



Overview

This humorous play follows a group of pirates as they use clues on a map to search for treasure. Students will delight in the pirates' misinterpretation of the clues and the problems caused as they follow their misdirected ideas.

The text 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). It also provides many opportunities for students to practise and enjoy expressive oral reading.

A PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file are available at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

Texts about pirates: “Landing a Job” (JJ 30, a play); “Pirate Crew” (JJ 41)

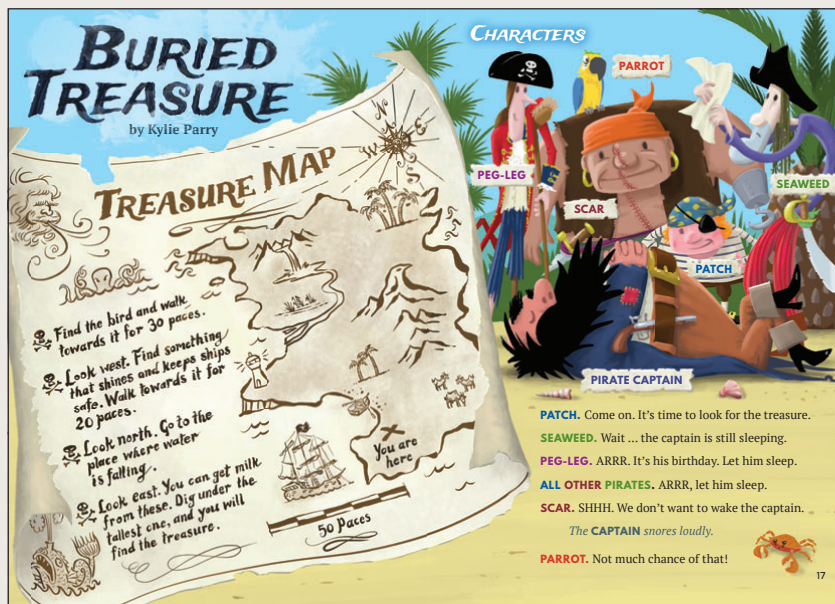
Plays that involve mix-ups or tricks, and imaginary contexts: “Landing a Job” (JJ 30); “Tricky Jack Rabbit” (JJ 31); “Fearless” (JJ 35); “Saving Planet Stripe” (JJ 36); “Lucky Dip” (JJ 40); “Frog School” (JJ 41); “Invisible” (JJ 47). There are further plays in *Junior Journals* 32, 33, 44, and 49 “Zapped!” (a book published in four chapters in *Junior Journals* 52–55) also involves many humorous examples of misinterpretation. “Zapped!” is also available as PDFs at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school, as they relate to this text, are shown in the boxes with the solid outlines. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

A mix of explicit and implicit content that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to visualise the differences between the clues and the pirates' interpretations and make inferences about the characters

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, including pirate vocabulary (for example, “Buried Treasure”, “paces”, “ARRR”, “that ever sailed the seas”, “clue”, “me hearties”, “treasure chest”) and descriptive vocabulary (for example, “cluster”, “measure out”, “puzzled”, “squawking”, “triumphantly”, “Good grief”), the meaning of which is supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the illustrations



Visual language features:

- the map with its compass points, scale, “skull and crossbones”, bullet points, diagrammatic representations of land features, and list of clues
- the text layout (coloured print and upper-case letters for the characters' names and italics for the stage directions)

A variety of sentence structures and some adverbial phrases within the stage directions (for example, “shaking her head in wonder”, “taking the map from SEAWEED”, “looking puzzled”)

The humour in the silliness of the pirates and the incongruity between the traditional setting for pirate stories (in the past) and aspects of modern life such as supermarkets and sunglasses

The play format, which relies on dialogue and stage directions to tell the story and convey characterisation



English (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

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

Mathematics (Geometry and Measurement)

Level 2 – Position and orientation: Create and use simple maps to show position and direction.

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6*).

Possible reading purposes

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

- To find out what happens when the pirates go hunting for buried treasure
- To find clues to help read this play for an audience

Possible learning goals

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

Several goals are provided here to choose from and adapt over multiple readings.

- The students **make connections** between the text and illustrations to track and **visualise** the action.
- They use the information in the dialogue, the stage directions, and the illustrations to **infer** what the characters are like and how they might speak.
- They **analyse** the way the writer creates humour through the characters' dialogue and actions.
- They **monitor** their reading, and when something is unclear, they take action to solve the problem, for example, by rereading a sentence or by looking for clues close by.



Text and language features

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar vocabulary, including:
 - pirate language: “ARRR”, “sailed the seas”, “me hearties”, “treasure chest”
 - descriptive language: “cluster”, “amazing”, “measure out”, “gaze”, “puzzled”, “squawking”, “high-five”, “clang”, “triumphantly”, “Good grief”
 - positional and orientational language: “towards”, “paces”, “west”, “north”, “east”, “tallest”, “upside down”.

Possible supporting strategies

(Use these suggestions before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- when **decoding**:
 - recognising word chunks or syllables within a word (“am-az-ing”, “squawk-ing”, “tri-um-phant-ly”)
- when **working out word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence, the surrounding sentences, and/or the illustrations
 - making connections to their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

Note that readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. See [ESOL Online: Vocabulary for suggestions](#).

Text features

- The play format
- Stage directions in parentheses, often using adverbial phrases.

Review the students' knowledge of the format of a play (for example, the character list, how to identify each character in the dialogue, and the stage directions, which describe the setting and the characters' actions and feelings).

To support the students with the syntax of the stage directions, explain that these phrases tell the reader *how* the character is speaking or what they are doing as they speak. Model how these phrases might look if they were sentences in a story (for example, “I should have stayed on the ship today,” said Parrot, shaking her head in wonder).



Metacognition

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE METACOGNITIVE

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

- *What helped you to notice that the pirates were getting things wrong?*
- *How did you work out the meaning of “triumphantly”?*

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading. Choose from the following suggestions.

For English language learners, before reading the play with the rest of the group, provide support for the prepositions they will come across in the map clues and stage directions (for example, “towards”, “to”, “under”, “round”, “up”, “on”, “over”, “off”, “in”, “around”, “out of”). Explain that the pirates need to use the instructions on the map to find the treasure. Make up instructions for the students to act out, for example, “Walk towards the door”, “Look under the table”, “Put the book on the shelf”.

- Expect the students to infer from the text layout that this is a play and to predict from the style of the illustrations that it will be humorous. Review their understanding of how to read a play. Draw out the purpose of stage directions and the idea that a play is a story told through actions and dialogue. Read the character

- list and have the students match the names to the illustrations.
- Use pages 16 and 17 to build on what the students know about pirates, buried treasure, and treasure chests, including ideas from books, films, and cartoons.
- Draw out (or feed in) the idea that in stories about treasure maps, there are often puzzles to solve. You could use an enlarged copy of the map to support their understanding of the positional language (such as the compass points) and the use of paces to measure distance.
- Give the students printouts of the map and have them work with a partner to read the clues and trace the path to the treasure so they know what is supposed to happen before they read the play.
- Explain that they will read the whole play to find out what happens before any roles are assigned to individual students. (Note that although the captain is listed as a character, he is asleep throughout the play. He only snores.)
- Share the reading purpose and the learning goals. Encourage the students to refer to the map printouts as they read.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column of the table below.

Select from and adapt the suggestions according to your students’ needs. These suggestions may apply to the first or a subsequent reading.

Encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it’s clear a student needs help. There will be many opportunities to explore word solving and deeper comprehension on subsequent readings.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until the discussion after the reading.

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

- When the students read about the pirates holding the map upside down (on page 18), they begin to make inferences about the pirates. As they read on, they notice more instances of the pirates’ silliness, for example, thinking that the parrot is the “bird” shown on the map.
- The students compare (make connections between) their own interpretations of the clues and those of the pirates and predict that the pirates will continue to misinterpret the clues and try to make them fit their own (silly) ideas.
- The students begin to notice the role of the parrot as a commentator on the pirates’ actions, both through her actions (“shaking her head”, “hides her head in her wings”) and her dialogue. Some may notice that by the time the pirates get to the “milk” clue, the parrot is sitting in a coconut tree, squawking (but the pirates ignore her).
- They notice and enjoy the ironic humour, for example, the pirates referring to themselves as “the smartest pirates”. The students (like the parrot) wonder about the pirates’ chances of finding the treasure.
- The students demonstrate monitoring and problem solving. For example, on page 20, they reread and/or read on to find context clues to help with the meaning of “gaze north”.
- On page 23, the students refer back to the wording of the clue (either on the map or on page 22) in order to work out why the pirates want to measure the goat.
- They recognise the significant clue in the stage directions that describes the goat as having stopped “under a very tall coconut tree”.

- Encourage the students to refer to the map often so they can notice and enjoy the mismatch between the intention of the clues and the pirates’ interpretations.

- What are you noticing about the pirates’ thinking?*

- Prompt the students to notice what the parrot is doing.

The ironic humour may need to be made explicit for some English language learners. You could ask: *Do you think the pirates are smart (or clever)?*

- If necessary, remind them of strategies they can use when meaning is unclear.
- There is a fast sequence of ideas on pages 22 and 23, so reassure the students that it’s fine to reread if they feel they are losing track.

Discussing the text after the first or subsequent readings

- The students reflect on how the treasure was eventually found and enjoy the humour in the pirates achieving their goal even though they misinterpreted every clue. They talk with a partner about their favourite misinterpretation.
- The students identify some of the reasons why the pirates went wrong. For example, that they were not reading all of a clue before deciding what it meant, not checking the map, changing words like “raining” for “falling”, and not thinking there might be more than one answer.
- The students identify humorous aspects, such as the pirates’ names, their dialogue and actions (as described in the stage directions), and the illustrations.
- They discuss the parrot’s role, identifying that she has a similar role to the reader (smarter than the pirates and knowing they are getting things wrong) and that her comments and actions highlight the silliness of their actions.
- Enjoy the students’ reactions to the ending. Ask them to summarise what happened.
- Ask the students: *Why do you think the pirates have so many problems?* If necessary, have them reread sections to clarify their thinking.
- Explore some of the ways the writer has made the play funny: *What things in the writing made you laugh?* Prompt the students to look at the stage directions as well as the dialogue.
- Draw attention to the role of Parrot: *What was Parrot saying? Who was she talking to?* Prompt them to think critically: *Would the play have been as funny without the parrot?*

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students describe strategies such as looking for links between the map clues and illustrations (the landmarks on the map), working out compass points (“west”, “north”, “east”), and making connections (for example, drawing on their own experiences of using a map) to visualise the information.
- The students explain how they used the stage directions (noticing both the characters’ actions and the parrot’s responses), the illustrations (including the map), and the pirates’ dialogue to learn what the characters were like.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
 - *What helped you to make sense of the clues on the map?*
 - *What helped you to understand what the characters were like?*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can reread the play as they listen to the audio version, which provides a good model of how readers can interpret and perform a play for an audience. The audio version also provides English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Have the students share their own ideas about how each of the pirates might speak. They could read the play aloud, taking the roles of the different characters. After some practice, the students could also add in the actions described in the text, for example, turning the map the right way up or pointing to the parrot. (Note that in the audio version, the stage directions are read aloud. If the play were to be performed as a stage play, then the students would carry out the stage directions rather than read them to the audience.)
- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this play as well as other plays and stories with similar themes (see “Related texts”).
- Explore and enjoy pirate vocabulary together. The students could:
 - build a word web about pirates
 - discuss how each pirate got his name and come up with alternative names for the pirates
 - discuss the meanings and add to the list of “pirate talk” (for example, “shiver me timbers”).
- The students could create their own pirate. They could draw, name, describe, and add a speech bubble with “pirate talk”.
- Practise using paces as a unit of measurement, and discuss why standard measurements are used more commonly. The students could hide some items in the classroom and then work in pairs to write instructions for finding them using paces. Alternatively, they could use a simple school map to write instructions for how others could find the classroom from other parts of the school.
- Provide copies of maps of the local area and have the students choose destinations and track their routes.
- The students could write about a time when their family needed to follow instructions to go somewhere.