



THE SUBSTITUTE

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TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Narrative—Realistic Story

GUIDED READING LEVEL: S

SUMMARY: Dooley's dad informs him he needs to do better in science class or else he will not get the new mountain bike he wants. A planned science project from his teacher, Mrs. Hernandez, is Dooley's only hope to improve his grade. When a substitute teacher, Mr. Sah, replaces an ill Mrs. Hernandez, Dooley is presented with a mysterious assignment and must do his best to 'fit all the pieces' together. Fixing Mrs. Hernandez's broken sundial, planting the principal's seedlings, and using the principles of flight to deliver his assignment all become part of Dooley's science project. If he can get past his frustration with the unconventional assignment, Dooley might learn a lot—not only about science, but about believing in himself.

TEXT FEATURES

- two-column format
- italics

VISUAL LITERACY

- illustrations

TEXT SUPPORTS

- traditional narrative structure
- themes in story familiar to students

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- scientific information, e.g., mechanics of a sundial
- new words, e.g., 'congregated,' 'intellect,' 'dexterity'
- inferring required for story's ending

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- sequencing

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- making connections: text to self
- evaluating
- inferring

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Four Corners strategy
- sharing ideas
- discussing with a group
- reading a thank-you letter (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: using word patterns to solve unfamiliar words

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- retell main steps of a scientific procedure in sequence
- recognize the importance of steps being in correct order
- recognize signal words indicating sequence
- make a connection and evaluation based on own experience
- go beyond the information presented in the text to make inferences

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Sequencing Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

BEFORE READING

Making Connections: Text to Self and Evaluating

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Begin the session with the Four Corners strategy (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*). Assign or place the following labels in each corner of the classroom: ‘Agree,’ ‘Strongly Agree,’ ‘Disagree,’ and ‘Strongly Disagree.’ Pose the statement to students: ‘It is better to have a substitute teacher rather than a regular classroom teacher.’ Have students go to the corner that best reflects their response. In each corner, have students share their reasons for responding the way they did. Ask students to think about regular and substitute teachers in general—not specific teachers. Each group should come to a consensus on the reason for their response.

ESL NOTE: Before posing the question you may wish to further activate prior knowledge of your ESL students by asking if they had substitute teachers in their home country, and if so, what they were called and how they were regarded by students.

Language Predictability

Introduce supports and challenges

- Point out the words ‘tenacity’ and ‘dexterity’ (both located in the first column on page 3). Note that both words end with -ity. Remind students to use such word and sound patterns when they encounter other unfamiliar words. These similar letter/sound cues can be helpful when trying to read and pronounce new words.

Sequencing

Set a purpose for reading

- Model a version of the following chart on a class board and ask students to create their own versions in their reader’s notebooks. Explain to students that the main character, Dooley, has to complete a science project consisting of three parts. As students read the selection, they must identify what the three parts of the project are. Students must then jot down the steps that Dooley follows to complete each part of the assignment in the correct sequence.

Dooley’s Science Project

Part 1
Steps followed to complete the task:
•
•
•
•
Part 2
Steps followed to complete the task:
•
•
•
•
Part 3
Steps followed to complete the task:
•
•
•
•

Provide for early finishers

- Any students who finish early can discuss with another early finisher the steps they wrote down, and look for similarities and differences in the order of their steps. Students might want to adjust their sequencing based on their peers' notes if they find their observations inaccurate.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Assist any students requiring help in identifying and ordering the steps within each component of the science project by providing them with sequencing prompts, e.g., *Have you identified all three parts of Dooley's assignment? Did he do something else before this step? Is there something missing here? Are there any signal words or clues that indicate to us the order of these steps?*

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Sequencing Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.) Ensure students are attempting to use strategies suggested.

AFTER READING

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Have each student share their sequencing with the group. Did everyone identify the three parts of the science assignment? Did all students list the steps for each part of the assignment in the same order? As a group, come to a consensus as to the steps Dooley followed for each part of the assignment.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Direct students to the end of the story, where Mr. Sah writes a note to Dooley telling him to enjoy the mountain bike. The text ends with the question: 'How did he know?' The author does not directly tell readers how Mr. Sah knew about the bike. Note to students that a certain amount of inferring is needed from readers here. Ask, *How do you think Mr. Sah knew about the bike?*

Note successful strategy use

- Ask students to share a strategy they found useful while reading. Highlight a student that uses a strategy effectively, e.g., *Gregor told me he used the context and his knowledge of other words to solve the meaning of the word 'elevate' (second column on the first page). He said the word*

was found in a sentence in which Dooley was explaining that he had to improve his science grade in order to get a mountain bike. Gregor also said most of the word 'elevate' is found in the word 'elevator.' Using these clues, Gregor decided the word 'elevate' means to 'raise' or 'bring up.' And he is correct!

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 6 Literacy Support Guide*.

Written

Sequencing

- Tell students to imagine they are technical writers for a company that makes sundials. Give a quick explanation as to the kind of work a technical writer might do. Ask students to write directions for a manual on assembling a sundial. They must include the components that are a part of the sundial and write the steps to assemble them in an easy and accurate sequence. Students can conduct any extra research needed to assist them in creating their directions. If students utilized research, ask them to share how their reading and research assisted them in writing the directions. Ask for an example.

Artistic

Synthesizing and Inferring

- Have students select one of the following parts of Dooley's assignment: 'The Workings of a Sundial,' 'The Effects of Overcrowding in an Ecosystem,' or 'The Principles of Flight.' Ask them to represent the main word of their chosen topic ('Sundial,' 'Ecosystem,' or 'Flight') without using words. Students can draw a picture, make a collage, or select another artistic form not involving written words to show the main idea of the word.

Oral/dramatic

Inferring

- Ask students to write and then read (with fluency) a thank-you letter to Mr. Sah from Dooley. In the letter students might wish to express their gratitude to Mr. Sah for believing in them and helping them to realize their potential. Students should use inclusive and non-discriminatory language to clearly communicate their thoughts and engage their audience (or Mr. Sah). If needed, provide guidance as to what stylistic devices would enhance their letter and presentation in such a way.