

The Longest Eel in the World

Benjy has seen a gigantic eel. He wants Team Turbo to help him catch it. Carlo would rather be surfing! But Harry discovers a way to catch eels without using a hook, so they all go down to the river to help. Will Team Turbo catch the eel or will it slip away?



Reading strategy

Listening to yourself as you read

- To track and enjoy the story
- To predict the words that are coming up
- To self-correct if the text doesn't make sense
- To self-correct if the text doesn't sound right

Comprehension focus

- Interpreting figurative language

Fluency focus

- Varying the pace of reading in response to a range of punctuation marks

Genre focus

- Report

Day 1: Before reading

- Introduce the book by discussing the cover and reading the title together.
- Encourage students to share what they know about eels and related experiences. Record their comments on a chart headed "What we know about eels".
- Read and discuss the blurb, then engage students in predicting the story. Have students write their predictions on sticky notes. Allow time for them to share and compare their predictions with a partner and the group.
- Introduce the reading strategy by discussing the importance of listening to yourself when you read and model how listening helps us to:
 - track and enjoy the story;
 - predict words that are coming up;
 - self-correct if the text doesn't make sense or doesn't sound right.
- Allow students to practise applying the strategy by rereading the blurb independently.

During reading

- Read the Chapter 1 heading and discuss its relevance to the story. Predict what kind of net is referred to. Is it a fishing net or the internet?
- Read the text with students. Add to the chart any new information learned about eels. Confirm or negate predictions.
- Identify the voice of the story. Ask: Who is telling this story? Allow students to justify their opinions and encourage them to use excerpts from the text to support their answers. Confirm on page 4.
- Pose questions that will help students reflect on what happened and the relationships between the characters. Ask: Why did Stace say "The eel's name gets longer every time you see it."? Why is she teasing Benjy?

- Have students check their original predictions about the story and record a different prediction or refine their original thoughts.
- Discuss what it means to make inferences and to read between the lines.
- Read the opening of Chapter 2, 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.
- Discuss features of the text where the reader must infer the meaning, e.g. “*Two seconds later it was worse – much worse*”.
- Review the term *figurative language* and discuss examples from the text, e.g. *Secure the rope, Number Two*.

After reading

- Read Worksheet A and model how students should make entries for Chapters 1 and 2.
- Allow time for students to complete the task. Emphasise that when we read figurative language, we read between the lines rather than take the language literally.
- Allow time for students to share and compare their work.

Fluency focus

Read *Longfin Eels* or *Big Eel’s Rap* to students. Discuss how they should use their voices when reading to an audience. Have students read along with *Longfin Eels*. They practise changing the expression and tone of their reading to suit the features of the text and the pace of their reading in response to the punctuation marks.

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:

- hyphenated words
- variant graphemes for /ee/
- alliteration
- onomatopoeia
- synonyms

Activity 1 Hyphenated words

Record the word *high-five* on the board. Find the word on page 17 and reread it together in context. Discuss the meaning, then introduce or review the term “hyphenated words”. Model how two words have been joined with a hyphen to make one. Brainstorm a list of other hyphenated words, e.g. *over-the-counter*, *part-time*, *up-to-date*. Students record and read the list. They discuss the meaning of each word.

Activity 2 Variant graphemes for /ee/

Record and read together the words *eel* and *eats*. Identify the sound that is common to both

words. Underline the letters that represent the /ee/ vowel sound in both words. Have students work with a partner to find other words with the /ee/ vowel sound in a chapter of the text, e.g. *teeth, money, we, Maddy, Evie, these, Team*. They classify the words into groups according to the spelling of the /ee/ sound in the words. Have students copy the lists of words for each spelling pattern and underline the /ee/ sound in each, e.g. *e, ea, ee, e_e, y, ey, ie*.

Activity 3 Alliteration

Use the name *Team Turbo* to model and explain alliteration, which is the use of the same letter(s) to begin two words. Have students scan the contents page for examples of alliteration. (*Pumpkin's Patch, Slippery Situation*) Involve students in the creation of phrases that have alliteration, e.g. *soggy sandwich, crazy crackers*. Students record their own definition of alliteration and add examples.

Activity 4 Onomatopoeia

Review the meaning of *onomatopoeia* using a word from the text, e.g. *Squishy, squashy*. Discuss the purpose in the text, then invite students to recall other examples of sound words in the text, *mushy, squash, slithered*. Discuss how these words improve the story for the reader. Compile a class list of onomatopoeic words, including words recalled from past reading. Practise reading the list together.

Activity 5 Synonyms

Discuss the meaning of *synonym*. Look for synonyms on page 6, e.g. *gigantic, biggest*. Look for more synonyms in the text. Think of synonyms for *love, smiled, gazed*. Record and read a list.

Day 2: Before reading

- Review the reading strategy by covering important words in the statements on the "What we know about eels" chart. Ask students to predict the missing words as they read the statements aloud.
- Record students' predictions and tell them they were able to make good predictions because they were listening to themselves and drawing on their prior knowledge of eels as they read.
- Allow time for students to share their predictions, then read the Chapter 3 heading together. Predict what the chapter might be about.

During reading

- Read Chapter 3 with students. Stop at appropriate places to discuss the competition between Carlo and Pumpkin. Interpret the figurative language, e.g. "*I think it's time Team Turbo pulled its tights up.*"
- Read the opening of Chapter 4, 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. At the end of the chapter invite students to add information to the "What we know about eels" chart.

After reading

- Explain expectations for Chapters 3 and 4 on Worksheet A.
- Discuss the value of rereading excerpts in context. Model the process and allow time for students to complete the task.

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.

Activity 2 Perform the rap

Encourage students to perform word or sound percussion in time with the rhythm of the rap. Pairs of students perform the rap with one student chanting a repetitive phrase or sound quietly in the background while the other student reads the rap.

Activity 3 Identify rhyme

Analyse each verse and the refrain to identify the pattern that has been used. Note any deviations and discuss. Identify the words at the end of the second line and the last line of each verse. Identify words that rhyme and words that don't in each verse. Students note the different spellings for rhyming words, e.g. *hood/should*, *whale/tail*. They brainstorm other sets of rhyming words that could be used. Have students choose a set of rhymes and write a verse using the same pattern as the original. They perform their verse as part of a group performance.

Activity 4 Identify rhythm

Identify the way that syllables work to establish a rhythm, e.g. when the last two lines are read as one. Brainstorm for other phrases with a similar rhythm that could be introduced. Have students practise varying the volume of their voices to add another dimension to the sound pattern.

Activity 5 Publish a rap

Have each student produce their own rap about one aspect of eeling or fishing. They use a computer and add graphics to their rap. Students jointly publish their raps as one book along with other details about eeling or fishing. Identify the cover features of books that are made up of collections of stories. Students include these features in their publication of raps.

Day 3: Before reading

- Review the reading strategy by discussing how listening when reading helps readers stop and self-correct when the text doesn't sound right or make sense.

- Model how to use excerpts from the text when talking about features of the story.
- Involve students in checking their predictions with a partner and then making final additions or changes to their predictions after reading the last chapter title. Ask: Why is the title for Chapter 5 “A Tights Situation” and not “A Tight Situation”?

During reading

- Read the opening of Chapter 5, then have students take over, choral reading it together to practice fluency. Ask them to note where they varied the reading to suit the situation.
- Identify and interpret figurative language. Ask: Why did Benjy come up with a new name for the eel? Do you think it was a better name?
- Discuss the ending and allow time for students to confirm or negate their predictions.

After reading

- Discuss expectations for Chapter 5 on Worksheet A and help students get started.

Publish a report

Goals

- To read and write a report
- To identify and discuss the features of a report

Reports tell us all about a topic. The heading tells what the report will be about. Reports include “who, what, where, when, how, why” information. The information can be presented in a graphic form. Reports begin with an interesting opening sentence and they end with a closing statement. Sometimes reports have subheadings to break up the text.

- Ask: What do you know about reports? Discuss responses.
- Students read *Longfin Eels*. Ask: What did you already know about eels? What did you learn?
- Discuss the need to sequence paragraphs of a report in a logical manner. Count the paragraphs and discuss the purpose of the introduction and conclusion.
- Allow time for students to reread the report, copy Worksheet B and cut it into meaningful sections, sequence the sections and then paste them on paper.
- Discuss the purpose and features of headings and subheadings, including the use of capital letters. Brainstorm a list of headings and possible subheadings for each section of *Longfin Eels*. Read the list together.
- Allow time for students to add their heading and subheadings to their report.
- Remind them to include acknowledgments by adding Benjy’s name as the author of the report and their name as the designer and publisher. Allow time for students to complete the task.
- Listen to students read their reports, noting how they use intonation to convey the author’s message.

The Longest Eel in the World

Worksheet A Identifying figurative language

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read between the lines to understand what the following quotes mean.

<p>Chapter 2 Longer than a Conger Eel What did Maddy really mean when she said, "It could be worse you know."</p>	<p>Chapter 2 Longer than a Conger Eel What did Stace really mean when she said, "A lot longer than it was yesterday, if Benjy is telling the story."</p>
<p>Chapter 3 Pumpkin's Patch! What did Pumpkin really mean when he said, "Well, look at this, Curly!"</p>	<p>Chapter 4 A Slippery Situation What did Benjy really mean when he yelled, "Heave ho!"</p>
<p>Chapter 5 A Tights Situation What did Maddy really mean when she said, "Problems solved".</p>	

The Longest Eel in the World

Worksheet B A report

Name: _____ Date: _____

Longfin Eels

A report by Benjy Hasluck

Longfin eels are born in the sea and drift on currents to reach the land. They live in rivers, streams, lakes, dams and swamps.

These eels eat little fish and shellfish.

Some longfin eels live in freshwater for as long as 90 years before breeding. They travel a long way back to their breeding grounds, and then they die.

When they are in freshwater, longfin eels don't usually move very far in any direction.

Eels that are found close to the sea are normally males and most of the ones that live further up rivers and in lakes and dams are females.

The skin of freshwater eels is full of oil which keeps the eel moist. They can take in air through their skin as well as their gills. This means they can survive for 48 hours out of water. Eels can even travel across land for short distances.

