

AFTER TWO YEARS AT SCHOOL

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

The King's Birthday by Dot Meharry; illustrated by Philip Webb

This text is levelled at Turquoise 1.

In this humorous narrative, the King is upset because nobody seems to have remembered his birthday. The illustrations are rich with clues about what is really happening, but the King remains oblivious until he sits down to his royal lunch. This story has a traditional fairytale structure, starting with a problem, continuing with a series of events similar to each other (as the King tries to find out if anyone has remembered his special day), and finishing with a happy ending.

This is a sequel, with lots of humorous links, to *The Hole in the King's Sock* (levelled at Orange), which is also available as a big book. This means that students are likely to be very

familiar with the characters, setting, and fairytale-like text structure before they read this Turquoise text.

Some key challenges are the "royal" vocabulary and the use of compound and complex sentences running over two or three lines.

The following example highlights the sorts of reading behaviours teachers could expect to observe in students who are meeting the standard. Sometimes these behaviours will be in response to teacher prompts and questions, and sometimes they will be spontaneous as the students notice and respond to the ideas in the text. These behaviours may be during the first or subsequent readings and discussion.

The student uses the speech marks and commas to clarify the sequence of events in this challenging sentence. They can explain why "is" is in italics.

The student notices "birth" in the familiar word "birthday" and/or the "ate" rime to help them work out "birth date".

The student uses a range of strategies to decode and work out the meanings of unfamiliar words. For example, they may split the word "banquet" into syllables, make connections to the idea of lunch, notice that "banquet" is followed by the word "hall" (twice) and "table", and/or make connections to any direct or indirect experiences of banquets.

The student can use evidence from this text and *The Hole in the King's Sock* to make further inferences about the personalities of the King and Queen.

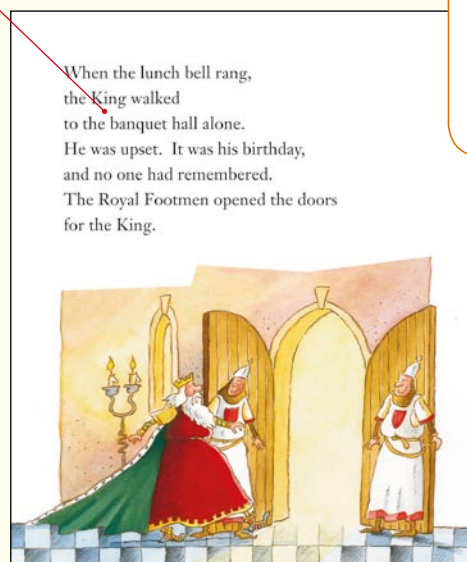
When the student reads the text aloud, for example, for Readers' Theatre, their phrasing and intonation indicate that they are reading with understanding (and enjoyment).



The student uses the commas, and conjunctions such as "where" and "as", to keep track of the sentences that run over two or three lines.

The student puts together clues (such as what they already know about the King and the Queen from *The Hole in the King's Sock*, the fact that it really is the King's birthday, and the fact that no one is mentioning it), to predict that something odd or surprising is going to happen. The student adjusts and refines their predictions as they notice new information.

The student can give an example of something that helped them make and adjust their predictions or inferences as they read.



The student expresses an opinion about how the King is feeling after the surprise has been revealed, making connections to their own feelings about surprise birthdays or about people pretending to forget special occasions.

