

Helping Grandma



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Text Type: Non-fiction: Retell — Personal Account

Summary: This book presents a photographic account of two cousins helping their grandma prepare a Mi'kmaq feast.

Please note that at the time *Helping Grandma* was written, Mig Mag was a common spelling. The commonly preferred spelling now is Mi'kmaq, as seen in this teaching plan.

Audio Available Online
www.lpey.ca

Text Features

- ▶ fact sheet (page 16)
- ▶ author biography

Visual Literacy

- ▶ inset photos

Print Concepts

- ▶ quotation marks
- ▶ exclamation marks
- ▶ consistent placement of text
- ▶ repetitive language
- ▶ capitalization of names

First Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ making connections: text to self

Working with Words

- ▶ attending to print (words, spaces between words, tracking across lines and down pages)
- ▶ language predictability: associating meaning to words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ participate by joining in with the reading
- ▶ track print
- ▶ analyze text and pictures to understand unfamiliar concepts
- ▶ make text-to-self connections



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to self

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Say, *Do you ever have special meals with family members or friends? What's that like? Does it mean that you have special food on those occasions? Does everyone help to get the food ready?* Invite students to talk about food preparation for special occasions. Say, *We sometimes use special words to describe meals such as the ones we've been talking about. Instead of just "dinner," we might call it a "feast." A feast is usually a very special meal.* Write "feast" on chart paper or the board. Encourage students to write on sticky notes some words they might associate with the word "feast." (Some might simply draw pictures. You could ask volunteers to write the words under the pictures.) Have students place their sticky notes around the word "feast" on the chart paper or board.

Show the book cover and read the title. Say, *What do you think the people in this book will be helping Grandma to do? Have you ever helped your grandpa or grandma? How?* Read the text on the back cover and say, *We're going to find out about a feast and how these girls helped their grandma prepare for it.* Establish that the two girls on the back cover are the speaker and her cousin and then turn to the front cover picture and have students identify Grandma. Say, *The people in this book belong to the Mi'kmaq Nation. The Mi'kmaq are Indigenous people who settled in the northeast of North America thousands of years ago.*

ESL Note:

Encourage students to bring in photographs taken at any family feasts. Students can share information about the special occasions and the names of any of the foods in the photographs.

Self-monitoring

Do a picture walk through the book and encourage students to ask questions about the feast that is described by the pictures in the book. Jot their questions on the board.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Let's read the book together to find out what the girl and her cousin do to help Grandma get ready for the feast.



DURING READING

Tracking print/ print concepts

Read the book to the class. Track the words with your finger or a pointer. When you come to dialogue, change your voice to match the speaker.

Building confidence

Invite students to join in. After the first "Grandma says," slow down your voice on the "Gr," and give students an opportunity to join in that phrase.

Phonological and phonemic awareness

When you come to the word *loosgenigen*, stop and say it a few times. Invite the class to say the word and clap the syllables in the word.

Teaching Tip:

You will find the correct pronunciation for *loosgenigen* and other words in the text on page 16.

Language predictability

Pause at challenging vocabulary and ask questions to explore meanings (e.g., *cousin, boils, salmon, potatoes, frying, oven mitts, blueberries, basket, laughs, dice, count*).



AFTER READING

Analyzing/making connections: text to self

Say, *What different things did the girls do to help their grandmother get ready for the feast? Have you done jobs like those with your family?*

ESL Note: Have students point to pictures showing how the girls in the story helped their grandma. Allow for one-word responses.

Making connections: text to self and comparing

Are any parts of Grandma's feast the same as feasts you've had with your family? How are they the same? How are they different?

Second Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ inferring
- ▶ self-monitoring

Working with Words

- ▶ attending to print (words, spaces between words, tracking across lines and down pages)
- ▶ word solving and building: using word parts to read unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ join in with predictable and familiar language patterns
- ▶ track print using a pointer
- ▶ make inferences about how people felt about the feast
- ▶ self-monitor



BEFORE READING

Analyzing

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Briefly review the previous lesson. *Last time, we started talking about feasts. We read the book Helping Grandma. Let's look at what we wrote about feasts and see if there's anything we can add from the feast the people in the book had.* Discuss the sticky notes students prepared at the beginning of the previous lesson. Add any new information from the text. Encourage students to add anything else they may have thought of.

ESL Note: Provide picture dictionaries for students' reference and to use for communicating/clarifying meaning as the story is read and during discussions.

Inferring

Setting a Purpose

Let's read the book together again. This time, let's see if we can find out how the people in the book felt about the feast.



DURING READING

**Tracking print/
building confidence
Language predictability**

Read the book with students, tracking print. Invite students to join in.

Clarify any words that puzzle students.

Inferring

Say, *Authors don't always tell us everything, do they? Sometimes they expect us to figure things out for ourselves. What sorts of things can you look for that tell you how people are feeling? How do you think you might be able to tell in this book?*

Self-monitoring

Say, *In the last lesson, we wrote down some questions that we had about the events in this book. Now that we know what happens, let's look at our questions and make sure we've answered as many as we can.*

Text features

Read the fact sheet on page 16. You might begin that page by writing on chart paper or the board the caption words from page 16, then telling students that you will read them some information about each of these items. Point out how the information is arranged and how you “read” columns and rows.



AFTER READING

Inferring

Say, *How did the girls feel about helping their Grandma? How did the Grandma feel about preparing the feast? How do you know? What do the photographs tell you about their feelings? What do the words tell you?*

Teaching Tip:

As students share responses, ensure understanding of emotion words and other key words through discussion and the use of pictures, e.g., *On page 11, the girl telling the story is proudly showing the loosgenigen. What does it mean to be proud? What makes you feel proud? Why do you think the girl in the picture is proud?*

Self-monitoring

Say, *Can we answer the questions we thought of before we read this book? Do we have any other questions? (e.g., What is the girl doing on page 2? Why are they cooking outdoors? Why do they cook the bread in a frying pan? How do you play a hand drum?)* Encourage students to discuss their thoughts about the questions and answers.

Text features

Ask, *Why do you think the author included the fact sheet?* You might ask students to choose one of the items and make a drawing of it. Students can exchange drawings and tell each other one fact about the item in the picture.

Word solving and building

Note the word *Helping* in the title. Print the word “help” on chart paper or the board and discuss how adding “ing” changes it from *help* to *helping*. Point out other words in the story that have an “ing” ending (*getting, frying, watching*).

**Print concepts/
letter knowledge**

Frame the capital letters in *Grandma, Aunt Joan, I*. Discuss why letters are capitals. Match these capitals with lower case letters.

Third Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ synthesizing
- ▶ making connections: text to self and comparing

Working with Words

- ▶ tracking print
- ▶ analyzing word patterns

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ track print using a pointer
- ▶ join in familiar sections of text
- ▶ use pictures to predict and verify information and text
- ▶ synthesize: integrate new information
- ▶ make text-to-self connections



BEFORE READING

Synthesizing

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Call on a student to briefly tell what happened in the book. Ask the rest of the class if they agree with this student's summary, and if there is anything else they think should be added.

With students, examine the sticky notes that have been used in the first two readings to create the "feast web." On chart paper or the board, make three columns headed, "People," "Food," and "Actions." Invite students to take their sticky notes and place them in the appropriate column.

Tracking print

Invite students to read the entries in each column. Say, *Let's see what we learned about the food, the people, and what the people did in this book.* Ask individual students to take the pointer and to track print as the columns are reread. Offer support by guiding the pointer with the student if necessary.

ESL Note: Students who have difficulty tracking the print independently as the columns are reread may do so with a partner who is a stronger reader.

Synthesizing

Setting a Purpose

I told you at the beginning that this book was about people of the Mi'kmaq Nation. Let's read the book again and see what it tells us about the traditions of the Mi'kmaq people.



DURING READING

Tracking print/ building confidence

Reread the book with students. Track print, but also ask individual students to come up and track a page or two of print.

Making connections: comparing

Pause at different points in the book and say, *Is this the same or different from what you do when you prepare for a feast?* Offer prompts to stimulate comparisons, e.g., *How is it the same? How is it different?*

Teaching Tip: Prompts may need to be more specific for some students, e.g., *Do you cook on a wood fire outdoors? Do you make bread in a frying pan? Does your family play a dice game like the one in this book? Do you sing together at your feasts? What kind of musical instrument is used?*



AFTER READING

Synthesizing

Say, *What did we learn about important Mi'kmaq traditions? What special food do the Mi'kmaq people eat? What kinds of activities do they do? Are they wearing any special clothes?*

Word solving and building

Say, *Knowing some words can help me to work out how to read and spell other words.* Locate and read *cook* on page 4. Write *book*. Ask students to read *cook* and *book* and discuss similarities and differences. Write *look* and *hook* on chart paper or the board and encourage students to read them and look at how the words are similar and different from *cook*.

Then ask students to think of words that finish in the “ook” pattern (e.g., *nook, rook, took, crook, shook, brook*). Write these words on chart paper or the board, asking students to use what they know about *cook* to help you to spell each of the new words.

ESL Note: As you create a list of words with the “ook” pattern, use illustrations, pictures, and dramatization to ensure students understand what the words mean.



FURTHER READINGS

Many texts benefit from being reread with students. The three readings suggested in this plan can be expanded to include further readings. Participation will increase when a book becomes familiar, and students will become more comfortable in taking turns and using a pointer to track print.

For each rereading, we suggest that you select a balance of Print Concepts, Comprehension, and Working with Words strategies from the following suggestions. Make your selections based on the needs of students in your class.

Print Concepts, Book Handling, and Text Features

Text features/ print concepts

Review the title, author, photographer, back cover text, and Mi'kmaq Facts. This would be a good time to read the biographical information about Mildred Milliea on the inside front cover.

Tracking print

Continue to track print but offer individual students roles in print tracking during rereading. Offer as much support as necessary (e.g., by guiding the pointer with students who need assistance.)

Add concepts that offer learning opportunities for the range of students in the classroom, e.g., *Where is the title? What other words are on the cover? Where do I start reading? Where do I go next? Where does this sentence end?*

Synthesizing/making connections: comparing

Focusing on Comprehension

Say, *People from different groups have different ways of doing things. They have different foods and ceremonies. They do things in the same way every time they do them or serve the same foods. We call these traditions. You have learned something of the Mi'kmaq traditional way to prepare a feast. If you were telling a Mi'kmaq person about the way you prepare for a feast, it would probably be quite different.* Encourage students to discuss what they have learned that is different from their own culture and to listen if students from other cultures are willing to share some of their traditions with the class. Talk a bit about traditions and how they come to be important to a group of people who are connected in some way.

Since kindergarten students are usually on the receiving end of instruction during book buddy time, this is a good book for encouraging them to tell their older book buddies about what they've learned. Students may wish to do a book walk with their older book buddies and teach them about *loosgenigen*, *waltes*, etc.

Inferring

Ask, *Do you think Grandma cooks outdoors because she doesn't have a stove? Why or why not?* Point to the photo of the house on page 6. Say, *This is a big house. I'm sure it has a kitchen with a stove. Why might Grandma be cooking like this?* (It's part of the tradition, and it's warm enough to cook outside.) Ask students about their own families' outdoor cooking habits.

Self-monitoring

Emphasize the strategy of self-monitoring, e.g., *Good readers ask themselves questions when they read.*

Phonological and phonemic awareness

Working with Words

Orally stretch words (e.g., *feast*: f–ea–s–t on page 2 and *boils*: b–o–i–l–s on page 5). Blend to reform the words.

Letter knowledge

► Frame “f” in *for* on page 2, in *fire* on page 5, in *frying* on page 7, in *family* and *fun* on page 12, and in *fun* and *from* on page 15 with coloured acetate if some students still need assistance with letter recognition.

► Locate words that start with “b,” e.g., *boils* (page 5), *bread* (pages 6 and 7), *blueberries* (pages 8 and 9), *basket* (page 11).

Word solving and building

Have a game in which students look for a word they know on a page (print the word on a sticky note on the top of the page). Students find the word on the page *and* somewhere in the classroom.



RESOURCE LINKS

Writing

After a final reading of *Helping Grandma*, ask students to help you write a “book invitation” for the next reader. A book invitation gives a hint about the text, but is written from the students' point of view. The book invitation may be paper clipped to the inside cover of the book, e.g.,

“If you're wondering about *loosgenigen*, you'll like this book!”

“If you like to help your grandma, you'll want to read this book.”

“Do you like to cook outside? Read this book!”

As a class, write a retell of people helping to get ready for something. For example, you could write about a special event in the classroom, and all the things students did to help get ready for the event. See the Retell text-type study in the Writing Guide.

Independent Reading

Make the six small versions of *Helping Grandma* and the online audio available for students. Invite students to use these materials to read the book independently.

Teaching Tip: The online audio for this book includes a cloze reading of this text. In this reading, selected words have been omitted. Students listening to the cloze reading have the opportunity to chime in with the missing words.



Home Links

Discuss with students how the girls in the book helped grandma, then suggest that they create a “Helping ____” list. They decide which of their family members they will help, then at home, they work with the family to create a list of things they can do to help that person. Have them illustrate their list. At school, the lists can be incorporated into a “We Help” book that all students can look at.

Gather a selection of picture books that depict children helping others for individual or partner reading.

Working with Words

Once concepts have been introduced in context, see the focused lessons in the Working with Words Guide for more direct instruction for those students who need it.

See also the specific Building Words lesson (“Grandma”) in the Working with Words Guide.

Read Aloud

Read to the class another book that involves Indigenous peoples or preparing a feast.