

# Fever

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Year 7



## Overview

In this ghost story, the author interweaves two parallel narratives in different settings. Using old rhymes and subtle clues, the story builds to a creepy climax that leaves the reader unsure of what might happen next. The use of a rhyme to set the scene provides an unexpected dimension to the present-day activities, and this will be challenging for some students. It is a story that will need to be read more than once. The historical background and sense of “long ago” will be unfamiliar, but students will be interested in piecing together the various clues to figure out what’s going on.

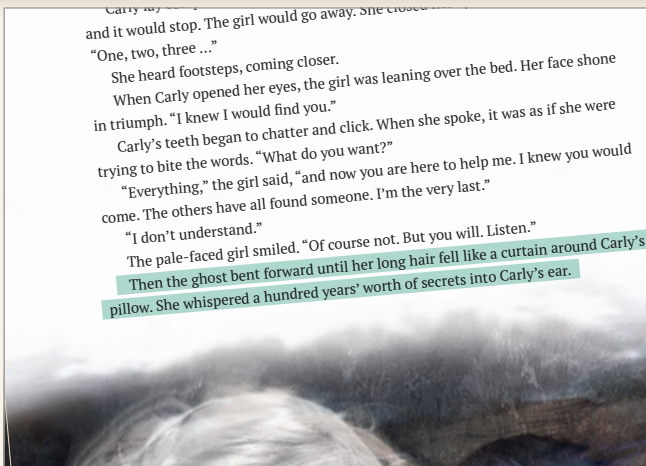
Note that some families or whānau may not be comfortable with their children being exposed to stories that imply or refer to supernatural themes.

This narrative:

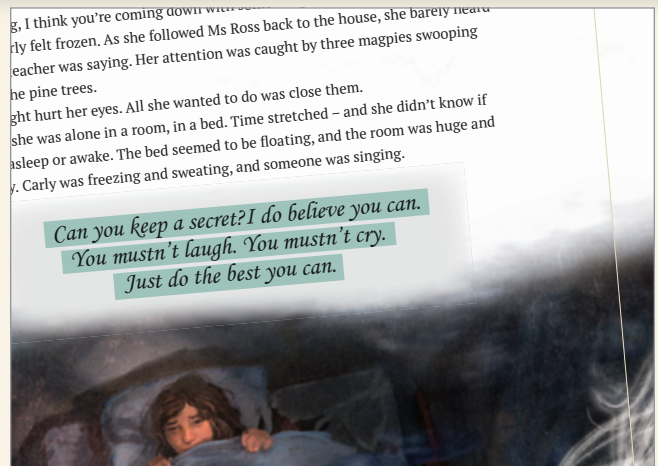
- provides opportunities for students to use clues and foreshadowing to make inferences and predictions
- provides the opportunity to discuss beliefs and superstitions
- includes reference to changing health issues and treatments in New Zealand.

Texts related by theme “The Red Ball” SJ L3 May 2015 | “The Penny Walk” SJ L3 April 2012

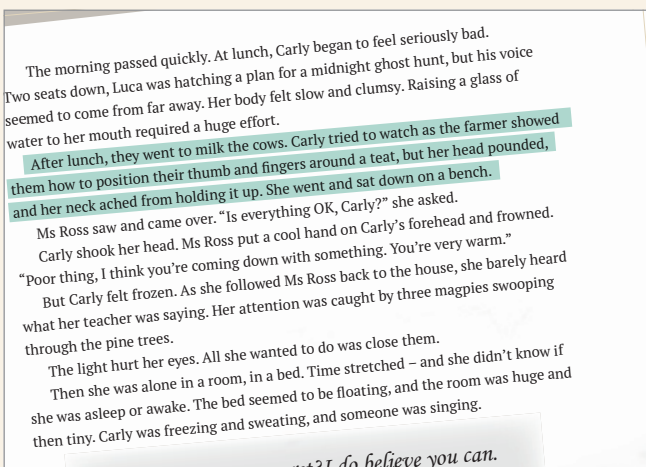
## Text characteristics from the year 7 reading standard



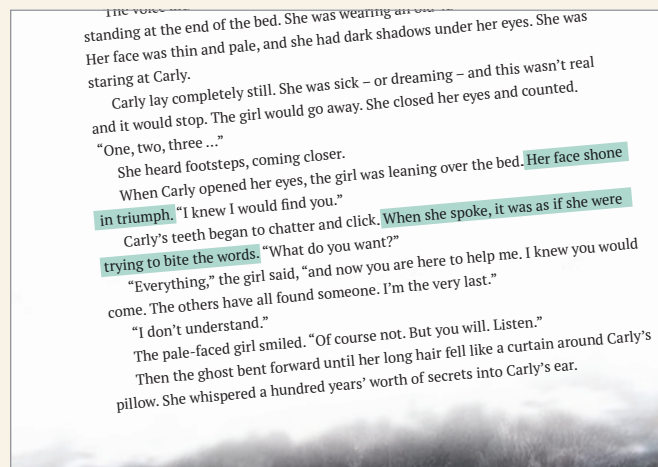
elements that require interpretation, such as complex plots, sophisticated themes, and abstract ideas



complex layers of meaning, and/or information that is irrelevant to the identified purpose for reading (that is, competing information), requiring students to infer meanings or make judgments



sentences that vary in length, including long, complex sentences that contain a lot of information



metaphor, analogy, and connotative language that is open to interpretation

Reading standard: by the end of year 7

## Possible curriculum contexts

### ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 4 – Language features: Show an increasing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

Level 4 – Structure: Show an increasing understanding of text structures.

### ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 4 – Language features: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

Level 4 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

### Possible reading purposes

- To enjoy a spooky ghost story about a school camp
- To analyse the ways the author uses structure and language features to create a mystery and to evaluate their impact.

### Possible writing purposes

- To write a mystery or ghost story (or retell an existing story)
- To describe a real or imaginary time when you saw or experienced something you couldn't explain
- To continue the story by writing the next chapter.



## Text and language challenges

### VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and concepts, including “hitchhiker”, “maniacs”, “rigid”, “volunteered”, “sanatorium”, “tuberculosis”, “cure”, “antibiotics”, “radiate”, “shimmering”, “plough”, “teat”, “pounded”, “forehead”, “nightgown”, “triumph”
- The name “Brajkovic”
- The expressions: “when hope failed them”, “hatching a plan”, “coming down with something”, “fever had broken”
- The verb form: “sing-singing”
- The metaphor: “Time stretched”.

### Possible supporting strategies

Some of these may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.

- If students need support with any of the words and expressions, create a vocabulary list and preview them before reading. See [ESOL Online](#) for examples of strategies for teaching vocabulary.

### SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Familiarity with school and family activities
- Some knowledge of how patients were treated in the past, in particular, for the disease tuberculosis (TB)
- Familiarity with ghost stories
- Familiarity with nursery rhymes
- Experience of reading texts that have a double storyline.

### Possible supporting strategies

- Review what students know about past treatment of certain illnesses. Although this is explained well in the text, some students may require support to understand that some people were kept in special hospitals, often in the countryside. Explain that in New Zealand, thanks to antibiotics, TB has almost disappeared.
- Ask students to share any experiences they have of telling or hearing ghost stories. Prompt them to explain what makes a good ghost story and how they usually end (for example, as an unsolved mystery or with waking from a dream).
- Invite students from other cultures to share similar traditional rhymes or ghost stories they know. Note that in some cultures, the structure of a ghost story will differ from European ghost stories.

### TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- Third-person fiction, with a present-day storyline and a connected ghost story
- Present-day setting of a school trip to a farm that was once a sanatorium
- The use of a parallel story that features a child who lived (and died) in the past but is a ghost in the present
- Alternating sections that tell the story from two perspectives
- The use of old rhymes, magpies, and superstitions to build atmosphere
- The foreshadowing of events
- Parallel events including the similar illnesses of both girls
- The dramatic and evocative ending that leaves the story open for a sequel
- The use of “she” for the ghost girl, along with the pronoun “she” for both Carly and the ghost. Pronouns commonly cause confusion for English language learners and could do in this case because of the intertwining of the two stories.

### Possible supporting strategies

- Review the features of a variety of narratives, including mysteries. Discuss why authors write different kinds of stories. Ask them to share the kinds of stories they enjoy and explain what they like to feel or experience as they read. Discuss the ways writers build suspense through a mystery, using examples from books students already know.
- Have some nursery-rhyme books on hand, if necessary, to demonstrate their rhythms and rhymes. Explain that some rhymes, such as “Ring a Ring o’ Rosies”, were about illnesses, and some were cautionary, telling what would happen to naughty children. Many were sung or chanted, sometimes as a skipping or dancing game.
- Take a section of text, for example, pages 43–44, and underline all the naming nouns and pronouns (Carly, She, others, magpies, Mum and Dad, ghosts, people in the hospital). Then circle all the pronouns. Ask who each pronoun refers to, then draw a line from the pronoun back to that character. This helps students to see how the author makes links and creates cohesion in the text. Have pairs of students repeat the task with a different section of the text (or you could ask students to complete a cloze text in which the pronouns have all been deleted).



# Instructional focus – Reading

**English** (Level 4 – Language features: Show an increasing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

Level 4 – Structure: Show an increasing understanding of text structures.)

## First reading

- Read the first (italics) section together, then ask students to share any questions they have. *What connections can you make to any of the ideas in this section? Have you heard of this or any similar rhymes before? What might it mean? What have you learned about the girl?*
- Explain that when a piece of text has questions that you can't answer, reading on is the best strategy to use and that authors do this deliberately to "hook you in".
- Direct the students to read the next section, pausing before the italics on page 44. *Turn to a partner and summarise this section. Who is the main character? What is happening? What is Carly feeling? What connections can you make to experiences of your own? Can you make any predictions about possible connections between Carly's story and the first italicised section?*
- Direct the students to continue reading section by section, sharing their summaries and predictions at the end of each section.
- Ask questions to help the students reflect on what happened. *Who was the girl who spoke to Carly? What did she want? Why? What secrets did she tell Carly? What happened in the end?*
- Depending on your students' strengths and needs, it may be appropriate for them to read the whole text to themselves after the initial introduction.

## If the students struggle with this text

- As the students read each section, ask questions to help them make predictions and inferences. *What is Carly worried about as they reach the farm? What is the significance of her sore throat? Why connection did you make when Carly saw the magpies? What could it mean? Who is the "pale-faced girl"? Is she real? Why do you think that: what clues and connections did you use?*
- Remind the students to make connections within the text and to things they know, then to use these to help infer meaning.
- Remind the students to make, check, and revise predictions as they read.

## Subsequent readings

### The teacher

Ask questions to help students find clues that show the girl was probably a patient in the sanatorium a hundred years ago.

- *What does the image of leaves turning and falling and growing again imply?*
- *Who was the girl, and who were "the others"? Why or how have they all gone?*
- *The rhyme is like a riddle, but it has a particular meaning for the girl. How does she use it?*
- *How does this section foreshadow the events to come?*

### The teacher

To provide extra support, you could create a compare-and-contrast chart that shows the similarities and differences between Carly and the ghost girl. Complete part of the chart to model how to use evidence from the text. Once confident, the students could complete the rest of the chart on their own.

### The teacher

Prompt the students to make connections with their own experiences as they think about Carly and why she became the one the ghost girl was waiting for.

- *What does the ghost girl want?*
- *Why is the ghost girl drawn to Carly?*
- *What might the girls have in common?*

### The teacher

Support the students to consider what happened on page 47 and then on page 48.

- *Why do Carly's teeth chatter and click?*
- *Is this a good or a bad ghost?*
- *What might "a hundred years' worth of secrets" mean? How do you know? Why does she whisper them to Carly?*
- *What clues on page 48 tell you Carly has changed?*
- *How does Carly feel at the end? Why?*
- *What do you think might happen next?*

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I heard you telling Ralph about the zombie video you'd seen. That's the kind of connection that helps you know what to expect in this story.*
- *I noticed you checking clues by flicking backwards and forwards through the story. Rereading to locate details is a very useful strategy when you're reading mystery stories.*

### METACOGNITION

- How did the structure of the text help you keep track of what happened?
- Is it easier to read a story in a style or genre that you've read before? Why is that?
- In this story, Carly's thoughts are written as if she has spoken them. How do you work out which are the character's thoughts and which are the words she actually speaks? Explain how you use the features of direct and indirect speech to identify those differences.

### The students:

- reread and discuss the meaning of the first section
- identify that the image of leaves falling and growing shows the passing of many years
- infer (based on their first reading) that the girl and the others were all patients in the old hospital and that the girl had died there
- make links between the rhyme and the girl's words to understand that she is connecting the rhyme with the magpies as a way of predicting what will happen.

### The students:

- make connections between the text, their prior knowledge of similar stories, and their own feelings about ghosts to infer that Carly is vulnerable or "open" to the idea of ghosts
- use what they know of ghost stories to make predictions about the ghost girl's intentions
- draw on information across the text to infer that Carly and the ghost girl are similar ages, they were both sick, and they both noticed the magpies.

### The students:

- visualise Carly's feelings and infer she is scared and possibly curious
- evaluate the words and actions of the ghost to decide if the ghost intends to help or harm Carly
- locate clues across the text (the ghost passages, the discussion about the past use of the farm, and the people who went there) to infer that the ghost girl had memories of what happened at the place, before and after it was closed, that she wanted to share with or transfer to Carly
- locate the clues (her voice, the reference to milking) and integrate them with what has gone before and their understanding of how ghost stories work to infer that Carly now has the ghost girl's voice and memories
- ask questions about Carly and make predictions about how the story could continue.



Reading standard: by the end of year 7



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

# Instructional focus – Writing

**English** (Level 4 – Language features: Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects.

Level 4 – Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.)

Text excerpts from “Fever”	Examples of text characteristics	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
<p>She had been waiting so long. Watching the leaves turn and fall and grow again, year after year. Alone, all alone, now that the others had gone. To help pass the time, she sang softly to herself ... She had waited so very long to share her secrets.</p>	<p><b>STRUCTURE</b> <i>Writers have a clear purpose. Knowing the purpose helps the writer make decisions about the kind of structure and language features they might use.</i></p>	<p>Some students, including English language learners, might find it easier to retell a familiar ghost story than to write an original one. Students could make a recording of themselves telling or reading their version of the story.</p> <p>Explain the importance of having a clear purpose at the planning stage of writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Even with a great idea in your mind, it's important to think about your purpose: what is it you really want your readers to think, feel, learn, or understand?</i></li><li>• <i>Armed with a great idea and a clear purpose, think about the best structure or type of text that will convey your purpose. The author of “Fever” wanted her readers to feel mystified and a bit scared. The structure she chose hooks her readers in with a mysterious girl in a strangely spooky section.</i></li></ul> <p>Direct the students to discuss their planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Share your ideas with a partner or the group.</i></li><li>• <i>What do you want your readers to experience?</i></li><li>• <i>What kind of writing could suit your purpose?</i></li><li>• <i>What language features are usually associated with this kind of writing?</i></li></ul>
<p>Spooky stories were big that term ... Carly would agree. “Me neither.” And during the day, she almost meant it.</p> <p>“It used to be a hospital. It’s full of the ghosts of all the people who got sent there to die ...”</p> <p>... What she really wanted to ask was “Is it true about the ghosts?”</p>	<p><b>FORESHADOWING</b> <i>Giving hints and clues about things to come is a great way to hook in readers. Writers of mysteries and spooky stories in particular drop just enough clues to let readers know something might happen, but not enough to reveal the plot too quickly.</i></p>	<p>Prompt students to consider the use of foreshadowing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>If you want to keep your readers guessing, what kinds of detail will you give them?</i></li><li>• <i>What can you assume your readers will be able to work out themselves?</i></li><li>• <i>Check the hints and clues as you write, asking a partner to give you feedback. Do you need to give more or less information?</i></li></ul>
<p>From the orchard, she watched the children get off the bus. She could see the life radiate from them in a shimmering haze.</p> <p>Her mother’s voice came to her then, sing-singing the old rhyme.</p> <p>Not compared with the powerful, steady beat of her heart; to her lungs breathing in the sweet, spring air.</p>	<p><b>USE OF DESCRIPTION</b> <i>Descriptions can tell facts about someone or something. They can also be used to help readers visualise, make connections, and infer meanings.</i></p> <p><b>CREATIVE LANGUAGE</b> <i>Writers sometimes play with words and make up a word or form that suits the purpose and style of their writing.</i></p>	<p>Model an example of the use of language features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>On page 44, the ghost girl watches the children get off the bus. The words she uses made me think of the way people describe or depict ghosts. They are often described as a shimmering light. I’m thinking the author deliberately used these words to strengthen the link between the living children and the ghostly girl. She expected her readers to make that connection. (Note that not all students will be familiar with the typical characteristics and language of European ghost stories.)</i></li></ul> <p>Prompt the students to consider their use of descriptive language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Read your descriptions as if you are seeing them for the first time. Do they elicit the response you want?</i></li><li>• <i>Could you use more evocative or connotative words? (Connotative words are those that evoke a particular response or imply a certain meaning. For example, the word “mother” implies caring and warmth.)</i></li></ul>
<p><b>METACOGNITION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell me about your thinking at the planning stage. What was it you wanted your readers to think and feel as they read your story? How did the decisions made at the planning stage help you make other decisions as you wrote and revised?</li><li>• How did using feedback from your partner help you revise your writing? How did giving feedback help you think more critically about your own writing?</li></ul>		<p><b>GIVE FEEDBACK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Writing this story as a crime file was a great way to achieve your purpose: the clues and evidence built up right to the arrest at the end.</i></li><li>• <i>You wanted to scare your readers, and you certainly surprised me. The clues you gave made me think one thing, but the outcome you wrote was much worse than I’d imagined! I can see how the clues could be interpreted in more than one way. That was very clever.</i></li><li>• <i>Jamie suggested you add some lines from a song that gangsters would like. That helped me understand more about one character in the story and why he wasn’t ...</i></li><li>• <i>Remember you can bring your own meaning to a particular rhyme or poem to suit your purpose.</i></li><li>• <i>Ask your partner for feedback and give feedback too. What suggestions can you make?</i></li><li>• <i>Do any additions you make achieve the effect you wanted?</i></li></ul>