



A FISH TALE

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TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Narrative—Fantasy Story
GUIDED READING LEVEL: S

SUMMARY: Chanise, a young girl used to having her own way, desperately wants a pet. One day, her mom caves in and buys her an aquarium and fish. Chanise quickly tires of her fish, kills each one by improper feeding, and flushes them down the toilet. All are gone, except for Pangio. However, Pangio makes too much noise in the tank, so Chanise plots its death. As Chanise takes action to deal with Pangio she discovers all is not as it seems.

TEXT FEATURES

- varied font use (italics, bold, capitalized words)
- dialogue
- highlighted and enlarged text quotes

VISUAL LITERACY

- illustrations
- fish icons
- enlarged first letter starting each new text section

TEXT SUPPORTS

- short introduction
- illustrations

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- scientific classification of fish
- names and phrases in Greek/Latin
- idioms
- surprise ending

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- self-monitoring

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- synthesizing
- predicting

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Think-Pair-Share strategy
- discussing with a group
- Reader's Theatre activity (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- word solving and building: reads homophones and is aware of their meanings
- language predictability: using context and textual definitions to work out word meanings
- language predictability: idiomatic expressions
- language predictability: fluently integrates meaning, grammar, and visual-sound cues

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- ask well thought-out questions that seek clarification or expand thinking
- monitor own comprehension through self-questioning
- use fix-up strategies when confronted with challenging text
- infer the meaning of words by using them in context, visualizing, and making connections to background knowledge

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Self-Monitoring Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

First Session (pages 1–5)

Making Connections: Text to Self and Text to Text

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Tell students to raise their hands if they have ever kept fish as pets, or wanted pets. Ask, *Do you think fish make good pets? Explain your thinking. What do you know about taking care of fish?* During the discussion, prompt students to use words and ideas that are specific to fish, and introduce words that they might encounter in the story.

ESL NOTE: When activating and building prior knowledge, consider bringing in an aquarium or fish tank (if possible), or objects that might be found inside them, to help with visual support for your ESL learners. You can then refer to them as your students predict key words pertaining to fish that they might encounter in the story.

Word Solving and Building

- Ask students what they know about the fantasy genre (e.g., *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*). Say, *This story is a narrative fantasy. Fantasy texts have distinguishing features that include the element of magic, the interweaving of real and imaginary worlds, the use of animals or creatures in the storytelling, and the theme of good and evil. This narrative fantasy begins in the real world and then moves to the imaginary world; the world of fantasy.*
- Tell students to look at the cover and illustration, as well as the title. Point out the play on the word ‘Tale.’ Note that it sounds just like the word, ‘tail.’ Although the two similar-sounding words clearly have different meanings and spellings they can both apply to this cover. Explain that words which sound the same but have different meanings and spellings are examples of homophones.

Text and Visual Literacy Features and Inferring

Introduce supports and challenges

- Read the short introduction on the first page. Ask, *Why do you think the author wrote these sentences before the story begins? How does the illustration support this introduction?* Guide students to infer that the author wants us to know that Chanise is used to getting what she wants by having temper tantrums.
- Tell students that the small fish icons signify both a break in the text and the end of a period of time. Point out the enlarged font of the first letter of the words that begin each new section.
- Read to students ‘*Hippoglossus stenolepis*,’ found on page 2. Explain that this is the scientific word (scientific words are often derived from Greek) for halibut—a type of fish. Tell students they will encounter several Greek/Latin words in the story and that the English translation will be provided nearby in the text.

Language Predictability and Inferring

Self-monitoring

- On a white board, write the idiomatic expressions: ‘on cloud nine’ (page 2), ‘going off the deep end’ (page 3), and ‘Twentyfour seven’ (page 4). If students are unaware of what an idiomatic expression is, go over what they are. Ask students to give an example of an idiomatic expression they know. Point out some strategies they can use to help them understand the meaning of new or unfamiliar idiomatic expressions (e.g., reading in context).
- Point out the dialogue written in quotation marks in the last four lines of the first section on page 2. Remind students that each new line indicates a different speaker, and that they can use cues like the punctuation mark at the end of a line to help them infer the tone of voice and feelings of the character speaking, and thus the text’s meaning.

Set a purpose for reading

- Instruct students to read to the fish icons on page 5.
- Distribute two colours of sticky notes (e.g., yellow and blue) to students. Say, *Place a yellow sticky on any part of the text that you find confusing. If you overcome your text challenge, record your fix-up strategy on the sticky so you can share it with the rest of the group. If you can’t solve the problem, write ‘Huh?’ on the sticky and we’ll try to figure it out together during our discussion.* On the blue sticky, tell students to write questions on things they are wondering about as they read the story. If they find the answer to their question, tell them to place a checkmark beside the question. If they can’t answer the question, tell them to write ‘Huh?’ on the sticky.

ESL NOTE: For your ESL students you may wish to have them concentrate on using the sticky notes to identify only the parts of the text that they find confusing. You may then pair your ESL learners with your early finishers to problem-solve fix-up strategies.

Provide for early finishers

- Ask early finishers to problem-solve with an ESL student, using fix-up strategies to repair areas that ESL students are struggling with. Working with another student to clarify a confusing part can sometimes lead to an issue’s resolution for students.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- As students read silently, ask individual students to read a portion of the text aloud to you. Assist them with prompts, as needed, in self-monitoring and using fix-up strategies (e.g., *Where did you lose track of the meaning? How might visualizing the scene help you? Can you substitute a word here? Summarize what has happened up to this point.*).

Self-monitoring

Observe

- Observe how individual students are recording self-monitoring questions and fix-up strategies on their stickies.
- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Self-Monitoring Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*.)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Record students' fix-up strategies on an anchor chart, entitled 'Fix-ups We Use.'
- Ask students to refer to their blue stickies to read aloud their wonderings. Ask students to explain how monitoring understanding through self-questioning helps them better understand the story (e.g., *At the bottom of page 3, the author refers to 'the curse of the Kuhlí loach.' I ask myself, Why would the fish be a curse? It was supposed to be a pet. I know that this is a fantasy narrative and I wonder what might happen as I read on.*).

Check on outstanding challenges

- Say, *When you ask yourself questions to help make sense of the text, sometimes you can find answers directly in the text; sometimes you need to infer, putting together information or clues from different parts of the text; sometimes your background knowledge or experiences will support you in finding the answers.*
- Ask students to discuss remaining areas of confusion and unanswered questions with the group. Provide support as needed as they problem-solve, using a variety of fix-up strategies. Add fix-up strategies to the 'Fix-ups We Use' anchor chart.

Note successful strategy use

- Highlight successful strategy use as students add to and refer to their anchor chart, 'Fix-ups We Use,' to solve outstanding comprehension challenges.
- Praise the successful use of any reading strategy as a student tries to figure out the meaning of 'cold-blooded,' in the first paragraph on page 2. Mention, *Raj used the inferring strategy to determine that the author meant the mother was cold towards Chanise and didn't show her any affection. Raj knew he was correct because later on in the text the author said, 'her mother kept her distance' when Chanise wanted to kiss her.*

Second Session (page 5–end)

BEFORE READING

Synthesizing

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Have students give brief oral summaries of the story so far. Ask students if the characters are part of a real world or whether they have entered a fantasy world. Discuss their responses and ideas.

Introduce supports and challenges

- Ask students to describe what they notice in the illustrations on pages 5 and 7, as well as on the final page. Then point out the bolded upper case letters throughout this section of text, as well as those that appear scrawled across the aquarium. With these features in mind ask students to Think-Pair-Share (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*) with a partner to predict what might develop as the story progresses.
- Point out the italicized words ‘*Filia mea*’ on page 7. Tell students that the mother uses these words three times. They mean ‘my girl’ in an ancient language called Latin (as defined in the text itself, immediately following the second instance of the phrase’s use). Ask them to think about who the mother is referring to.
- Ask students to turn to page 6. Point out the way the words are emphasized—written in capitals, with dashes separating the letters and followed by ellipses. Say, *When you come to this part in your reading, and other sections of capitalized print, think about how the author wants you to read these words.*

Text and Visual Literacy Features and Predicting

Set a purpose for reading

- Tell students that the fantasy will now unfold as Chanise enters the basement. Say, *As you read to the end of the story, ask yourself: ‘What strategies might I use to keep me on track and help make sense of this part of the story?’ Visualizing the described sights, sounds, and smells in this section of the story is one way of involving myself to help me understand what is happening to Chanise as the story moves forward.*
- Ask students to continue to code and track their self-monitoring and fix-up strategies and to write their questions on the coloured sticky notes you provide them, as done in the previous session.

Self-monitoring

Provide for early finishers

- Ask students who finish reading early to record on a third colour sticky, descriptive/sensory words that help them visualize and feel what is transpiring in the story. Words like ‘Glub. Glub.’ and ‘foul-smelling mould’ provide sensory information students can use to gain some perspective on how Chanise might feel and react to her circumstances as they continue to grow ever-stranger.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- As students read silently to the end of the fantasy, ask individual students to read aloud portions of the text that they find challenging. Support them with prompts to help students self-monitor their reading.

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Self-Monitoring Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*.)

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Ask students to share their self-monitoring strategies and questions with the group. Ask, *How did visualizing this story's events and words help your reading?*
- Add new strategies used by students to repair their comprehension to the 'Fix-ups We Use' chart started in the first session.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Tell students to confirm or revise their predictions with a partner. Discuss the surprise ending with the group. Ask students if this was what they expected to happen or if they were confused by the ending. Ask how many of them reread the ending to try to make sense of it. Note that rereading confusing text can be a very effective way of understanding something that is tricky at first—like the story's ending.
- Ask students to share any areas in the text that are still unclear so the group can problem-solve together. Add any new strategies to the 'Fix-ups We Use' chart. Again, note to students that enlisting the help of another student can be a good way to understand parts of a text that pose difficulties.
- Ask students why they think the author used capitalized lettering when the mother was speaking to Chanise on the final page.
- Ask questions that relate to the theme of this story: *Who is a good character? An evil character? Is there a moral to this fantasy?* Discuss students' responses as a group.

Self-monitoring

Note successful strategy use

- Praise students' successful use of a strategy when thinking about the story. For example, *After she finished reading, Roberta thought about what she had read. She and I talked about what this story's message might have been. She said it was about treating others nicely, and the consequences of being a mean person. When I asked her to expand on her statement she said that Chanise was pretty spoiled and was horrible to her pet fish, letting them die by not looking after them as she should have. She said that in the end, she got the same kind of treatment her pets suffered. Roberta said that if Chanise was a nicer person the mother might have been nicer to her as well. Roberta's thoughts and comments demonstrate to me that she synthesized the events and ideas in this fantasy very nicely. She really made an effort to think about a message the author might have been trying to send.*

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 5 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Self-monitoring and Predicting

- Write a sequel to this fantasy from either Pangio's or Chanise's perspective. Remember that in the fantasy genre it would be possible for Chanise to survive her fate.

Sequencing and Synthesizing

- Pretend that you are Pangio, observing Chanise. Write a diary entry for seven days, spanning over the period of a few months. Ensure students proofread and correct their writing using an editing checklist developed by you and the participants.

Synthesizing and Evaluating

- Write a script based on a trial scene in which the two defendants, Pangio and the mother, are charged with the disappearance of Chanise. Both the defense lawyer and the prosecutor present their case as they interview and cross-examine the witnesses (the readers of the story). It is up to a jury to rule as to who is guilty or not guilty, and to announce an appropriate sentence if needed. Encourage students to thoughtfully consider both points of view in this script, just as a real jury would have to do. Students should consider how these points of view are supported by the evidence presented to the court.

**Sequencing and
Synthesizing**

Analyzing and Sequencing

**Synthesizing and
Sequencing**

Artistic

- Create a comic strip of 6–8 frames, summarizing the main events in this fantasy in their proper sequence.
- Using transparencies, create a series of overlaid illustrations, showing the transformation of Chanise’s mother into Pangio’s mother. Include details from the story.

Oral/dramatic

- Ask students to create a Reader’s Theatre based on this fantasy. In writing the script, they need to copy or rewrite dialogue, in the form of a play, highlighting key events from the fantasy, and including key parts for each character to read. They choose the role they wish to play (Chanise, Pangio, the mother, or the narrator). Students are to perform their Reader’s Theatre for the rest of the class.