MAPLE SYRUP— WITH BELLS ON!

Written by Andrew Borkowski

TEXT TYPE: Non-fiction: Description—Retell
GUIDED READING LEVEL: N

SUMMARY: This book is about two girls who are invited by Swap TV to trade places for the weekend. Melanie works on her family's maple syrup farm in Kingston, Ontario, and Amrit is a classical Indian dancer from Richmond Hill, Ontario. They pose challenges for one another and learn a bit about the other family's traditions and life.

TEXT FEATURES
- text boxes
- symbols: exclamation point, smiling face, clocks

VISUAL LITERACY
- photographs
- photograph frames are a different colour for each girl

TEXT SUPPORTS
- each new page signals a switch in story
- most Indian (Punjabi) words are defined in the sentence in which the word is first used ('*tabla*,' '*bindia*')
- some of the vocabulary specific to making maple syrup is defined in either a text box or the sentence in which it is used ('evaporators,' 'spile')

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES
- lack of background knowledge (maple syrup production, Indian (Punjabi) culture, swapping)
- switching between the two stories that unfold simultaneously
- specific vocabulary related to making maple syrup ('shanty,' 'sap,' 'cloth filter,' 'taffy')
- Indian (Punjabi) words ('Kathak,' '*sat sri akal*')

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY
- predicting

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES
- inferring
- making connections: text to world, text to self

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES
- Say Something strategy
- reporter interview (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS
- language predictability: uses context (text and visual features) and some basic strategies (such as background knowledge and rereading the surrounding sentences) to work out word meanings
- word solving and building: uses a range of strategies to read unknown words, including chunking words into parts, associating sounds to the parts, and reblending

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Observe each student's ability to:
- make and confirm predictions using the text and picture cues
- make inferences from the text and picture cues
- use the context to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words
- chunk words to assist in reading

ASSESSMENT TOOLS
Select from the following:
- Predicting Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

First Session (pages 1–7)

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

> **ESL NOTE:** Some students new to Canada may be unfamiliar with maple syrup. Bring in a bottle of maple syrup for students to sample and discuss the taste, texture, colour, and how they think it is made. Tell students that maple syrup is a symbol of Canada and invite them to talk about what they consider symbols of their culture. Please be aware of food allergies and other health concerns before students try the syrup, which is a sugar product.

Predicting

- Tell students they will be reading a story called *Maple Syrup – With Bells On!* Show students the front cover of the book. Read the title, then the author's name, and point out the Swap TV logo. Using the Say Something strategy and the predicting stems provided (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*), have students predict what the book will be about. Discuss their predictions. You may want to lead a discussion on maple syrup and how it is made and/or reality television, depending on what students already know about both topics.

- Read the back cover of the book. Discuss with students if any of their predictions have been confirmed. Ensure students understand that as long as they can provide evidence or clues from the text to back up predictions, they are not incorrect.

Making Connections: Text to World

- Using a large map of the world, show students where India is located. Ask students to share what they know about India and Indian culture.

- Using a map of Ontario, show where Kingston, Lanark County, and Richmond Hill are located. Ask students to share if they have been to any of these locations. If not, share with students that Kingston and Richmond Hill are urban and suburban areas, respectively, whereas Lanark County (north of Kingston) is rural — in the country. Ask students to share what they know about life in cities versus life in the country. Have students imagine what it would be like for them to switch places with another child. If you are in a city, have students imagine what it would be like to switch with a child that lives in the country, and vice versa if you live in a rural location.

Introduce supports and challenges

Text Features

- Hand out copies of the book and look through pages 1–5 to help students get a feeling of how the swap works. As you are looking through the pages with students, point out how the two different stories are being told at the same time. Draw attention to the layout technique of using different coloured frames on the photos; blue for Melanie and green for Amrit. Also note how each page signals a change in story, moving from one girl to the next and from one event to the next. Emphasize

that students need to pay attention to the beginning of each new page to know which girl is being written about, and how the story has also changed in focus.

Visual Literacy Features

■ Have students look at pages 2 and 3. Discuss the design and visual literacy features of these two pages. Note the way it is organized. Highlight the way that each page focuses exclusively on one girl, and is set up so that all facts and content are contained within the page. Highlight the boxes containing quick facts, like the age of the girls, where they live, and what their individual challenges will be on Swap TV. Do these features assist in students' comprehension? Ask students, *While reading these pages I'd like you to pay attention to these boxes. They contain a lot of information that, like the rest of the text, is important and will give you a better understanding of the story you are reading.*

Language Predictability

■ Point out the word '*tabla*' on page 4. Ask students if any of them can say the word and know what it means. Explain that this story has some unfamiliar language and some Indian (Punjabi) words. Have students read the entire sentence that contains this word. Ask if anyone can explain what 'tabla' means. Explain to the students that throughout the story the first time a new Indian (Punjabi) word is used its definition is in the same sentence as the word.

■ Have students locate the word 'expressway' on page 4. Explain to students they can use the context — the rest of the words in the sentence — to figure out what this word means. The words 'travel to' and 'packed with cars' can help them figure out that an expressway must be some kind of road, like a highway.

Set a purpose for reading

Predicting

■ Have students read pages 1–7 to find out what challenges Melanie and Amrit will face, and if they will successfully complete them. Encourage students to pause and consider if their predictions were confirmed or where they think the story has unfolded differently than how they predicted.

Provide for early finishers

■ Encourage students who finish early to jot down the sentences where their predictions were confirmed or where they think the story has unfolded differently than how they predicted, and what they think will happen next in the text. They can compare their predictions with another student's predictions if there is time.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Have a student read a portion of the text aloud to you. Assist with word solving, comprehension, and vocabulary. Always provide a comprehension prompt that highlights the focus strategy (predicting), e.g., *What was the first challenge Melanie or Amrit faced? Will Melanie or Amrit be successful at the challenge? What makes you think this? Did your prediction work out or did the author do something different?*

- Give feedback to the student on successes and an area that may need attention.

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Predicting Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide.*)

- You may have a second student read or spend time observing other group members and provide them with comprehension prompts. Be sure to ask students to provide evidence for their answers.

- Note any successful reading strategies you observe, e.g., students working out a word using the context or making a prediction about an event.

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

Predicting

- Revisit your purpose for reading. Ask, *Can you confirm your predictions? What were the challenges for each of the girls? Were they successful?*

Check on outstanding challenges

- Your observations will help you work out other challenges students experienced. Discuss and clarify at this point, e.g., a difficult word or a comprehension issue.

Note successful strategy use

- Explain a successful use of strategy you observed, e.g., *Marco predicted that Amrit would be making maple syrup. When he read what was in the text box on page 2, he realized that she would be making maple taffy and tapping a tree while snowshoeing. It's important to read captions under photos and text boxes because they may have information that is not in the rest of the text, but is still important to understanding the story.*

Second Session (pages 8–16)

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

Inferring

- Ask, *How do you think the girls feel about completing the first challenge? How do you think Amrit and Melanie feel about the second challenge they will face? Will they enjoy tasting food they are unfamiliar with? How do you think the girls feel about switching homes and families for a weekend?*

> **TEACHING TIP:** Take a quick moment to ask students if they have ever tried doing something they were not at all familiar with. Have they eaten at a restaurant that serves food they've never tried, or tried a hobby they had no past experience with? What was the outcome? Did they find new exposures challenging? Rewarding? Both?

Making Connections: Text to Self

- Ask students, *What makes your family special? If you were to swap places with another student for the weekend, what challenges would you have them do?*

Introduce supports and challenges

Language Predictability

- Have students turn to page 13 and find the word 'initials.' Ask students to read the entire sentence and look at the photograph to figure out what the word may mean. Remind students they can use the context, prior knowledge, and photographs to figure out unknown words.

Word Solving and Building

- On page 8 stop at the Indian (Punjabi) words '*bindia*' and '*sat sri akal*.' These words might be difficult for students to read as many are not likely to have encountered them previously. Assist students in reading these words by chunking them into their different parts.

Set a purpose for reading

Predicting

- Have students read from page 8 to the end of the text to find out if Melanie and Amrit will successfully complete the second challenge. Encourage students to pause and consider if their predictions were confirmed or where they think the story has unfolded differently than how they predicted.

Provide for early finishers

- Encourage students who finish early to think of and/or write down additional challenges the girls could pose for one another. Have them share with a partner.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Have a student read a portion of the text aloud to you. Assist with word solving, comprehension, and vocabulary. Always provide a comprehension prompt that highlights the focus strategy (predicting), e.g., *Let's pause for a moment and think about what will happen in the challenge to come. Will Melanie or Amrit be successful at the second challenge? What makes you think this? Did your prediction work out or did something else happen?*

- Give feedback to the student on successes and an area that may need attention.

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Predicting Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*.)

- You may have a second student read or spend time observing other group members and provide them with comprehension prompts. Be sure to ask students to provide evidence for their answers.

- Note any successful reading strategies you observe, e.g., making connections to their own lives and reflecting on their own culture's traditions while reading.

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

Predicting

- Revisit your purpose for reading. Ask, *Can you confirm your predictions? Did Melanie and Amrit successfully complete their second challenges? Did they enjoy tasting food that was different from what they ate at home? Was the swap successful? Did the girls enjoy the swap?*

Check on outstanding challenges

- Your observations will help you work out other challenges students experienced. Discuss and clarify at this point, e.g., a difficult word or a comprehension issue. Have students had difficulty with Indian (Punjabi) words? Was the text explaining their meanings helpful? Are students comfortable with the transitions made from page to page?

Note successful strategy use

■ Explain a successful use of strategy you observed, e.g., *Georgia wasn't sure what a fiddle was. She read the rest of the sentence and realized that it might be an instrument because everyone dances when Grandpa Ray plays the fiddle. Then she looked at the smaller photograph and realized that a fiddle is a lot like a violin. It is important to read on when we come to an unknown word and look at photographs because they can help us figure out the word. I also liked the way Juan blended all the chunks together to figure out the word 'experience.'*

FOCUSED REREADING

Three options are provided for focused rereading in the next Guided Reading lesson. Choose an activity that meets the needs of your students, or you might select a Reader Response activity from the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Making Connections: Text to Self

■ In pairs, have students describe something that they are good at. Students can explain how to complete the activity using words and/or pictures. Students can describe any number of activities they feel they have an aptitude for or ardent interest in.

TEACHING TIP: The activity above also lends itself well to sequencing. Students could write out the steps to completing an activity they enjoy.

Predicting

■ Have students predict what they think would happen if they swapped lives for a weekend with another student in the class. What sort of activities would they be involved in? Would they eat different food? Would they have different responsibilities or play different games? Then, have each partner read the other's predictions about the weekend switch and give an oral evaluation of them to the other student.

Artistic

Inferring

■ Have students draw the outline of another student on butcher paper — trace around another student while the student is lying on the ground. Have students choose either Amrit or Melanie and then inside the body draw symbols, draw pictures, and write words that they feel represent that girl. You could divide the students into two groups, with one group choosing Amrit and the other focusing on Melanie. Encourage students to reflect not only on what is known about the two girls but also on what they think might represent the girls well that might not have been mentioned in the story.

Oral/dramatic

Synthesizing

- Tell students that they are reporters for television or radio. They have been sent by you — the editor — to interview either Amrit or Melanie. They need to prepare a list of questions that they would like to ask either Amrit or Melanie. An example question might be, 'What did you learn from the swap about the other person's life or talents', and so on. Students can team up with another student who takes on the role of either Amrit or Melanie. The reporter asks Melanie or Amrit the questions while the second student answers the questions in that role. If possible, have students videotape or tape record the interview.