

GUIDED READING PROGRAM

Fiction Focus

2nd Edition



These are the cards that go with Level N of the Guided Reading Program: Fiction Focus, 2nd Edition. There is one card for each book in the level, as follows:

- **Alfie the Apostrophe**
- **Comic Guy: Our Crazy Class Election**
- **Fables**
- **Franny K. Stein, Mad Scientist: Frantastic Voyage**
- **Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year**
- **Mice and Beans**
- **A Spy in the White House**
- **Suitcase**
- **Wonderful Alexander and the Catwings**
- **Zen Shorts**

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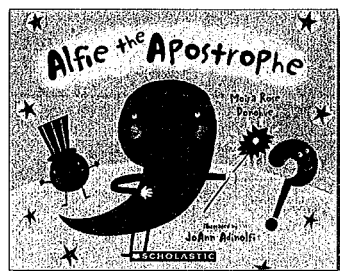
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Alfie the Apostrophe



Summary & Standard

In this fantasy book about punctuation marks as characters, Alfie the Apostrophe gathers up the courage he needs to show the other punctuation marks what he can do. Children will independently relate prior knowledge to what is read and use it to aid in comprehension.

Author: Moira Rose Donohue

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Fantasy

Theme/Idea: realizing a special talent

Making Connections: Text to Self

Children will be familiar with most punctuation marks and their purpose. Have children explain why a sentence would close with a question mark, an exclamation point, or a period.

Extend the connection by asking children how a punctuation mark can make a sentence come to life, such as an exclamation point creating excitement. Explain that writers use punctuation to add character to their writing. Show the book cover and point out that each punctuation mark, as with people, has its own talent.

For additional teaching ideas and resources, see <http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/contents09writingpunctuationgrammar.htm>.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: auditorium, changed, disappeared, practice, stage, star

Related Words for Discussion: confidence, courage, nervous, self-confidence, talent

Genre

Fantasy Remind children that a fantasy is a made-up story that has characters and settings that could not exist in real life.

Supportive Book Features

Text The text is minimal on each page and most punctuation marks are used in the paragraphs. Vivid pictures illustrate what each mark looks like and how Alfie's "tricks" work. An "About the Apostrophe" note provides readers with background information.

Content Children may be able to identify how a talent show and performing in front of other people can be intimidating. They will be able to follow the story even if they do not understand how each punctuation mark is used.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text The text is full of punctuation-related puns and jokes that children may not catch at first. Point out the relationship between the talent of each punctuation mark and how it is used to give intonation to sentences.

Vocabulary Children may not be familiar with the written names of some of the punctuation marks, such as *hyphen* and *asterisk*. Review these words as children read the text.

ELL Bridge

Have children create a deck of punctuation-mark cards. Help them identify the different punctuation-mark characters and draw and label each on one side of a blank card. It may be helpful to write the punctuation-mark words on a chart or on the board. Then, on the other side of the cards, have children write short sentences from the book that demonstrate how to use each mark. Ask partners to practice reading the sentences together.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Ask children to summarize what each punctuation mark did in the talent show and why that represented its special talent.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Ask children to describe how each punctuation-mark character acts like a person. Ask: *How did Alfie feel before the talent show auditions? How does he feel when the quotation marks tease him? Is this how a real person might feel? Why?*

Thinking About the Text

Discuss why children think the author chose to tell this story about punctuation marks. Ask: *How might this story change if it were about numbers? How might it change if it were about letters of the alphabet?*

Understanding Main Idea and Details

Remind children that the main idea is the most important point the author makes. The details are the smaller pieces of information that tell about the main idea.

- Read aloud page 2 and ask children what this page is mainly about. (Alfie is afraid to try out for the talent show.) Ask children to identify the details that support this idea. (Note: Book pages are not numbered. Page 2 begins: *Alfie curled . . .*)
- Read aloud pages 10–13. Ask: *What is the main idea of these pages?* (The different punctuation marks have different talents.)
- Ask: *What is the main idea of this story?* Guide children to identify that the main idea of the book is that Alfie overcame his fear and became the star of the show.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Words With Apostrophes

Remind children that an apostrophe usually indicates either possession or the omission of a letter or letters in a word or pair of words. (e.g., *Sue's cat; do not, don't; until, 'til*)

- Have children identify the word that Alfie made using an apostrophe on page 23. (*can't*) Ask: *What two words were used to make the new word? (can, not)*
- Point out *Dot's doll* on page 30. Ask: *What punctuation mark signals that the doll belongs to Dot? (apostrophe s)*

Developing Fluency

Model fluent reading of the first five lines on page 10, stressing the effect of the punctuation. Have children repeat each sentence after you.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Special Talents Discuss how the audience reacted to Alfie's abilities at the talent show. Talk about how his courage and confidence helped him overcome his fear so that he could use his special talent. Encourage children to talk about a special talent they have.

Extending Meaning Through Writing

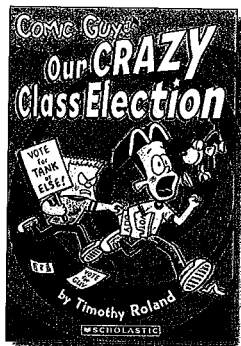
- Have children write a couple of sentences describing one of the book's characters, using the correct punctuation. (**Descriptive**)
- Have children choose another punctuation mark and write a short story from its point of view. (**Narrative**)

Other Books

Stage Fright by Ann M. Martin

Max Malone the Magnificent by Charlotte Herman

Comic Guy: Our Crazy Class Election



Summary & Standard

The race for class president is crazy—a monkey and the class bully are both in the running—but the new student, who holds back at first, turns out to be the best person for the job. Children will read to refine their understanding of how texts work across a variety of genres.

Author: Timothy Roland

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Word Count: 250+

Theme/Idea: voting for the best person for any job

Making Connections: Text to World

Children may have experience with voting or with hearing adults talk about voting. Discuss things for which people vote, such as for leaders or to make decisions about where to go or what actions to take or rules to make.

Extend the real-world connection by discussing whether voting is (or is not) a fair way to pick a leader. Challenge children to begin to think about what qualities are good for a leader to have and why they might vote for one candidate over another.

For additional teaching ideas and resources, see <http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: campaign, candidate, election, politician, poll

Related Words for Discussion: equal, fair, majority, opinion

Genre

Realistic Fiction Remind children that realistic fiction has characters, settings, and conflicts that may be found in real life.

Supportive Book Features

Text The typeface is large, and the tone of the writing is conversational. The cartoon-style pictures illustrate much of the action and help children follow the plot.

Content Although many situations in the book are exaggerated to create humor, children will relate to common events such as dealing with a class bully and trying to do their best.

Praise children for specific use of “Behaviors to Notice and Support” on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher’s Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text Children may become confused about the relationship between the comic strips (and other included graphic aids) and the running text, especially when the comic strips portray exaggerated situations. Some events are told only through comics. The text sometimes wraps around the illustrations.

Vocabulary Although many election-related words and terms such as *write-in candidate* (page 46) are defined in context, some are not defined or are defined incorrectly to make a joke, such as *swing vote* (page 61). Be sure to define words and terms as necessary.

ELL Bridge

Help children talk about character traits. Define *character trait* as “a feature of a person,” such as kindness or shyness. Then invite children to list some traits of Guy and Clint. Record children’s responses in two different T-charts, with the name in the left column and the traits in the right column. Discuss together what traits the class thinks each character has.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Have children identify each candidate and why this candidate is running. Then discuss who wins and why Homeroom 207 chooses this candidate for class president.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Have children discuss the qualities each candidate possesses that might or might not make him a good leader. Then have children explain what qualities would be best in a class president.

Thinking About the Text

Discuss how the illustrations in this book help tell the story. Make sure children understand how to “read” the features of the comics, such as speech and thought balloons and motion lines. Work with children to identify the different visuals used—such as comic strips, stand-alone cartoons, newspaper pages (pages 48 and 73), campaign posters/signs (pages 57 and 59), labeled diagrams (pages 64 and 83), and charts (pages 44, 82, and 89)—and explain what each does and why the author might have included it.

Understanding Figurative Language

Point out that much of the humor in this book comes from figurative language.

- Explain that a metaphor is when two different things are compared, such as on page 41 when Guy calls the newspaper room a beehive. Note that Guy uses a simile—a comparison using *like* or *as*—to expand on this metaphor, comparing Zoe to a queen bee. Have children identify similar uses of metaphor and simile (pages 63, 70, 71, 75, 80, and 84), and how the pictures reinforce each comparison.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Idioms

Explain that an idiom is a word or phrase that has a different meaning from the dictionary meaning of its parts.

- Turn to page 59 and discuss the use of the phrase *get the monkey off your back* on the campaign sign. Explain that this saying is an idiom used to describe someone who would like to be free of a problem. The sign is making a joke, but it is also promising that electing Ollie will solve problems.
- Have children examine and discuss the idioms *brain freeze* (pages 23–24), *sweep up* (page 60), *swing vote* (page 61), *rock the boat* (page 80), and *go bananas* (page 81).

Developing Fluency

Model reading dialogue from several different characters, and focus on reading each line the way that character would speak. Then have partners practice reading the section.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Voting Discuss the fact that in direct democratic voting, each person's opinion is given the same weight in determining outcome. Ask: *How is this a good or bad way to make decisions?*

Extending Meaning Through Writing

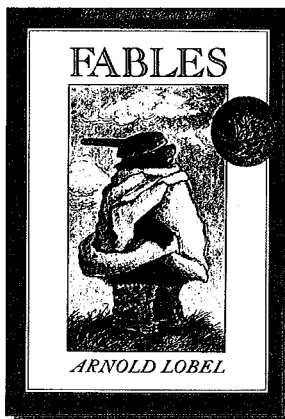
- Have children illustrate a simile (using page 63 as a model) and write a few sentences explaining what they drew and why. **(Descriptive)**
- Have children use the campaign posters on pages 57 and 59 as models for creating their own campaign posters for one of the candidates in this book. **(Persuasive)**

Other Books

Class President by Johanna Hurwitz

Max Malone, Superstar by Charlotte Herman

Fables



Summary & Standard

Each of the original fables in this collection teaches a moral through the antics of animals exhibiting human behaviors. Children will read a variety of genres to better understand various aspects of the human experience.

Author: Arnold Lobel

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Traditional Literature/Fable **Theme/Idea:** lessons learned

Making Connections: Text to Text

Explain that fables are stories that almost always have animals with human traits teaching a lesson. Children may be familiar with the classic Aesop's fables, such as "The Lion and the Mouse." Invite children to discuss fables or other folktales they have read or heard before.

Extend the text-to-text connection by discussing various animals and the traits that fables commonly represent: a wise owl, a silly goose, and a sly fox. Invite students to name other animals and suggest traits they might represent.

For more information on how children can write and submit fables of their own, see <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/>.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: accustomed, anticipation, fatigue, forlornly, smirked, summoned

Related Words for Discussion: behavior, education, experience, moral, trait

Genre

Traditional Literature/Fable Remind children that a traditional fable is a story passed down over the years by word of mouth and often uses animals as characters to teach a lesson.

ELL Bridge

Have children perform a Readers Theater version of a fable with multiple characters, such as "The Ducks and the Fox" on page 5 or "The Frogs at the Rainbow's End" on page 14. Begin by reading aloud the fable, modeling intonation and expressiveness to distinguish each character. Have children identify the character parts and note the dialogue each one will say. Remind them to select a narrator for the remaining text. As children read their parts, encourage them to use gestures or facial expressions to give emphasis to what they say.

Supportive Book Features

Text The illustrations provide support for details in the text. A table of contents allows children to quickly find specific fables for discussion. The moral is set in italics at the end of each fable.

Content Children will be familiar with the animal characters used in each fable. The animals exhibit human characteristics that students will recognize and find humorous. Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text Children may have difficulty connecting the moral to the fable itself. Reread each fable as needed, reading the moral first and then using the fable's text to illustrate how it supports the moral's meaning.

Vocabulary Some of the more complex vocabulary will be difficult for children to understand, particularly the vocabulary within the moral text at the end of each fable. Before students read the book, identify and discuss words in the morals that might be troublesome, such as *resist* and *flattery* (page 26).

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Invite children to discuss specific fables, describing the circumstances that set up a problem for the characters. Then ask children to identify and discuss the choices the characters must make as a result.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Have children evaluate the choices made by some of the characters. Ask: *Which ones made good choices? Why? Which faced consequences because of bad choices? What do you think a character will do next, now that he or she has learned a lesson? What lessons did you learn from these fables?*

Thinking About the Text

Have children notice how the author uses dialogue in each fable. Ask: *How does the author show us what the animals are thinking? Would the stories be as interesting if they were told without dialogue?*

Understanding Genre

Explain that this book is a collection of original fables, meaning that these have been invented by one person. Each fable is a complete story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Have children state examples from a specific fable as you discuss the following characteristics:

- A fable is a short story that teaches a lesson.
- In a fable, the characters are almost always animals or inanimate objects.
- In each fable, the characters make choices or do things that help them learn that lesson.
- A fable ends with a moral, a statement that sums up the lesson learned.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Words With -ed

Remind children that the *-ed* ending can stand for /d/, as in *dreamed*; /t/, as in *bumped*; or /ed/, as in *braided*. Have children read each sentence below, say the words with *-ed*, and identify the sound made by the ending.

- Page 5: *The sisters quacked and screamed.* (/t/, /d/)
- Page 21: *On Monday the ostrich gathered violets as a gift for his beloved.* (/d/, /ed/)
- Have children find and read other sentences with words that end in *-ed*.

Developing Fluency

Model reading aloud the first fable. Emphasize phrasing, punctuation, and pace. Have children read aloud another fable in the same way with repeated readings until they read fluently.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Lessons Learned Have children discuss lessons they have learned in life, such as the importance of sharing and helping others. Invite volunteers to tell how they learned these lessons and to discuss why they are important.

Extending Meaning Through Writing

- Have children choose six of their favorite fables to compare. Then have them make a three-column chart that includes the following for each fable: title, characters, and lesson learned. (**Graphic Aid**)
- Ask children to write a paragraph on the fable they think teaches the most important lesson. Have them include real-world examples to support their claim. (**Persuasive**)

Other Books

Rumpelstiltskin retold by Paul O. Zelinsky
The Tortoise Shell and Other African Stories
by Geof Smith

Franny K. Stein, Mad Scientist: Frantastic Voyage



Summary & Standard

When girl scientist Franny K. Stein's dog, Igor, accidentally eats the Doomsday Device that Franny has invented, she shrinks herself to take a voyage inside of Igor to retrieve the device. Her scientific know-how and quick thinking save the day. Children will comprehend basic plots of a variety of fiction genres.

Author: Jim Benton

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Science Fiction

Theme/Idea: mad scientists and inventions

Making Connections: Text to Text

Ask children whether they are familiar with the Frankenstein story. Explain that the original was written in 1818, and that many stories have been written and movies made based on the character. (Mention also that Frankenstein is the name of the scientist, not the monster.)

On the board, write the names *Frankenstein* and *Franny K. Stein* and compare them. Ask children to predict what kind of person the main character in the story might be and what she might do.

For information on scientific inventions by kids, both real and imaginary, see http://inventors.about.com/od/kidinventions/ss/kid_inventors_U.htm.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: channel, device, explore, inventions, perfect, pressure, scientist, voyage

Related Words for Discussion: creative, determined, fearless, knowledgeable

Genre

Science Fiction Remind children that science fiction is a made-up story dealing with scientific subject matter and may be set in the future.

Supportive Book Features

Text A table of contents and humorous chapter titles help outline the story. The text is also heavily illustrated with minimal text on pages.

Content Children will likely relate to the humor in the story and enjoy the “gross” descriptions of Franny’s voyage into Igor’s stomach.

Praise children for specific use of “Behaviors to Notice and Support” on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher’s Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text On pages 12–13 and 40–41, make sure children relate the handwritten captions to the appropriate pictures. Remind children that a word may be broken between syllables at the end of a line of text and that a hyphen signals this break.

Vocabulary Some words are well above grade level. Tell children to use strategies for reading difficult words, such as *mummification*, page 13; *diabolical*, page 14; *tarantulas*, page 20; and *gastronomical*, page 85. Also, see Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies on the other side of this card.

ELL Bridge

Encourage children to do a picture walk of each spread before they read the text, describing what they see and what is happening now in the story. Have children read the spread together, pointing to the corresponding pictures. If they come upon an unknown word, demonstrate using the pictures to decode the word. Encourage children to keep a list of unknown words, and remind them that they can use a dictionary.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Ask children what Franny's "frantastic" voyage was. Have them explain what Franny's Doomsday Device would do, why she invented it, and why she had to find it.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Discuss with children why Franny is called a mad scientist. Note how she is like other mad scientists they have read about or seen in movies. Ask: *What motivates her to invent the things she does?*

Thinking About the Text

Talk about the humor that the author included throughout the story. Have children read their favorite examples of funny lines, situations, or puns, such as *frantastic voyage* instead of *fantastic voyage*. Discuss how the illustrations add to the humor.

Understanding Plot

Remind children that, like all stories, this book has a plot. Explain that the structure of a plot generally contains three parts: a problem, events leading to a climax, and a solution.

- Begin by asking: *What main problem did Franny face?*
- Have children summarize the main events in the story and discuss how these events led to the resolution of Franny's problem.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Reading Difficult Words

Remind children to use various strategies when they come across a long or difficult word.

- Guide children to find on page 40 the words *horribly devastating explosive*.
- Discuss and have children apply strategies for reading and understanding *horribly*: (1) try to break the word into syllables; (2) look for familiar word parts; (3) look for context clues in the text and illustrations.
- Repeat for *devastating* and *explosive*.

Developing Fluency

Model reading a short chapter, pausing at commas and periods and changing intonation at question marks and exclamation points. Then have children read the same chapter aloud, responding appropriately to punctuation.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Inventors Lead a discussion about the personality traits of Franny K. Stein, inventors in general, and mad scientists in particular. Explore the differences between a mad scientist and an inventor.

Extending Meaning Through Writing

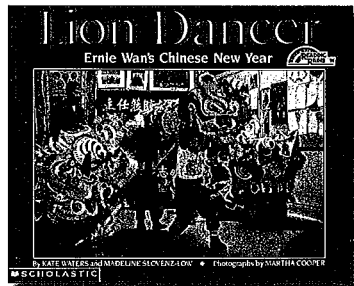
- Have children explain something they would like to invent. Encourage them to be as creative as possible, no matter how fantastic their ideas may seem. **(Expository)**
- Ask children to write to Franny K. Stein, telling her why she should or should not continue to be a mad scientist. **(Persuasive)**

Other Books

Vampires Don't Wear Polka Dots
(The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids)
by Debbie Dadey and Marcia Thornton Jones

Stuart Goes to School by Sara Pennypacker

Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year



Summary & Standard

Ernie Wan prepares to perform his first Lion Dance on the streets of New York City to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Students will read to better understand the various cultures of the United States and the world.

Authors: Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low
Genre: Nonfiction

Word Count: 250+
Theme/Idea: preparing for important moments

Making Connections: Text to Self

Children will be familiar with celebrations and holidays. Ask them to share traditions that their families follow for special holidays and celebrations. Ask: *Is there a tradition that you were once too young to participate in, but are now old enough for?*

Extend the connection by explaining that the Chinese New Year is the most important Chinese holiday. It is an occasion to sweep away bad luck and start anew. Tell children that they will learn about the celebration and how a young boy prepares for a very important day.

For additional teaching ideas and resources, see http://crafts.kaboose.com/holidays/chinese_new_year.html.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: ancestors, celebrations, ceremony, custom, evil, public, tradition

Related Words for Discussion: honor, important, meaningful, prepare, pride

Genre

Nonfiction Remind children that nonfiction stories give facts about real people, events, or other subject matter.

ELL Bridge

Use picture-word correspondence to help children see many of the things mentioned in the text. Model finding words on a page that are shown in the pictures on that page, such as *Chinatown*, *feast*, and *firecrackers*. Point to the word and then to the item in the picture. Have children repeat the connection. Encourage partners to work together to connect other words to the pictures.

Supportive Book Features

Text There are many large, colorful photographs that closely support the text throughout this book. The close text-picture match will help children who are not familiar with the Chinese New Year. A Chinese lunar calendar and horoscope provide additional information.

Content The text covers the events of two days in chronological order. The clear sequence allows readers to follow the events easily even if they are unfamiliar with Chinese customs and traditions.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text There are no page numbers or headings, and the text is spread along between pictures on the page, which may make it difficult to follow. Encourage children to use the pictures to aid in comprehension.

Vocabulary Vocabulary, such as *kung fu*, *martial arts*, *evil spirits*, *cinnabar*, and *Buddha*, may be unfamiliar to children. Encourage children to use photographs and context clues to help them understand unfamiliar words.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

As they read, have children make a list of the sequence of events in the story. Have children use their list to summarize the events of the two days.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Discuss the fact that different cultures have different customs and traditions, and the importance of respecting the celebrations of other cultures. Ask: *What celebration do you take part in and to what culture does it belong?* If possible, have children explain why the celebration is important in that culture.

Thinking About the Text

On the copyright page, read aloud the note of thanks to the Wan family. Point out that the author uses information from many people to provide the story for this book.

Generating Questions

Tell children that it is often helpful to ask themselves questions as they read, especially when there is information they do not understand. Encourage children to look for the answers to their questions as they continue to read the text.

- Have children turn to the first page of text (used as page 1). Model by saying: *When I read this page, I wonder why Ernie thinks performing the Lion Dance is the most important day of his life. On page 7, I find the answer to my question: If Ernie does well, he will bring honor to his family.*
- Have children generate their own questions and locate the answers to them in the book.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Multisyllabic Words

Remind children that when reading a long word, dividing the word between consonants and breaking it into syllables will help them decode it. Point out that digraphs such as *ch*, *gh*, *ph*, *sh*, or *th* should not be divided.

- Guide children to find and divide *different* (page 3), *wiggle* (page 7), *incense* (page 9), and *mixture* (page 15) into syllables. (dif-fer-ent, wig-gle, in-cense, mix-ture)
- Help children decode other multisyllabic words as they read.

Developing Fluency

Have children echo-read one of the pages of the book with you, one sentence at a time. Emphasize appropriate phrasing, pace, and intonation.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Important Moments Lead a discussion of important moments in children's lives. Ask children: *What was an important moment in your life? What did you do to prepare for it?* Point out that any moment that is meaningful to someone is important.

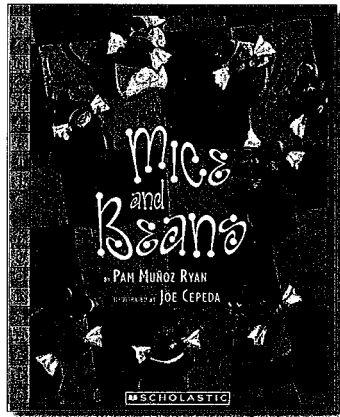
Extending Meaning Through Writing

- Have small groups create a poster of an upcoming celebration that includes *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. (**Graphic Aid**)
- Invite children to write a letter to a relative describing the events of an important day in their life. (**Descriptive**)

Other Books

At 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue by Crystal Wirth
A Very Special Kwanzaa by Debbi Chocolate

Mice and Beans



Summary & Standard

In this fantasy, Rosa María learns to value the mice that live in her house after they help her prepare for an important family event. Children will accurately identify the theme or author's message in a grade-level-appropriate text.

Author: Pam Muñoz Ryan

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Fantasy

Theme/Idea: the value of accepting differences

Making Connections: Text to World

Children may be familiar with the ideas of prejudice, intolerance, and avoiding people who are different. Point out that once people get to know one another, they often find that they were wrong to avoid each other. Together, create a list of reasons why it is important to understand other people and accept their differences.

Extend the connection by telling children that *Mice and Beans* is about a woman who thinks mice have no place in her house until she sees how helpful they can be. Then, even though they are different, she welcomes them to stay.

For additional teaching ideas and resources, see http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=890.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: assembled, devoured, menu, satisfied

Related Words for Discussion: accept, appreciate, prejudice, tolerance, value, welcome

Genre

Fantasy Remind children that a fantasy is a made-up story that has characters and settings that could not really happen.

Supportive Book Features

Text The book's action spans one week, from Sunday to Saturday. The passage of time is easy to follow because the account of each day begins with the name of the day in large print. The actions for each day follow the same pattern: Rosa María doing a task to prepare for the party, noticing there is no mousetrap out, and setting yet another one before going to bed.

Content Most children will relate to the experience of preparing for a birthday party or other special family event, and they will be amused by the mice's actions after Rosa María goes to bed for the night.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text The illustrations support the text but some of the mice's actions must be examined closely for the story to make sense. Explain that in Spanish, exclamatory sentences are signaled by an upside-down exclamation point at the beginning of the sentence.

Vocabulary Spanish words are set in italics. Glossary and pronunciation guides are included in the back of the book.

ELL Bridge

Have children make a picture dictionary for words they don't know. Tell students to write each word and draw a picture to go with it. Invite Spanish-speaking children in the group to help non-Spanish speakers pronounce and define words in Spanish.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Have children examine the illustrations and text and identify the ways the mice help Rosa María throughout the story. Ask: *How do Rosa María's feelings about the mice change from the beginning of the story to the end?*

Thinking Beyond the Text

Have children look at the story from the perspective of the mice. Ask: *Why do you think the mice want to help Rosa María? How do you think the mice feel about Rosa María?* Ask children to explain why they think as they do.

Thinking About the Text

Point out that the story would be very different if there were no illustrations to accompany it. With children, note a few details (that the mouse on page 3 is a tiny version of Rosa María) and clues (that the mice on page 4 are measuring the mousetrap). Ask children to identify things learned only from the illustrations and discuss why this information might not have been included in the main text.

Distinguishing Fantasy from Reality

Discuss with children how to distinguish fantasy from reality. Remind them that some things in a fantasy could never happen in real life. Ask children to identify parts of this story that are based on reality and parts that could happen only in a fantasy.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Using a Pronunciation Guide

Point out that one difficulty with reading a word from another language is not knowing how the different syllables are pronounced and which syllables to stress.

- Have children turn to the glossary and look at the pronunciation guide for *bolsa*. Explain that the pronunciation is enclosed in parentheses, that the word is divided by the hyphen into its two syllables, and that the syllable to be stressed is written in uppercase letters. Have children use the guide to say *bolsa*.
- Ask pairs to use the pronunciation guide to practice reading the rest of the words.

Developing Fluency

Echo-read various pages of the book with children. Read each sentence and have children repeat it after you. Emphasize proper phrasing, intonation, pronunciation, and rate.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Differences Lead a discussion about why it is important to understand and accept people or groups that are perceived to be different. Discuss traits that Rosa María and the mice in fact had in common. (e.g., being organized, helpful, and fun-loving)

Extending Meaning Through Writing

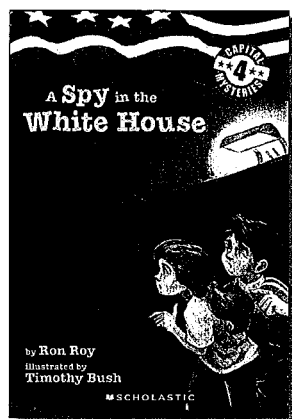
- Ask children to rewrite from the perspective of the mice one of the days described in the book. **(Narrative)**
- Have children write a description of the mouse birthday party, including details about the decorations, activities, and food. **(Descriptive)**

Other Books

Berlioz the Bear by Jan Brett

Flossie and the Fox by Patricia C. McKissack

A Spy in the White House



Summary & Standard

KC and her best friend, Marshall, must find the spy in the White House before her mother's wedding to the president is ruined. Children will read to refine their understanding of how texts work across a variety of genres.

Author: Ron Roy

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Mystery

Theme/Idea: creating a plan to solve a mystery

Making Connections: Text to World

Children may have experience from their lives or from science class with making plans to find out more information about something. Note that sometimes, to solve a mystery, a detective must come up with a plan to get more information than he or she already has about suspects and events.

Extend the real-world connection by discussing how one puts a plan together. Talk about how people can set up an experiment to find out what would happen in a situation.

For additional teaching ideas and resources, see <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1989/4/89.04.06.x.html>.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: device, disguise, national security, press conference, reporter, spy

Related Words for Discussion: evidence, examine, experiment, investigate, solution, theory

Genre

Mystery Remind children that a mystery is a story about a puzzling event, such as an unsolved crime, and the clues that help solve it.

Supportive Book Features

Text The text is divided into chapters with descriptive titles. Most sentences and paragraphs are short. A map of Washington, D.C., a table of contents, and several full-page illustrations offer support.

Vocabulary For the most part, unfamiliar terms and phrases can be defined from context. Generally, the language and vocabulary used are appropriate for the level.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text Pages are full, with few illustrations, and the amount of text may be overwhelming to some children. Point out that sometimes characters' thoughts are written in italics and newspaper headlines are written in uppercase letters. Help children read the dialogue when Marshall stammers (pages 69–70).

Content Children may be unfamiliar with aspects of the U.S. government and how the press reports news. Review both with children prior to reading the story.

ELL Bridge

Break up long sentences from the book into smaller parts in order to help children who have difficulty absorbing a lot of unfamiliar text at once. For example, *When she sat on a bench and took out her cell phone, they hid behind some bushes* (page 61). Read the sentence parts separately, helping children get the gist of what's happening in each part. Then have children create their own long sentences by coming up with two ideas and joining them together.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Have children identify the mystery KC and Marshall must solve, list their suspects, describe their theories about what is going on, and explain how they figure out who the spy is.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Point out that KC comes up with two ideas (pages 44 and 68) to identify the spy. Using her plans as a focus, discuss ways a detective can set up a situation to find out information about suspects, and how people in general make plans to discover things about the world.

Thinking About the Text

Note that the author of a mystery must provide the reader with sufficient information to give the reader a fair chance at solving the mystery along with the characters. Add that the writer cannot give away so much information that the mystery's solution is easy. Ask children to notice and point to specific examples of places in which the author offers clues that help solve the mystery, such as George smelling like mint (page 9) and Darla Darling having green mouthwash in her office (page 31).

Understanding Idioms

The characters in this book use many idioms, or words or phrases that have meanings different from the meaning of their parts.

- Have children reread page 14 and identify the idiom *let the cat out of the bag*. Discuss what it means and why it is used here.
- Challenge children to find other idioms, such as *the walls may have ears* (page 18) and *going to flip* (page 49).

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Multiple-Meaning Words

Explain that sometimes one word may have several different meanings, and to understand text, the reader must figure out which meaning is being used.

- Turn to page 16 and discuss the use of the word *leaked*. Point out that often people speak of a pipe that leaked, but that here the meaning is that someone revealed a secret on purpose.
- Have children examine how the words *bug* and *swept* are used on page 17 and determine what meaning each of these words has in this context.

Developing Fluency

Model fluent reading of a passage that contains interesting dialogue. Model how to adjust your voice and tone as you read each character's words. Then have partners practice reading the passage to each other using appropriate pace and intonation.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Solving Mysteries Discuss how people collect information about a mystery and combine new information with what they already know to figure out what is going on. Ask: *Have you ever solved a mystery? How?*

Extending Meaning Through Writing

- Have children write a short newspaper article telling who the spy was and how the spy was caught. (**Expository**)
- Have children write an opening paragraph about a mystery that needs to be solved. (**Narrative**)

Other Books

The Case of the Secret Valentine by James Preller

Mallory and the Ghost Cat by Ann M. Martin

Suitcase



**GUIDED
READING
PROGRAM**
Fiction Focus

2nd Edition

Summary & Standard

Xander is an artistic boy who feels awkward and clumsy; being teased by classmates only makes things worse. But by challenging himself to try new things, he proves to himself and others that he is a winner. Children will read to enhance their understanding of the demands of society.

Author: Mildred Pitts Walter

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Word Count: 250+

Theme/Idea: overcoming self-doubt

Making Connections: Text to Self

Most children will be familiar with basketball and other school sports, as well as with drawing and art. Discuss what children know about these activities and whether they prefer one to the other.

Extend the real-world connection by talking about why children chose one activity over the other. Ask: *Do you choose only things you're good at or do you try to learn something new?* Remind children that personalities and interests influence the choices they make each day.

For additional teaching ideas and resources, see ssw.unc.edu/jif/makingchoices/lesson-g4.htm.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: balance, coach, embarrass, express, practice, praise

Related Words for Discussion: accomplish, confident, determination, doubt, goals

Genre

Realistic Fiction Remind children that realistic fiction is a made-up story that features characters who are like real people and situations that could really happen.

Supportive Book Features

Text The book is divided into 13 easy-to-read chapters. Illustrations throughout the book depicting the characters and situations provide visual support to readers.

Content Children will be able to connect with the characters and cheer for Xander as he overcomes his own self-doubt.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text The abundant and sometimes quick-paced dialogue may confuse readers. Remind children to reread a section if they misunderstand who is speaking. Explain that sentences or paragraphs in italics represent Xander's thoughts and that he doesn't speak them aloud.

Vocabulary Children may find some vocabulary difficult, such as *strategy* (page 92) and *equality* (page 82). You may want to remind children to use context clues or a dictionary to help them understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.

ELL Bridge

Help children understand the Essential Words and Related Words for Discussion. Write the words on a chart or the board and sound them out by syllable. Have each child or a volunteer tell the meaning of a word. If a meaning cannot be established, have a volunteer look up the word in a dictionary and read aloud its meaning to the class. Invite children to use the word in a sentence.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Have children discuss what they learned about Xander and his determination to be good at both sports and drawing.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Have children discuss what influenced Xander's decision to practice and find a sport he was good at. Ask: *Was Xander doing what he wanted to do? Did he really want to play sports? Why or why not?* Discuss the fact that Xander was able to prove to himself that he could be good at other things besides drawing.

Thinking About the Text

Have children notice and point to specific examples of how the writer's use of dialogue allows readers to learn more about the characters. For example, point out the dialogue between Xander's parents on pages 10–11. Ask: *What does this tell you about Xander's parents? How does it make Xander feel?*

Understanding Problems and Solutions

Help children understand that a problem is a challenge or difficulty that a person faces; a solution is the action that solves the problem. A story can have more than one problem and solution. Ask:

- *What problem does Xander face when he tries to play basketball?*
- *How does Xander solve his problem of feeling unable to do anything well?*
- *What does Xander do to solve the problem of being unable to draw the tiger's paws?*

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Words With the Letter x

Remind children that the letter *x* is pronounced differently when it is used at the beginning of a word.

- Write *explain, relax, Alexander, and xylophone* on a chart or on the board. Read aloud each word and point out that when the letter *x* is in the middle of a word, *x* has a /ks/ or /kz/ sound. At the end of a word, it has a /ks/ sound. However, when *x* is used at the beginning of a word, it has a /z/ sound.
- Ask children to turn to page 7 and find the name *Xander*. Have them identify where the letter *x* is found and how it sounds. Repeat with the word *excuses* (page 13).

Developing Fluency

Have children echo-read page 86, beginning with Xander's dream. Read a sentence and have children repeat after you. Continue until children are reading fluently.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Self-Doubt Lead a discussion about overcoming self-doubt. Ask: *Have you ever thought you would be bad at something? Did you try it anyway?* Discuss means by which children gain confidence.

Extending Meaning Through Writing

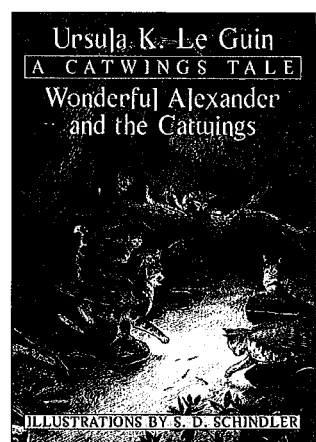
- Have children write a journal entry summarizing one of Xander's school days. **(Narrative)**
- Have children list and describe the different exercises Xander did to improve his balance and agility. **(List)**

Other Books

Hurray for Ali Baba Bernstein by
Johanna Hurwitz

America's Most Wanted Fifth-Graders by
Jan Lawrence and Linda Raskin

Wonderful Alexander and the Catwings



Summary & Standard

Alexander is a cat who thinks he is destined to do wonderful things. Follow Alexander in his first excursion into unknown territory where he finds himself in some risky situations. Help comes in the form of a family of cats with wings. He in turn helps them. Children will distinguish fantasy from reality.

Author: Ursula K. Le Guin

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Fantasy

Theme/Idea: helping a friend who has helped you

Making Connections: Text to Text

Ask whether children have read other books in the Catwings series by Ursula K. Le Guin. If so, have them share their knowledge and views about the books. If not, ask: *What stories have you read in which animals can talk to each other or act in ways that don't seem real?* Discuss with children what they like about such stories.

For additional information on author Ursula K. Le Guin, see <http://www.ursulaklequin.com>.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: bruise, discover, explore, rescue, shiver, silent, stranger

Related Words for Discussion: flight, protect, secrecy, unusual

Genre

Fantasy Remind children that a fantasy is a made-up story that has characters and settings that could not happen in the real world.

Supportive Book Features

Text Fine, detailed illustrations that support the text accompany most pages. The text block on the pages is narrow, so line length is short for easy tracking.

Content Though the book is a fantasy with cats that talk and fly, children will identify with the cats' human characteristics, such as the desire to explore the unknown, helping each other, and the need to feel safe in a comfortable home.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text Chapters are numbered but not titled. Some pages are full text. Suggest that children find a comfortable reading area free from distractions to build their reading stamina. Encourage them to refer to illustrations on facing pages.

Vocabulary Some words are above grade level. Tell children to use context clues to help them determine the meanings of unfamiliar words. (e.g., *exceptionally*, page 7; *clambered*, page 11)

ELL Bridge

Help children practice expressing ideas by having partners take turns describing the book illustrations to each other. For each picture have them answer questions, such as: *What animals are in the picture? What is happening? Could this happen in the real world?* Encourage children to respond in complete sentences and to use descriptive adjectives and action verbs. Write model sentences to review the structure of questions and answers.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Ask children how Alexander came to be with the Catwings. What did he do that made him truly wonderful?

Thinking Beyond the Text

Ask children to explain in what ways Alexander and the Catwings were like real cats and in what ways they were imaginary. Discuss how this story compares with other animal fantasies they have read.

Thinking About the Text

Talk about the humor that the author includes. Ask: *What does Alexander do on page 9? Why is his reaction to the cows funny to us?* Have children point out other examples of humor. Ask: *Why do you think the author included these events in the story?*

Understanding Theme

Help children see that authors write books with a “big idea” in mind that they want their readers to understand and remember. This big idea is called the theme. Discuss the theme that author Ursula K. Le Guin wants readers of this story to remember. Use questions to guide children.

- *Why does Alexander first leave his home?*
- *How does Jane help Alexander?*
- *How does Alexander help Jane?*
- *What do you think the author is trying to tell us about being “wonderful”?*
- *Why do you think the author chose this theme? Is helping others important? Why?*

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher’s Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Words With -y, -ly

Remind children that base words with the suffix -y added to them are often adjectives that mean “having ___” or “like ___.” Base words that have -ly added to them can be adjectives or adverbs that mean “in a ___ way.”

- Write *sadly* and *lumpy* on the board and point out the -ly and -y suffixes.
- Ask children to turn to page 7 and find the phrase *long, silky, golden coat*. Have them identify the base word in *silky*, define *silky*, and use it in a sentence.
- Have children find *trotted bravely* on page 10 and repeat the routine for *bravely*.

Developing Fluency

Divide the class into small groups and have each member of a group read a passage that includes dialogue. Point out the quotation marks. Remind children that dialogue and narration call for different types of expression.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About Living a Fantasy Discuss what children would do if they found a family of flying cats. Would they keep these unusual animals a secret or share them with the world? Have them explain their responses.

Extending Meaning Through Writing

- Have children write a short story in which they find a flying dog. (**Narrative**)
- Ask children to write a book review of *Wonderful Alexander and the Catwings*, summing up the story and explaining why they did or did not like it. (**Expository**)

Other Books

The Cat Who Wore a Pot on Her Head
by Jan Slepian and Ann Seidler
Jane on Her Own by Ursula K. Le Guin

Zen Shorts



Summary & Standard

Three children befriend a panda named Stillwater, who teaches them life lessons in the form of short Zen stories that relate to their recent experiences. Children will accurately identify the theme or author's message in a grade-level-appropriate text.

Author: Jon J Muth

Word Count: 250+

Genre: Traditional Literature/Fable

Theme/Idea: reevaluating thoughts and habits

Making Connections: Text to Self

Children most likely will not be acquainted with Zen Buddhism. Explain that when people practice Zen meditation, they sit quietly and let thoughts float through their minds.

Extend the connection by inviting children to try a modified version of this: sitting quietly for a couple of minutes and thinking about a topic. Provide them with a story-related topic to think about, such as good luck versus bad luck. Once children are done thinking, invite them to share their thoughts with the class.

For a list of resources for Zen Buddhism, see www.tricycle.com/special-section/bringing-up-buddhists-a-resource-guide.

Vocabulary

Essential Words: brooding, lament, misfortune, monk, robber, transport, Zen

Related Words for Discussion: forgiveness, luck, meditation, ponder, reflect

Genre

Traditional Literature/Fable Remind children that a fable is a fictional story that has been passed down over the years and often uses animals as characters to teach a lesson.

Supportive Book Features

Text The text for the main narrative is simple and sparse. Beautiful, detailed watercolor illustrations depict the growing relationships among the characters. An Author's Note gives rich background information about the concepts of Zen and "Zen shorts."

Vocabulary Most words in this story will be familiar to children. Encourage them to use context to define unfamiliar words.

Praise children for specific use of "Behaviors to Notice and Support" on page 93 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Challenging Book Features

Text Help children keep track of what is going on as the story and pictures shift between the main narrative and the three "Zen shorts."

Content The ideas behind Stillwater's three simple stories are deep. Give children plenty of time to think about and discuss what these stories say about concepts such as generosity, luck, anger, gratitude, and forgiveness. After presenting the information in the Author's Note, discuss the meaning of Stillwater's name.

ELL Bridge

Have children retell Stillwater's stories to help them grasp the central idea of each one. Form groups of two or three children, varying the level of proficiency within each group. Help children understand that they do not have to mention every detail from a story but should mention the most important ones. Help children express themselves correctly and fluently, allowing groups time to practice before they make their presentations to the class.

Teaching Options

Developing Comprehension

Thinking Within the Text

Help children identify the purpose of each of Stillwater's stories. Guide them to understand why Stillwater might have chosen to share this particular story in each instance.

Thinking Beyond the Text

Now that children have read *Zen Shorts*, have them think back to the activity in Making Connections on the front of this card. Divide the class into three groups, assigning each group a Stillwater story. Then have groups spend a few minutes sitting still and meditating on the story. When they are finished, ask children how they think each story affected Addy, Michael, and Karl. Invite children to share their own thoughts about the lessons in the stories.

Thinking About the Text

Note that this book contains three short stories within the main story. Ask children to identify the ways the author changes the text and illustrations to distinguish between the main narrative and Stillwater's Zen shorts.

Understanding Genre: Fable

Explain that a fable is a story that teaches a lesson. It is usually told orally and usually contains animal characters. Discuss a familiar fable, such as "The Tortoise and the Hare" or "The Lion and the Mouse".

- Ask children to identify ways in which *Zen Shorts* could be considered a fable. Talk about whether only the stories Stillwater tells are fables, or whether the entire story might be considered a fable as well.
- Have children support their opinions with evidence from the text.

For more prompts and ideas for teaching problem-solving strategies, see page 22 of the *Guided Reading Teacher's Guide*.

Developing Phonics and Word-Solving Strategies

Words With Prefixes: *un-*, *im-*

Remind children that a prefix is a letter or group of letters added at the beginning of a base word that changes the word's meaning.

- Turn to page 8 and have children identify the word on this page that begins with the prefix *un-*. (*unannounced*) Explain that the prefix *un-* means "not." Have children define *unannounced* and explain how the prefix changes the meaning of the base word. (Note: Book pages are not numbered. Page 5 begins with: "Michael! There's a bear outside!")
- Repeat for *impatient* on page 34. Explain that the prefix *im-* also means "not."

Developing Fluency

Echo-read one of Stillwater's stories with children, reading each sentence and having children repeat it after you. Emphasize expert phrasing and intonation when reading.

Oral Language/Conversation

Talk About the Concept of Zen Discuss why a person might benefit from taking time to meditate on an idea. Ask: *What are examples of things people might not do if they thought about their actions first?*

Extending Meaning Through Writing

- Have children write a paragraph about the lesson they learned in one of Stillwater's stories. (**Expository**)
- Have children write a story about what happens one day when all three children visit Stillwater at once. (**Narrative**)

Other Books

Folktales From China by Barbara Lawson
The Tortoise Shell and Other African Stories by Geof Smith