

The Finest in the Land

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<p>Comprehension strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehension strategies are taught throughout the Teaching Notes to enable pupils to understand what they are reading in books that they can read independently. In these Teaching Notes the following strategies are taught: <i>Prediction, Questioning, Clarifying, Summarising, Imagining</i> 	<p>Tricky words</p> <p>can't, castle, daughter, dungeons, guitar, have, love, many, married, musicians, one, people, practising,so, some, strange, surprised, tambourine, there, two, want, were, what, who</p> <p>C = Language comprehension</p> <p>W = Word recognition</p>
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Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- C** (*Clarifying*) Together, look at the cover. Ask the children: *What are the children doing? Can you name the musical instruments? Which children are playing the same instruments?*
- C** (*Questioning*) Ask: *From the picture on the cover can you guess who is 'the finest in the land'?*
- C** (*Questioning, Prediction*) Read the title and ask the children to try to guess what the story is about. Look through the book to see if they are right.

Strategy check

Can the children match the names of the instruments mentioned in the book ('kazoo' page 3; 'tambourine' page 3; 'guitar' page 5; 'recorder' page 9) to the instruments shown on the cover?

Independent reading

- Ask the children to read the story. Praise and encourage them as they read. If they get stuck, prompting where necessary. Encourage them to use their knowledge of phonics as well as the illustrations to help with unusual words such as 'kazoo' and 'mixture'.
- C** (*Clarifying*) Ask: *Why did Hugh's friends pretend to be entertainers?*
- W** Think of some other words that end in 'est' to show comparison, e.g. lovely/loveliest, hot/hottest, sunny/sunniest.
- C** (*Prediction*) Ask: *Do you think the king will be angry with Edith and Hugh when he wakes up? How do you know?*

Assessment Check that the children can discriminate, spell and read the phonemes 'ear' ('hear') and 'ea' ('ready') and that they are applying their word-level skills.

Returning to the text

- C** (*Questioning, Clarifying*) On page 17, ask, *Why does Nadim say 'I said something funny was going on'?*
- C** (*Imagining*) On page 28, ask, *How do you think Hugh and Edith feel when they ride away on their horses?*
- C** (*Summarising*) Ask the children to look at the pictures in the book and tell you all the things they see that make them think the entertainers weren't very good. Ask: *How did Wilma and her friends save the day?*

- W** On pages 8 and 11, ask, *Why do you think the author uses ellipses (the three dots after each 'but')?* (This shows that the characters are unsure about what is going on.)
- C** (**Questioning**) Ask: *Can you remember where the king said he would put the entertainers?* (the dungeons, page 24).

Group and independent reading activities

Objective Draw together information from across a whole text, using simple signposts in the text.

W **You will need** a dictionary for each pair of children and three Post-it notes for each dictionary to mark pages.

- Ask the children, in pairs, to go through the storybook listing all the words they can find that have to do with entertaining (band, entertain(ers), guitar, instruments, juggler, kazoo, musicians, play, practise, recorder, sing(ing), song, stilts, tambourine, tune).
- Ask the children to look up definitions in their dictionary for three of the words, marking the pages with a Post-it note. Choose some children to read them out.

Assessment Do the children use their alphabetic skills to find the words in the dictionary?

Objective Read independently and with increasing fluency. Adopt appropriate roles and consider alternative courses of action.

- Choose four children to read pages 24, 25 and 26 of the story: a narrator, the Duke, John and Wilma. Give them time to read the text carefully and to practise using an appropriate voice, first on their own, then together. Remind them to read only the words of their own character.

C Ask the children to read the passage to the class, putting in as much expression as they can (the Duke booming, John begging, Wilma whispering).

Assessment Did the children read the descriptions of their characters' voices carefully before they read aloud and notice that they 'shouted', 'begged' or 'whispered'?

Objective Make adventurous word choices appropriate to the style and text.

W Ask: *Who can play a musical instrument? What is it?* Write the instruments that the children play on the board. Ask if any members of their families play different ones and add those. What other instruments do they know? Add some unusual instruments, such as the trombone, ukulele, French horn, zither, mbira (African finger drum).

W Ask the children to put the instrument words into alphabetical order, and to then choose one instrument to draw and label its various parts.

Assessment Can the children alphabetise beyond the first letter, e.g. triangle, trumpet?

Speaking, listening and drama activities

Objective Present work drawn from different parts of the curriculum for members of their own class.

You will need to write this silly rhyme on the board (or make up one using the theme of the book):

We are the finest in the land,
 In all the land, the finest band.
 We'll sing our songs as best we can,
 Give us a hand, we'll take the stand.

Give the children some time to work out a way of performing the rhyme in groups. They could make up a tune and sing it, chant it together or take turns to say the lines separately.

Ask groups to perform it for the rest of the class.

Writing activities

Objective Make adventurous word and language choices appropriate to the style and purpose of the text.

- Explain what a tongue-twister is and give an example, e.g. 'Round and round the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran'; 'She sells seashells on the seashore'.
- Tell the children that the sleeping mixture in the story still isn't working and they have got to help the children to entertain the Duke. They must invent tongue-twisters to make him laugh.
- Together, think of some simple 's' and 'sh' words that could be used to make sentences, e.g. sea, sinking, shoddy, ship, should, slipping, slithery, sloppy, slowly, stop, sharp, skinny, smelly, small.
- The children attempt to write their own tongue-twister, using the words discussed or others they can think of, and take turns to read it out.

Assessment Have the children understood the concept of a tongue-twister?

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