

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

“Basket Boats” *School Journal, Part 2 Number 1, 2009*

Noun frequency level: 9–10

As part of a social sciences topic, the year 4 students are inquiring into ways in which a range of communities use local resources to meet their daily needs. This learning requires them to generate questions to extend their knowledge and understanding of the topic and to build on the key competencies of thinking and participating and contributing.

The text “Basket Boats” is a non-fiction article that describes the construction and use of special round woven boats (thung chai), which are used by many fishing communities in Vietnam. The author’s factual description of how the boats are made provides opportunities for meeting several learning purposes.

The teacher chose the text because the detail and information are well supported by the structure and visual features. He expects the students to be surprised and challenged by the unexpected information that thung chai are made without nails and waterproofed with resin from a local tree. The text and photos support the students in locating the information and help them to generate questions about how people use resources to meet their daily needs.

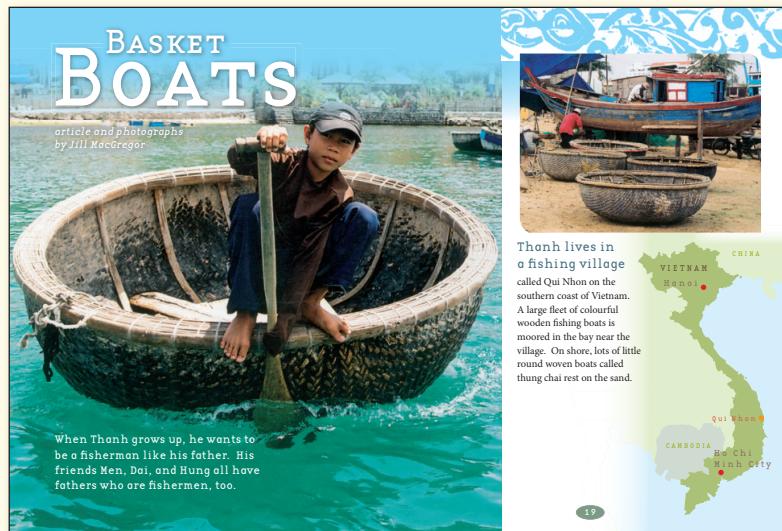
The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

A thung chai is built without nails. To hold the weaving together, thicker pieces of bamboo are wrapped around the rim and lashed on with strong fishing line.

Every six months or so, a sticky resin from a special tree is smeared over the inside and outside of the thung chai. This makes the boat watertight.

Thung chai come in handy for all kinds of things. In the morning, the fishermen cast nets over the side of the thung chai or lower crab traps into the sea from them. At night, the fishermen use headlamps to attract fish to the thung chai. During the day, thung chai ferry passengers between their boats and the shore.

The student finds the key information in the descriptive sequence, with support from the photos, to understand how the thung chai are made. She uses decoding strategies, the context, and the photos to work out and understand key vocabulary such as “rim”, “resin”, “smeared”, and “watertight”. She asks questions about the aspects that surprise her, such as why the boats are round, how they are used, how the bamboo can hold the boats together, or why they don’t sink in the water. With support, she makes inferences about why the men don’t use nails, wood, or human-made materials to make their boats.



The student uses the topic sentence to identify the main idea of the paragraph (that the boats are used for a variety of purposes) and looks for further information in the photos. She answers her earlier questions about how the boats are used and makes connections to what she already knows about how boats, including traditional Māori waka, are made and used. She evaluates the information in the text to draw conclusions about how people adapt and use available resources to meet their daily needs.