



# SCIENCE FAIR

Written by Deb Loughhead  
Illustrated by Mike Polito

**TEXT TYPE:** Fiction: Narrative—Humorous Story  
**GUIDED READING LEVEL:** O

**SUMMARY:** This story, a sequel to *Swimming Lessons*, is about a class science fair project. Two friends, Steve and Zain, decide to work together but have to overcome their different working styles, and must learn to pool their different skills in order to be successful. Their relationships with other students and their need for honesty and integrity are called into play as they try to find the best way of doing well in their project while ensuring everyone gets a fair chance to compete.

## TEXT FEATURES

- chapter headings
- author biography

## VISUAL LITERACY

- table of contents
- supportive illustrations

## TEXT SUPPORTS

- narrated plot explanations

## POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- challenging words related to science experiments ('hypothesis,' 'design,' 'precipitation' 'sample,' 'acidity,' 'prediction')
- a lot of dialogue between characters
- sentence complexity varies throughout text

## FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- synthesizing

## FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- making connections: text to self
- inferring

## ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Say Something strategy
- discussing with a partner
- dramatic performance of short script written by students (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

## WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: uses dictionaries to check on word meanings
- language predictability: uses context (text and visual features such as pictures) and some basic strategies such as background knowledge and rereading the sentences to work out word meanings

## ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- make text to self connections
- make inferences from picture cues
- use multiple word solving strategies, including context cues, prior knowledge, using a dictionary, and other reference tools
- synthesize to integrate new information and prior knowledge to create new understandings

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Synthesizing Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

# First Session (pages 3–17)

## Making Connections: Text to Self

## Inferring

## Text Features

## Synthesizing

## BEFORE READING

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### Activate and build prior knowledge

- Tell students they will be reading a book called ‘Science Fair.’ Ask, *What is a science fair? Has anybody been to a science fair, or do they know of any family member or friend who has worked on a science fair project?*
- Next, look at the book cover. Say, *The author and illustrator have given us a lot of important information in the front cover illustration. What can you infer, or guess, from the picture? Who is involved in this project? What is the focus of the project? What special interests might each of the students have? Where is the science fair going to take place?*

### Introduce supports and challenges

- Ask students to turn to page 3. Say, *This table of contents helps us to find out where each chapter begins, and gives us clues about the story by including chapter headings.*

### Set a purpose for reading

- Explain, *Today we’re going to read chapters 1 through 4. Using the chapter headings to help you, what do you think some of the challenges for the two boys might be, in the first part of the story?* Ask students to record their thoughts in one or two sentences. Give out four sticky notes to each student. Say, *Read chapters 1–4, looking for evidence that supports your thoughts. Place a sticky note on the evidence you find. You may find evidence in more than one place. After you’ve finished reading, we’ll compare our evidence.*

### Provide for early finishers

- Ask students to look over their sticky notes and summarize their evidence.

## DURING READING

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### Monitor reading

- Ask each student to read independently, keeping the session’s purpose for reading in mind. Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts to help students solve problems as they read. For example, ask, *Can you read on to solve the word? Have you tried re-reading to solve that word? Did you reference our science glossary/dictionary?*

**ESL NOTE:** Allow students to use sticky notes to mark the words that they want to have clarified later. During clarification, guide students through the contextual clues to solve the meanings of those words.

## Synthesizing

### **Observe**

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Synthesizing Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*.)
- Note any successful reading strategies you observe, e.g., students looking at the pictures to assist in understanding the text's content.

## **AFTER READING**

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### **Revisit the purpose for reading**

- Share and discuss the evidence students found to support their earlier findings for chapters 1–4.

### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Review and discuss any difficulties students experienced. The assessment tools used, along with students' comments, will help clarify what the significant challenges are. Have students used dictionaries or other reference aids to assist them in solving the numerous words that are unfamiliar and challenging in this story? Are these unfamiliar words now better understood through the use of context and the word solving strategies discussed? What words still pose difficulty for some students?

### **Note successful strategy use**

- Point out a successful reading strategy you observed, e.g., *I think Maya did a great job using the Internet to better understand what was meant by 'acid rain' on page 16.*

## **Optional Approach**

### Synthesizing

You may wish to have the 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). It is recommended that you do some diagnostic work with students or hold a book discussion halfway through to check their comprehension of the text.

### **Setting a Purpose**

Give students six sticky notes and revisit your ongoing purpose of finding evidence regarding what challenges students believe will lie ahead for Steve and the other characters.

## Second Session (pages 18–39)

### BEFORE READING

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#### **Activate and build prior knowledge**

##### **Inferring**

- Ask students to think about their opinion and evidence from the previous sessions, and orally present their ideas to a partner. The teacher can model this with their own example:
  - *When I looked at the first 4 chapter headings, I knew the story would be about two boys, Zain and Steve. I also knew that Zain might not be as interested in the science fair as Steve. I still think this is true, because Zain always wants to play road hockey instead of getting down to work. Steve is getting worried because everyone else has their hypothesis ready for the due date, but he and Zain still don't know what they're going to do!*

#### **Introduce supports and challenges**

##### **Language Predictability**

- Ask students to scan page 18 for the word 'OBSERVATION.' Solve the word and its meaning together, using multiple strategies, such as context cues, prior knowledge, and reference tools such as an English or science dictionary. Repeat these word solving strategies for the words 'PROCEDURE' (page 18) and 'predicted' (page 29).

#### **Set a purpose for reading**

##### **Synthesizing**

- Ask students to read chapters 5 through 8, and use sticky notes when they find evidence that supports their current thoughts on how this story is going to unfold. Teachers can model this by referring back to their earlier statement under the second session's 'Activate and build prior knowledge' section. For example, *I think they are going to decide on their project; there's the evidence on page 18.* Inform students, *After you've finished reading, we'll compare our evidence.*

#### **Provide for early finishers**

- Ask students to look over their sticky notes and summarize their evidence. Or if they prefer, encourage them to make connections to the story by sharing any previous or personal knowledge they have of science fairs with a partner. Even if some students have no real connection to science fairs their partner might. They might wish to ask their partner who they most identify with, Steve or Zain, and why.

## Synthesizing

### DURING READING

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#### **Monitor reading**

- Ask each student to read independently, keeping the purpose in mind. Observe and listen to students as they read, assisting them with word solving strategies, vocabulary, punctuation, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts to help students solve problems as they read. For example, ask, *Can you read on to solve that word? Have you tried re-reading to solve it? Did you reference our science glossary/dictionary?*

#### **Observe**

- Note any successful reading strategies you observe, e.g., students self-monitoring and using reference aids to word solve when they need to understand a challenging word they come across.

### AFTER READING

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#### **Revisit the purpose for reading**

- Share and discuss the evidence students found to support their conclusions in chapters 5–8. Ask students, *What do you think the author's main message will be in this story?* They can look at the chapter headings for chapters 9 through 11, to help them to form their ideas.

#### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Have students had success or difficulties using dictionaries and other reference tools to assist them in solving unfamiliar words? Are students having problems with transitions between easier to more difficult narrative and dialogue?

#### **Note successful strategy use**

- Highlight a successful reading strategy you observed among students, e.g., *I think Ray did a nice job following up on his predictions when he reviewed his sticky notes and thought about what had happened in the story so far.*

## Third Session (pages 40–55)

### BEFORE READING

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#### Synthesizing

#### **Activate and build prior knowledge**

- The following can be used as a Say Something activity (see the Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*). Prepare an anchor chart, listing the following prompts:
  - What is the book about?
  - What is the author’s message?
  - What are the most important things you have learned so far?
  - In just a few words, tell us what Chapter 8 is about.
  - Does the title tell us what the book is really about?
- Direct students to find a partner, and to number themselves as 1 or 2. Tell students they have two minutes ‘think time’ to choose a prompt and formulate an oral response. After two minutes, ask partner 1 to begin sharing. When they have finished, partner 2 begins.
- Ask partner 1 from each pair to report back on partner 2’s ideas, then partner 2 to report back on partner 1’s ideas, until all ideas have been heard.
- Demonstrate how to synthesize, by using students’ ideas to formulate a group statement about the main message of this book. For example, *The most important things to remember in group work are to be honest and to take your responsibilities seriously*. Or, *Being honest and working together are very important in school projects*. Teachers should write this agreed-upon statement on a piece of chart paper, for students to refer to.

#### Visual Literacy Features

#### **Introduce supports and challenges**

- Ask students to look at the picture on page 45. Does this picture help them in understanding what Zain and Steve are trying to accomplish? For those students who have not yet participated in a science fair or experiment, does this picture help form an idea of what is involved?

#### Making Connections: Text to Self

#### **Set a purpose for reading**

- Have students ever faced a dilemma like Steve’s? Have they ever had a tough choice to make that involved fairness? As students read encourage them to think about Steve’s problem and how they would react in his situation.

#### **Provide for early finishers**

- Ask students to write their own statement about the most important message in this story. Also, if there is still time, ask students who finish early to find two words they did not understand previously but have since learned the meaning of by using any of the strategies discussed so far.

## DURING READING

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### **Monitor reading**

- Have a student read a portion of the text aloud to you. Assist with word solving, vocabulary, and comprehension. Always provide a comprehension prompt that highlights the focus strategy (synthesizing), e.g., *Now that we are nearing the end of the book, can you tell me what you think the message is turning out to be?* Also, invite students to reflect on what they have read by asking, *Did looking at the chapter headings help you begin to figure out the direction this story would take?*

### **Observe**

- Note any successful reading strategies you observe, e.g., students making their own connections to Steve's problem of having to weigh his personal concerns and priorities to arrive at a fair solution, in the final chapters.

## AFTER READING

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### **Revisit the purpose for reading**

- Ask students, *How do you think Steve feels now that he has completed the project? How might you feel if you had to make the choices Steve faced? How are Steve's and Zain's challenges similar to a challenge you have experienced when completing group projects?*

### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Your observations will help you work out challenges that continue to pose difficulty to some students. Discuss some of these at this point, e.g., a difficult or scientific word or a comprehension issue.

### **Note successful strategy use**

- Again, spotlight a successful reading strategy you observed among students, e.g., *I really like how Shervin thought about a past experiences where he, like Steve, had confronted difficult issues such as fairness or cheating. It seemed to help him identify and connect with what he thought one of the book's messages was.*

### **Making Connections: Text to Self**

## **Optional After Reading**

### **Making Connections: Text to Self**

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.

### **Synthesizing**

Ask students how they balance responsibilities like school and homework with things they enjoy doing outside of class. Who did they relate to most – Steve or Zain?

On pages 53–54, Mrs. Henshaw talks about being 'good sports' and doing a 'great service.' Discuss with students what they think is being communicated by the author here.

## FOCUSED REREADING

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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*.

### Synthesizing

#### **Written**

- Tell students that one day you would like to develop a Science Fair project for a class and you need input from students. Students should work with a partner to list the 7 to 10 main things that the teacher should think about/include when introducing the project to a class.

### Inferring

#### **Artistic**

- Students choose one of the main or secondary characters. Divide a sheet of plain paper into four sections and draw that character's face, showing four different expressions, each of which relates to a different part of the book. Beside each face, draw a speech bubble and write a 'feeling' statement, e.g., Steve at the beginning of Chapter 2: 'Right now, I'm feeling really happy because it's time to begin our science fair project'!

### Analyzing and Synthesizing

#### **Oral/dramatic**

- Students choose a scene from the book and write it as a script for a dramatic performance. Begin by discussing Chapter 2 and asking students to adopt the roles of Mrs. Henshaw, Zain, and Steve. Groups of three read the chapter together. Note how direct speech can be immediately converted into a part for a script, while actions and expressions need to be analyzed, then synthesized, and added to the script in brackets. Ask the group to reread the book, select a chapter to adapt into a play, and come up with a group script.