



THE GREAT WAVE

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TEXT TYPE: Fiction: Narrative—Fantasy Story
GUIDED READING LEVEL: Y/Z

SUMMARY: Nick Gold can't seem to figure out what has happened to him or where he is when he finds himself alone on an unfamiliar and surreal beach. He tries to communicate with the only other person he encounters, a mysterious stranger named Ojisan, who initially communicates by drawing in Japanese characters. Nick soon finds himself not only trying to figure out what is happening to him, but also trying to help Ojisan reunite with his father. When Nick wakes up in the hospital he is left to determine if it was all a dream or if it really happened.

TEXT FEATURES

- italics
- section dividers

VISUAL LITERACY

- artwork illustrations

TEXT SUPPORTS

- descriptive language
- dialogue

POSSIBLE TEXT CHALLENGES

- 'dream' sequence versus reality
- an elevated application of inferring needed
- challenging words, e.g., 'scrutinized,' 'methodically,' 'filaments'
- sentence complexity
- World War II reference/Japanese geography, art, and artists references

FOCUS COMPREHENSION STRATEGY

- inferring

FURTHER COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

- making connections: text to world, text to text, text to self
- predicting

ORAL LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES

- Think/Timed-Pair-Share strategy
- Say Something strategy
- selected oral readings from the text (option 3 in Focused Rereading)
- multimedia presentation (option 3 in Focused Rereading)

WORKING WITH WORDS

- language predictability: rereads to solve unfamiliar words
- language predictability: using context to work out word meanings
- language predictability: developing awareness of variety in adjective, verb, and adverb use

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Observe each student's ability to:

- infer using prior knowledge and clues from the text
- visualize text from the author's descriptions
- identify elements of short story and fantasy story
- make, confirm, and revise predictions
- monitor own reading and use numerous strategies when understanding breaks down

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Select from the following:

- Inferring Strategy Checklist
- Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record

First Session (first page–first text break on page 5)

Making Connections: Text to World

Making Connections: Text to Text

Predicting

BEFORE READING

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Ask students what they know about Japan. Some possible responses: Japanese people speak, read, and write a different language; Mount Fuji is a volcano located in Japan; cities they know (e.g., Tokyo, Kyoto). Show students where Japan is located on a world map.
- You may choose to hold a discussion with students, giving them some background knowledge on Iwo Jima:
 - It is a remote island 1200 km south of Tokyo. An historic battle took place there in 1945 during World War II between the Allied Forces and Japan. The Allied Forces won the battle. Japan lost over 20 000 soldiers, while the Allied Forces lost over 6000. The U.S. occupied the island until 1968, when it was returned to Japan. (This information may help students when trying to infer why Ojisan was waiting for his father to return home from Iwo Jima.)
- Tell students that ‘The Great Wave’ is a short story, as well as a fantasy story. Ask students what they know about short stories and fantasy stories. Some possible responses that summarize key components of a short story include:
 - a fictional piece that is significantly shorter than a novel
 - can be read in one sitting
 - has a simpler plot than a novel
 - characters are not as developed as in a novel
 - fewer characters
 - story often centres around one main event

As well, note some of the distinguishing features of a fantasy story that apply to this text in particular (e.g., surreal settings and characters, the interweaving of real and imaginary worlds, bending of time and space).

- Distribute copies of the story to students. Preview the first page together. Ask, *What might this story be about? What makes you think that?*
- Remind students that, while they are reading, they will need to find evidence to either confirm or correct their predictions made. Encourage students to record any questions they have on sticky notes so that they can discuss them either during or after reading.

Language Predictability

Introduce supports and challenges

- Remind students that while they are reading the story, they may encounter challenging words. Ask, *What strategies will you use to solve unfamiliar words and determine their meaning?* Encourage students to use the following strategies when they are having difficulty with a word:
 - reread/read to the end of the sentence or paragraph
 - use context and surrounding sentences to help solve the word/phrase
 - use background knowledge

Advise students that they may need to use a combination of strategies in order to establish the meaning of a difficult word.

Text Features

- Have students read the first paragraph on page 2. Ask students why one of the sentences is in italics. If necessary, explain to students that sentences/words in italics are what the main character—Nick—is thinking. The author puts the sentences in italics so that the reader knows that Nick is not speaking out loud.

Inferring

- Create for students a chart with the following three headings: ‘Prior Knowledge,’ ‘Clues from the Text,’ and ‘Inference.’ The purpose of this chart is to assist students in making inferences about plot and character features that are not explicitly stated in the story. Model how to use the chart. Using the word ‘plunged’ on page 4, fill in the chart with help from students.

| Prior Knowledge | Clues from the Text | Inference |
|--|--|---|
| I know a plunger is something that is used to unclog a toilet or sink and it goes down into the water in the bowl. | ‘slid over the table’s edge;’ ‘suspended a good 10 centimetres above the tile floor’ | The word ‘plunged’ must mean fall down. |

In this example, clues from the text potentially provide more significant insight as to the meaning of the word; however, in other examples the information recorded in the ‘Prior Knowledge’ column might provide greater assistance in making an inference.

Inferring

Set a purpose for reading

- Review the predictions students made about the story. Ask them what the difference is between inferring and predicting. Explain to students that when we predict, the answer will be found in the text, whereas when we infer, we are ‘reading’ what’s not explicitly stated in the text. Say, *In order to infer, we need to use prior knowledge and clues from the text to draw conclusions and make our own interpretations of a text. When we infer, we need to fill in the gaps left by the author, or ‘read between the lines.’*

- You may wish to give students an example of an inference. Say, *A little girl sat on the steps with her head in her hands. Tears were dripping off her chin.* Ask students what they think is happening. Remind students that, just like when they were inferring about the word ‘plunged,’ they need to use their own prior knowledge.
- Review the three-column inferring chart created earlier and ask students to create their own version in their student notebooks. Say, *In your reading today of the first page to the first break on page 5, focus on making inferences about what you think is happening in the story—as at this stage things might seem perplexing to some.* Tell students they are to record any inferences they make on their individual charts. If needed, you may wish to revisit the example modelled previously to illustrate to students how to complete the chart. Tell students they can record any inferences about ‘big ideas,’ themes, outcomes, characters, or unfamiliar vocabulary on their chart.

TEACHING TIP: Instruct students to put a sticky note at the first break in the text on page 5, to serve as a reminder of where to stop.

Provide for early finishers

- Have students verify with a dictionary or thesaurus any words they inferred the meaning of. Have them record what they find on their chart beside what they inferred the word to mean.

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Listen to individual students read aloud a small section of this session’s text. Offer support, as needed, with word solving strategies, comprehension, and challenging vocabulary. Always provide a comprehension prompt that highlights the focus strategy (inferring), e.g., *What can you infer about where Nick is? What might be happening? What clues does the text give you?*
- Give feedback to students on their inferring successes and note an area that may need some extra attention.

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Inferring Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.)
- As you observe students, be sure to ask them to provide evidence or support for their inferences or answers.

AFTER READING

Inferring

Revisit the purpose for reading

- As a Think/Timed-Pair-Share activity (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*) have students share any inferences they have made with a partner. Have students share an inference they heard from their partner with the larger group. You may wish to add some of the responses to the larger chart so you can refer to them during the next session.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Your observations will help you work out other challenges students experienced. Discuss and clarify at this point, e.g., a difficult word or a comprehension issue.

Note successful strategy use

- Explain a successful strategy you observed, e.g., *I like how Alberto went back and reread a few paragraphs when he was unsure of what was happening to Nick. He realized he was having a tough time making sense of the story so he did something to help clarify the text. This is a great example of self-monitoring while reading. A strong reader makes sure to self-monitor.*

Second Session (first text break on page 5–end)

BEFORE READING

Synthesizing and Predicting

Activate and build prior knowledge

- Have students retell what they have read so far and predict what they believe will happen next in the story.

ESL NOTE: Review the events by recreating the storyline onto sentence strips and displaying them, out of sequence, on a wall chart. Ask the group to tell what happened first, next, and so on, and to assemble the sentences in the proper order. ESL students can do this activity on their own or with a partner.

Language Predictability

Introduce supports and challenges

- Ask students to close their eyes and try to create a picture in their heads as you read the following:

Then he drew boats with men. Some were rowing; others were still, looking at the wave over their heads...

Have students Think/Timed-Pair-Share with a partner what they saw.

- Again, ask students to close their eyes and visualize as you now read the following text from page 6:

‘Then he drew three boats filled with tiny, white-faced men. Some were frantically rowing; others were still, gazing in awe at the magnificent tsunami rearing over their heads...’

Have students Think/Timed-Pair-Share what they visualized this time.

- Ask students to share the differences between their ‘two pictures.’ Ask them if they know why their pictures were different. Help students understand that when adjectives and adverbs are used and word choice is varied in writing, it helps both authors and readers create more detailed visualizations, and also helps with inferring. To this end, ask students to pay particular attention to adverbs and adjectives like ‘frantically,’ ‘magnificent,’ and ‘white-faced’ to help create a picture for them to visualize. Remind students that when they visualize it helps them to comprehend more deeply what they are reading.

Inferring

Set a purpose for reading

- Students are to continue adding inferences they make about the ‘big ideas,’ themes, outcomes, characters, or unfamiliar vocabulary on their charts created in the first session. Remind students that part of inferring is visualizing from what they’ve read.

Provide for early finishers

- Early finishers can pair up and discuss their interpretations of the ending. Provide prompts to help facilitate discussion. For example, *How do you explain Nick and Ojisan’s out-of-body experiences? Can you see why this story would be considered a fantasy?*

DURING READING

Monitor reading

- Listen to individual students read aloud a short section of the text. Offer support, as needed, and assist with word solving, comprehension, and vocabulary. Always provide a comprehension prompt that highlights the focus strategy (inferring), e.g., *The pieces are falling into place for Nick. What do you think he’s figured out? What can you infer about Nick’s character after he says he’s not going anywhere until he knows Ojisan is all right?*

Observe

- Make observations on your assessment tools. (See the Inferring Strategy Checklist and the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*.)

- Note any successful reading strategies you observe, e.g., rereading, adding inferences to individual charts, following up on previous predictions, and so on.

AFTER READING

Inferring

Revisit the purpose for reading

- Using the Say Something strategy, have students choose one of the inferring prompts (see Oral Language Strategies in the *Grade 6 Literacy Support Guide*) and share their response with the group (you may wish to have the prompts already prepared on a chart or class board). Remind students to use information from the text and their own ideas. Using this strategy after students have shared their inferences allows students to refine and/or adjust their thinking. Tell students that strong readers often refine and adjust their thinking to ensure their interpretations match the story as it develops.

Check on outstanding challenges

- Discuss and clarify outstanding challenges at this point, e.g., a difficult word, what parts of the story were dreams and what parts were real, and so on. Are students having difficulty with the amount and nature of the inferring needed to navigate through this fantasy story?

Note successful strategy use

- Explain a successful strategy you observed, e.g., *I really liked how Lizette used her background knowledge and clues from the text to infer that Nick was a compassionate person. She said, 'People who are kind put other people's needs above their own. Even though Nick didn't know where he was and was really confused, he refused to leave Ojisan until he was sure Ojisan was safe with his father.'*

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

- In character as Nick, have students write a diary entry about what happened to him in the story. Remind students that their entry should reflect what Nick was feeling and what he thinks really happened.
- Ask students to write an obituary for Ojisan, to be published in the local newspaper. They might wish to do some research on Iwo Jima, Japan, and 'The Great Wave Off Kanagawa' by Katsushika Hokusai.

Inferring and Synthesizing

Inferring and Making Connections: Text to Text

They will need to make inferences about why Ojisan was separated from his father. Since obituaries are seen by a lot of people, ensure that grammar such as adverb phrases and past, present, and future verb tenses are used correctly and appropriately to clearly communicate meaning.

Inferring

Artistic

- Have students reread one of the parts of the story where the author used descriptive language (e.g., the description of Nick’s house on page 4, or the description of the painting ‘The Great Wave Off Kanagawa’ on page 6), and ask students to sketch/paint/draw what they visualize is happening in the story. You may choose to have students write a descriptive paragraph about the part they visualized, trying to use different descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs) than were presented in the text.

Making Connections: Text to Self

- Have students go to following Website: <http://japanesetranslator.co.uk/your-name-in-japanese/>

Students will be asked to type in their name, hit the ‘Translate’ button once they have done so, and will then receive a Japanese translation of their name. Students could then draw/paint their name in Japanese on a sheet of paper and illustrate the paper with drawings and designs that relate to Japanese culture and places, people, events, or things mentioned in the story.

Synthesizing

Oral/dramatic

- Ask students to choose a section of the text containing dialogue. Invite students to select roles and practise the dialogue. Encourage students to focus on a character’s voice and tone while reading. Allow students to perform the dialogue for others.

Analyzing and Synthesizing

- Have students research one of the Japanese places and/or important events, concepts, or people mentioned in the story: Iwo Jima, ‘The Great Wave Off Kanagawa’ by Katsushika Hokusai, Mount Fuji, or tsunamis for example. Students can then prepare and deliver a finished multimedia presentation using a computer program suited to present their research and findings to the group. The presentation should incorporate a number of different and interesting graphics, pictures, fonts, and design features.