

Skateboards and Meatballs

After a morning at the skatebowl, Carlo is going to have lunch with his Nonna. She makes the best pasta and meatballs. But when Doris eats Pumpkin's burger, Carlo has to invite Pumpkin and Curly to Nonna's for lunch, too. He feels odd introducing them to her as his friends.



Reading strategy

Asking questions as you read

- What do I know about the characters?
- Why did the character say that?
- Why did the character do that?
- What does that tell me about the character?
- What will the character do?

Comprehension focus

- Analysing characters

Fluency focus

- Reading with emphasis when you see an exclamation mark

Genre focus

- Instructional text

Day 1: Before reading

- Introduce the book. Allow students to make predictions about the content by looking at the title, cover illustration and blurb, then choral read it together.
- Review the term “main character”.
- Allow time for students to scan the book, including the contents page, to see who they think the main character will be and to note features of the storyline. They share their predictions with the group.
- Introduce the reading strategy by discussing the importance of asking ourselves questions about the characters before, during and after reading. Explain that we do this to aid prediction and comprehension.
- Record and share the questions for the reading strategy on a chart.
 - What do I know about the characters?
 - Why did the character say that?
 - Why did the character do that?
 - What does that tell me about the character?
 - What will the character do?
- Ask: What do you already know about Carlo's character? Have students record three facts on sticky notes, then share their opinions with the group.
- Identify common elements and differences of opinion.

During reading

- Read the title for Chapter 1 and ask, What do you think this chapter will be about? Discuss responses.
- Discuss the importance of identifying who is telling a story (voice), then invite students to identify the narrator of *Skateboards and Meatballs*.

- Students scan the Chapter 2 title and illustrations and predict how Carlo will do in the competition. Encourage them to justify their opinions.
- Read the opening of Chapter 1, then students take over in pairs. The pairs take turns to read the rest of the chapter aloud to each other (quietly!). Move between pairs and listen to students reading. This is a good opportunity to find out if they have any issues with decoding, fluency and/or comprehension.
- Jointly describe Carlo's attitude to Pumpkin in Chapter 1, e.g. "*have been mad at us*" and "*looked to see if we were watching*". Ask: Do you think Carlo will feel like this throughout the story? Why or why not?
- Allow time for students to refer to their sticky-note facts about Carlo.
- Read Chapter 2 together stopping at appropriate places to pose questions about the characters. Ask: Why do you think Pumpkin lost interest in skateboarding? Why was Benjy suddenly hungry, too?

After reading

- Read Worksheet A and model how students can use excerpts from the text to record information about Carlo.
- Have students record the information for Chapters 1 and 2.

Fluency focus

Read *How to Ollie* or *I Can Talk Skateboard!* with students. Discuss how they should use their voices when reading to an audience. They read along with *I Can Talk Skateboard!*, practising reading with emphasis when they see an exclamation mark.

Vocabulary and spelling activities

You can substitute these suggested activities with ones that specifically address any gaps in student knowledge that you become aware of:

- variant graphemes for /ur/
- figurative language
- pronouns
- interesting vocabulary

Activity 1 Variant graphemes for /ur/

Record the following words on the board: *burger, burglar, Curly*. Read the words together and ask: What sound can you hear in each word? What letters represent the sound? Underline the vowel sound /ur/ in each word. Have students find other words with the /ur/ sound in the text, e.g. *Turbo, turned, hurt, turn*. Students read the words, listening for the /ur/ sound. Revise a range of words with /ur/ spelt differently, e.g. *her, search, word, bird*. Brainstorm words with variant graphemes for /ur/ (er, ir, or, ear). Record, sort and read them.

Activity 2 Figurative language

Introduce the term *figurative* and discuss its meaning in the context of the book. Use an example of what Carlo said – “*kissed the concrete*” (page 10). Invite students to find and list other examples, such as “*Tuck in*” (page 33). Involve students in creating other figurative language for Carlo to say. Record the figurative language and include it in appropriate places when reading the text aloud.

Activity 3 Pronouns

Revise the term *pronoun* and its usage. Invite students to select a pronoun from the text, e.g. *we, us, I, him*. Discuss what *we* means on page 33. Compile a list of pronouns from the text and discuss their meaning. Brainstorm other pronouns to add to the list and discuss their meaning.

Activity 4 Interesting vocabulary

Revise the term *vocabulary* and what it means. Point out that this story has interesting vocabulary because much of it is to do with skateboarding and has been developed by skateboarders themselves. Invite students to look at the glossary. It will help with the meaning of some of the terms. Ask: What’s a hand plant? Is it a plant that grows on hands? Discuss how familiar vocabulary can be used in an activity like skateboarding to create its own language.

Day 2: Before reading

- Explain how asking questions about characters aids prediction and comprehension. Read the chart of questions together.
- Involve students in orally retelling the story so far through Carlo’s eyes.
- Allow time for students to check headings for Chapters 3 and 4, then record a prediction about Carlo on sticky notes.

During reading

- Read the opening of Chapter 3, then have students take over reading independently in silence. Go around all or some of the students and ask them to read a few sentences. This is an opportunity to check their reading.
- Repeat the process for Chapter 4 after orally predicting what will happen about lunch. Ask: Why did Carlo think, “Nice timing, Stace.”? Why did Carlo want Evie to be quiet? Discuss the way Pumpkin responded when Doris took his burger.

After reading

- Explain expectations for Chapters 3–4 on Worksheet A and encourage students to find examples of their own.

The rap: rhythm, rhyme and repetition

Goals

- To provide a forum for meaningful reading practice
- To use rhythm, rhyme and repetition and shared reading experiences to build students' confidence
- To further develop students' ability to read important words automatically

Activity 1 Introduce the rap

Read the rap with students. Invite volunteers to read the rap independently. Review how to read a sentence with an exclamation mark.

Activity 2 Identify rhyme

Identify the rhyming words in the first verse. (*roll, bowl*) Establish that some of the rhyming words are not spelt with the same letter pattern, e.g. *too/you, roll/bowl*. Brainstorm other rhyming words that could have been used. Group the words according to how the sounds are spelt.

Activity 3 Alliteration

Read the rap together and discuss the use of alliteration (same initial sound in the word) in these words – *tick tack tail tap*. Students suggest words with alliteration to describe skateboarding, e.g. *fabulous fakie, drastic drop in*. They create a verse using alliteration.

Activity 4 Identify rhythm

Identify the rhythm of verse one by counting the syllables in each line. Brainstorm other phrases that repeat the rhythm of the first verse. Students read the verses with the substitutions.

Activity 5 Make a readers' theatre script

Have students work in groups of three. They decide which line each one will read individually and which lines/words they will read together. Have students perform their scripts for the class.

Day 3: Before reading

- Review the reading strategy by inviting students to recall questions they can ask themselves about characters before, during and after reading.
- Involve students in summarising what they know about Carlo in this story after allowing time for them to refer to their sticky-note predictions about him.
- Discuss how knowing and analysing characters aids prediction and comprehension.

During reading

- Read the opening of the chapter then have students take over, choral reading it together. Model reading with expression a passage with dialogue, e.g. page 30. Students echo-read the passage. Students do the same with no model on page 34.
- Ask: Why did Carlo feel weird about Pumpkin and Curly being referred to as "*your friends*"? Why did Carlo mutter "*Everything's back to normal*" after lunch?
- Encourage diversity of opinion and allow time for students to voice their ideas and opinions and demonstrate respect for differing views.

After reading

- Discuss expectations for Chapter 5, then have students complete Worksheet A.

Describe a skateboard trick

Goals

- To read, understand and write a set of directions
- To identify and discuss the features of an instructional text and introduce related terminology
- To rewrite an instructional text

Skateboard tricks have directions to tell you how to do them. They are an instructional text, written in a sequence of steps. The steps can be numbered or lettered. By following agreed steps, everyone can learn how to nollie. Diagrams and labels are useful to help the skateboarder.

- Ask: What do you know about instructional texts? Discuss responses.
- Allow time for students to read *How to Ollie*. Talk to them about how directions are written. Model how to begin writing the directions using Worksheet B.
- Refer to the glossary for a description of a nollie. Students brainstorm a list of alternative headings for directions on how to nollie. Listen for important words and phrases when they share their ideas.
- Have students write and share their headings.
- Students prepare to write the steps for the nollie. They note that most steps begin with a verb. They write the steps.
- Brainstorm possible diagrams with labels to make the steps clearer.
- Have students complete the task by editing the steps.
- Listen to students read their directions, noting how they vary the pace of reading to suit the content.

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Worksheet A Analysing characters

Name: _____ Date: _____

Record information about Carlo.

Chapter	Action	Speech and thoughts	Feelings
Chapter 1 Doing Tricks			
Chapter 2 The Competition			
Chapter 3 Lunch Time			
Chapter 4 Pumpkin for Lunch			
Chapter 5 Nonna's Pasta			

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Worksheet B Reading and writing an instructional text

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write directions for how to do a skateboard trick.

Heading
Prepare the steps
Directions
Step 1
Step 2
Step 3
Step 4
Step 5