

Topic: Explore stories

Receiving another mystery letter

Lesson concepts

- Punctuation — Capital letters for names
- Punctuation — Capital letters and full stops for sentences
- Text organisation — Concepts about print: books
- Spelling — Letters of the alphabet represent sounds in spoken words
- Spelling — High-frequency sight words, known words
- Sounds of language — Syllables, phonemes
- Features of literary texts — Beginnings and endings
- Text processing strategies — Print knowledge, contextual knowledge, semantic knowledge, grammatical knowledge, phonic knowledge
- Text structures and language features that create texts — Short texts: familiar words and phrases, beginning writing knowledge

Today students will:

- ▶ understand that a solution to a problem or issue is a feature of some narratives
- ▶ understand how to create short texts to record ideas.

Resources

Text

Shanahan, L and Guthridge, B 2003, *My mum Tarzan*, Hodder Headline, Sydney. (Or use an online search engine to find a read-aloud version of the story.)

Digital

Learning object — Tune in

Find and prepare

Sheet — Mum dresses up

Sheet — Letter 1

Sheet — Letter 2

Scrapbook

Old postcards

Key terms

For definitions and explanations of terms, please see the [Glossary](#).

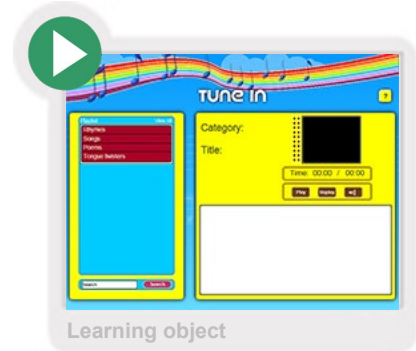
Note

In this lesson, students will receive mystery letters that they will be asked to respond to. Where possible, organise the letters to come in different ways (for example: by email, text message). Have **Sheet — Letter 2** appear suddenly at the beginning of the 'Read and respond to a second mystery letter' section of the lesson.

Lesson

Opening of lesson

- View and listen to the song 'Mr Frog' in the **Learning object — Tune in**. Talk about the parts of the story being told in the song.



Learning object

Focus questions

This song is not just a song. It is a song that tells a story. Let's think about the information in the 'Story beginning'.

Q: Who is in the story?

A: Mr Frog

Q: Where does the story happen?

A: The pond

Q: When does the story happen?

A: When it's raining.

Now let's think about what information there is about the 'Story problem'.

Q: What problem did Mr Frog have and what caused the problem?

A: Mr Frog was worried he would get wet because it was raining.

What about the information about the 'Story solution'?

Q: How did Mr Frog solve his problem?

A: Mr Frog jumped back into the pond.

Read for visual accuracy

Look at the Sheet — Being the best reader I can be and review what it means to notice and fix up mistakes.

- Explain to students that to 'be the best reader they can be', they need to:
 - think about what the words are saying and their meaning
 - check that what they are saying matches the words and letters
 - think about whether it makes sense and sounds right.
- Read the **Sheet** — [Mum dresses up](#).
 - Read the sentence on the sheet, but say 'My mother dresses up as a crazy queen.' instead of 'My mum dressed up as a crazy queen.'
 - Think out loud as you demonstrate checking if it sounds right and makes sense.

Say to students

‘ I know what I said makes sense in terms of the picture, but does it make sense in terms of the words and letters on the page?

I said ‘dresses’ with an /s/ sound at the end, but when my finger is at the end of the word there isn’t a letter ‘s’. There is a letter ‘d’. This tells me that the word must be ‘dressed’ not ‘dresses’. I also said ‘mother’ which ends with an /uh/ sound, but this word ends with an /m/, so the word must be ‘mum’.

It is important to check with your eyes when you are reading and fix up your mistakes as you go.

Observe self-correction strategies

- Re-read parts of the book *My mum Tarzan* to students.
 - As you read, sometimes make an intentional mistake where the words said do not match the letters on the page.
 - Stop and signal that there is a mistake.
 - Demonstrate correcting your mistakes by looking closely at the letters or by re-reading words and sentences or whole pages.

Explore the solution to the story

- Review story solutions by talking about the problem and solution in the book *My mum Tarzan*.
 - Show students that the words, as well as the pictures tell the story in this book and that they should use both to help decide what the solution to the story’s problem is.

Focus questions

Q: *How are the characters’ problems resolved at the end of the story?*

Q: *What is the little girl thinking and feeling in the final words she says in the story?*

Q: *What does her mum’s reply show?*

Read the first mystery letter



- Read the first mystery letter on **Sheet** — [Letter 1](#).
 - Review the information it contained about the missing dog.
 - Talk about and record or highlight information about the characters, setting and problem.
- Have students discuss what they think might happen next to Sam and the missing dog.



Read and respond to a second mystery letter

- Show students the second mystery letter on **Sheet** — [Letter 2](#).

Focus questions

Here is another letter from Sam addressed to us. How exciting is this?

Q: What do you think this letter will say?

Q: Do you think Sam received our letters with the ideas about where his dog may be?

Q: Do you think Sam has found his dog?

- Read the letter and make sure students understand the new information that has been outlined in the letter, for example:
 - the dog is still missing
 - Sam talked to his friend Kim
 - Kim suggests they play a game where they are trekking through the forest
 - Sam is asking if the students know any suitable games.

Say to students

It is very sad that Sam's dog is still missing. Maybe Sam's dog will turn up when he and his friend Kim are playing.

- Discuss Sam's letter and the problems he has. Brainstorm ideas for a game Sam and Kim could play that might help them find the dog.
- Have students think of the games they like to play.
- Keep and display the letter for use throughout the lessons.

Write sentences about characters' actions and share with peers

- Explain to students that they will write a reply to Sam with some ideas about their favourite game.
 - Allow time for students to independently write or draw a response to the second letter.
 - Encourage students to answer the questions in the letter.
 - As they write, encourage students to listen to the most obvious sound in words and to use alphabet charts, the high-frequency words or other print resources.
- Allow time for students to read their letters to another person.
- Collect students' letters and explain that you will send them off to Sam.
- Discuss with students what might happen next with Sam and his dog.

Review letters and sounds

Note

These lessons provide opportunities for students to explore three- and four-letter words in context that have the letter endings 'op', 'ot' and 'og', the blends 'pl' and 'fl' or the letters 'c' and 'h' which make the /ch/ sound when they are together.

Draw students' attention to these letter patterns in words as you write and read texts, for example: stories, factual texts and everyday or environmental print.

When two letters are together and they make one sound in a word, such as 'sh', 'th' or 'wh', they are called digraphs. It is not necessary for students to know or use this term.

- Show students **Sheet — Letter 1** and **Sheet — Letter 2**.
 - Ask students to find the word 'dog' in either of the letters.
 - Explain to students that the word 'dog' has the /og/ letter ending which is made by the letters 'o' and 'g'.
 - Read the words in the letter and run your finger along under the words, slowing down when you get to the word 'dog'.
 - Ask students to tell you some words that have this letter ending. They will be words that rhyme with 'dog' (for example: 'jog', 'frog', 'hog').
 - Encourage students to write these new words on a page in their scrapbook, making sure the 'og' letter ending in each word is aligned and underlined.
 - Help students copy the words and/or use their understanding of the letter ending 'og' to write the new words.

Say to students

“ I know how to write the word 'jog' because it rhymes with 'jog', 'frog', 'hog'. I can hear the sound /j/ at the beginning of the word so I will write the letter 'j'. I can also hear the /og/ sound at the end so I'll write the letter ending 'og'. The word 'jog' is spelled 'j' 'o' 'g'.”

Develop a bank of high-frequency sight words

- Identify and record and high-frequency words in **Sheet — Letter 1** and **Sheet — Letter 2**.

Play a game with high-frequency words

- Play 'Swat the word' with students to practise recognising and saying known high-frequency words.
 - Place high-frequency word cards face-up on the table in front of students.
 - As you say one of the words, students are to slap the card on the table with their hand or a fly swat.
 - Students keep the words they identify correctly.

Develop, progress and consolidate English through the contexts for learning

Prepare for real life

- Explain to students that they will:
 - look at examples of letters and postcards
 - create letters and messages for real purposes.

Writing for real purposes

- Talk about the features of the letters previously explored, including:
 - a greeting/who it is to
 - contents
 - sign off/who it is from.
- Explore postcards and read and view old postcards.
- Write letters or messages or create postcards to send to other people.

Early literacy skills

Write a new story

- Write new parts for the book *My mum Tarzan*.
 - Review sentences students have written previously about the Mum in the story.
 - Ask students to think of something else Mum could pretend to do or dress up as.
 - Have students tell their sentence with the new idea, for example: Mum dresses up as a tightrope walker and walks across Niagara Falls.
 - Ask students to write their sentence independently.
 - Encourage students to use their knowledge of letter–sound correspondence to write the sentence.
 - Remind students about using capital letters and correct punctuation.
- Ask students to create an illustration for the sentence.
- Share students' ideas and, where possible, collate the sentences and pictures into a booklet for all students to read.
- Encourage students to read the booklet, pointing to each word and using the picture as a strategy for reading the sentence.

Build responsibility in students

- Have students pack away any materials they used in this session.