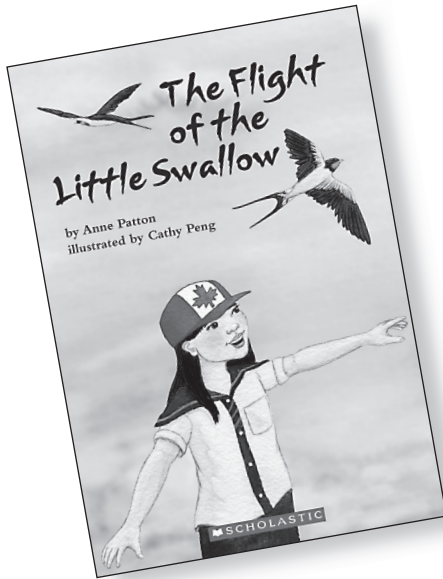


The Flight of the Little Swallow



Written by Anne Patton

Illustrated by Cathy Peng

Text Type: Fiction: Narrative — Realistic Story

Guided Reading Level: Q

Summary: A little Chinese girl named Song Lei and her parents have a lot to do before they can board a plane for an exciting adventure in Canada. As we read this story, we learn about Song Lei's friends and family and their lives in China.

Text Features

- ▶ table of contents
- ▶ numbered chapters, with titles
- ▶ glossary
- ▶ information section about China
- ▶ author's note
- ▶ dialogue

Text Supports

- ▶ illustrations support the text
- ▶ paragraphs aid comprehension

Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ figurative language and unfamiliar verbs
- ▶ italics
- ▶ unfamiliar punctuation marks
- ▶ use of Chinese words and nicknames

First Session (pages 4-15)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ identifying verb endings
- ▶ understanding figurative language
- ▶ building on word parts to understand compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make and confirm predictions
- ▶ make inferences about characters' emotions
- ▶ use the glossary
- ▶ understand figurative language and identify compound words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ sharing predictions
- ▶ sharing information about China



BEFORE READING

Making connections: text to self

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Have students look at the front and back of the book. Ask, *Is anything in the picture on the front cover familiar to you?* Lead them to notice the maple leaf on the girl's hat. Ask what they know about the maple leaf symbol.

Predicting

Read the title and the summary and look at the illustration on the cover. Ask for predictions about the "little swallow" and the reasons for the flight. Might the "little swallow" refer to anything else besides the bird shown on the cover? Ask, *Why do you think the little girl has a maple leaf on her hat? What do you think her connection with Canada might be?* Have students look at the titles and the illustrations in chapters 1 and 2. Ask for any additional predictions.

ESL Note: Depending on the community you teach, you may wish to draw on the particular experiences of your ESL students by inviting them to share culturally significant facts they may know about swallows.

Word solving and building/ language predictability

Overcoming Text Challenges

Direct students to the first word at the top of page 6. Ask if any of them can say the word and know what it means. Explain that this story has some unfamiliar language and some Chinese words. Have students look at the glossary, and see if they can find the word *Xiexie*. Read it chorally.

Making connections: text to world

Ask students to share some things they know about China. Then have them look at the section called "Information About China." As a group, go through each of the topics, allowing for some oral discussion. Read the name of each topic aloud, then have students read the rest of the information silently.

Inferring

Have them look at page 8 and see if they can find a nickname for Song Lei. Ask, *Is there someone on this page who calls her by another name? What is it? Why do you think she uses that name?*

Setting a Purpose

Predicting

Say, *Now let's read chapters 1 and 2 to see what we can find out about Song Lei's secret and what "spilling the beans" means.*



DURING READING

Before they begin reading independently, have students work in pairs. Pronounce the Chinese words and explain them. Have each pair, in turn, practise saying the words. Draw attention to illustrations that will enhance students' understanding.

Then have students read silently to the end of page 15, thinking about the purpose for their reading. Encourage students to stop after every couple of pages to reflect on their reading and think about what they are learning about Song Lei and her secret.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Note students' ability to decode unfamiliar words (and to use the glossary to translate any Chinese words) and any difficulties they may encounter.

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 4–15, then tell a partner three things they learned about Song Lei.



AFTER READING

Predicting/infering

Ask, *Can you confirm your predictions? What is the secret? What does “spilling the beans” mean? Why did Song Lei’s mother laugh about it? Did Song Lei spill the beans about her family secret?*

Text features

Discuss the importance of conversation in this story and explain that each time there is a new speaker or a change of topic, a new paragraph starts with an indentation. Explain how paragraphs can help us organize and understand what we read.

Word solving and building

In chapters 1 and 2, locate words ending in “-ed” and “-ing.” Identify them as verbs—words that tell what someone is doing, e.g., *splashed, shuffled*.

Predicting

Sum up what was read in this session. Ask, *Why can’t Song Lei talk about the secret yet? What did you read in this part of the story that tells you she is very excited? Do you think she will be able to keep the secret?*

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

Predicting/infering

Setting a Purpose

Have students read the titles of each chapter from the table of contents and predict what will happen in each chapter. Then have students silently read each chapter to check their predictions. Ask them to notice when Song Lei’s actions and thoughts indicate how she feels about her secret.

Second Session (pages 16–30)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ identifying verb endings
- ▶ understanding figurative language
- ▶ building on word parts to understand compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make and confirm predictions
- ▶ make inferences about characters' feelings and thoughts
- ▶ use the glossary to find the meanings of unfamiliar words
- ▶ understand figurative language
- ▶ identify compound words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ sharing predictions
- ▶ sharing inferences about characters' actions



BEFORE READING

Predicting/inferring

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Activate prior knowledge by having students, in pairs, share what they think the secret will be and how they know Song Lei was excited about the secret.

Word solving and building

Overcoming Text Challenges

Explain that the author has used some words that students might not understand. Encourage them to feel free to ask for help or post the challenging words on sticky notes for group discussion after reading.

Print concepts

Remind students that punctuation can help them understand what they are reading. In this story, they will sometimes see unusual punctuation. It has a special purpose. Italics are used mostly to express thoughts, and an ellipsis is used for an interrupted/unfinished sentence.

Predicting

Setting a Purpose

Say, *Let's read the next section of the story (chapters 4, 5, and 6) to see what the secret is and why it is so exciting to Song Lei.*



DURING READING

While students read silently, observe and listen to individuals read. You may wish to use prompts, such as, *Is that what you expected? What caused that?* to encourage the use of predictions and inferences to assist comprehension.

Look for endings like “-ing” and “-ed” to help locate the action words. Have students identify at least one very good choice of action word (e.g., *sniffed*, *snuggled*, *drifted*).

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 16–30 independently or with a partner, and to explain to a partner why Song Lei is so excited.



AFTER READING

Predicting/analyzing

Ask for a show of hands in response to the following question: *How many of you guessed the secret before it was given out in the story?* Say, *With a partner, discuss your prediction about the secret. Explain what it was in the story that caused you to think as you did.*

Word solving and building

In a group, locate action words like *quivered* (p. 18) or *sobbed* (p. 24). Substitute common verbs like *moved* or *cried*, then help students appreciate how much more vivid the images are when colourful verbs are used.

Third Session (pages 31-44)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ identifying verb endings
- ▶ understanding figurative language
- ▶ building on word parts to understand compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make and confirm predictions
- ▶ make inferences about characters' feelings and thoughts
- ▶ use the glossary to find the meanings of unfamiliar words
- ▶ understand figurative language
- ▶ identify compound words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ sharing predictions



BEFORE READING

Inferring/ making connections: text to world

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

In a group, talk about Song Lei's secret. Ask, *Why was she worried? What was she worried about?* Have each student share something they would tell Song Lei about Canada that would make her feel better.

Inferring

Overcoming Text Challenges

Encourage students to look carefully at the illustrations in these chapters for help with understanding concepts about China.

Word solving and building

Tell students to look for familiar words or word parts in any unfamiliar words, as they will be able to unlock many of the unfamiliar words in these chapters by using familiar words/word parts. Remind students to check the glossary or notes on China, if they need more help.

Predicting

Setting a Purpose

In these chapters, Mrs. Chen is going to help Song Lei feel better. Say, *Look at the titles of the chapters and see if you can guess what she is going to do and why. Read these chapters on your own, and check to find out if your predictions are right.*



DURING READING

Have students sit in pairs but have each one read silently. If a student can't solve a word or doesn't understand a part of the story, the partner can try to offer a helpful strategy.

Observe and listen to students as they read and confer about the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries, if they are unable to resolve these with their partner. Note students' ability to decode unfamiliar words and any difficulties they may encounter.

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 31–44, then tell a partner what they thought Mrs. Chen would do, and if they were right.



AFTER READING

Predicting/making connections: text to world

In a group, confirm students' predictions. Ask them to share something new they learned about China. List the points on the board. Ask what we have in Canada that would be similar to some of these things.

Print concepts

Direct their attention to page 42: "Uh . . . uh . . . , Song Lei." Ask, *Why do you think the author put the dots in there?* (Explain that the dots are called an ellipsis, and that the use of an ellipsis shows hesitation or momentary loss of words.)

Inferring

Say, *On page 42, Song Lei hesitates before she tells the monk her name. What do you think caused Song Lei to hesitate?* Encourage students to share their ideas.

Word solving and building

Encourage students to locate compound words made up of smaller, familiar words. The story contains many of these, e.g., *seafood* (p. 31); *walkway* (p. 35); *uphill* and *stairway* (p. 41); *forever* (p. 44); *neighbourhood* (p. 46); *halfway* (p. 47); *suitcases*, *bedroom*, and *backpack* (p. 48); *everyone* (p. 50); *cornfields* (p. 51).

Have students build four compound words using words from the chart below:

sea	case	walk	one
every	shell	book	thing
no	some	side	in

Fourth Session (pages 45-56)

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ identifying verb endings
- ▶ understanding figurative language
- ▶ building on word parts to understand compound words

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ make and confirm predictions
- ▶ make inferences about characters' feelings and thoughts
- ▶ use the glossary to find the meanings of unfamiliar words
- ▶ understand figurative language
- ▶ identify compound words

Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ sharing predictions
- ▶ sharing story events



BEFORE READING

Synthesizing

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

In pairs, have students take turns sharing what has happened so far in this story.

Predicting

Have students look in the table of contents at the titles of the last three chapters. Ask them to share some predictions about what they will read about in each chapter, based on the titles. Write the predictions on the board.

Word solving and building

Overcoming Text Challenges

Some of the descriptive language may be challenging to some students. Encourage them to think beyond the words on the page and share simpler ways to say the same thing. Work together to simplify these descriptions and then discuss how much more interesting the story is made by the colourful words and expressions.

Inferring

Setting a Purpose

Say, *How would you feel if you were leaving your country?* Have students share their responses. Say, *Let's read the rest of this story to see how Song Lei feels and what she is thinking about as she gets ready to leave China.*



DURING READING

Have students read these chapters silently. Have individual student conferences using prompts, such as, *Did you expect that to happen? What makes you think that? Can you picture that in your mind?*

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, assisting them with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries.

Note students' ability to decode unfamiliar words and any difficulties they may encounter. Encourage students who finish early to re-read pages 45–56 independently or with a partner.



AFTER READING

Inferring

Think-pair-share: Have students think about what happened and how Song Lei felt throughout these chapters. Have each student share with a partner how Song Lei felt and why she felt that way, e.g., sad, excited, shy, nervous, exhausted, etc.

Sequencing/making connections: text to self

Open the book to the table of contents. Have students take turns recapping the overall story line, using the title of each chapter as a guide. Then ask them to think about how they might feel if they were moving from Canada within two weeks.

Optional After Reading

Predicting

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

As a group, have students share their predictions about the secret and the part of the story that confirmed their predictions.

Word solving and building

Have students find five words of two or more syllables. Have them write them in syllables/word parts. Ask them to circle any part of the word they used to help them figure out the larger word.

Rereadings

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

Focused Follow-up

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

Inferring/evaluating

Writing a Letter

Song Lei is worried that she won't like Canada. Write Song Lei a letter telling her what you like about Canada and why you think she will like it in this country.

Predicting

What Happens Next?

Have students work in pairs or in groups to write a short sequel to the story. They could consider questions such as, *What is her new school like, and how does she like it? Is there a market near her new home? How is it the same as or different from the one in China? Are there any special places to visit in her new country?*