 10, *Funny Bones*, and/or 3, *Comparing Stories*.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss idioms (familiar figures of speech) using some of Brian's expressions as a starting point. For example, on page 24, he says, *I was in this up to my neck* to mean I was really committed. Have children think of other idioms (e.g., *out in left field, a chip off the old block, and don't cry over spilt milk*). They could write about, and illustrate, the literal and figurative meanings. The children may enjoy M. Terban's *In a Pickle and Other Funny Idioms*, New York: Clarion Books, 1983.
- As a follow-up, you could introduce the term “cliché” and discuss the idea that some expressions become so familiar

that they lose a lot of impact. Encourage the children to think of fresh expressions that could be used instead of some of the familiar idioms they have discussed.

Write On

- The children could write a script for a commercial, hold auditions among their classmates, and perform the commercial as a skit. Alternatively, the children could write and perform short plays based on Brian's “discovery” as an actor, or the best and worst experiences in his brilliant career.
- Have the children think of other brilliant careers for children and write advertisements and/or job descriptions.
- Ask the children to imagine that Brian is going to apply for acting work with a new advertising agency. They could write an application letter or a personal profile, giving details of Brian's strengths and experiences.



Synopsis

Duncan Fisher, the son of a Scottish fisherman, loves otters. The otters help Duncan to catch fish to fill the King’s first order, and they let him swim with them. But the King wants even bigger orders of fish, which Duncan’s father fears they won’t be able to fill. The King also wants a cloak for the Queen, and otter pelts would be the ideal fur.

In a plan to save the otters and also help his father meet the King’s orders for fish, Duncan asks the King to come and see the otters for himself. His plan works: He is named by the King as Keeper of the Otters, and the otters’ lives are spared.

Setting the Scene

- Discuss the cover and title with the children and tell them that *Fern-i-tickles* means “freckles” in Scottish. Ask the children to look at the pictures. Ask, *Where do you think this story might take place?*
- Point out the glossary and bibliography, and ask, *Why do you think the author included these?* Explain that in this story some words and phrases will not be familiar because the people speak in a Scottish dialect. Encourage the children to note unfamiliar or unusual expressions, and the pages on which they occur, in their reading journals; remind them that we can often work out what new words mean by thinking about the rest of the sentence and what would make sense.

Reading the Text

- Fluent readers could read the book independently. Because this is a longer book, you may want to break the reading into smaller sections for less fluent readers, using questions such as the following, as appropriate:

- After the children have read to the end of chapter 4: *What would it be like to live under the rule of a King? Give some examples from the story.*

What danger could there be in taming wild animals? Why would Duncan take this risk with the otters? Review any words the children have recorded in their journals.

- After the children have read to the end of chapter 8: *How can Duncan possibly use the net from the bank to help catch 225 fish? Describe the relationship that Duncan and his father have. What parts of the story show this?*

- After chapter 12: *What was Duncan’s original plan? What difficulties did he face? How did Duncan save the otters?*

Responding to the Text

- Using copies of Photocopy Master 6, *Story Map*, the children could work in pairs to make a story map of *Stirling*. Encourage them to use the order of events in the story to help them

determine the places they will include (e.g., Duncan’s home, the castle, the tavern, the cobbler’s, the woods of Gowan Hills, the causeway, the carseland and the Water of the Forth). Encourage the children to go back to the book and discuss possible locations before creating their map. Discuss the strategy of creating a mental picture while reading and then putting places and events into this picture as they come into the story.

- Ask, *Did you think that Duncan would be able to save the otters? Why or why not?* Discuss what it means to be a risk taker. Reread aloud the part of the story in which John Fisher says, *“When facing the impossible, we must risk something new”* (page 53). *What do you think he means? Have you ever faced what seemed like the impossible? How did you deal with it?*
- Ask the children to find people’s names in the story and discuss how they are related to their occupations. Ask if they can think of other names that originally stood for an occupation. The children may be able to talk about the meaning of some family names from several different cultures.
- Children may want to research the historical period of the story. The following are some possible topics to research: Mary, Queen of Scots; Queen Elizabeth I; James VI of Scotland; House of Stuart; the plague; Sir Walter Raleigh and his role in the “Main Plot” to dethrone King James I; the Plymouth Company; Guy Fawkes; Pocahontas and her marriage to John Rolfe.

Structures and Strategies

- Using examples from the book, discuss the idea that writers sometimes plant “clues” about what is going to happen later in the story; e.g., Duncan’s thoughts on page 19, *If I could, I’d spend my whole life watching otters*, hints at what will happen, even though Duncan does not know this at the time. Have the children find other examples of “foreshadowing” throughout the story.
- Discuss the meaning of the sentence, *The King is just a salmon, swimming up river to where he was spawned* (page 7). Develop the idea that the sentence provides a comparison, even though it does not use the word *like*. Now draw the draw children’s attention to the words on page 9: *The Water of Forth meandered eastward like a great snake*. Work with the children to find more examples of similes and metaphors in the story.

Notes for Fernitickles continued overleaf.

Write On

- The book explains some 17th Century occupations, their symbols, and their tools. The children may research these occupations and add other occupations in *Fernitickles*. Have the children set up a data chart with headings similar to the following:

Title in 17 th Century	Occupation/ Description	Symbols	Tools	Title in 20 th Century

- Invite the children to write or role-play a short dialogue that might take place *today* in a simple, everyday situation; e.g., going shopping, or saying goodnight to your family at bedtime. Then they could write or role-play a dialogue for a similar situation in Duncan’s time.

- Children might imagine a character who is in the crowd in the town of Stirling, waiting for the King. They could give the character an occupation, a home, and a family, then write his or her account of what went on that day.
- Brainstorm some of the ways in which an author (or a film-maker) can create the feeling of another time; e.g., language appropriate to the time and people; descriptions that suggest their habits, manners, and values of a particular time. Using these ideas as a checklist, the children might like to write their own historical fiction or develop short plays set in another time and another place.



Synopsis

James is always imagining himself as a brave adventurer, but in reality he knows he is just a dreamer who likes his creature comforts. Jim and his parents are on one of his parents’ great fresh-air vacations, and he is certain there will be no adventure for him. Jim surprises himself, however, with his bravery and initiative in saving a baby sea lion. What is more, he finds himself in the middle of a risky adventure stopping the dangerous Conner brothers from polluting the ocean and harming his parents. James Robert’s imagination has paid off at last!

Setting the Scene

- Allow time for the children to share their impressions of the cover illustration and their first thoughts about the title. Then read aloud the introduction to chapter 1 and the first paragraph. Discuss daydreaming. *Why do you think the author italicised the introduction to each chapter? What new ideas do you have about what this title means?*

Reading the Text

- Fluent readers can read this short novel independently. Invite the children to write their own questions for group discussion. Another option is to divide the book into sections and use questions such as the following to guide the children’s reading.
 - Chapters 1-2: discuss characters. Ask, *How would you describe James Robert Howard? His parents? What kind of adventures do you think Jim could have on his vacation? Where do*

you think his family might be vacationing?

- Chapters 3-5: *Which adventure was the most exciting? Why? What dangers did Jim face in the boat? What dangers did he face in freeing the sea-lion? What did Jim mean when he said, “I saw a horse along the way, and I got right back up on it!” (pages 30-31)? How will Jim solve the problem of the bay?*

- Chapters 6-7: *Was it a good idea for Jim to sneak out of the cabin? Why? What will Jim do now?*

- Chapters 8-9: *How does Jim’s imagination help him save his parents and the ocean? What adventures might he have next?*

Responding to the text

- Invite the children to respond to the story in their own way. They could make a diorama, create a story map, or draw pictures of some of the story episodes. Alternatively, they might take on the character of James Robert and describe one of his adventures, either orally to the group, or in their reading journals.
- Discuss the introductions to each chapter. Ask, *How do these introductions offer hints as to what will happen in the chapter? At what point in the book do Jim’s daydreams really begin to reflect his own character?*

- Children could complete Photocopy Master 4, *Inside Stories*.
- Discuss how Jim changes through the story. Have children list characteristics (with examples) that describe him in the first three chapters of the story and then toward the end of the story.

Jim’s Character

At the beginning	At the end
Sense of humour	The same
e.g.,	e.g.,
Has trouble concentrating	The same
e.g.,	e.g.,
Imaginative	The same
A bit lazy	Enjoys a challenge
Good tempered	The same
Insecure	Confident
etc.	etc.

- Encourage children to compare and contrast this book with other stories in the series. Use Photocopy Master 12, *Confidence and Courage*, to introduce some discussion points around these themes.

Structures and Strategies

- Remind children of the conventions for recording speech in writing. Then, working in pairs or groups, each child could choose from the story a paragraph (of about six lines) that contains speech. Have them copy out the paragraph with no capital letters or punctuation. Children can then exchange paragraphs and try to add the punctuation. Paragraphs can be corrected from the book.
- Have the children examine pages 30 and 31 to find the words *mum* and *dad*. Ask

them to note when these words are capitalised in the middle of a sentence and when they are not. Encourage the children to create rules for when to capitalise and when not to capitalise; e.g., *When “dad” and “mum” are preceded by “his” or another possessive pronoun or noun, do not capitalise them. When someone is being addressed or when these words could be replaced by a person’s name, do capitalise them.*

Write On

- Working in pairs, the children could write a dialogue or dramatise an interview between James Robert and a radio or television presenter, about how James triumphed over the polluters. The children could then perform their piece for the class.
- Discuss the settings of the story (e.g., where Jim first saw the sea lions, where he nearly fell out of the boat, where his parents went swimming, where he found the little sea lion, and where he released it). The children could make a mural of the setting and use this as a backdrop for displaying writing about the book; e.g., descriptions of the events that took place in each area of the mural.
- Suggest that the children choose one of the chapter introductions and complete the imaginary story. Alternatively, the children could write a sequel to *It’s all in your Mind, James Robert*.
- Invite the children to tell about their own adventures – real ones or ones they would like to have. They might turn these into short pieces of fiction: written stories or monologues that they could record aloud for the class.



Synopsis

Anna, who wants to be a ranger like her Uncle Jeff in New Zealand, breaks the park rules and feeds the endangered “kea” parrots. Now she risks her uncle finding out. Anna discovers that someone else has also been feeding the birds, and she catches the smugglers in the act of drugging and capturing the rare keas to sell overseas. Will she be able to save the keas? Anna’s detective work proves that she is well on her way to being a ranger.

Setting the scene

- Discuss what the title could mean. What ideas do the children associate with “goof”; e.g., *goofy, goof-ball, goof-off?* Ask, *Who or what might be called Gooftah?*
- Tell the children that this story takes place in a national park on the South Island of New Zealand. Locate New Zealand on a map. Ask, *Why do countries have national parks?* Discuss the reasons why many national parks have signs that say do not feed the wild animals. *Should people put out food for birds in their yards?* Discuss the pros and cons. Read page 5 aloud and discuss how these birds may be different from backyard birds we do feed.

Reading the Text

- Fluent readers can read this book independently, keeping a reading journal of their own responses to the events in the story. If you feel some children need more support, you could divide the book into sections and ask questions such as the following to guide the

reading:

- Chapters 1-2: *Why do you think Anna fed the birds despite the rules? What do you think Uncle Jeff will do if he finds out? Why do you think Mr McNabb is acting strangely?*
- Chapters 3-4: Have the children retell the events of these two chapters. *What do you think Anna’s parents will do?*
- Chapters 8-9: *What did Anna think was going to happen to her at the ranger’s station? In your opinion, did she deserve the award? Why or why not? What do you think Anna is thinking as she drives away and gets on the plane back to Canada? In what way is her life different since her adventure in the national park?*
- Ask the children to list some interesting words from the book, think about the context, look up the word in the dictionary, or discuss the word with someone else. Suggest they write their own definitions of the words in their reading journals.

Responding to the text

- Ask the children to write a review of the book in their reading journals. A simple plan they might follow is:
 - Very briefly, retell the story.
 - Describe the story’s main character. Include details that helped you to get

to know the character.

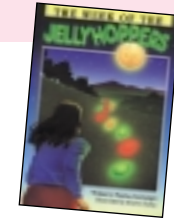
- How important was the setting of the story?
- From what point of view is the story told?
- Say what you liked about the story.
- Discuss the story's theme or message. (E.g., Even though we might make some bad decisions, it is still possible to achieve our goals). Children may come up with several different messages.
- Have students consider different points of view. *What if this story had been told from Megan's or McNabb's point of view?*
- Children could complete Photocopy Master 5, *Interview Chart*, to gather a number of reader responses to this story.

Structures and Strategies

Work with the children to find and discuss some examples of phrases that tell how, when, or why something is done; e.g., *Instantly alert*, she sat up in bed (page 42); *In a daze*, Anna changed clothes (page 58); The chief said *in a deep voice* (page 59). The children could find other examples of adverbs or adverbial phrases. Discuss their function and how the story would be changed if they were removed; e.g., on page 10 we would have a less vivid picture of Anna without phrases, *biting off a yawn*, or *with a shiver*. The children might compare phrases such as this with stage directions in a play, which help to tell us how certain things are said or done.

Write On

- The children could write a newspaper article about the arrest of the McNabbs or about Anna receiving the Junior Conservation award.
- Children might do some research into either endangered species or bird smuggling, consulting library books, nature magazines, environmental groups, or a government department of conservation or environment, then preparing a short report to present to the class.
- Discuss writing persuasive arguments and debates. In an argument, state the issue, your point of view, your reasons for this, and a recommended solution. In a debate, state the issue, arguments for and against the issue, and finally a conclusion that summarizes your point of view on the issue. Have children pick an issue from the story as a topic for a persuasive argument or for a debate. The following suggestions may give them some ideas:
 - Feeding wild animals
 - Regulations for capturing and selling endangered animals
 - Punishment for violating National Park regulations.



Synopsis

Isobel is lonely in her new home – until she finds a space creature, and learns that eight more of the creatures are being hidden by the children on a nearby farm. The children try to keep the “jellyhoppers” a secret, but decide to tell after the jellyhoppers foil a robbery at a local chocolate shop. Before they can be revealed, however, the jellyhoppers are collected by their spaceship, and the only evidence the children have left to document their encounter are photographs, diagrams, and Jamie’s record book. Will anyone believe them?

Setting the Scene

- Talk about the cover with the children. Ask, *What do you think jellyhoppers might be? Where do you think they might be from?* Read aloud the back cover copy and the front cover flap.
- Discuss the children’s ideas about UFOs and any other stories or movies they may know of that deal with extraterrestrials – especially friendly ones!

Reading the text

- This is one of the longer books in level 16. Fluent readers can read independently, but you may wish to break the book into smaller sections for less fluent readers, and guide their discussion along the following lines. Children could also use Photocopy Master 7, *Prediction Chart*, as they read.
 - Chapters 1-2: *What do you think Mr Miro will say if he finds out about the*

jellyhopper? Why was Isobel unfriendly toward the other girl?

- Chapters 3-5: *Why do you think the jellyhoppers stayed behind when the spacecraft left? Why haven't the children told any adults about the jellyhoppers? Why do you think Isobel is having a hard time making friends?*

- Chapters 6-9: *What do you think about Jamie's idea of keeping a journal? How easy or hard will it be to keep the jellyhoppers a secret now that they are doubling? Now why do you think the jellyhoppers stayed on Earth?*

- Chapters 10-12: *How will the children get the jellyhoppers out of the shop? Why were the burglars running? Why did one go back into the store? Who do you think will be blamed for the burglary?*

- Chapters 13-15: *How have the children's feelings about the jellyhoppers changed? What happened to the jellyhoppers?*

- Chapter 16: Discuss the newspaper article. *Do you think readers of The Morning Star will believe the children's story?*

Responding to the Text

- Allow time for the children simply to enjoy sharing their personal responses to

THE WEEK OF THE JELLYHOPPERS cont.

the story and its characters – the human ones and the jellyhoppers. Ask, *Do you think the author made the jellyhoppers believable? Likeable?*

- Discuss how Isobel's relationship with the other children changes during the story. *What do you think would have happened if the jellyhoppers had not arrived?*
- The children could complete Photocopy Master 4, *Inside Stories*.
- Create maths problems from the story such as the following: *The jellyhoppers doubled daily. There were eight to begin with. How many would there be in one week? Two weeks? One year?*
- Encourage children to compare and contrast this book with other stories in the series. Use Photocopy Master 3, *Comparing Stories*, to introduce some discussion points.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss some of the techniques an author can use to build characterisation. Explore the character of Isobel as an example. The children could list her various qualities or characteristics and find evidence in the story from the action, conversation, and narration to support their suggestions. They could

record their observations on a chart like the one below. Encourage them to use these different aspects of characterisation in their own writing.

- Explore some of the language features of the newspaper reports included in the book. For example, turn to pages 4 and 5 and read the pages aloud. Ask, *What words are used in the article to tell readers not to take the story as fact?* (E.g., *claims, purported*).

Write On

- The children could write an ending for one of the news stories on pages 4 and 5, 38, 70, or 100. They could also create their own news stories about events or characters in the book.
- Discuss the resolution of the story. The children could work in pairs to write a final chapter for the story that resolves the burglary and the appearance and disappearance of the jellyhoppers.
- The children could write a sequel, *The Return of the Jellyhoppers*.
- The children could write a story creating their own space creatures. They might like to write from the space creatures' point of view and give their impressions of earth creatures.

Qualities	Actions	Conversation	Narration
Lonely	Isobel kept wishing for a dog so that she wouldn't have to leave it behind if she and her dad moved again. (pages 8-9)	"I'd love to come and play. I'd really love to." (page 106)	Isobel remembered how the knot of loneliness tightening inside her has meant she was unable to sleep. (page 8)

TIMOTHY WHUFFENPUFFEN-WHIPPERSNAPPER



Synopsis

Marcus is used to receiving unwelcome animal gifts from his Great Uncle Hinkley, owner of a most unusual circus, but he has never before received anything quite like Timothy Whuffenpuffen – a dragon! Marcus wants to keep Timothy, but unfortunately this results in him and his mother being evicted from their apartment. And they can't find Uncle Hinkley anywhere! Soon Uncle Hinkley has lots of people looking for him, and the reader is drawn ever deeper into a fantastical world of fun and adventure. There is a happy ending, too: Marcus and his mother will be the new managers of the circus, and Uncle Hinkley will finally write his life story.

Setting the Scene

Invite the children to look at the contents page, then discuss what type of book this might be. *Does it seem serious? Factual? Fantastic?* Ask the children to describe the illustrations. *Does the style of illustration match your ideas about the kind of book this is?*

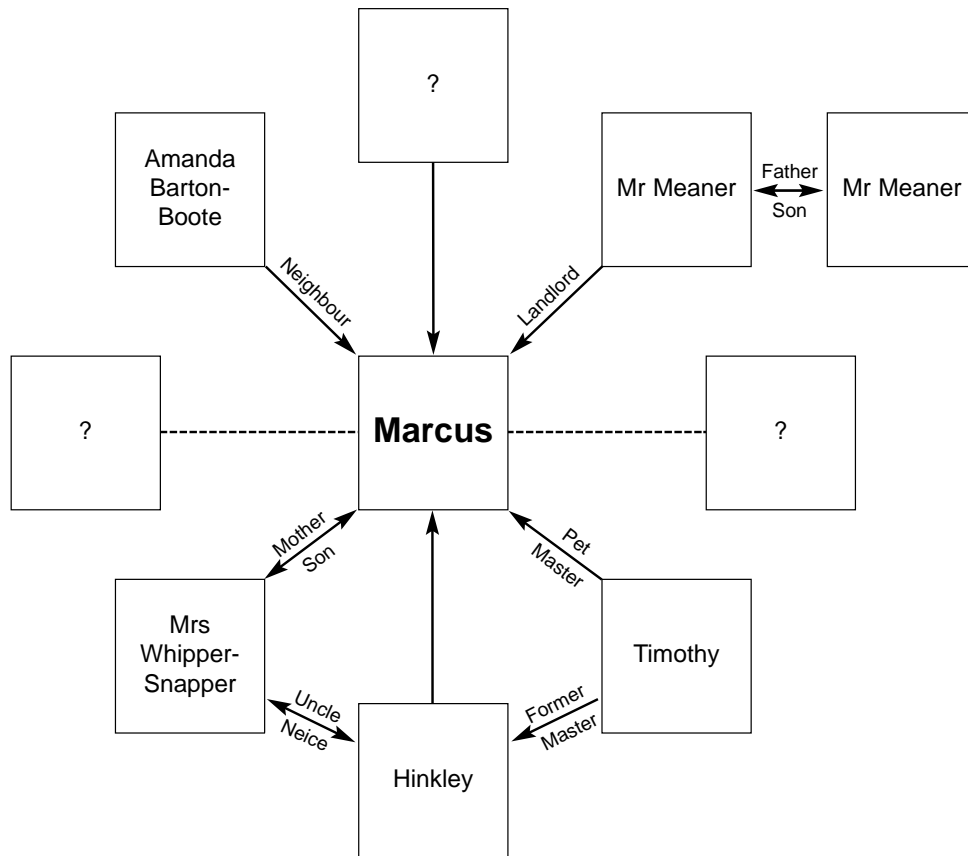
Reading the Text

- Have the children read independently or with a partner. Ask children to keep a list in their reading journals of the major events of the story, and to record interesting vocabulary or words they wish to clarify, together with their page numbers.
- To monitor interest and understanding, you may want to build in time for group discussion or reading conferences after chapters 5, 10, and 14.

- Chapters 1-5: Have the children write a short description of the characters they have met in the book so far. Ask, *Why do you think Mr Meaner evicted Marcus and his mum? What do you think they'll do now?*
- Chapters 6-10: Ask, *How would you describe Petronella Patella? Why do you think Marcus's mum allowed Marcus to go along? What is Petronella's real reason for going after Hinkley? How does Marcus's mum feel now that he has gone? What have you learned about Marcus's character? How would you compare him to Zack Meaner and Amanda? What do you think will happen?*
- Chapters 11-14: Ask, *How do Marcus, Petronella, and his mum finally find Uncle Hinkley? Why do you think Uncle Hinkley moved to Nowhere Else? Describe the meeting at Calendar House. Why does Uncle Hinkley owe everyone an explanation and an apology?*

Responding to the text

- After the children have provided a collaborative retelling of the story, they could share their ideas to make an illustrated summary of events on a large sheet of paper. *How were everyone's problems solved?*
- Invite the children to nominate words or



situations in the story that made them laugh. Reread some sections aloud and discuss some of the different kinds of humour found in the book; e.g., the frequent play on words with people's names.

- Modern fairy tales often use eccentric characters, and Great Uncle Hinkley is no exception. Discuss and list examples of what makes Hinkley eccentric. Children could use Photocopy Master 2, *Character Traits*. They could also compare characters in *Timothy Whuffenpuffen-Whippersnapper* with other fairy tale characters.
- Have the children discuss vocabulary they found interesting and/or words they didn't understand.

Structures and Strategies

- Ask the children how they would describe Timothy's style of speech (formal, courteous). Select some sections of his dialogue and together rewrite them in informal language.
- The book uses many examples of alliteration, such as Whuffenpuffen-Whippersnapper (page 15), Blankstone Buildings (page 7), sausage-scented smoke (page 40), and permanently, perpetually polite (page 112). Make a chart and ask the children to work in pairs to find examples of alliteration. Continue to add to the list from poetry and other books the children are reading. Have the children use adjectives and nouns to make up their own alliterative phrases.

Write On

- Children could create a sociogram by writing the main character's name in the centre of a web and the other characters in circles on the circumference. On each spoke, they can write the name and relationship to the main character, and they could also extend the sociogram outwards to include pictures or character descriptions. Children might like to select one relationship to write about in more detail; e.g., in letters to or from the characters.
- The children could create a sequel to *Timothy Whuffenpuffen-Whippersnapper*, or an original story with Timothy Whuffenpuffen as the children's pet dragon.
- Children could write a serious, "scientific" explanation of how Timothy Whuffenpuffen can change sizes. Alternatively, they might pretend to be Timothy and write a set of detailed instructions for a class of young dragons about how to change their size.



Synopsis

This science fiction story takes place in the Australian island of Tasmania, in a wilderness area that provides a perfect setting for a mystery. Two boys, the narrator, Tom, and his friend Coxie, go on a camping trip and find a prehistoric opalized skull and a medallion inside a large rock. On their second trip to the area they discover a second medallion that fits together with the first to cause a time warp. After experimenting in time travel, the boys discover how to control the time warp. They go back to 3570 B.C. and find a woman of the 32nd century who has travelled back through time to resolve a dilemma of her time. The boys also face many moral dilemmas. Other than the boys, no person living ever learns about fantastic adventure until now, when you read this story.

Setting the Scene

- Be sure to read this story yourself before assigning it to children. It raises ideas about possible future technologies and their possible dangers, and presents challenging moral issues that will require sensitive discussion.
- Discuss the cover illustration and the clues about the story that can be drawn from the back cover and inside the flap information.

Reading the text

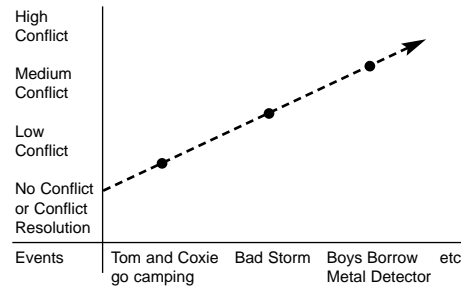
- More mature children could read this book independently.
- If using this book for small group discussion, you could break the story

into the following sections for reading and discussing: chapters 1-4, 5-7, 8-10, 11-14, 15-16. Allow the children to express their views about the behaviour of the characters. Talk about the moral dilemma in letting Palmer die and Lizba commit suicide.

Responding to the Text

- Discuss the story’s setting. Ask questions such as: *Where and when is the story set? How does the setting affect the story? Could the same story have taken place somewhere else?* Children could complete Photocopy Master 1, *Story Settings*.
- Help the children understand the actions of the characters by asking questions such as: *When things are unfamiliar to you, how do you try to understand them? How do the characters in the story deal with strange or unfamiliar situations? What does it mean to be a risk taker? Who took risks in the story? Could you relate to them? Were the risks always good risks? If you were in the story, would you have taken the same risk? Why or why not?*

- Have the children summarise the levels of excitement in the book by plotting the events of the story on a graph:



- Discuss the various characters in the story. Some children might draw pictures of the characters, or they could brainstorm words that best describe their characteristics.
- Ask the children to make a timeline of the main events in the story. Children can decide how to represent the long jumps into the past and into the future (e.g., use of an ellipsis...or three parallel time spans for three different eras).

Structures and Strategies

- After reading, draw on examples from the story to discuss possible strategies for building suspense in a story. For example, ask the children to look at the examples of foreshadowing (hints of what will happen later) on pages 6, 9, 11, 28, and 38. Discuss at what points in the story these hints actually begin to make sense. Discuss how hints such as these can help to build suspense.
- Discuss examples of Australian expressions from the text; e.g., “telly”

for television, or “bush” for forest. The children may keep track of the Australian words in their reading journals and write more familiar words, or other words with a similar meaning, next to each one. The children could go on to begin charts of different kinds of expressions, such as colloquialisms, and slang, adding examples from other texts.

Write On

- The children could write the newspaper stories that might have appeared after the boys found the skull, or the stories that might have appeared if the boys had told about the events in chapters 12-16.
- Children might research and write about how opal is formed or about carbon dating. As an alternative research project they could investigate the discovery of Australia by Europeans (1500s the Portuguese; 1600s the Dutch; 1699 Dampier; and 1768 Captain Cook). Different groups could investigate different periods and share their results.
- Children could write a non-fiction piece about Tasmania (e.g., a description for a tourism brochure) based on the information in the story.
- Children could find out more about endangered or extinct animals, cutting of virgin forests, and the effects of clear-cutting on the environment. This research may lead to writing letters, debating, or creating posters.
- Children might write a one-week diary of a child from the 1900s who finds himself in the 30th century.

RYAN'S DOG RINGO



Synopsis

This is a story of twin brothers, Greg and Ryan. Greg is in a wheelchair, the result of an accident in which a German Shepherd dog knocked him off his bike. Ryan had been promised a dog, but now the boys' Aunt Beth, who has cared for them since their mother died, says no. The boys seem to be drifting apart, and Ryan feels neglected.

But things begin to change when Ryan takes a job in some boarding kennels, where he falls in love with a little dog that has been left behind. Although they can't go home with the twins, the dog and her new puppy bring the boys close together again and help Greg to overcome his fear of dogs.

In time, Ryan learns about Aunt Beth's childhood accident with a dog, and also comes to understand the guilt she feels over Greg's accident. And Aunt Beth comes to understand that Ryan is the one who will encourage Greg to walk again.

Setting the Scene

- Allow time for the children to share their first impressions of the book, based on the cover illustration and information. Then read chapter 1 aloud and discuss questions such as the following: *Why do you think Aunt Beth was right in not allowing Greg to go with Ryan to the gym award presentations? What are the reasons for Ryan feeling alone and rejected? What do you think are the real reasons Aunt Beth won't let Ryan have a dog?*
- Children could use Duplicate Master 7, *Prediction Chart*, to record their

predictions of what will happen in the story.

Reading the Text

- Have the children finish the book independently. Alternatively, have the children read two or three chapters independently, and then gather together for discussion and to hear another section read aloud. The story could be divided into sections such as the following:
 - Chapters 2-4: *What has happened to Ryan and Greg's relationship? How does Ryan feel about himself?*
 - Chapters 5-7: *What changes have there been in the boys' relationship? Why do you think things have changed? What do you think the boys should do?*
 - Chapters 8-11: *Why do you think Aunt Beth gets so angry at the mention of a dog? How has Greg changed his mind about dogs? Why would Ryan say the thing he most wanted was a ramp? What has caused the twins to grow closer?*
 - Chapters 12-15: *What happened to Trixie? Did you think Ryan would be able to keep the puppy a secret? Why do you think Ryan talked so harshly to Aunt Beth? Do you think things will change before the end of the story?*

- Chapters 16-18: *What have we learned about Aunt Beth's fear of dogs? Why did she neglect Ryan? Do you think that their parting was a happy one? What changes have you seen in Greg? What other changes have occurred? Was this what you expected?*

Responding to the Text

- Discuss how characters' attitudes towards one another change throughout the story. Children could show this on a grid such as the following:

Characters	At the Beginning	At the End
Aunt Beth		
Greg		
Ryan		
Father		
Rachel		
Mr Stein		
Trixie	disobedient destructive	obedient gentle

- Discuss Greg's struggle to cope with being in a wheelchair. What factors make this hard for him? In what ways does he get support (practical as well as emotional) and encouragement? How might his experiences in the story help us to understand the challenges facing a person in a wheelchair?
- Write the following incidents from the story on a sheet and copy for each child. Have the children cut the incidents in strips and arrange them in order. They can compare their ordering before using the book to check.

1. Ryan discovered that Zip appeared to like Greg more than him.
2. Mr Stein told Ryan that there was nowhere to put Trixie.
3. Greg and Aunt Beth arrived home from the hospital.
4. Rachel and Ryan took Trixie to dog training.
5. Ryan went alone to collect his award.
6. Greg practices walking with Ryan's help.
7. Father agrees to put in a ramp for Greg.
8. Aunt Beth discovers the puppy.
9. Trixie saves Greg from the German Shepherd after training.
10. Aunt Beth decides to leave.

Structures and Strategies

- Have the children list words (adjectives) from the book used to describe different characters. Ask them to use some of these words in sentences about characters. Then discuss which of the words have opposites; e.g.,

Thoughtless (page 8) thoughtful
Guilty (page 10) innocent
Irresponsible (page 54) responsible
Comfortable (page 108) uncomfortable

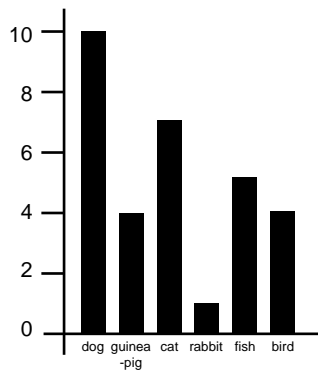
- Children could write each word on one side of a card and write its opposite on the other side. Collect the cards and put them in a stack. Put the children in two lines and show them a card. The first person to say the opposite gains a point for his or her team.
- Use examples the children find to

RYAN'S DOG RINGO cont.

support discussion of different ways in which opposites are formed: by using a completely different word, or by adding a prefix or suffix.

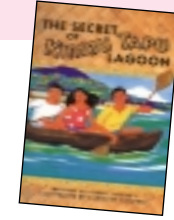
Write On

- Children could write and discuss and write about situations in which they might have reacted to someone, or felt impatient or annoyed, before fully understanding the circumstances.
- The children could write about difficult obstacles they have had to overcome.
- Ask the children, *What breed of dog did Ryan want?* Have the children conduct a survey of children in other classes who have pets or survey children on their favourite kind of dog. Tally the results and show the results on a graph, such as a bar graph like the one below:



The children could incorporate this information in a display of writing and illustration about pets and people; they might like to write fiction or non-fiction on topics such as: *The World's Best Pet*, *Pet Care*, *The Private Diary of a Pampered Pet*, *Advice to Pets: How to Take Care of Your Owners*.

THE SECRET OF KIRIBU TAPU LAGOON



Synopsis

Apu, Sare, and Lee enjoy a simple but fulfilling existence in the village of Waigame. When the children win a VCR and camera, it is exciting for the whole village. As the children videotape the village and the sea, they notice a light shining near the forbidden Kiribu Tapu Lagoon, as if a fishing boat was working there. But the only boat that could possibly be in the area is the one that Mele has told them is under repair. The children are sure Mele is lying, and decide to investigate. There is something going on at the lagoon, and the children have a cunning plan.

Setting the Scene

- Study and discuss the map at the start of the book, making sure that the children can use the key. Also ask the children to scan the glossary and the contents page. Ask, *What do you think this story will be about?* Now look at the picture of the setting on page 6. Invite children to discuss how living there would be different from living in their own environment.
- Discuss how the children in the pictures might feel about a trip to town. Read aloud, or have the children read silently, up to the break on page 13. Discuss some of the things the children did on their trip. Ask, *Do you think the boat might be important in this story? Why or why not?*

Reading the text

- Some children may read this book independently. Because this is one of the

longer books in the series, you may want the children to form a study group to discuss questions such as the following:

- Chapters 1-3: *What is life like for Apu, Lee, and Sare? What might some of the advantages be? Would there be any disadvantages? After reviewing events so far, what do you think is going on? How might the three children find out? What would you do?*
- Chapters 4-5: *Considering what the children have seen, how do you think they might be able to foil what is going on?*
- Chapters 6-7: *Review the facts of the case to date. Decide upon a number of ways the children could now proceed. Do you think the children are behaving wisely? Responsibly? Why or why not?*
- Chapters 8-9: *Take some time to trace the events that Mele misunderstood. What would you have done? The children have decided to protect a criminal. What do you think of their decision? What other choices did they have?*
- Chapters 10-11: *Throughout the story, the three children have had to make certain decisions. Discuss these, and decide which seem sensible and which seem foolish.*

Responding to the Text

- You may find it important to discuss the characters’ moral dilemma in not revealing what Mele had been doing. Allow children to present arguments from both points of view.
- Discuss how the book builds tension and suspense; for example, the appearance of the fishing boat where it shouldn’t be, almost being caught in Mele’s house, and the “tapu” on the lagoon. Have the children search the text for major points of tension and discuss parts of the story in which Uncle Rama hints at (or *foreshadows*) events that are to come later.
- Encourage children to compare and contrast this book with others in the series. Use Photocopy Master 3, *Comparing Stories*, to introduce some discussion points.

Structures and Strategies

- Discuss the use of acronyms in this text, such as TV, VCR, PMV, *What do they stand for? Why are these used? Are there times when they would be more effective if written out in full?* Have the children list other acronyms including their non-abbreviated forms, for example: VIP (Very Important Person) RAM (Random Access Memory).
- Discuss why the glossary is an important component of this book. Ask, *Which words in the glossary were you able to understand from the context without going to the glossary?* Discuss the specific clues the context provides. Ask, *What words do you use every day that a child from another culture would not know?*

Write On

- The children could construct an imaginary treasure map, and have others search for the *treasure*, e.g., a message or a prize.
- Have the children think of the decisions the children made and how the story would have changed if they had made different decisions. The children could rewrite the story’s ending to explore different possibilities. For example, if Mele had come home sooner...
- Some children might like to write the letter that Mele received. Allow time to compare and discuss how different children approach this activity.
- Children could write their own stories or short plays set in the book’s exotic location. Alternatively, they might write, design, and illustrate travel brochures or information sheets about Waigame and the surrounding area.

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