

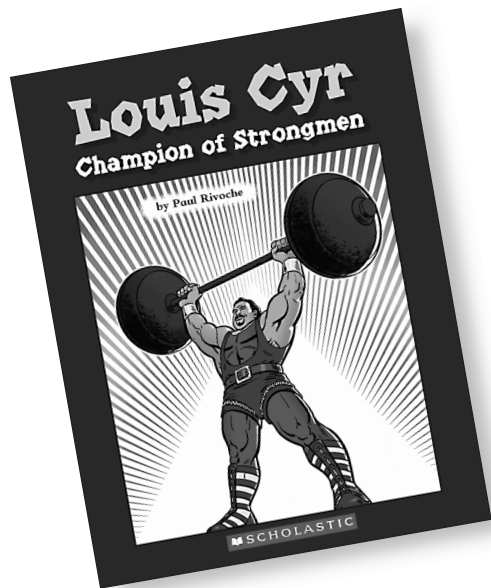
Louis Cyr: Champion of Strongmen

Written and illustrated by Paul Rivoche

Text Type: Non-fiction: Retell — Biography

Guided Reading Level: O

Summary: Canadian-born Louis Cyr was known to be one of the strongest men in the world. This account tells how he grew up, and how he found ways to use his strength for good.



Text Features

Visual Literacy

- ▶ account presented in both text and graphics
- ▶ speech balloons
- ▶ fact sheet

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations support the text

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ reading layout of graphics
- ▶ some challenging vocabulary, e.g., *astounding, squabbling, consume, constantly, persuaded, scoffed, immense, professional, limitless, executed, indulged*

First Session (pages 2-11)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ inferring
- ▶ synthesizing

Working with Words

- ▶ using picture cues to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ using word parts to read unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make inferences and support them using picture cues and the text
- ▶ synthesize new information with prior knowledge to create understanding
- ▶ use various strategies to determine word meaning

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ asking/responding to questions

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



BEFORE READING

**Making connections:
text to self/predicting**

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Have students look at the front and back covers of the book. Read the title, author name, and back cover of the text. Ask students if they have heard of Louis Cyr and if they know of any very strong men or women. Have them explain what the front and back covers tell them about the book. Ask, *What do you expect to find out?*

Text features

Have students look at the back cover and flip through the book. Ask, *What do you notice about this book? Is it different from most of the books you read?* Students should be able to tell you that the account is told mostly in pictures. Ask, *How is it the same as a story about someone's life? How is it the same as a comic book?*

Visual literacy

Overcoming Text Challenges

Preview the layout by having students look at pages 4 and 5. Direct students' attention to the layout of the illustrations and speech balloons on these pages. Discuss the ways students can choose to read this material: from left to right frame/top to bottom frame, and from highest to lowest speech balloon inside a frame.

Inferring

Ask, *Why do you think the author might have chosen to use stories and pictures to tell you about Louis Cyr's life, rather than just writing about it?*

Synthesizing

Setting a Purpose

Indicate page 11 to students and tell them that you want them to read up to the end of that page. Ask them to try to pick out the most important things that happen in that part of Louis's life.



DURING READING

Tell students to read pages 2–11 independently, thinking about their purpose for reading. Ask students, *What lesson on strength was Louis taught when he was a young child and teen?*

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Provide prompts encouraging students to look for word parts they know, as well as clues in the illustrations. For example, ask, *Do you see a word you know inside this word? What word would make sense here? Do any of these illustrations help you with the word? Does the word sound right in the sentence?*

Note students' ability to decode unfamiliar words and any difficulties they encounter.

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 2–11 independently or with a partner, and to tell each other the main points about Louis's life.

ESL Note: Have students share any words they found difficult and record them on chart paper. Discuss their definitions and record them on the chart paper beside the word.



AFTER READING

Synthesizing

Ask students to tell you what the main events in Louis's life have been so far. Let them present the facts in any order they wish as you list them on the board.

Inferring

Ask, *Why did Louis leave school and look for work at such a young age? How do you think he felt about it? Why do you think some men in the workforce had a hard time accepting Louis? Why do you think the man he found in the snow decided to give him a job?*

Word solving and building

Ask students if they found any new, challenging words. Ask students what strategies they used to work these out, referring to the text if the strategy involved visual cues.

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 7). You may choose to do some diagnostic work with students or to hold a book discussion halfway through to check their comprehension of the text.

Synthesizing

Setting a Purpose

Tell students that they will read the rest of the book independently. Have them read to find out the major events in Louis's life and to participate in summarizing them in class discussion following the reading.

Second Session (pages 12-23)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ using word parts to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ using illustrations to assist with the recognition of unfamiliar words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make inferences and support them using illustrations, text, and speech bubbles
- ▶ analyze text and illustrations to find meaning
- ▶ use various strategies to determine word meaning

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to self

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Ask students about some of their earliest memories or about important events in their lives that they have been told about. What do they expect to be doing when they are 12? Will they still go to school or will they go out to work? How is their life different from Louis's life?

Analyzing

Review the purpose for reading in the first session—to find out about the important events in the early life of Louis Cyr. Ask students what significant events occurred during Louis's childhood and teenage years.

Text features

Overcoming Text Challenges

Preview pages 12–23, noting the photographs, illustrations, speech balloons, and captions appearing at the corner of the illustrations. Make a statement to model for students what can be learned from each feature. For example, in the illustration on page 15, say, *I can tell by the illustrations and the speech bubbles that Louis found it somewhat challenging to lift a very heavy horse off the ground.*

Language predictability

Write the word *professional* on the board and ask if anyone can tell you what it says. If not, ask them to turn to page 20 and look at the large picture of Louis and the words beneath it. Lead them to understand that it means a person who is an expert at his or her own work.

Word solving and building

Remind students to use strategies such as chunking words to solve unfamiliar words, and to think aloud as they do so.

Analyzing

Setting a Purpose

Tell students that they will be reading to the end of page 23. As they read, ask them to think about the problems Louis faced at this time of his life and what he did to solve them.



DURING READING

Tell students to read pages 12–23 independently, thinking about their purpose for reading.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, and comprehension. Provide prompts encouraging students to look for word parts they know, as well as cues in the photograph and illustrations. For example, ask, *Do you see a word inside this word that you know? What word would make sense here? Do any of these illustrations help you with the word? Try reading ahead. Does the word sound right in the sentence?* Note students' ability to decode unfamiliar words and any difficulties they encounter.

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 12–23 independently or with a partner, and to discuss with their partner what they learned about Louis's problems and how he solved them.



AFTER READING

Analyzing/evaluating

Ask, *What problem did Louis have? What was his first solution to the problem? Why did he and his wife decide they weren't happy with that solution? What did Louis's wife suggest?* Discuss how Louis Cyr used his strength for good in the workforce and how he used his strength in his professional career as a strongman. Discuss the amazing feats Louis achieved. Ask, *What feats did you find especially amazing?*

Ask students about the important events in Louis's life. Add them to the list you started in the previous lesson.

Inferring

Ask, *What kind of person do you think Louis was?* If students need hints, you could ask questions such as, *Did he give up easily? What kind of person doesn't give up easily? Was he a good person? How do you know? Was he a brave person? How do you think he felt when he was sent to patrol the bad part of the city as a police officer?*

Third Session (pages 24–32)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ synthesizing
- ▶ evaluating

Working with Words

- ▶ using word parts to read unfamiliar words
- ▶ breaking down compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ evaluate the main character
- ▶ synthesize to determine main ideas and supporting details
- ▶ understand compound words
- ▶ use word parts to read unfamiliar words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ offering verbal opinions



BEFORE READING

Analyzing/synthesizing

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Review the purpose for reading in the second session—to learn about the problems Louis Cyr faced and how he solved them. Ask students to summarize the significant events Louis experienced in the workforce and as a professional strongman.

Text features

Overcoming Text Challenges

Preview pages 24–31, noting the photographs, illustrations, speech balloons, and captions appearing at the corner of the illustrations. Make a statement to model for students what can be learned from each feature. For example, by looking at the illustrations and reading the caption above it, signs of aging are beginning to take their toll on Louis's body. Ask students to describe what they can learn from each feature on pages 24–31.

Direct students' attention to page 32. Ask, *What do you think the purpose of the information on this page is? Does it tell you anything you didn't already know, or expect to find out, from reading the text?* (Louis Cyr was not his real name; he tied heavy weights in his curls and swung them around for fun.) Tell students that a fact sheet such as this can provide a quick overview of a person's life for the reader.

Language predictability

Write the word *indulged* on the board and ask if anyone can tell you what it means. If not, give students some clues, such as, *I indulged in some candy, even though it isn't good for me*, or *His family always indulged him, and he ended up being very spoiled*. If students still have difficulty, explain that it means to allow one to follow one's will.

Word solving and building

Point out the past-tense ending “-ed” and help students blend the sounds together. Remind students to use strategies such as chunking words to solve unfamiliar words, and to think aloud as they do so.

Evaluating

Setting a Purpose

Tell students they will be reading about Louis's retirement and the end of his life. As they read, ask them to think about whether his life was satisfying and happy, and to be able to tell why they think as they do.



DURING READING

Tell each student to read independently, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts, such as, *Do you see a word that you know inside this word? Do any of the illustrations help you figure out the meaning of the word?*

Note students' strategies when solving words and any problems they encounter.

Encourage students who finish early to reread the entire story independently or with a partner.



AFTER READING

Synthesizing

Discuss the life of Louis Cyr at the height of his professional career and then at retirement. Add to the list on the board the significant events that students recall for these two stages.

Evaluating

Have students work in pairs to discuss and explain the most interesting things they learned about Louis Cyr. Ask, *Was Louis as wise as he was strong? Explain. Was Louis satisfied and happy with his life? What makes you think so? What did it mean that so many people attended his funeral?*

Ask, *Did the word-and-picture format help you understand this account of Louis Cyr's life? Do you think the illustrator did a good job of showing the events in Louis's life?*

Optional After Reading

Synthesizing/sequencing

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 students to list the significant events of the four stages of Louis Cyr's life, and tell why they were significant.

Language predictability

Make a list of descriptive words or phrases that the author uses to describe Louis Cyr's unbelievable strength.

Evaluating

Ask students whether or not it made a difference that the biography of Louis Cyr's life was written in a word-and-picture form instead of in a chapter book form. Have students write their answers down and share them with a partner. Encourage them to provide reasons for their answers.

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.

Evaluating/synthesizing

Our Hero

Ask students to imagine they are newspaper reporters who have been assigned to write an article explaining why Louis Cyr is a hero. Have them use the BLM to prepare their article.

Synthesizing

Talk It Up!

Have students imagine that Louis Cyr has been invited to be on a talk show. Write an interview by creating a dialogue between the talk show host and Louis Cyr. Have students re-enact the interview.

Word solving and building

Action Words

Have students look through the story of Louis Cyr for any action words that end in "-ed." Have them compare their lists with a partner. Ask, *Did you both find the same words?* For any whose meanings they aren't sure of, have students help each other find strategies to decode the words.

