



Overview

This dramatic poem uses personification to vividly convey sights and sounds of a thunderstorm. It shows the narrator, in a house, taking part in a two-way communication with the thunder, which is overhead. As well as making connections to their own experiences of thunder, students can use this text as a model for writing. "Thunder" requires students to "confidently use a range of

processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about" text (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14).

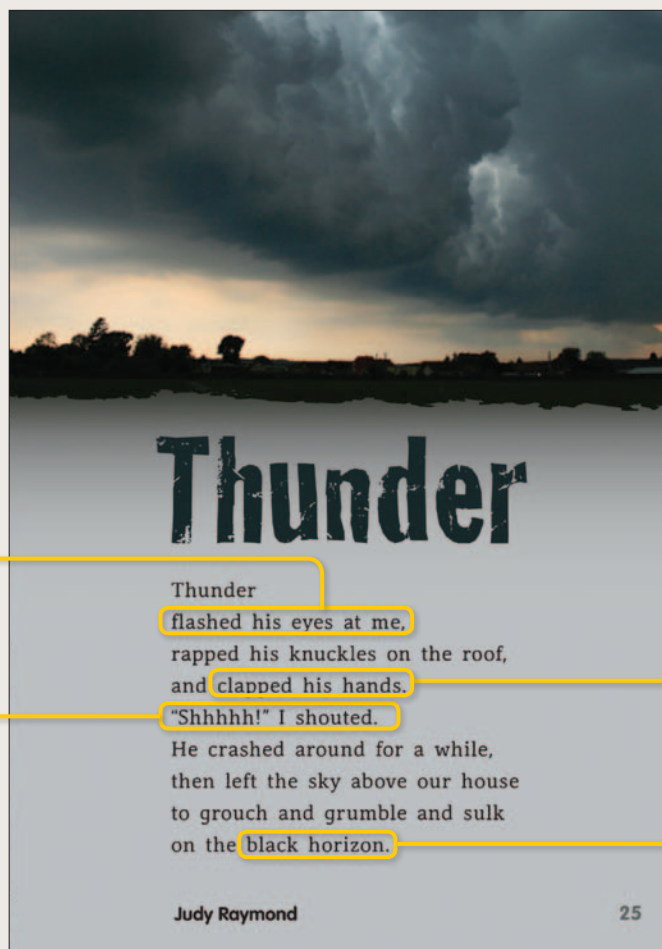
There is an audio version of the text on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45* CD, as well as on an MP3 file at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make simple inferences, for example, about:

- the flash of lightning, which isn't directly stated
- how the narrator feels about thunder.



The poetic language features, including the use of onomatopoeia and personification

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

English (Reading)

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

English (Writing)

Level 2 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

Suggested reading purpose

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

- To explore how thunder comes alive in the poem

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?)

Select from and adapt the opportunities below to set your specific learning goal or goals. In addition to using the information you have gathered about your students from a range of reading assessments, be guided by their particular strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

The characteristics of this text provide opportunities for students to:

- make connections between their prior knowledge and the language in the text to visualise and make simple inferences
- identify how the author has used language for impact
- evaluate the effectiveness of the writing
- use word-solving strategies to decode and/or work out the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

Text and language features**Vocabulary**

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, such as “rapped”, “knuckles”, “sulk”, “horizon”
- The use of onomatopoeia
- Vocabulary to express personification, such as “Thunder flashed his eyes at me”, “rapped his knuckles”, “grouch”, “grumble”
- The verbs “flashed”, “rapped”, “clapped”, and “crashed”, which have a hard “t” ending that contributes to a sense of sharp, loud sounds. In the last two lines when the storm is moving away, the verbs have softer endings.

Possible supporting strategies

Discuss how some words, such as “crashed”, make the sound they are describing (onomatopoeia). Have the students think, pair, and share other examples they know. Create a chart and display it in the classroom so that the students can refer to it to support their writing. Continue to add to the chart throughout the year.

Note that some students, especially English language learners, may need support with noticing the hard “t” sound on the verb endings in lines 2–4 and 6. Reassure them that these words do end in a “t” sound even though the end is spelt “ed”. The “ed” verb ending is pronounced “t” after certain sounds, for example “p”, “s”, “sh”, and “ch”.

Monitor the students’ **decoding** attempts by noticing their use of words from the text during discussion. Prompt them to remember strategies they can use, for example:

- using knowledge of verb endings that form the past tense (as in “rapped”, “clapped”, “shouted”, “crashed”)
- drawing on knowledge of spelling patterns and phonics (for “knuckles”, “grouch”, “sulk”)
- using phonics knowledge to decode “horizon” .

Monitor the students’ use of **word-solving** strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Prompt them to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example, using a dictionary and then checking the meaning in context to work out the meaning of “horizon”.

Have a dictionary available to confirm or clarify word meanings. If possible, have appropriate bilingual dictionaries available for students who have a first language other than English.

Metacognition

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

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

- M** 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?*
- M** Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*

Introducing the text

- If necessary, explain that thunder is the sound made by lightning. Have the students share their experiences of what the sky looks like when there is thunder and the sounds they might hear. *Close your eyes and visualise the sights and sounds of a thunderstorm. If you were to describe thunder to someone who has never heard it or who has never seen the sky when there is thunder, what would you say? What kinds of sounds could you compare it to?* Create a chart with two headings: What thunder looks like and What thunder sounds like, and then record the students' ideas. Students who share a first language other than English would benefit from exploring the topic in their language.
- Students who need extra language support will benefit from exploring some of the vocabulary before reading the poem. You could do this by giving pairs of students one or two words to explore along with a definition for each one (and, where appropriate, a translation). Tell the students they need to explore the word so that they understand it (using appropriate dictionaries, examples, and so on) and can demonstrate the word to the class using objects, pictures, or miming/acting, as well as their own example sentence. Then have each pair demonstrate their word and the rest of the group guess what it is.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s) and have the students read the poem quietly to themselves. *As you read this poem, I want you to be thinking about how the language helps the reader to see what thunder looks like and sounds like. You will need to do some visualising (creating pictures in your head).*
- If necessary, clarify any words that the students had difficulty with, for example, "horizon" and "knuckles". See Text and language features section for strategies to support your students.

Reading and discussing the text

Below, in bold, are the sorts of behaviours (derived from the learning opportunities for this text) that you want your students to demonstrate as they read and discuss the text on the first or subsequent readings. Instructional strategies you can use to support the students to demonstrate those behaviours are in the right-hand column. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students' needs and experiences.

The students make connections between the language and their prior knowledge to visualise and hear the thunderstorm and to make simple inferences. They evaluate the effectiveness of the writing.

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

The students read the poem and make comparisons between the ideas they discussed before reading the text and the language used in the poem to describe thunder.

They infer that "flashed his eyes at me" is referring to lightning.

The students identify the verbs and nouns ("eyes", "rapped his knuckles", "clapped his hands") in the first three lines that are usually associated with people. They use their knowledge of language features to identify that the poet uses personification to liken thunder to a person. They describe what they see and hear in the poem.

In the fifth line, the students identify "I" as a person inside a house, listening to the thunder.

They use the text and their own experiences to infer that the thunder has moved further away and so doesn't sound as loud.

Students continue to identify examples of personification. They describe the images they see when they read.

Students evaluate the poem by considering the effect of personification for describing a common phenomenon.

How you can support students to read, respond, and think critically

Briefly revisit the chart created when the text was introduced. *Does the poet capture the ideas you had about how thunder sounds and what it looks like? Why or why not?*

Have the students reread the poem down to "hands".

What image do you see in your head when you read "Thunder flashed his eyes at me"? What is the poet describing? If necessary, draw out the idea that this is lightning.

Have the students identify the words used to describe the sound thunder makes. You could have the students rap on their desks or the floor and clap their hands to explore the sound. *What images did you see when you read those lines? They might talk about how they saw a person doing those things. If not, model your own thinking: When I read the word "hands", I saw the image of a person.*

Who is "he" ("his eyes") referring to? I'm wondering if this is another clue to how the poet is thinking about thunder. Draw out the idea that the author has described thunder as if it were a person.

Explain that the author used a language feature called personification. Write the word on the board and circle "person".

Have the students read the line " 'Shhhhh!' I shouted."

Who is "I"? Why do they say "Shhhhh!"? How is the narrator feeling about the thunder? Let's read the rest of the poem to find out what happens next.

How loud do you think the thunder sounds now? What words in the text tell you that?

You could discuss the soft endings of the words "grouch", "grumble", and "sulk", which indicate a quieter sound compared with the hard "t" sounds of the earlier verbs.

What words in this half of the poem did you find that describe the actions of a person? Have the students think, pair, and share their ideas.

If necessary, prompt them to think about what gouching, grumbling, and sulking would look and sound like by acting them out. *What are those words telling us about the character of thunder?*

Refer back to the chart created before reading. *These were your experiences of the sights and sounds of a thunderstorm. Now that we have read how the poet described thunder, do you think they have effectively described the things you saw and heard? Have they helped you to think about your experience in a different way? Why or why not? Have them share their thinking with a partner.*

With support, students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or goals and explain some of the things they did to meet them, for example, how they formed images in their mind of thunder and compared them with the description in the poem as they read.

The students identify some challenges in the text and explain what they did to work them out.

Revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or goals.

Ask questions: *How did making pictures in your mind help you to think about the way thunder could be described in words? How did the words used in the poem help you to form further images of thunder?*

What strategies did you use to help you solve any difficulties you had when reading this text? If necessary, model or explain some strategies they could use.

After reading

- Students can listen to the audio version on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45* CD or the MP3 file and use it as a model for their own expressive oral reading of the poem. English language learners may benefit from opportunities to listen to and read along with the CD or MP3 on their own (with no one listening) and then with the teacher giving feedback.
- Students can each write their own poem about another weather phenomenon, such as wind, hail, rain, or sunshine. Encourage them to use a mind map to come up with words and images they could use. Support them to use personification by having them think about what sort of personality or characteristics the phenomenon might have and then to convey these in the poem using appropriate verbs and phrases.
- Support visualising by having the students draw one aspect of the poem and then explain to a partner the words in the text that helped them to create their drawing.
- Provide opportunities for the students to practise and consolidate their skills of identifying how the author has used language for impact, especially personification, across other similar texts. See the Related Texts section below for examples of texts you could use in a guided reading session.

Related texts

Poems that use personification: "Autumn Leaves" (JJ 36), "The Road to Milford Sound" (JJ 34); "Storm" (SJ 1.4.04), "Big Blue Mouth" (SJ 1.5.07).

Poems about weather: "The Wind Hound" (JJ 32), "Rain Game" (JJ 38).