

TV Mum

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Overview

Now that she has a job, all Mum wants to do when she gets home is lie on the couch and watch TV — and her kids aren't happy about it! This play explores the problem in a light-hearted way but also raises questions that support the development of critical thinking.

Suggested Teaching Purpose

Based on the information I have about my students' learning needs, what would be an appropriate teaching purpose for this session?

Examples of an appropriate teaching purpose are listed below.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">To support the students in developing the comprehension strategies of making connections and identifying the author's purpose. |
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Features of the Text to Consider in Context

What features of this text would support the teaching purpose?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">The light-hearted portrayal of important ideas, emphasised by the humorous illustrations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The contrasting needs and points of view — Mum needing to relax and the children wanting her to interact with them
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The role reversal (children trying to stop their parents from watching TV rather than the opposite)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The familiar everyday setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The children's TV news report (a play within a play) and their use of ad-libbing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The way Mum gets drawn into the kids' performance, emotionally and physically
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The conventions of a play, for example, character names in capital letters, stage directions in italics, the terms "offstage" and "exit", and the use of adverbs and phrases, such as "looking offstage", "excitedly", "leaping out of the TV", "chasing after Mum and Sandy", "together", "looking behind the couch", "miserably"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The natural dialogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The hyperbole "a million cups of coffee"
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The figure of speech "have you on the edge of your seat".

Readability

Noun frequency level: 9–10 years for guided reading

What other features of this text might constitute challenges for my students? (For example, features that may require a prompt or a brief explanation.)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Particular words and concepts, including "offstage", "excitedly", "must've", "percussion", "hubcaps". |
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What prior knowledge would support my students in reading this text?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Their experiences of family life
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Their experiences of watching television, including police shows and cartoons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Their familiarity with plays
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Their experiences of thinking critically about texts.

Sharing the learning outcome and success criteria with your students

Learning outcome

I am learning to identify the author's purpose for writing this play and give evidence for my opinion.

Success criteria

I will be successful when I have:

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| • | made connections with my own life to help me understand the ideas and points of view in the play; |
| • | discussed the points of view in the play; |
| • | thought about what the author was trying to get us to think about by having the characters act this way. |

A Framework for the Lesson

How will I help my students to achieve the learning outcome?

Before reading

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| • | Tell the students you have a play for them to read to see how an author puts an interesting slant on a familiar issue. Discuss after-school routines. "Are your parents or other family members at home after school, or are they at work? What kinds of things do you talk about with them at the end of the day?" Brainstorm the needs that children and their caregivers have when they get home. Discuss the expectations that people have of working mothers and fathers, particularly solo parents. (Making connections; evaluating) |
| • | Tell the students the title of the play and have them consider (in light of the previous discussion) what the play could be about. (Forming hypotheses) |
| • | If necessary, briefly review the conventions of plays. (Making connections) |
| • | Share the learning outcome and success criteria with the students. |

Reading and discussing the text

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| • | (For the first reading, have all the students read the text rather than allocating parts.) Have them read page 29 and review their predictions about the title. "What kinds of things might the children want to talk to Mum about?" Discuss their decision to remove the TV. "How might Mum feel about that?" (Making connections) |
| • | Have the students share their initial responses to the contrasting points of view. The students may notice that Ray seems most sympathetic to Mum. Explore Mum's dialogue at the bottom of the page ("How was your day? Oh boy, I'm exhausted.") "Does Mum really want an answer to her question?" Briefly discuss Mum's use of hyperbole (exaggeration) to convey her tiredness. (Evaluating; inferring) |
| • | "So far, what do you think the author is trying to get us to think about? What makes you think that?" (Identifying the author's purpose) |
| • | Have your students read page 30. "Was it okay to lie about the TV? Why or why not?" (Evaluating) |
| • | Encourage the students to make connections with the sorts of things the children want to tell Mum about. Draw out the idea that they're just ordinary sorts of things that happen at school that any child would want to share with their parents. "What are you noticing about Mum's reaction?" (Making connections) |
| • | Have the students read page 31. "What does Mum joining in with the performance here suggest to you about the family? How does this fit with your thinking so far about the author's purpose?" Encourage the students to share their predictions about how the author might bring the play to an end, both in regard to this particular "TV episode" and the possible longer-term outcome. (Inferring; forming hypotheses; identifying the author's purpose) |

•	Have the students read to the end of the text and review their predictions. If necessary, you could read aloud the first half of page 32 with them to help them appreciate the pace of the quick-fire dialogue. Note how the kids tell Mum what's bothering them after she finds the TV. "Why do you think they didn't do it earlier? What do you think about this strategy compared to their strategy of hiding the TV?" (Testing hypotheses; evaluating; identifying the author's purpose)
•	Discuss the needs and points of view of the characters in the play. Encourage the students to make links to any experiences they have of being expected to do things or talk to people when they're really tired (or when they want to be doing something else). Discuss whether there are rights or wrongs in this situation or whether trying to understand the other person's point of view is most important. The students may notice that the children don't ask Mum about her day! (Evaluating; making connections)
•	Focus on Mum's change of attitude in the play. "Why did the author decide to have Mum change like this? How convincing do you find this change? (Evaluating)
•	"I find it interesting that this play is about a mother and her children but is written by a man. I wonder why he chose to write about this topic ... " (Identifying the author's purpose)
•	Review the learning outcome and success criteria and reflect with the students on how well the learning outcome has been achieved. "How did you come to a conclusion about the author's purpose? What helped you?" Note any teaching points for future sessions.

Links to Further Learning

What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate and/or extend their new learning?

•	Allocate roles and have the students read or perform the play. (Making connections)
•	Do a "hot seat" activity where the students take turns at being the various characters and using "I" statements to express their feelings and needs. You could model some ideas: "I feel really tired and need to rest" or "I really want to tell you about my day." (Making connections; identifying the author's purpose)

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