

BRANCHES™



growing readers

EARLY CHAPTER BOOKS FOR AGES 5-7

Use this guide to:

- Help students become confident readers at the critical transition from beginning readers to chapter books
- Meet critical **Common Core State Standards** in Speaking and Listening, Reading, and Writing (see specific Common Core standards throughout the guide)
- Enjoy great stories with your students and have fun while you share the joy of reading!

For more information about the Reading Levels and "Appeals To" Levels in this guide, visit scholastic.com/readinglevel



SCHOLASTIC

WHY BRANCHES?

Branches is perfect for newly independent readers ages 5-7 and kids who are ready to “cross over” from beginning readers but are not quite ready for traditional chapter books.

Nurturing Independent Readers

Children become skilled as independent readers when the books they select are not too easy or too difficult. The series in the Branches line help develop readers’ confidence and facilitate comprehension, and support their growth as independent readers.

Independent readers can:

- Recognize many sight words
- Utilize different strategies such as context clues to determine unfamiliar words
- Integrate meaning, syntax, and phonics easily
- Read with fluency, expression, and proper phrasing
- Handle longer, more complex texts with short chapters and engaging characters
- Summarize texts that they read
- Take on traits of skillful and successful readers

Some of the components of Branches books that encourage ongoing independence as readers are:

- Accessible language and vocabulary
- High-interest storyline
- Relatable characters and situations
- Readable sentence structure
- Engaging format
- Broadens reading strategies and improves comprehension

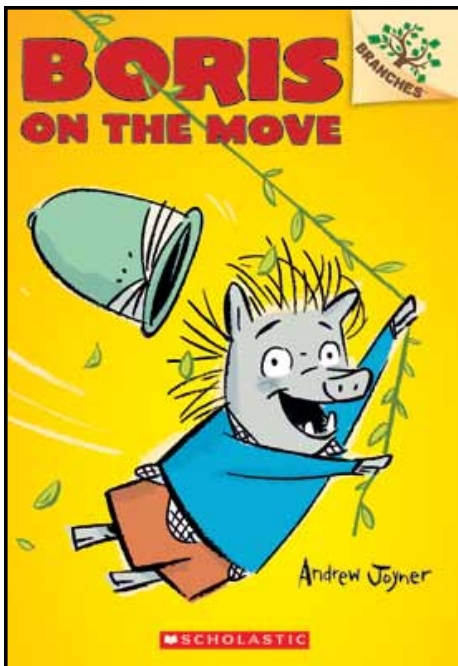
Motivating Readers

A number of series will be published in the Branches line. Series books provide an added incentive because children love to read about characters they already know. The stories provide readers with a sense of satisfaction and familiarity, and readers’ comprehension skills improve as they revisit popular characters in each book.

Monitoring Progress

As children continue their reading progress, have them generate a reading log like the one below.

READING LOG				
Title	Number of Pages	Date Started	Date Finished	Recommend to a Friend?
				Yes No
				Yes No



Boris #1: Boris on the Move

by Andrew Joyner

Boris lives in Hogg Bay, but dreams of big adventures in the Amazon jungle just like his favorite book character, Captain Clive.

May 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-48443-5 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-48442-8 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-48782-5 • \$4.99

80 pages • Full color

Word count: 727

Lexile: AD230L

Guided Reading Level: M

Spache Reading Level: 2.1



BEFORE READING

Set a purpose:

- Today, the class will read the chapter book, *Boris on the Move*.
- Ask, "What do you think Boris is doing on the cover? Does the illustration give you any information about the character?"
- Read introductory pages one through eight aloud to your class. Ask the students to predict what they think this story will be about based on the information that the author has given about Boris.

DURING READING

- Have students follow along as you read aloud the first chapter in *Boris on the Move*. Point to the words as you read so that students can follow along on the page.
- After reading the text on a page, stop and model how students read the captions next to the illustrations.
- Discuss the differences between the ways the author uses narrative storyline and speech bubbles to tell the story. (RL 1.6: Identify who is telling the story at various points in the text.)

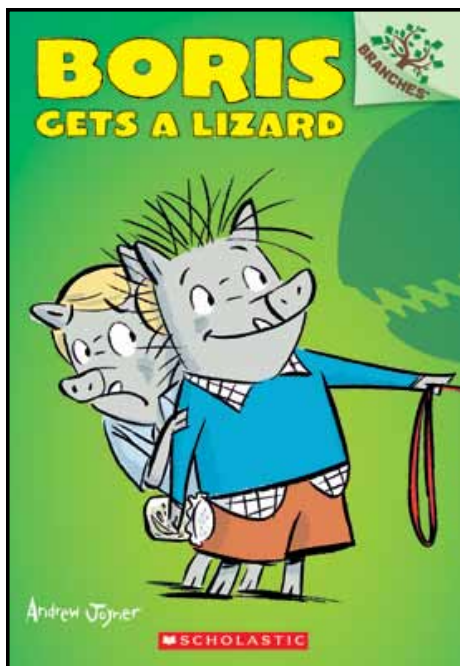
AFTER READING

- Ask students to identify their favorite part of the story and the reasons for why they liked it.
- Write down words on a chart that students struggled with or words that were interesting such as "clambered." If students are not sure of the word's meaning, encourage them to use context clues to help them. (RL K.4: Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.)

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- Revisit *Boris on the Move* and have students examine the ways that the illustrator has shown the different adventures of Boris and his family. For example, photographs show Boris's parents visiting various countries while thought clouds show the adventures that Boris wants to explore. Have students draw another adventure that Boris might want to have using one of the formats used in the book such as photographs or thought clouds. (RL 1.7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.)





Boris #2: Boris Gets a Lizard

by Andrew Joyner

Boris has lots of pets including Lion the cat, Ethel and Tina the chickens, Frank the sheep, and Quince the duck, along with a few worms, spiders, and a beetle. But what Boris really wants is a Komodo dragon.

June 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-48447-3 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-48446-6 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-48783-2 • \$4.99

80 pages • Full color

Word count: 775

Lexile: 320L

Guided Reading Level: M

Spache Reading Level: 2.1



BEFORE READING

Set a purpose:

- Today, the class will read the chapter book, *Boris Gets a Lizard*.
- Point to and read the title and author. Explain that Andrew Joyner is both the author and the illustrator. Discuss what role each one fulfills in creating a story. (RL K.6: *With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.*)
- Have students read pages one through eight. What similarities are there with these pages between *Boris on the Move* and *Boris Gets a Lizard*?

DURING READING

- Have students read Chapter 1 to themselves. Once they have finished, discuss Chapter 1 to support and assess comprehension. Then have students read the rest of the chapters independently.
- Give students sticky notes to mark pages that they think are humorous or that they want to discuss later.

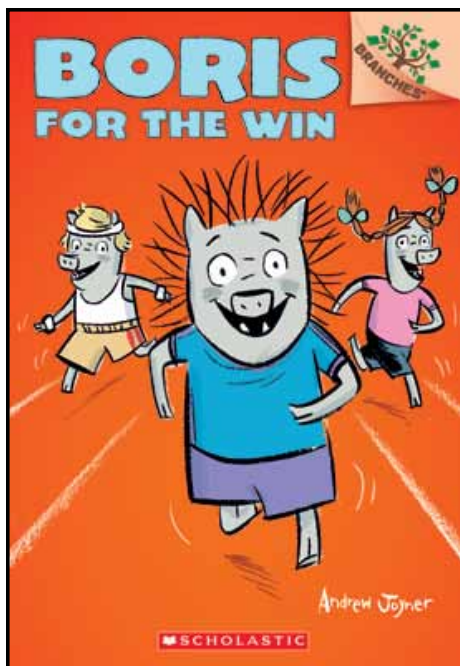
AFTER READING

- Have students retell the story using the structure, "What happened at the beginning, in the middle, and how did the story end?" (RL 1.2: *Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.*)
- Ask students, "What was the lesson in this story?"

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Word Journal:** Learning new vocabulary words is important for any reader. Give each student a small notebook or strips of paper stapled together. As students encounter a word that they do not know, a word that intrigues them, or a word that appeals to the ear as they say it, have them record it in the word journal. Tell students to listen for words about feelings or words that make them use their senses. These words can be used later in discussion or when writing about the story. (RL 1.4: *Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.*)





Boris #3: Boris for the Win

by Andrew Joyner

Boris is always tired of Eddie winning all of the events during Sports Day at school. So Boris and his friend Frederick come up with a Top Secret Training Plan with their coach, Alice. Will they win the high jump, the long jump, or the marathon?

August 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-48449-7 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-48448-0 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-48784-9 • \$4.99

80 pages • Full color

Word count: 712

Lexile: 160L

Guided Reading Level: L

Spache Reading Level: 2.0



BEFORE READING

Set a purpose:

- Today, the class will read the chapter book, *Boris for the Win*.
- Discuss the characters and recall events from *Boris on the Move* and *Boris Gets a Lizard*. Take a picture walk through the first three chapters of *Boris for the Win* and have students predict what this story will be about.

DURING READING

- Have students read *Boris for the Win* independently. As they read, encourage them to write down any questions that pique their curiosity and that they would like to discuss.
- As students read, have them create a timeline of the story events.

AFTER READING

- Once students have finished the story, ask them to draw the most important scene in the book and explain its importance and action. (RL 1.3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.)
- Praise children and tell them how proud you are that they are reading independently.

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Problem Solving:** Boris encounters a problem in each book and seeks to find a creative solution. Have students fold a piece of paper in half and then write "problem" on one side and "solution" on the other. Have them draw or write about the problem and solution in each story. They can compare and contrast their responses with others who have read the same book or else compare and contrast the different problems that Boris encounters across books in the series.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION

(RL K.9: With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories; RL 1.9: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of character in the stories.)

Also Available:

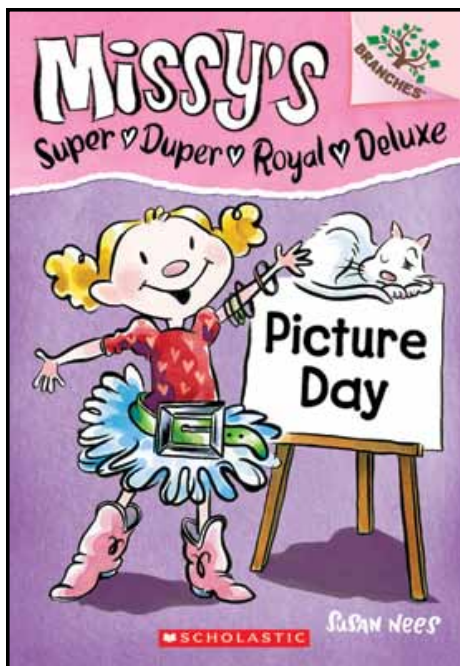
Boris #4: Boris Sees the Light

October 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-48454-1 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-48453-4 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-48785-6 • \$4.99



Missy's Super Duper Royal Deluxe #1: Picture Day

by Susan Nees

Melissa Abigail Rose (Missy) anxiously anticipates picture day at school and dreams about the fabulous outfit she will wear. Her mother, however, has other ideas. Missy commiserates to her friend Oscar about her boring ensemble. Together, they find a creative solution to her picture day debacle.

May 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-43851-3 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49609-4 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-54009-4 • \$4.99

80 pages • Full color

Word count: 1599

Lexile: AD500L

Guided Reading Level: L

Spache Reading Level: 2.1



BEFORE READING

Tell students that today they are going to have the opportunity to read *Missy's Super Duper Royal Deluxe: Picture Day* independently.

- Identify the title and author. Predict what the story might be about.
- Discuss the students' experiences related to the topic of Picture Day.
- Identify several pages with speech bubbles and talk about the bubbles' purpose and a strategy for reading them.

DURING READING

Have students think about the following as they read:

- What did the author write about?
- Who is telling the story?
- Whose point of view is featured in the story?

AFTER READING

- Ask students to retell what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story. (**RL 2.5:** *Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.*)

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Fill in the Blanks:** To support students in retelling the sequence of events in a story, have them fill in the blanks by using the following structure.

First, _____.

Then, _____.

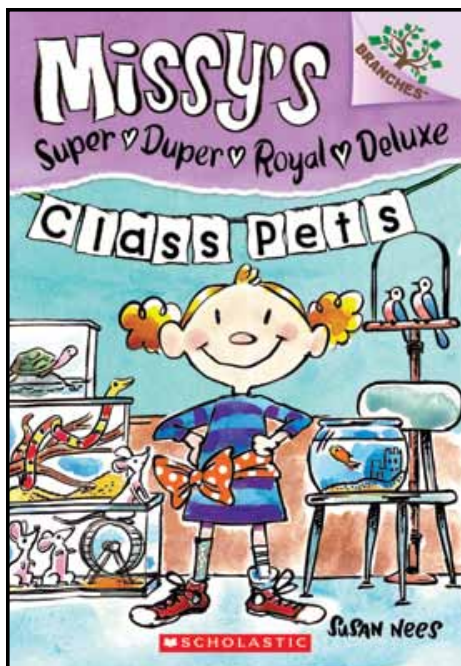
This happened at the end of the chapter/book:

_____.

I think Missy felt _____ because _____.

(**RL 1.3:** *Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story using key details.*)





Missy's Super Duper Royal Deluxe #2: Class Pets

by Susan Nees

Missy has big plans for when she brings home the class pets, Eenie-Meenie, Miney, and Moe. Unfortunately, the new girl Tiffany is given first choice and chooses the same pets that Missy covets. Will Missy's pet plans be ruined?

June 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-43852-0 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49610-0 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-54010-0 • \$4.99

80 pages • Full color

Word count: 1413

Lexile: 390L

Guided Reading Level: M

Spache Reading Level: 2.1



BEFORE READING

- Have students discuss the cover of *Missy's Super Duper Royal Deluxe: Class Pets*. What pets are depicted on the cover? Could these be the pets in Missy's class?
- Talk about what "point of view" means. Read a few speech bubbles to illustrate the different points of view by the characters.

DURING READING

- As students read, have them use a graphic organizer to record each character's personality traits and the page number that shows the action or behavior that supports their idea. (RL 2.3: *Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.*)

Character	Personality Trait	Page #

Also Available:

Missy's Super Royal Deluxe #3: School Play

October 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-43853-7 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49611-7 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-57703-8 • \$4.99

Missy's Super Royal Deluxe #4: Field Trip

December 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-43854-4 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49612-4 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-57704-5 • \$4.99

AFTER READING

- Discuss the personality traits of each character. What evidence did students find of this trait?

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Bubble Reading:** Readers' theater is one of the best ways to promote fluent reading because it involves an oral performance. *Missy's Super Duper Royal Deluxe* includes extensive dialogue between characters, particularly Missy and Oscar. Select a chapter from one of the Missy books such as Chapter 3, "No Ruffles, No Rainbows, No Ribbons, No Sparkles, No Nothing!" in *Picture Day* or Chapter 4, "Green Gummy Bears" in *Class Pets*. Prepare the students to engage in a readers' theater bubble reading by doing the following:
 - ♦ Point to and read a selection of Missy's speech bubbles. Ask the students, "Who is telling this portion of the story? How do you know? How is she feeling? What type of expression should be used in reading Missy's speech bubbles?"
 - ♦ Point to and read a selection of Oscar's speech bubbles. Ask the students the same questions as you did when discussing Missy's speech bubbles.
 - ♦ Next, select three children to read the parts of the narrator, Missy, and Oscar. Remind them to read with expression and to convey what the characters are feeling.

(RL 2.6: *Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.*)



Lotus Lane #1: Kiki: My Stylish Life

by Kyla May

Kiki, a member of the Lotus Lane Girls Club, is a true fashionista. Written in diary format, Kiki tells of the activities she and her friends engage in such as scrapbooking, doggie day spa, cupcake baking, and of course, pajama parties.

May 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-44512-2 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49613-1 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49680-3 • \$4.99

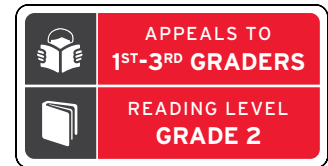
96 pages • Black-and-white

Word count: 5487

Lexile: AD640L

Guided Reading Level: N

Spache Reading Level: 2.3



BEFORE READING

- Tell students that they will have the opportunity to read about a group of girls who have formed the Lotus Lane Girls Club. Share the first book in the series, about Kiki.
- Open up the book and point out the different text features such as captions, abbreviated words, quotes, dialogue boxes, and graphics.

DURING READING

- Point out how new vocabulary and interesting words are shown throughout the book. Have students mark these pages with a sticky note to revisit after reading. (RL 2.7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting or plot.)
- Have students think about their strategy for reading what is presented on the pages.

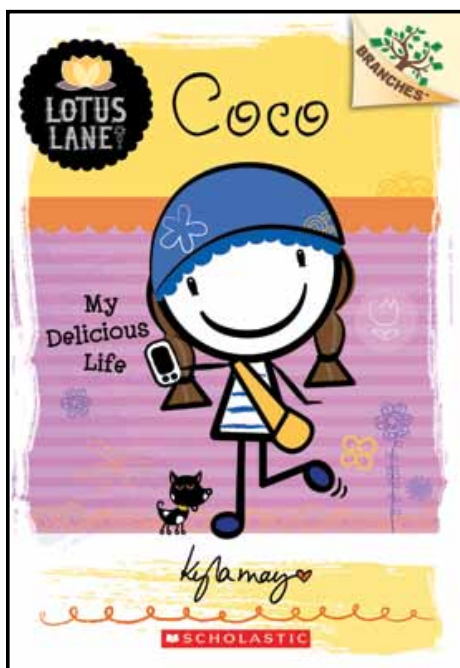
AFTER READING

- Ask students to describe which text features they most enjoyed and why. What were their strategies for reading the additional text?
- Have students write down the traits for each character on a chart that can be added to as other books in the series are read.

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Create a Scrapbook:** One of the things that the Lotus Lane Girls Club enjoys doing is creating scrapbook pages. These pages should be ongoing as each book is read, with one or more pages devoted to each character. Some of the information could include:
 - ♦ Personality traits of each character
 - ♦ Appearance of the character(s)
 - ♦ Accomplishments
 - ♦ Challenges faced by character(s) and how they were resolved
 - ♦ Words that describe the character
 - Have students think about the layout and design of their scrapbook pages as well as color and images.
- (RL 2.3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.)





Lotus Lane #2: Coco: My Delicious Life

by Kyla May

Coco loves animals, gardening, digging in the dirt, climbing trees, and especially baking. She lives on Lotus Lane with her BFFs Kiki and Lulu who join her in fund-raising by selling her World-Famous Coco Cupcakes.

July 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-44514-6 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49615-5 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49681-0 • \$4.99

96 pages • Black-and-white

Word count: 5957

Lexile: 740L

Guided Reading Level: O

Spache Reading Level: 2.6



BEFORE READING

- Discuss with students what stands out for them in the illustrations. What do they think the illustrator wants the reader to notice about the characters, setting, and events? What mood or tone is the illustrator trying to convey?
- Have students think about the subtitle, "My Delicious Life." What do they think Coco enjoys doing?

DURING READING

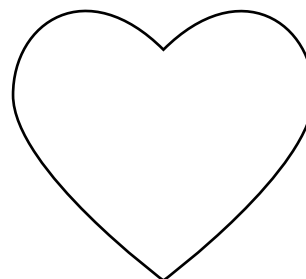
- Encourage students to pay attention to the punctuation that is used in the diary entries. How does the punctuation assist in knowing how Coco is feeling?

AFTER READING

- Discuss the story by talking about the characters, setting, and events.
- Create a chart showing these main components of the story.

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Character Heart Mapping:** The Lotus Lane Girls use hearts throughout the book to show what they love, to provide definitions of words, and to show the meanings of abbreviations such as TTYL or LOL. Have readers create a heart map to show all the different things that Kiki or Coco love (such as fashion, food, or animals), the words that they abbreviate, or maybe even the various types of cupcakes that they enjoy creating. The heart map can be divided into sections or the images can be drawn randomly. After the map has been created, have students share them with a small or whole group by explaining what they did, why they chose that aspect of the book, and how the text and illustrations helped them to create their heart map.



Also Available:

Lotus Lane #3: Lulu: My Glamorous Life

September 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-44516-0 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49618-6 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49682-7 • \$4.99

Lotus Lane #4: Mika: My New Life

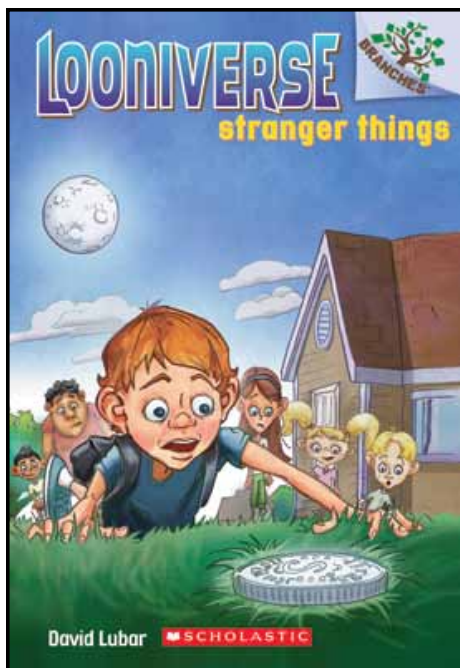
November 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-44519-1 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49620-9 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49687-2 • \$4.99

(**RL 2.7:** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.)



Looniverse #1: Stranger Things

written by David Lubar, illustrated by Matt Loveridge

Strange things seem to happen to Ed after he finds a silver coin with the words *Strange, Stranger* on it. But just who is the "stranger" that the coin belongs to?

May 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-49602-5 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49601-8 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49685-8 • \$4.99

96 pages • Black-and-white

Word count: 5735

Lexile: AD520L

Guided Reading Level: O

Spache Reading Level: 2.3



BEFORE READING

- Ask students, "Has anything strange ever happened to you? What did you do?"
- What do sayings mean such as, "Money doesn't grow on trees"?
- Read the first chapter. Ask students to respond to the questions of *who, what, when, where, why, and how*.

DURING READING

- Have students examine the illustrations as they read. How do the illustrations assist in comprehending the story?
- Suggest to students that they write down details and examples that answer the questions of *who, what, when, where, why, and how*.

AFTER READING

- Ask students to retell what they read.
- Generate questions that will require students to support their opinions and responses to the text such as:
 - ♦ What strange things happened in the story?
 - ♦ What prompted each event to happen?
 - ♦ How did Ed or his friends deal with the strange events?

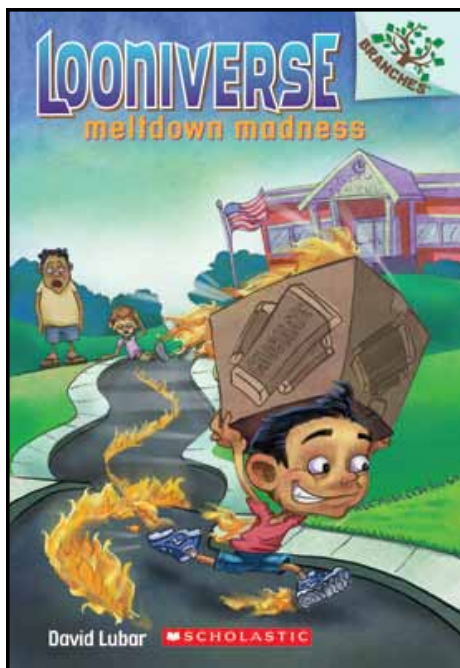
EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Five W's and an H:** Have students respond to each chapter or each book in the series on the chart shown below. Be sure that they include details and page numbers to support their answers.
 - ♦ Who was there?
 - ♦ What happened?
 - ♦ When did it happen?
 - ♦ Where did it happen?
 - ♦ Why did it happen?
 - ♦ How did the character(s) feel?

What	Who
When	Where
Why	How

(**RL 2.1:** Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why, and how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.)





Looniverse #2: Meltdown Madness

written by David Lubar, illustrated by Matt Loveridge

Ed has to sell chocolate bars if he wants to join the soccer team. However, the silver coin continues to cause strange events and Ed must find a way to not only sell the melted chocolate but to deal with the chaos.

July 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-49604-9 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49603-2 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49686-5 • \$4.99

96 pages • Black-and-white

Word count: 5555

Lexile: AD480L

Guided Reading Level: O

Spache Reading Level: 2.2



BEFORE READING

- Share a variety of sayings with students such as, "A fool and his money are soon parted" or "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth." Discuss what they mean.

DURING READING

- Encourage students to reread any portions of the book that may seem confusing.
- Have students record the various sayings in a notebook as they read. Write down the meanings if the students can determine what the sayings mean using context clues.

AFTER READING

- Organize students into small groups for literature circles. Assign students roles such as summarizer (the student who summarizes the story), the discussion leader (the student who facilitates the discussion), the real-life connector (the student who shares connections between story events and those from real life), and word wizard (the student who writes down words that s/he found confusing or interesting). Have them refer back to the story to assist them as they discuss the book. **(RL 3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text for the answers.)**

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Critical Reading:** Reading independently provides students with an opportunity to engage in critical reading. As they read *Looniverse: Meltdown Madness*, have students take notes on the following questions after reading each chapter:

- ♦ What was the most important thing that the character did in the chapter?
- ♦ How would you describe Ed's feelings in the chapter?
- ♦ Did anything about Ed or one of the other characters change in the chapter?
- ♦ Select a sentence or two from the chapter that is significant for the character. Why was it important?
- ♦ What do you think the character is going to learn from his/her experience?

(RL 3.3: Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.)

Also Available:

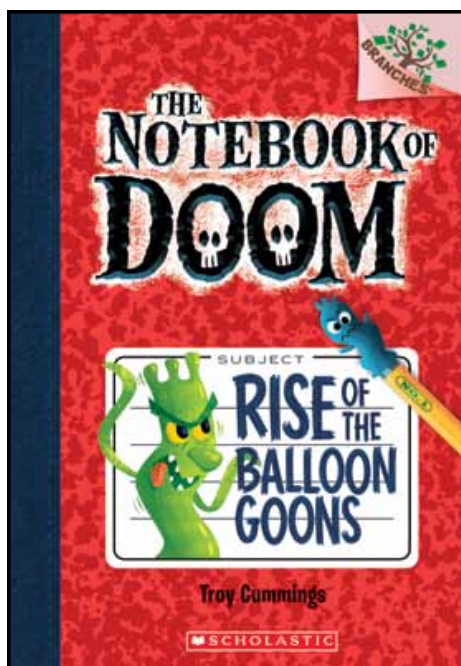
Looniverse #3: Dinosaur Disaster

November 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-49606-3 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49605-6 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49692-6 • \$4.99



The Notebook of Doom #1: Rise of the Balloon Goons

by Troy Cummings

Alexander Bopp has just moved to Stermont but immediately notices that things are a little strange in his new hometown. Can he survive his new school and classmates, as well as the balloon goons that are stalking him?

July 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-49323-9 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49322-2 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49326-0 • \$4.99

96 pages • Black-and-white

Word count: 5649

Lexile: AD490L

Guided Reading Level: N

Spache Reading Level: 2.5



BEFORE READING

- Show students the cover of *The Notebook of Doom: Rise of the Balloon Goons*. Ask if they have ever seen a large, inflatable balloon. What do they think a “balloon goon” might be?
- Share the notebook pages depicted on pages 24-25. Read aloud the entry about the “Playing Mantis” which includes habitat, diet, behavior, and a warning. Ask, “Is this a real insect?”

DURING READING

- As students independently read *The Notebook of Doom*, have them make predictions. Provide students with sticky notes to write down predictions and questions that might occur to them as they read.
- Have students pay attention to the plays on words, such as “The Morgue the Merrier” (p. 34), that are found throughout the book. Mark those pages with a sticky note as well to discuss later.

Also Available:

The Notebook of Doom #2: Day of the Night Crawlers

September 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-49325-3 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-49324-6 • \$15.99

eBook • 978-0-545-49327-7 • \$4.99

The Notebook of Doom #3: Attack of the Shadow Smashers

November 2013

Paperback • 978-0-545-55297-4 • \$4.99

Library Binding • 978-0-545-55298-1 • \$15.99

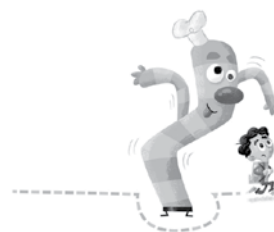
eBook • 978-0-545-55553-1 • \$4.99

AFTER READING

- Have students choose five events from the book that are fantasy or could not happen and write them down. Next have them share their list with another student. Which ones were the same and which were different?
- Discuss the beginning, middle, and end of the book. What were the characters’ problems and what were the solutions? (**RL 2.3:** *Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.*)

EXTENSION STRATEGY

- **Reader Profile Poster:** The notebook pages about the different creatures, as well as the author page, all provide information using a structure. Have students create their own reader profile poster by using the same format, including description, behavior, habitat, diet, evidence, and a warning. Make sure that they include a self-portrait! Then hang these in the reading corner. (**RL 2.7:** *Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.*)



Books may be ordered from any bookseller or your usual vendor. Teachers and librarians may order from Scholastic, 2931 East McCarty Street, P.O. Box 7502, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Call toll-free 1-800-724-6527.

Discussion guide written by Cyndi Giorgis,
Professor of Children's and Young Adult Literature,
College of Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV

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