

Big Cousin Harold



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Text Type: Fiction: Narrative — Fractured Fairy Tale

Guided Reading Level: K

Summary: Cousin Harold is big, loud, and frightening, and he wants Charlie to come for a visit. Charlie is nervous, especially when he hears about the hens that lay golden eggs, the harp music, and the beanstalk that reaches the sky. Although this humorous tale is inspired by the characters in “Jack and the Beanstalk,” Charlie is not Jack and his experience is very different.

Word Count: 947

Text Features

- ▶ table of contents
- ▶ title page
- ▶ chapter headings

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations support the text
- ▶ vocabulary similar to the way students speak

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ quotation marks
- ▶ some difficult vocabulary as alternatives to *said*: *stammered*, *gulped*, *boomed*, *begged*
- ▶ contraction: *m’boy*

First Session (pages 1-9)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ inferring
- ▶ making connections

Working with Words

- ▶ integrating visual and context cues to read unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student’s ability to:

- ▶ infer information from the story
- ▶ make connections between the text and another story
- ▶ integrate context and visual cues to solve unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing predictions in partners and in a group
- ▶ suggesting other related stories
- ▶ reading dialogue aloud

Teaching Tip: When assessing students' learning, make sure you observe them throughout the Guided Reading sessions and not just at the end.



BEFORE READING

**Predicting/infering/
evaluating**

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Hold up the front cover of the book, and read aloud the title and author's name. Then hold up the back cover, and read the text there. Ask students to predict what the story is about from the illustrations, title, and text on the back cover. Then ask, *What sort of story do you think this will be? A realistic one or a fairy tale? Why do you think there are vines in the pictures?* Have students discuss their answers with a partner. Then ask each pair to share their predictions and ideas with the larger group.

**Making connections:
comparing**

Show the title page and ask, *How does this picture compare with the one on the front cover? Does it give you any new clues about the story?*

Predicting

Show the Table of Contents on page 3. Say, *The first two chapters are called "Help!" and "I Can't Go." What can you learn about the story from these headings? What predictions can you make about these chapters? Do you think the boy in this story wants to visit his cousin?* Record students' predictions so they can be referred to later.

**Making connections:
text to text**

Ask students to suggest any other stories that the information on the cover of this book makes them think of. Have them explain their reasons.

Print concepts

Overcoming Text Challenges

Tell students there are many places in the story where the characters talk to each other. Hand out the books and ask students to turn to page 4. Read the page together, and direct students' attention to the punctuation marks around the part where people are speaking. Say, *These are called quotation marks. You will see these throughout the book whenever a character is talking.* Point out the fact that each new speaker starts on a new line. Say, *Find a part on this page where someone is talking. Point to the quotation marks at the beginning of the person's speech. Now point to the quotation marks at the end of what the person is saying.*

Word solving and building

Remind students to stop when they come to a word they don't know and use one of the strategies they have learned for solving unknown words. For example, you might say, *Look for a little word inside the big word, and then ask yourself what word would make sense there.*

Point out the word *stammered* on page 5, and ask students to tell you how they would figure it out if they didn't know this word. Then say, *The author has used different words to describe the way the speakers sound when they say something. Why is stammered a better word to use than said? As you read, look out for more words that are used instead of said.*

Inferring

Setting a Purpose

Remind students of their predictions about the type of story this is, the other stories they think it might be like, and what the first two chapters are about, based on the chapter headings. Tell students the purpose of reading today is to look for information that supports their predictions or to note new information that changes their thinking.



DURING READING

Direct students to read the first two chapters (up until the end of page 9) independently, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

As students read, observe and listen to them, assisting with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Note students' ability to decode unfamiliar words and any difficulties they encounter. Offer prompts to help students problem-solve as they read. For example, say, *Use the beginning sounds and the ending to help you solve that word. Try reading ahead. Does the word make sense in the sentence?*

After students have read a few pages, check their ability to infer by asking individual students, *Were you right about what type of story this would be? How do you know? Is this story so far anything like the other story you thought of when you saw the front cover? Why or why not?*

Take time to listen to one or two students read aloud. Note their ability to notice the direct speech and use their voices to indicate the different speakers.

Have students who finish reading before the others look for words the author used instead of *said*. They can mark these with sticky notes.

ESL Note: While students read the first two chapters independently, review with your ESL students the beginning, middle, and end of the story “Jack and the Beanstalk.” This can be done orally or through the use of a graphic organizer. Have students complete a graphic organizer by drawing pictures that show what happens at the beginning, middle, and end of “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Have a copy of the story on hand for reference.



AFTER READING

Inferring/predicting

Once all students have finished reading, reread the predictions they made earlier. Ask, *Were your predictions correct? What did you discover from reading? What new predictions can you make now about the last two chapters of the book?* Record their predictions.

**Making connections:
text to text**

The story refers indirectly to the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Ask, *What clues did you find in the text that made you think about the fairy tale “Jack and the Beanstalk”?* Ask students to find places in the text that refer to “Jack and the Beanstalk” and to point to those references. Ask, *How is this story the same as “Jack and the Beanstalk”? How is it different?*

Word solving and building

Revisit any words that were challenging for students. Ask them to share strategies they used to solve these words. Review any challenges you noticed while students were reading.

Praise good reading behaviours you observed. For example, you might say, *I noticed that Rumi stopped when he came to an unknown word and looked for a little word he knew inside the big word. He found air inside hairy, and that helped him. Hairy also made sense next to chin.*

ESL Note: While revisiting words that were challenging for students, be sure to explicitly explain specific vocabulary and phrases for ESL students. They may require further explanation with words such as *harp, beanstalk, shovels, hairy chin, and sunscreen*. These can be explained through the use of visuals. You may wish to use real objects, pictures, and /or student-teacher illustrations.

Second Session (pages 10-16)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ inferring
- ▶ synthesizing

Working with Words

- ▶ reading contractions
- ▶ using context and visual cues to solve unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student’s ability to:

- ▶ make inferences based on the text and illustrations
- ▶ synthesize the first two chapters
- ▶ make predictions based on chapter headings and previous chapters
- ▶ make connections to another familiar story
- ▶ solve unfamiliar words using context and visual cues

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ recapping the first two chapters
- ▶ making predictions about last two chapters
- ▶ dramatizing the story with a partner



BEFORE READING

Synthesizing/predicting

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Ask students to briefly recap what has happened so far. Ask, *Why didn't Charlie want to go to Cousin Harold's farm?* (Charlie thought Harold was the giant from "Jack and the Beanstalk.")

Have students turn to the Table of Contents and read the chapter headings for this section: "Special for You" and "You Can Never Tell." Ask, *What can you predict about the story from these headings?* Record students' predictions.

Word solving and building

Overcoming Text Challenges

Instruct students to turn to page 11 and find the contraction *m'boy*. Pointing to the apostrophe, say, *This mark is called an apostrophe. It means one or more letters have been taken out. What letter do you think is missing? Why did the author write m'boy instead of my boy?* (It sounds more like talking.) Explain that words that are shortened by replacing some letters with an apostrophe are called contractions. Give a few more examples (e.g., *don't, I'm*). Ask, *What other contraction words do you know?* Record these contractions on a list students can refer to for Independent Writing.

Synthesizing

Setting a Purpose

Tell students the purpose of reading today is to find out whether Charlie's feelings about Cousin Harold change.



DURING READING

Ask students to read the text independently from page 10 until the end, thinking about how things worked out for Charlie.

Observe and listen to students as they read to see which word-solving strategies they use. Offer prompts to help students problem-solve as they read. For example, ask, *What small word is inside that bigger word?*

Once students have finished page 15, check their ability to synthesize by asking, *Did Charlie feel differently about Cousin Harold at the end of his visit than before his visit? What happened that made him change his mind?*

Have students who finish reading early reread the story with a partner, reading the parts in quotation marks the way the characters might say them.

ESL Note:

To ensure comprehension of this chapter while students read independently, have ESL students retell the story of Hansel and Gretel. Have them follow the same format as they did with "Jack and the Beanstalk."



AFTER READING

Synthesizing

After students have finished reading the book, ask them to think about Charlie's feelings throughout the story. Ask, *How did Charlie feel before his visit? How did he feel when he was served a bowl of something long and skinny and covered in red sauce? How do we know he felt nervous?* (The author tells us he stammered and gulped.) *How did Charlie feel at the end of his visit? What happened that made Charlie's feelings about Cousin Harold change?*

Predicting

Have students reread the predictions they made during the First Session about the last two chapters. Ask, *Were your predictions correct? Did anything happen that changed your mind?*

Inferring

Ask, *When Harold mentioned his sister, Henrietta, what did Charlie think? How do you know? What clues tell you that Henrietta might be an unusual character?*

Making connections: text to text

Ask, *Did the last part of the story about Henrietta remind you of another story? Why?*

Word solving and building

Ask students what strategies they used when they came to a word they didn't know. Point out successful strategies you observed while students were reading.

Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the entire text independently or with a partner.

Focused Follow-up

The follow-up activities are optional. Choose those that best meet the needs of your students.

Creating a Picture Book

Making connections: text to text/sequencing

Ask students to work in small groups to discuss what might happen when Charlie and Harold go to visit Henrietta. Remind them of the story of Hansel and Gretel and, if possible, provide a copy of the story for reference. Have them create a series of pictures with captions showing what happened. The pictures can be stapled into a book. The finished books can be placed at the Reading Centre for others to enjoy.

Inside and Outside

Synthesizing/evaluating

Hand out copies of the BLM to students. On the left side of the chart, have them list words that describe what Harold looks and sounds like (e.g., *big, hairy, sharp teeth, booming voice*). Explain that this description is Harold's outside story. On the right side of the chart, have students list words describing the sort of person Harold is (e.g., *friendly, a vegetarian, happy, a good cook*). Explain that this description is Harold's inside story. Have students then choose what they like best about Harold from their chart and fill in the sentence at the bottom of the BLM. Students can share their BLMs with a partner.

Word solving and building

Speech Words

Remind students of the word *stammered*, which the author used instead of *said* to tell the reader how Charlie was speaking. Have students revisit the text to find all the words the author used to describe someone speaking. They can make a list of these words and then add new words to the list as they read other selections. Tell them to try to use these words in their own writing when someone is speaking instead of always using *said*.

Analyzing

Dramatizing a Scene

Have students act out the story in partners. One person plays Charlie while the other plays Harold. Have them dramatize the scene in which Harold invites Charlie to his farm. Remind students to look for the part inside the quotation marks in the book. Then have them dramatize the scene in which Charlie visits the farm, eats the spaghetti, and picks the beans. Students can take turns acting out their scenes for the class.

ESL Note: You may wish to have ESL students demonstrate comprehension of character attributes by making a Big Harold puppet. They may then write on their puppet words that describe Big Harold (*friendly, happy, etc.*).

Inside and Outside

Name: _____



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The thing I like best about Harold is that _____
