ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

"Night is a Blanket" by Barbara Hill; illustrated by Clare Bowes

This text is levelled at Gold 1.

In this story within a story, a grandfather tells a bedtime story to his grandchildren to explain how the moon was formed. This text is one of a collection of linked stories and poems in a miscellany (also called *Night is a Blanket*). It gives students opportunities to compare ideas about night and the moon across a range of texts and text forms.

This poetic, descriptive text, with its evocative but non-specific illustrations, requires students to keep track of and visualise a relatively complex series of events and settings.

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 clues, such as the title, Grandfather's references to the night, the sky, and sleep, the fact that he is speaking softly, and the visual language (the text set within a starry sky) to infer that Grandfather is telling the children a bedtime story.

The student uses Grandfather's descriptive language (for example, "dark", "old and full of holes", "shining away", and "peeping through the holes") to help them visualise Grandfather's image of night as a blanket.
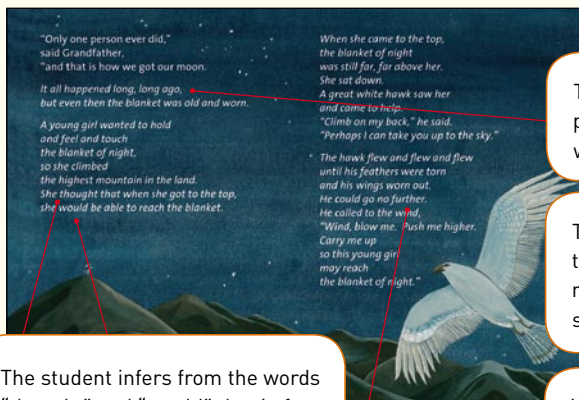
The student uses such features as speech marks, dialogue attribution, italic print, and the phrase "It all happened long, long ago" to help them identify where in the text the bedtime story starts.

The student makes connections to their knowledge of the elements of a fairy tale or traditional tale (for example, a challenging task, a series of helpers, and magical elements) to make predictions about what will happen in Grandfather's story. The student reviews and refines their predictions as they read.

The student infers from the words "thought" and "would" that in fact the young girl was wrong.

While reading, the student notices and makes connections between the ideas about night as a blanket to help them visualise and track the events in Grandfather's story. For example, the repeated references to the idea of the blanket being old and worn prepare the reader for the fact that it tears so easily when the girl tries to grab it.

The student can discuss how storytellers (like Grandfather) make their stories sound interesting. The student can retell the story of the young girl using some of the same techniques, for example, using repetitive phrases ("long, long ago", "flew and flew"), poetic language structures ("He could go no further"), and expression to convey a sense of mystery and suspense and the idea of great effort on the part of the characters.

The student can use the ideas in the text to help them describe what is happening to the "blanket" of night when there is a starry night.

The student infers from the final paragraph that the children have fallen asleep.

The student compares the images in this text with those in other texts about night or the moon. The student draws on the ideas to create their own personal image of night or the moon.