



TWENTY-DOLLAR REWARD

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TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Narrative—Historical Story

GUIDED READING LEVEL: U/V

SUMMARY: On her 12th birthday, Sarah Simmons decides she must find out why her birth mother abandoned her on the steps of the Collins' home 12 years earlier. With just the basket she was left in and some baby clothes as clues, Sarah and her cousin, James, try to unravel the mystery of her past. The story is set in London Township, Ontario, in 1870, and based on the actual abandonment of a baby on the doorstep of Edward Collins' home in 1858, as recorded in the minutes of a London Township Council meeting.

TEXT FEATURES

- chapters
- italics
- hand-written note
- text advertisements
- sketch of township map

TEXT SUPPORTS

- postscript
- narrative structure
- italics
- use of questions

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- historical content (events, activities, and words)
- sentence length and use of commas
- punctuation (use of colon)

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- predicting

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- evaluating
- self-monitoring

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Say Something strategy
- discussing with a group
- asking questions
- town meeting (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: using context to work out word meanings
- language predictability: idiomatic expressions

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- make predictions about characters and plot
- confirm or change predictions
- use fix-ups when comprehension breaks down
- understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction portions of a text
- evaluate the author's craft

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Predicting Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

First Session (pages 3–14)

BEFORE READING

Text Features

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Tell students they will be reading a book entitled ‘Twenty-Dollar Reward,’ and present the cover of the book. Say, *The account in the book is historical fiction. What are some characteristics of historical stories?* Be sure to include the following features:
 - historical setting
 - characters fit the time (the way they speak and act, and their activities)
 - some characters might be based on real people
 - some historical facts
 - some of the action and events are made up

TEACHING TIP:

Record the information from the discussion on the features of historical stories as an anchor chart. Students can refer to the information contained in the chart as they read.

Text Features

Introduce supports and challenges

- Direct students to the top of page 5 and read the first paragraph together. What is the purpose of italics? Allow students to discuss the reasons for using italics in writing. Be sure to include: someone’s speech or thoughts; titles for books, movies, songs, and so on; emphasizing an important part of a text. Ask, *What was the purpose of italics in this section?* Allow students the opportunity to discuss as a group. Encourage students to think about the purposes of italics when they encounter them in this text. Ask them to keep in mind how italics might help them as they read.

Evaluating

- Direct students’ attention to page 13 and read the final two paragraphs (continuing onto the top of page 14) together. Say, *The Franco-Prussian War was an historical event. Why do you think the author mentioned this event in the story? Does it have anything to do directly with the story?* Provide an opportunity for students to discuss. Remind students that an important part of historical fiction is including events that really occurred in that time period. Historical events help make the story real. Encourage students to pause and think about any references to actual historical events.

Language Predictability

- As a group, read the first two paragraphs on page 4. Highlight the word ‘contemplating.’ Ask, *What are some strategies we could use to help us figure out the meaning of the word ‘contemplating’?* Provide students with the opportunity to share appropriate strategies. If not mentioned

by students, looking at the context of the word by studying the surrounding sentences is a strategy that should be highlighted. Model your thinking process in solving the word's meaning by saying, *Sarah's actions give me some good clues as to what the word 'contemplating' might mean. At the beginning of the sentence containing the word she tugged on one of her braids. It seems as though she is nervous or anxious because she is playing with her hair. The next part of the sentence, following the word 'contemplating,' tells me she thinks about the same question every year at her birthday. When I read on a little further and look at how she begins to ask the question ('I was wondering...')—as if she does not want to really ask the question—it also helps me understand the word a little better. All the information surrounding the word 'contemplating' helps me figure out the word has something to do with thinking about something very carefully.* Direct students' attention to the word 'tentatively.' Ask them to demonstrate using context to figure out the meaning of this word, as modelled above.

Predicting

Set a purpose for reading

- Tell students they will be focusing on the predicting strategy. Ask students to discuss what they know about predicting while reading a text. Remind students about two important points concerning their predictions:
 - Predictions should be appropriate. A prediction cannot be a wild guess or have little connection to the text (i.e., the book they are about to read is historical fiction, so predictions have to be related to the past, not the present or the future).
 - Predictions should be revisited. Students should check predictions to see if they worked out or need to be adjusted.
- Say, *Think about the title of the story. Predict why you think it is called 'Twenty-Dollar Reward.'* As you read the first two chapters, look for evidence to support your predictions. Remember as you read to ask yourself: *'Did my prediction work out? Did the author do something different from what I predicted?'* Remind students that they can make appropriate predictions, but the author may take a different direction. Their predictions are not a mistake in this case. Ask students to share their predictions based on the conversations that have occurred. Encourage them to look for evidence to support their prediction as they read.

Provide for early finishers

- Any students who finish early can share their predictions with a partner.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Assist students with predicting prompts to encourage the use of this comprehension strategy, e.g., *Have you found any evidence in the text to directly support your prediction as to why the book is titled ‘Twenty-Dollar Reward’? Are there clues which may help support your prediction? Do you think you need to adjust your prediction at this point?*

ESL NOTE: Provide students with a story map. Allow students to jot down notes as they read the story so that they can better follow the storyline.

– Story Map 1: Beginning, Middle, End

– Story Map 2: Setting (when, where), Major and Minor Characters, Plot/Problem (including events), Solution

Observe

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

AFTER READING

Predicting

Revisit the purpose for reading

- The reason for the author titling the book ‘Twenty-Dollar Reward’ has not been revealed. After reading the first two chapters, can students find any support for their prediction? Present students with the following statement: ‘From the author’s clues, I think my prediction is (correct/needs to be adjusted) because _____.’ Discuss as a group, allowing each student to provide an answer.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Along with observations recorded during the reading, ask students to discuss any problems they had in reading the text in this session, and address these problems now. Has using context provided some assistance in helping to solve difficult words?

Note successful strategy use

- Ask students to share a strategy they found useful, e.g., *As she was reading page 8, Susan told me she used the context to solve the meaning of the word ‘intrigued.’ She said the word ‘mystery,’ at the beginning of the sentence, was the first clue that helped her. The information in the rest of the sentence, regarding Sarah and James spending hours trying to think up reasons why Sarah’s mother abandoned her, also helped Susan figure out the word. She decided the word meant finding something interesting, and you might use it when you were trying to find out answers; especially to a mystery.*

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, *At the beginning of each chapter write a one sentence prediction as to what will happen in the chapter on a sticky note. At the end of the chapter put a number 1 on the sticky if your prediction was correct, or a number 2 if it needed to be revised.*

Second Session (pages 15–29)

Text Features and Language Predictability

Predicting

Key events

- Say, *In the first two chapters we read that Sarah Simmons had been abandoned on the doorstep of the Collins' house 12 years earlier and adopted by the Simmons family. She has always been curious about her birth mother and why her mother left her. Sarah and her cousin, James, decided to use the basket she was left in as a baby as a clue to search a local market to find information about Sarah's past. They found out the basket was made by the Six Nations people.*

Introduce supports and challenges

- Refer students to the idiom 'Curiosity killed the cat,' on page 16. Ask students, *What is an idiom* (words or phrases commonly used and understood by a group or culture that might mean something other than what it indicates)? *What are some other examples of idioms* ('Break a leg,' 'Go on a wild goose chase')? *Why do you think authors use idioms? Why did the author use this idiom?*
- Remind students to continue to use context and a range of strategies in figuring out new words. Refer students to the word 'ample' on page 19, and use context to solve the word.

Set a purpose for reading

- As they read chapters three and four, ask students to check if their initial prediction of why the book was titled 'Twenty-Dollar Reward' is correct. Remind students to pause as they read, revisit their predictions based on what they read, and find evidence from the text to either support or adjust their predictions.

Third Session (pages 30–45)

Text Features and Language Predictability

Predicting

Key events

- Say, *We found out the book is titled ‘Twenty-Dollar Reward’ because of an advertisement placed in the local paper years earlier, with a reward of twenty dollars for information on the whereabouts of Sarah’s mother. We discussed our predictions and confirmed or revised them based on our reading. Sarah also found a brooch in the basket with the letters ‘S,’ ‘E,’ and ‘S,’ and the year 1857 inscribed. She decided it was a wedding gift and she was going to try and find out if there were any records of marriages associated with the initials and date. At the same time her adoptive parents were worried she would find her birth mother. We were left with the question: What would she do if she found her birth mother?*

Introduce supports and challenges

- Tell students the story follows the structure of most narrative fiction: characters, a problem/plot, chapters, and so on. How does the familiar narrative structure help students’ comprehension as they read? Discuss with students.
- Remind students they will encounter words and activities that occurred in the past, but that we no longer see today. Turn to page 36 and read the fourth paragraph from the bottom. Highlight the words ‘bobbed a curtsy.’ What do students think this means? What can we do to figure out the meaning? Encourage students to pay attention to and bring up any historical words and activities they are not familiar with.

Set a purpose for reading

- Say, *In the first couple of sessions you made predictions about the title of the book. Before you read the next two chapters I want you to predict if searching for her birth mother is going to change the character of Sarah. I also want you to take a few moments to think about the answer to your prediction. On a sticky, jot down your prediction and a few brief notes as to why you feel this way.*

Fourth Session (pages 46–62)

Key events

- Ask students to summarize key information from the last two chapters, including: the names of Sarah’s birth parents (Selina and Edward Sommerton); Edward Sommerton purchased land in the northern part of the district; Edward and Selina travelled with a lady named Margaret Buckley; and the discovery of a disc that belonged to Edward, with the same engraving as on the brooch. Review the predictions made regarding Sarah. Ask, *Did Sarah change as a character?* Ask for evidence from the story to support students’ answers.

Text Features

Introduce supports and challenges

- Highlight a new text feature on page 58; a hand-written note. Discuss with students why the author used a hand-written note in this section of the book.

Evaluating

Set a purpose for reading

- As students read the next two chapters ask them to consider whether or not the author is successful at including historical elements into this narrative. Ask, *Does the author do a good job of combining history with telling a story that is interesting?* Students must use examples from the book to support their evaluations.

Fifth Session (pages 63–75)

Key events

- In the previous session’s reading, Sarah discovers that the lace given to Kate by her fiancé, Abraham, is the same lace as found on some of her baby clothes. James and Sarah place an advertisement in the newspaper in London, where Abraham purchased the lace, to find a maker of lace in hopes of finding out more about Sarah’s past. The reply to their advertisement comes from Margaret Goddard, formerly Buckley before she married. Margaret is the lady who was with Sarah’s parents. At the end of the last chapter she was just about to reveal the story of how Sarah arrived at the Collins’ door.

Text Features

Introduce supports and challenges

- Turn to page 73 and read the word ‘POSTSCRIPT.’ Ask students what it means. Explain that the postscript will provide information about the origin of the story and which parts of the book are historical facts and which are fiction.

Predicting

Set a purpose for reading

- Say, *As we have read the book we have been wondering: Why was Sarah left on the Collins’ doorstep?* Ask each student to make a prediction based on what they have read so far. Using a Say Something activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 5 Literacy Support Guide*) direct students to find a partner and number themselves One and Two. Partner One shares their prediction, while Partner Two listens. Partner Two then shares their own response. Provide an opportunity for students to think about their predictions. Observe the discussions of the different groups. You may use the Predicting stem starters, or other appropriate starters you might wish to model. After the responses, hold a group discussion and ask what strategies students found useful before, during, and after speaking and listening. What steps can students take to improve on their oral communication?

Optional After Reading

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.

Predicting

Review and share the predictions students made about each chapter. Did students have to revise some predictions? Were students surprised when predictions turned out to be off track? Which ones were surprising?

Evaluating

Ask, *Do you think the historical facts and information help make a story interesting? More challenging?* Allow students to share their responses with the group.

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*.

Predicting and Synthesizing

Written

- Ask students to imagine they are Sarah. Write an entry in her diary explaining how she came to solve the mystery of why she was left on the Collins' doorstep.

Inferring

Artistic

- Students select one of the businesses in the novel (e.g., John Granton's store, the Tecumseh House Hotel, or any other business mentioned). Create a sign to go on the front of its building. The sign must contain colour, appropriate font and wording, and reflect the time period.

Synthesizing

Oral/dramatic

- Re-enact the meeting at the Township Council when the matter of the abandoned baby was mentioned and recorded in the council minutes. Students take on the role of various characters in the book (e.g., Mr. and Mrs. Simmons, Uncle George and Aunt Charlotte) as well as individuals who are not mentioned in the story, but would be present (e.g., mayor, councilors, and concerned citizens). The meeting should include a presentation of the facts and ideas to come up with a solution for finding the parents of the baby.