



# SERF'S UP

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**TEXT TYPE:** Fiction: Narrative—Fantasy Story  
**GUIDED READING LEVEL:** R

**SUMMARY:** In this 'choose an adventure' text, Mort and Nick stumble across a video game-like time machine at a neighbour's garage sale that transports them back to medieval times in England. In order to get back to the future, the boys must outwit serfs, an intelligent reeve, impish minstrels, and a curious young king.

## TEXT FEATURES

- ellipses
- song lyrics
- 'What should happen next?' text block

## TEXT SUPPORTS

- italicized text sections indicating the end of specific adventures

## POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- multi-sequential format
- quotations without speaker tags
- dashes and hyphens

## FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- predicting

## FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- sequencing

## ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Ranking Ladder strategy
- discussing with a partner
- discussing with a group
- Reader's Theatre activity (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

## WORKING WITH WORDS

- word solving and building: reads an increasing range of homophones (words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings) and is aware of their meanings in context
- language predictability: uses context to work out word meanings
- language predictability: uses dictionaries (print and online) to check on word meanings
- high frequency words: recognizes important words linked to other curriculum areas (e.g., history)

## ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- make predictions about characters and plot
- provide evidence from the text to back up predictions
- retell main events in sequence

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Predicting Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

# First Session (pages 1–15)

**Word Solving and  
Building and Language  
Predictability**

## BEFORE READING

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

- Show the title of the book and ask students to read it. Ask, *Have you ever heard the saying or expression ‘surf’s up’? What does it mean?* If no students mention it, direct their attention to the word ‘serf’ and ask if the spelling of the word is correct for the context they are talking about (beach, surfing). Ask students, *What does the word ‘serf’ mean?* If no students can answer, have them use a dictionary to assist them. Explain to students that ‘surf’ and ‘serf’ are examples of homophones—words that sounds the same but have different spelling and meanings.

**ESL NOTE:** The concept of puns or play on words can effectively be taught with the use of a pair of drawings. Write down the following sentence on a whiteboard: ‘There are forks on the road.’ Ask a volunteer to illustrate that sentence. If they draw eating utensils, reply, *Yes, those are forks on the road, and so are these* (draw a second picture of a road forking off in separate directions).

**Text Features and  
Sequencing**

- Display the front cover. Ask students to predict what the book could be about based on the illustrations and title. Provide students with appropriate prompts: *What do you see in the cover illustration? How can the title help you make a prediction? What clues does the word ‘serf’ suggest about the story?* Ask students to provide reasons for their predictions. Next, read the blurb on the back cover. Ask, *Were your predictions correct?*

### **Introduce supports and challenges**

**High Frequency Words**

- Say, *The book we are about to read allows you to make choices about what you think should happen next. Turn to page 2 and read the section ‘What should happen next?’ Has anyone ever read a book like this before? How do you think reading this type of book will be different from reading a book that you read from beginning to end with a regular story sequence?*
- Turn to page 7 and ask students to find the word ‘breeches.’ How many students know the meaning of the word? Ask, *If you don’t know the word, or the meaning of the word, what can you do to help you figure it out?* Allow students to discuss various strategies. Explain to students the pages they are about to read contain many historical words. As a Ranking Ladder activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 4 Literacy Support Guide*), small groups can brainstorm and list any words students already know about the era. Then have them share three of their top picks with the larger group. Post the top choices for the class to view.

**Predicting**

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

- Tell students to read to see if the predictions they make about what will happen in the story are correct. Tell students they should look for examples from the text that prove their prediction was correct.

### **Provide for early finishers**

- Students who finish early can pair-read taking turns rereading aloud to a partner.

## **DURING READING**

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### **Monitor reading**

- Ask each student to read independently to the end of page 13 thinking about the purpose.

**ESL NOTE:** There are many reference books on the subject of medieval times. Have several handy and ask students to find pictures or information about the historical words they encounter in the story.

- Provide individual students with the opportunity to read aloud to you. Encourage students to pause as they read to think about their predictions. Provide any students who are having difficulty with appropriate questions: *What will the character do? What will happen next? Did my prediction work out? Do I need to change my thinking?* Likewise, if a student makes an appropriate prediction and it does not occur, it is important to point out he or she did not make a mistake or his or her prediction was not valid. Say, *Your prediction made sense, but the author decided to do something else.*
- Assist any students who are experiencing difficulty with following the format of the text to carefully follow the instructions in the ‘What should happen next?’ text block and go to the correct pages.

### **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*.)
- Commend students who are successfully utilizing the strategies that were highlighted so far, or any other appropriate strategies.

## **AFTER READING**

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

- Revisit the predictions made by students. Were their predictions correct? What evidence do they have from the text to support their predictions? Say, *Some of you may have made predictions that were well thought out, yet the author did something else in the story. What did you do as you read the text when you realized your prediction was different from what was happening?*

## **Predicting**

### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Ask, *Was it difficult having to choose what should happen next on page 2? Do you think you will have any problems as you continue to read the text and make choices as to what will happen as the story continues?* Provide students with the opportunity to discuss any difficulties they encountered and allow them to share how they are going to deal with the remainder of the text.

### **Note successful strategy use**

- Highlight a student who successfully reads the text, e.g., *Dani really gave some thought to which choice to make on page 2, when she arrived at 'What should happen next'? She looked at page 3 and page 4. Dani carefully read the two choices. She paused at both and said, 'I like Mort's idea of finding out more about the video game. I bet that will be exciting.' She decided to continue reading based on which choice she thought would be a more interesting read and a greater adventure for the characters.*

## **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). 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.

### **Predicting**

#### **Setting a Purpose**

Say to students, *Make sure to follow up on your predictions as you read on.*

## **Second Session (pages 16–27 or 18–33)**

### **BEFORE READING**

### **Sequencing**

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

- Ask students to retell what has happened in the story so far. If needed, provide students with appropriate prompts. Encourage students to think about what happened first, second, and so on. Remind students that the plot of the story has followed the same order up to this point. Explain to students, depending on what options they choose for the characters, the events in the story, and the order of events, will vary from reader to reader.
- Model appropriate ways for students to deal with the individualization of the story that is about to take place. Say, *I have to decide if I'm going to turn to page 16 or 18 now. I think it would be good for the boys to*

*jump into the swamp now, so I'll go to page 16. When I start on page 16, I have to keep in mind everything that has happened so far, but also pay attention to new events. I also have to keep an eye out for 'What should happen next'?* Inform them that if they come to *'Your adventure ends HERE,'* they have to go back to page 15 and pick the other option and keep on reading.

### **Predicting**

- Direct students to page 15. They have two options. Ask students to choose an option and allow them to make predictions as to what will happen. Discuss why students made such predictions. Be sure to highlight the importance of using their own background knowledge along with what has already happened.

### **Text Features**

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

- As a group, turn to page 19 and have students read the italicized section at the bottom of the page. Remind students if they choose an adventure that leads them to a section where their adventure ends, they must go back to the page where they had two choices on how to proceed and select the other adventure. Ask, *Why do you think it is important to continue reading the book and not stop when you come to the page stating 'Your adventure ends HERE'?* Provide students with an opportunity to discuss the importance of finishing the book.

### **Sequencing**

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

- Explain to students that as they read, they should keep the sequence of events in order so they can retell what happens.

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

- Students who finish early can pair up and take turns retelling the section of the story they just read.

## **DURING READING**

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### ***Monitor reading***

- Ensure students continue to read even if they come to *'Your adventure ends HERE.'*
- Provide support to students in word solving and vocabulary. Ensure students are using a variety of strategies, including paying close attention to the relationship between their story choices and sequencing, background knowledge, context clues, rereading, and reading on.

### ***Observe***

- Pay attention to students as they are reading dialogue, particularly any dialogue without speaker tags, to identify who is actually speaking.

## Sequencing

- Give feedback on any successful use of strategies you observe, e.g., *I liked how Jan-Marie told me that this book was a lot different from other books in that it had a different way of telling a story—one that she had not seen before. She said she would pay extra close attention to how her choices affected what happened in the story if she was going to have to retell what happened. Great work, Jan-Marie.*

## AFTER READING

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

- Ask students to retell the section they just read. Remind them of the order of events, characters, action, problems, and solutions. Ask students to discuss why there are differences in the retellings.

### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Ask students if they had problems with identifying speakers when the dialogue did not specify who was speaking. What strategies did they use, or can they use, to help them when reading direct quotes?

### **Note successful strategy use**

- Explain a successful reading strategy you observed, e.g., using context to figure out words: *On page 26, Milo came to the word ‘attire.’ At first he did not know what it meant. Milo decided to read on where there are several clues to help him figure out what ‘attire’ meant. First, the minstrel pinched Mort’s sleeve. Then, as he read on, the minstrel said: ‘Cloth like this I have never felt.’ The two clues helped Milo conclude that attire had something to do with clothing.*

## Third Session (pages 28–48 or 34–48)

## Text Features

## BEFORE READING

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

- Start by asking students if they think Mort and Nick are in a good situation at this point in the story. Allow students to discuss and give reasons for their answers based on the sections they have read up to this point. *If you had to start the book again, why would you have chosen different adventures or the same options for Nick and Mort?*

### **Introduce supports and challenges**

- Focus students’ attention on the third last paragraph on page 34 and the punctuation between the words ‘off’ and ‘key’ and ‘hey’ and ‘ho.’ If not mentioned by students, tell them they are hyphens and are used to join words and to separate syllables.

Invite students to turn to page 37 and direct students to the end of the fourth paragraph ('You can get to a whole lot of other churches if you go this way, but over here—') Ask students what type of punctuation is found at the end of the sentence just before the quotation mark. Do students think it is a hyphen? Inform students this punctuation is called a dash. It is longer and has a different purpose than the hyphen. Dashes can be used to show:

- a sudden break in thought, e.g., *My dog—a poodle—loves to eat.*
- an interrupted quotation, e.g., *'I never knew that—' she started to say.*

Note, *Throughout the book, you have seen a lot of dashes and hyphens. I want you to see if you can identify them in the remaining text and think about why they might be used. How do you think they will affect your reading?*

## Predicting

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

- Encourage students to make a final prediction about what will happen to Nick and Mort.

### **Provide for early finishers**

- Students who finish early can practise reading parts of dialogue in the 'voice' of the character who is speaking.

## **DURING READING**

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### **Monitor reading**

- Encourage students to re-evaluate their predictions. Remind them to support their predictions with evidence from the text or adjust their predictions, if necessary.

### **Observe**

- Are students identifying the difference between a dash and a hyphen?

## **AFTER READING**

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

- Did any students correctly predict the ending? Were some predictions appropriate, even if the author moved in another direction? Discuss the predictions and how they compare to the actual conclusion.

### **Check on outstanding challenges**

- Review and discuss any examples of hyphens and dashes students identified. Could they tell the difference between the two? How did the use of dashes and hyphens affect their reading and understanding of the text?

## Predicting



### **Note successful strategy use**

- Explain a successful reading strategy you observed. Commend students for using strategies that were appropriate for the text and for their individual reading strengths. Encourage students to share successes they had while using various strategies.

## **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 reader strategies.

Students can write a different ending in a paragraph or two. Perhaps the ending might lead to a sequel.

### **Inferring**

Say, *The author doesn't really say how the time machine device arrived at the garage sale at the beginning of the story. With a partner, come up with some ideas as to how it arrived at the garage sale. Did it spark any other adventures before Nick and Mort found it?*

## **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**

### **Sequencing**

- Direct students to the bottom of page 28 and read the italicized 'Your adventure ends HERE.' Have students imagine there was a TV show, and ask them to write the episode depicting what happens to the boys next. Remind students to have a cliffhanger at the end of the episode.

### **Artistic**

### **Inferring**

- Ask students to draw a detailed diagram of the time machine the boys used to travel back to medieval times. The diagram should include labels and descriptions of what the different parts of the machine do. If there are materials available in the classroom that will allow students to create a replica of the time machine, they might wish to create one rather than illustrate it.

### **Oral/dramatic**

### **Synthesizing**

- Working in small groups, students can participate in a Reader's Theatre. Students will write a script based on a section of the story. Each member of the group will have a copy of the script. Students will decide on the roles and read the script orally to the class after having sufficient time to practise. Students should try to capture how the characters express themselves and how they feel in the script through the performance. The audience should feel tension if there is tension, should understand fear if that is what is being presented in the scene, and so on. This activity promotes fluent and interpretive reading.