

The Mammoth Cheese: A True Story

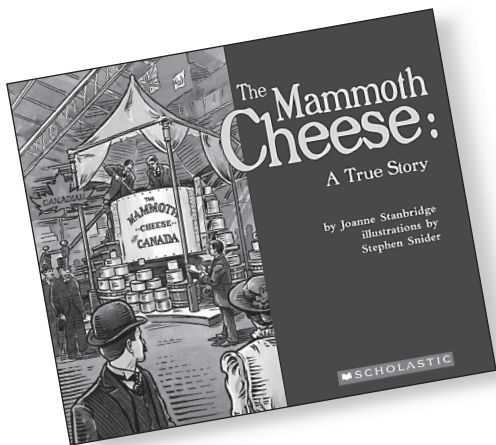
Written by Joanne Stanbridge

Illustrated by Stephen Snider

Text Type: Non-fiction: Retell — True Story

Guided Reading Level: O

Summary: This book is about a special Canadian project that happened over one hundred years ago, in 1893. At that time, cheese makers who lived in Perth, Ontario decided to make the biggest cheese in the world and send it to the World's Fair in Chicago.



Text Features

- ▶ table of contents
- ▶ chapter headings

Visual Literacy

- ▶ map
- ▶ timeline
- ▶ sidebar information
- ▶ recipe

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations reflective of the culture and times support the text

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ specific vocabulary related to cheese making (*cheese press, curd, whey, cheddar, brick, parmesan*)
- ▶ bulleted list
- ▶ numbered steps

First Session (pages 4-7)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ making connections: text to self, text to world

Working with Words

- ▶ using syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge to solve unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze text and illustrations for facts
- ▶ make text-to-self and text-to-world connections
- ▶ use syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge to solve unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ listening to others
- ▶ responding to questions



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to self/language predictability

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Tell students they will be reading a story called *The Mammoth Cheese: A True Story*. Ask, *What does mammoth mean?* Brainstorm a list of other words that mean *large*. Explain that, in this story, students will also learn how cheese is made. Lead a discussion about what students already know about cheese. At this point, simply write students' comments on chart paper.

ESL Note: Some students may have never seen or eaten cheese before. Bring in samples of cheese and do a "Wine (grape juice) and Cheese" for students to experience cheese.

Making connections: text to world

Show students the front cover of the book. Read the title, then the author's and illustrator's names, and the back cover text. Have students look at the illustrations on the covers to identify when the story took place. Ask, *How can you tell the story took place in the past?*

Hand out copies of the book and say, *Before we start reading, let's look through the pictures to get a feeling for what life in Canada was like in 1893*. As students look through the pictures, guide their observations to notice the similarities and differences between the clothing, transportation, and buildings of 1893 and today.

Begin a "Five Ws and an H" (Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How) chart on chart paper. Say, *What do we already know about this story? Which one of these questions can we begin to answer? When is this story taking place?* Record "Canada, 1893" under the "When" column of the chart.

Overcoming Text Challenges

Text features

Have students turn to the Table of Contents on page 2 of their books. Ask, *How does the Table of Contents help the reader? What can you learn from it?*

Word solving and building/language predictability

Point out difficult words, such as *supervise* on page 5. Ask, *How would you go about reading this word? What strategies would you use?* With students' guidance, solve the word and its meaning using multiple strategies, such as syllabication, context cues, reading on, and prior knowledge. Encourage students to use these strategies when reading other challenging words.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Remind students of the "Five Ws and an H" chart begun earlier. Explain that, as students read pages 4–7, they should keep in mind the following questions that correspond to the chart:

- What is the Mammoth Cheese?*
- When does this story take place?*
- Where does this story take place?*
- Who is making the Mammoth Cheese?*
- Why are they making the cheese?*
- How did they make the cheese?*

Teaching Tip: Display the questions on chart paper so students can refer to it as they independently read the text.



DURING READING

Ask each student to read independently to the end of page 7, thinking about the purpose of their reading.

Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word-solving strategies. Offer prompts, such as, *What is this story about? How did they make the cheese?*

If students finish before others have completed the reading, ask them to go back and reread pages 4–7, then share with a partner the answers to each of the questions on the chart.



AFTER READING

Analyzing

Discuss what happened in the story and read each of the questions from the “Five Ws and an H” chart, then record students’ responses on the chart. Encourage students to find evidence in the text to justify their responses.

Word solving and building

Revisit the words *loudly*, *railway*, *squeezed*, and *famous* and ask students to explain the strategies they used to work out these and any other challenging words.

Point out positive reading strategies you observed during the reading. For example, say, *I noticed Paula recognized the “-ly” ending in loudly. She sounded out the word, then the ending, and read ahead to make sure the word made sense. That’s what good readers do.*

Optional Approach

You may wish to have students read the rest of the text independently. Set a purpose for reading and choose a date to come back together to discuss and work with the text using the Optional After Reading session (see page 6). You may choose to do some diagnostic work with students or hold a book discussion halfway through to check their comprehension of the text.

Sequencing

Setting a Purpose

Say, *Let’s read pages 8–9 to find out the steps involved in making cheese.*

Second Session (pages 8–9)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ sequencing
- ▶ analyzing

Working with Words

- ▶ using familiar words to solve unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ sequence the steps involved in making cheese
- ▶ analyze text and illustrations for facts
- ▶ solve unfamiliar words by building on familiar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ listening to others
- ▶ responding to questions



BEFORE READING

Sequencing: retelling

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Ask, *What has happened so far in the story?* Compare students' responses to the "Five Ws and an H" chart made in the previous session.

Word solving and building

Ask students to look at the word *why* on page 8 and see if they know a word like that (*they*). Remind students that using familiar words to read unfamiliar words is another effective reading strategy. Explain that they will learn about the meaning of the word *why* when they read pages 8–9. Tell students that they will be learning other new words used during the making of cheese.

Sequencing

Setting a Purpose

As students read pages 8–9, they should think about the steps needed to make cheese. Say, *Let's read to find out how the cheese is made.*



DURING READING

Ask students to read the text independently, thinking about the purpose of their reading.

Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *What is the first step in making cheese? What is added after the curd is squeezed?*

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 8–9 independently, then share with a partner the steps involved in making cheese.



AFTER READING

Sequencing

Discuss the steps involved in making cheese. Have students tell you the sequence of steps involved one at a time, then record the numbered steps in a chart. Have students read aloud the sequence of steps involved in making cheese.

Say, *We've been reading for information. At first, we looked for the five Ws and an H, then we created a list of steps. These are two ways good readers make sure they understand what they read. When we get together again, you'll read the rest of the book, and you'll learn one more way to search for and record information.*

ESL Note: Make a chart of specific vocabulary related to making cheese (word, definition, picture, or example). Have students explain the meaning of the words. Write the definitions on the chart for reference.

Third Session (pages 10-24)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ synthesizing

Working with Words

- ▶ compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze text and illustrations for facts
- ▶ synthesize new information with prior knowledge to create understanding
- ▶ use word parts to solve unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ listening to others
- ▶ responding to questions



BEFORE READING

Text features

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Have students turn to the Table of Contents on page 2. Ask, *On what page does the next chapter begin? What is it called?* Direct students' attention to the chapter titles. Ask, *What do you think we will be learning about?*

Synthesizing

Revisit pages 4–5 with students. Model determining the main idea by thinking aloud as you figure out what is important on these two pages. Guide students through questioning and modelling to establish the main idea. Begin a chart using the title from the first chapter, "The Biggest Cheese in the World." After determining the main idea, record it in the chart. The chart will be expanded later in the lesson.

Word solving and building

Direct students' attention to page 13 and point out the word *newspaper*. Ask students to explain the reading strategies they would use to solve this compound word. Remind students that there will be more compound words as they read the story.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Tell students that, as they read the rest of the story, they are to find out what happens to the mammoth cheese. Divide the class into six groups and assign each group one chapter. Provide students with small pieces of paper to record the main idea of their assigned chapters.



DURING READING

As students read, circulate and listen to individual students. Make notes about their accuracy, fluency, and problem-solving strategies. Offer prompts, such as, *In your own words, tell what the chapter was about.*

Note students' success in using reading strategies and any difficulties they encounter.



AFTER READING

Analyzing

After students have completed reading the text, have each group state the main ideas of each chapter one at a time in order from the second chapter. Revisit each chapter and complete the chart made earlier in the session.

Visual literacy

Revisit page 15 and direct students' attention to the map. Ask, *How does the map help the reader? What does it show?* Discuss with students how a map helps them visualize the trip the mammoth cheese had to make when travelling to Chicago.

Making connections: text to self/print concepts

Discuss with students the different ways they like to eat cheese. Refer students to page 19 and talk about the recipe. Elicit from students that the bullets help make the list of ingredients easy to read, and the numbered steps help with reading the recipe's directions.

Teaching Tip:

After finding out if there are any food allergies in the class, collect ingredients and follow the steps in making cheesy grilled sandwiches.

Optional After Reading

Synthesizing

If students have completed the text independently, use the following After Reading Discussion and activity suggestions to support comprehension, word solving, and good reader strategies.

Ask, *What challenges did the cheese makers face when making the mammoth cheese?*

Evaluating

Ask, *Do you think another cheese could be made that is larger than the cheddar cheese made in Granby, Quebec? Why do you think so?*

Analyzing

Ask, *What phrases did the author use to indicate size?*

Rereadings

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

Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet the needs of your students.

Synthesizing

Writing a Letter

Provide each student with a copy of the BLM and have them write a letter to a classmate about one of the events in the chapters titled “All Aboard,” “At the Fair,” or “Off to England.” Students may wish to draw pictures on a separate sheet of paper to accompany their letters. Encourage students to share their letters with their partners.

Language predictability

Size Words

Have students look for words in the story that indicate size. Say, *We found out in the sidebar information on page 7 that the word mammoth means huge. Search through the book and find other words, or groups of words, that describe the size of the cheese.* Create a list of such words and add them to the Word Wall.

Print concepts/sequencing

Cheese Timeline

Discuss the timeline on page 24 and point out how the information has been arranged. Ask, *What information can you find on this page? What information has been placed in order—the sizes of the cheese or the dates?* Introduce the timeline and discuss how it provides information about an event in the order in which it occurred. Say, *Let’s use the timeline. Find 1866 and tell the group what happened at that time. Which big cheese came first—Mr Smith’s or Thomas Jefferson’s? Who got a big cheese as a wedding gift? When was it made? What is the date of the world record for a big cheese? How heavy was the cheese?*

Writing a Letter

Name: _____

Dear _____,

Sincerely, _____