

On the Reclaim

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Overview

Lance doesn't think much of the reclaim land where he hangs out after school. He thinks that his email buddy Filo has a much more exciting life in Sāmoa, but when Lance discovers a dolphin in the "scuzzy old bay" ... well, maybe the reclaim isn't so bad after all.

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.

•	To support the students in developing the comprehension strategies of making connections, inferring , or identifying the main idea.
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Features of the Text to Consider in Context

What features of this text would support the teaching purpose?

•	The different viewpoints of the narrator, Lance, and Filo
•	The theme of appreciating what you have
•	The need to infer information about the setting and about Lance's feelings
•	The double meaning of "rubbish heap" on page 2
•	The contrast between the New Zealand and the Sāmoan settings
•	The first-person narration and the use of colloquial, conversational language, which encourage the reader to identify with the characters
•	The use of dialogue (and email) to convey information
•	The clear narrative structure (orientation, complication, resolution)
•	The sharp contrast in pace and style for each section of the narrative (the initial "boring" situation, the exciting discovery of the dolphin, and the characters' responses)
•	The writer's use of vivid descriptive language, exclamation marks, fast-paced staccato dialogue, and italics to convey excitement
•	The humorous twist at the end
•	The simile of the dolphin being "like a cursor across a computer screen" and its link to the idea of the email correspondence between Lance and Filo.

Readability

Noun frequency level: 9–10 years

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

•	The inclusion of complex sentences, with clauses providing additional information, for example, "Come on," I said, ignoring him.'
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•	Some of the features of the dialogue, for example, the use of elision (“What you doin’, Lance?”), the colloquial language (“yer”, “scuzzy”, “grinning from ear to ear”, “pumped up”, “Wanna go down ...”), and the use of “muscle” as a verb, especially for ESOL students
•	The use of parentheses “(That was Lance.)” on page 4
•	The made-up word “boringest”
•	The words “lagoon”, “phoney”, “reclaimed land”, “terminal”, “shunters”.

What prior knowledge would support my students in reading this text?

•	An understanding of some or all of the features of the setting (reclaimed land, rail yards, a ferry terminal, and proximity to a city)
•	Experience in using email.

Sharing Learning Outcomes with Your Students (select one or two)

I will be able to:

•	make connections within the text and to my own experience to infer what’s happening and what the characters are thinking;
•	make connections between the events in this text to identify the main idea.

A Framework for the Lesson

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

In the sections below, particular comprehension strategies, reading processes, and links to other aspects of literacy learning have been identified in brackets. Many of these relate directly to the highlighted teaching purpose, but others have also been identified where appropriate.

Before reading

•	Ask the students to discuss how they spend their leisure time. “Is it very exciting?” Ask them to use one word to describe what their weekends are like. “Do you know anyone your age who has a more exciting life than you?” “Would you want to change your life?” (Making connections)
•	If your students are likely to be unfamiliar with the setting, build up a word web of the sorts of things they might expect to see by a rail yard or ferry terminal. (Making connections; building vocabulary)
•	Tell the students that you have a narrative for them to read and <i>briefly</i> review the structure of a narrative. (Making connections)
•	Tell them that the author has chosen a particular incident to convey a main idea. Explain that you want them to read between the lines and connect the ideas in this text to clarify what is happening and then to consider what main idea the author might be trying to convey. (Inferring; making connections; identifying the main idea)
•	Clarify the learning outcome(s) with the students.

During reading

•	Have the students read page 2. “This boy seems a bit down. I wonder what’s going on here.” Encourage the students to share their inferences, supporting them with evidence from the text. “Do you think the narrator agrees with Lance?” (Inferring)
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•	If the students are unsure about what the reclaim is, reassure them that there is more information on the following page.
•	Draw on the students' knowledge of narrative structure to identify that the setting has been established and to encourage them to predict what the "complication" might be. Note whether their predictions link to the idea of something happening that might change Lance's mind. (Inferring; making connections; forming hypotheses)
•	Have the students read page 3 and discuss the different opinions of the two friends. "What does the narrator think about the reclaim?" "What does he think about Lance?" "How do you know?" (Summarising; inferring)
•	"Why does Lance think life on the reclaim is boring?" Draw out the idea that Lance used to think the reclaim was cool. If necessary, prompt the students to reread the final paragraph on page 2 for clues about his change of attitude. (Making connections; inferring)
•	Have the students review their predictions about what might happen next and then read to the end of the first paragraph on page 7. (Forming and testing hypotheses)
•	Give the students an opportunity to share their responses to the excitement of the dolphin episode and to make links to any experiences they may have had of dolphins. "Does this fit with your predictions?" (Making connections; testing hypotheses)
•	"How does this episode link to the first part of the text?" (Making connections)
•	Ask the students to predict how the story will finish. Alert them to the fact that there is a bit of a twist and then have them read to the end of the text. (Forming hypotheses)
•	Review the student's hypotheses and the humour in Filo's response. "How do you think Lance feels now?" (Testing hypotheses; inferring)
•	Have the students think, pair, and share what they think the big idea underlying this text might be. Ask them to explain how they came to their conclusion. You could feed in the proverbs "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" and "Familiarity breeds contempt." Draw out the idea that you sometimes need an outside point of view to show you what you've stopped noticing. (Identifying the main idea; analysing and synthesising; building vocabulary)

After reading

Select from these suggestions according to your purpose for the reading and what you've observed about the students' needs during the reading.

•	"How does the author convey information about the characters in this text?" Discuss how the author has shown the boys' friendship. "The narrator and Lance are good friends. How do we know this?" Have the students work in pairs to record their thinking about one of the characters in the story. For example:	
	The narrator's feelings	Why we think that
	A bit fed up with Lance	We would be! He ignores Lance's moaning on page 3.
	He thinks the reclaim is cool	He says he likes it (page 2) and "it's cool" (page 3) He describes lots of interesting things about the reclaim (page 3), and you would only do that if you felt they were important.

<p>He still wants to be friends with Lance even when Lance is being a pain</p>	<p>Their dads are friends (page 4), so he's used to hanging out with Lance.</p> <p>Lance used to enjoy the reclaim, so the narrator probably hopes he'll change his mind.</p> <p>He knows Lance really well—he knows all about Filo and what Lance emails him about.</p>
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Encourage the students to reflect on the way they've used strategies to make these inferences, for example, making connections to their own experience (how would I feel in this situation?), making connections within the text, and summarising (when the characters make explicit statements). Draw out the idea that people may draw different meanings from the same text and, in fact, discussing different interpretations and how you made them is an exciting part of becoming a reader. (Reflecting on strategy use)

Reflect with the students on how well the learning outcome has been achieved and 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?

•	The students could explore the ideas about being bored in the play “Are You Bored Yet?” in SJ 4.1.04.
•	As a class, find out about other familiar proverbs and whakatauki and discuss how they connect with everyday life. (Making connections; building vocabulary)
•	Look for opportunities to communicate with students from another school and explore differences in viewpoints. (Making connections)
•	The students could read the text, “Walking on the Grass” in SJ 1.4.06, which is a dramatic example of contrasting points of view. (Making connections)
•	You could revisit this text with the purpose of focusing on the writer's use of language, for example, how she shows that it's written from the point of view of a New Zealand boy, how she engages the reader, or how she conveys the change of pace and the excitement of the dolphin episode.