

Scaredy Crow

by Sheryl Gwyther

JUNIOR JOURNAL 42
This text is levelled at Gold 1.



OVERVIEW

In this narrative, told mainly through dialogue, Scaredy Crow is teased by the other crows because he is frightened of the scarecrow. Three mice come to his aid, and together, they devise a plan to trick the bully crows and teach them a lesson, but there is a surprising twist at the end of the tale.

The dramatic nature of the text and the author's highly descriptive language make this a good text for expressive oral performance (as in Readers' Theatre). It also provides opportunities to explore the author's use of descriptive language.

There is an audio version of the text on the *Junior Journal 42 and 43 CD*.

RELATED TEXTS

Tales where a character uses a clever trick to overcome a challenging situation: *I'm the King of the Mountain* (RTR, shared); *Giant Soup* (RTR, Purple); "Frog School" (JJ 41).

Texts about crows and/or scarecrows: *Scarecrows from Space* (RTR, Purple); "Scarecrow" (RTR poem card).

TEXT CHARACTERISTICS

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes.

Some unfamiliar contexts and settings

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~ a story that can be read aloud as Readers' Theatre ~

Scaredy Crow's heart thumped as he crept towards the scarecrow. The other two crows turned to watch.

"Scaredy Crow, nobody but you is scared of the scarecrow," said Brenda Crow. "You're as timid as a mouse."

Albert Crow pulled Scaredy Crow's tail feathers. "BOO!"

"AAARK!" Scaredy Crow shook with fright.



A mix of explicit and implicit content that requires students to notice clues and make inferences, for example, about:

- why Scaredy Crow is frightened of the scarecrow when the other crows aren't
- why being scared of the scarecrow is such a big problem for Scaredy Crow
- how the feelings of the crows change during the story
- why the scarecrow was laughing

"We should give those bully crows a fright," said the first mouse.

"They chased us away from the corn," said the second.

"What can we do?" said the third.

"I've got an idea," said the first mouse.

"Let's scare those crows and prove you're not a coward." He told them his plan.

When the crows weren't looking, the mice climbed inside the scarecrow.

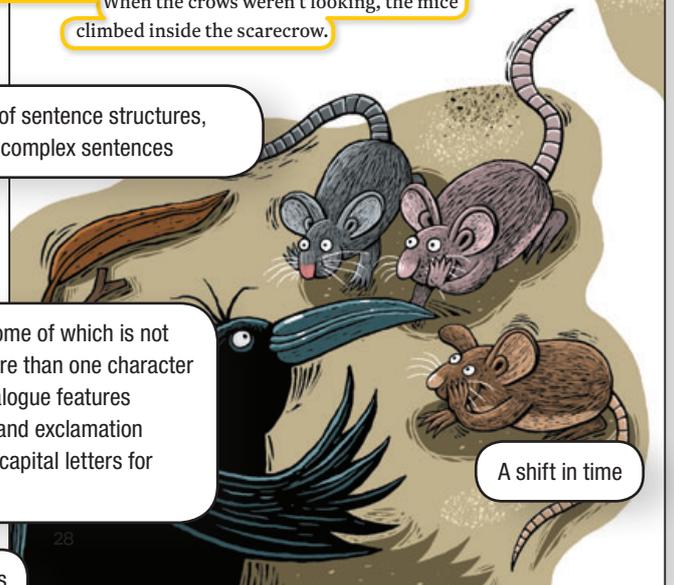
A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

Frequent use of dialogue, some of which is not explicitly attributed, and more than one character speaking on a page. The dialogue features contractions, exclamations and exclamation marks, with some words in capital letters for extra emphasis.

Ideas organised in paragraphs, with the start of each paragraph indicated by indented text. Each new section of speech is also indicated by indented text, requiring students to attend to punctuation and context to keep track.

Many characters and events

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations



A shift in time

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Language features: Show some understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

The Arts (Drama)

Level 2 – Communicating and Interpreting: Share drama through informal presentation and respond to elements of drama in their own and others' work.

SUGGESTED READING PURPOSES

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

- To find out who the scarecrow is and what happens to him
- To read expressively for an audience
- To explore the author's use of descriptive language.

SETTING A LEARNING GOAL

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to "read, respond to, and think critically about" texts?)

Some behaviours you could expect to see as the students read in order to meet the reading purpose are suggested below. **Select and adapt** from them to set your specific learning goal(s). Be guided by your students' particular needs and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

The students:

- use clues in the text and illustrations to make inferences about the characters and form and test hypotheses about what's going to happen
- summarise the events in the story and form an opinion about (evaluate) the ending
- attend closely to the layout and punctuation in order to track the dialogue and read expressively for an audience
- use word-solving strategies to decode and/or work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.

TEXT AND LANGUAGE FEATURES**VOCABULARY**

- Some unfamiliar words and phrases, including "looks so human", "voice shook", "coward", "perched", "moaning with hunger", "scrambled up", "drooping", "bullying"
- The use of similes, for example, "as timid as a mouse", "acting like a baby"

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Scarecrows and their purpose

POSSIBLE SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

For students who may be unfamiliar with a lot of the vocabulary, display the illustration on page 25 without the text. Ask the students to tell you what they can see and then label the illustration (for example, scarecrow, hat, fingers, crow, tail feathers, squawk, and so on). Provide the words if students don't suggest them, ask them to repeat the words after you, and then write the labels.

Give pairs of students the illustrations from the text, cut up and out of order. Ask them to sequence the pictures and then explain to the others their ideas about what they think happens – don't expect them to come up with a whole story. As the pairs do this, introduce and record any relevant key vocabulary, especially the descriptive vocabulary. You could begin a list of descriptive vocabulary, grouping words under headings such as Movements, Expressions, Ways of speaking or making noises, and Actions. Have the students listen to the audio CD once or twice to check the sequence of their pictures in pairs. Give them time to share their ideas, but tell them you are all going to find out the order by reading the story.

Explain that the purpose of similes (for example, "as timid as a mouse", "acting like a baby") is to compare two similar things and help a reader (or listener) to visualise. Make connections to other similes that students are familiar with.

Monitor students' **decoding** attempts by noticing their use of words from the text during discussion and/or by asking questions that require the students to use those words. Prompt students to remember strategies they can use, for example:

- breaking words into syllables or familiar chunks
- drawing on knowledge of spelling patterns and phonics ("Albert", "perched"); awareness of more than one sound for "ch" ("echoed") and "ove" (with "prove" rhyming with "move")
- rereading the phrase or sentence around the unfamiliar word to confirm decoding attempts
- using knowledge of word structure, for example, to identify the root words in "scrambled", "echoed", and "scurried".

Monitor students' **word-solving strategies** to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Prompt students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- thinking of the overall context and making connections to their own experiences
- rereading or reading on so that they can use the next word or the overall context of the sentence or paragraph; for example, "heart thumped" has a different meaning to "thumped" and "scrambled up" has a different meaning to "scrambled"
- using the illustrations and/or syntax ("crept" is the past-tense form of "creep"; "perched" means to "sat" or "stood" on something).

Have a dictionary available to confirm or clarify word meanings.

Make connections to the students' prior knowledge of crows and scarecrows. You could refer to the RTR book *Scarecrows from Space*.

INTRODUCING THE TEXT

- Plan to read this text over several sessions, first to understand the storyline and then to focus on the rich, descriptive language and expressive oral reading.
- Read the title and examine the illustration on page 25.
- Ask the students to form hypotheses about the reason for the title. If necessary, prompt them to identify the scarecrow and the crows in the illustration and the graphic near the title to clarify that it is one of the crows that is scared.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

METACOGNITION

Effective readers are metacognitive. They are aware of the processes and strategies they draw on and are able to explain how they used these to successfully make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours, or strategies that promote metacognitive behaviours, are threaded through the notes and indicated by .

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

-  As they read or reread this text, students notice when meaning has broken down. They draw on a range of strategies to correct the problem and can explain what they did.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

-  Ask questions: *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*
-  Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*
-  Give feedback: *I noticed that you read this as... and then you fixed it up by ...*

READING AND DISCUSSING THE TEXT

In order to meet the reading purpose: **The students use clues in the text and illustrations to make inferences about the characters and form and test hypotheses about what's going to happen. They summarise the events in the story and form an opinion about (evaluate) the ending.**

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

PAGES 25–26

The students make connections between the text and the illustrations to identify the characters and infer what they are like. They use their prior knowledge of scarecrows to infer why Scaredy Crow is creeping towards the scarecrow even though he's scared of it.

They test their initial hypotheses about the reason for the title.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

Support the students to infer what the crows are like. *I am noticing lots of clues in the illustrations and text that give me ideas about what the characters are like. What does it mean to be "as timid as a mouse"? Which crow looks timid?*

If necessary, explain that "nobody but you" means "only you" and the phrase is the subject of "is scared". *Who is scared? Is anyone else scared?*

Prompt the students to think critically: *Why does he have a name like Scaredy Crow when the other crows have ordinary names?*

Have the students think, pair, and share about the language that describes how scared Scaredy Crow is.

Direct the students to locate specific information. For example, *Find the part (on page 26) that tells you why he's scared of the scarecrow.*

PAGE 27

The students infer from the text and/or the illustration that:

- time has passed ("Later")
- "perched" means "sat" or "stood"
- Scaredy Crow is too scared to go near the scarecrow and get corn to eat
- he's so hungry his tummy is rumbling.

The students can explain how the mice know Scaredy Crow is sad.

They review their hypotheses about what will happen.

If necessary, explain that sentences can have more than one idea and support the students to identify the ideas in the first sentence (It was later. He was perched on a log. His belly was moaning with hunger.)

Prompt the students to infer: *What do we know so far? Why is Scaredy Crow so hungry?*

What are the mice noticing about Scaredy Crow? Show me the words that tell you that.

Model your thinking to support the students to form hypotheses: *I'm wondering how these new characters might change the story ... What might the mice say and do next?*

PAGE 28

The students notice that the mice climb inside the scarecrow and review their hypotheses in the light of this information.

Have the students read the page and then prompt them to discuss their hypotheses and decide which is the most likely (and why). Monitor any hypotheses that haven't taken into account the fact that the mice climb inside the scarecrow.

Prompt the students to reread and notice the actions of the mice.

PAGE 29

The students summarise the plan so far and infer that the intention is to scare the other crows. They notice that it doesn't seem to be working yet and form hypotheses about what else the mice might do.

Direct the students to read the rest of the story to find out what happens.

Prompt them to keep forming and testing hypotheses in their heads as they read. *Is this what you thought would happen? What do you think will happen now?*

PAGES 30–31

The students infer from clues in the text and illustrations on page 30 that the plan has worked.

Ask questions: What clues on page 30 told you that the plan was working?

Monitor the students' reactions as they notice the twist at the end of the story.

They identify the twist in the tale on page 31. Some may notice the clue (the fourth mouse) in the illustration.

Prompt the students to share their reactions to the ending. *Is this what you expected? Why/why not?*

They discuss their understanding of the more challenging descriptive words ("nervous", "Hollow laughter echoed").

The students summarise the events in the text and discuss their personal responses to the text, in particular, their opinion of the ending.

Ask questions to help the students to identify key points: *What was the situation at the beginning, middle, and end of the story? Was Scaredy Crow's problem solved?*

Ask questions: *What will Scaredy Crow and the mice do next?*

If necessary, model your thinking: *I think Scaredy Crow will definitely be too scared to go anywhere near the scarecrow now. I wonder if the other crows will help him get food?*

- ⚙ With support, the students reflect on their learning. They explain some of the strategies they used, for example, how they formed and tested a hypothesis or made an inference.
- ⚙ The students identify challenges in the text and how they worked (or tried to work) them out.

Revisit the reading purpose and learning goals.

- ⚙ Ask questions: *How did you know how Scaredy Crow was feeling? When did you realise what the plan was? What helped you?*
- ⚙ *Was there anything that you found difficult or confusing? If necessary, model or explain to the students some strategies they could use.*

In order to meet the reading purpose: The students attend to meaning, sentence structure, and punctuation, to read expressively for an audience.

The students read with appropriate intonation. They use punctuation (especially the speech marks and commas) to support phrasing.

Begin by rereading page 25 together, trying out different voices and using expression. Ask questions to draw the students' attention to the supports for expressive reading (the commas, exclamation marks, and words in capital letters): *Why are you choosing to say it that way? What helped you?*

Model how the commas support phrasing.

Provide scaffolding by initially taking the role of the narrator yourself and have students read the dialogue for each character. Model expressive reading as you read along with the students.

Provide feedback on the students' oral reading.

AFTER READING

- Students can reread the story as they listen to the audio version on the *Junior Journal 42 and 43* CD. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- The students identify and discuss the author's use of descriptive language.
- Photocopy the text and have the students work in pairs, on one or two pages each, to highlight examples of descriptive language. Then have the students think, pair, and share why they chose their examples and how the language helps them to visualise the events in the story or how the characters are feeling.
- Have the students draw a character from the story and label it with appropriate descriptive language, including adjectives, similes, and verbs. *How would this character talk and move?* Students could read out their labels without showing the picture or giving the character (and act it out if they like acting) and ask the other students to guess who it is.
- Start a reference chart of favourite figures of speech or similes. Add to it as you and the students discover more examples. Encourage the students to try some of them out in their writing (and speaking).
- Have students, each as a different character, read the story aloud as Readers' Theatre for an audience. Either you or a student could take on the role of the narrator.