

AFTER THREE YEARS AT SCHOOL

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

The Impossible Bridge by Jane Buxton; photographs by Jamie Lean

This text is levelled at Gold 2.

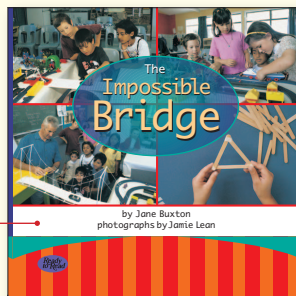
This non-fiction text describes the building of model bridges by a group of students and illustrates how they develop their understanding of bridge structures. It incorporates a mix of text forms: a recount written in diary form, “engineers’ reports”, and instructions. The text contains detailed photographs, headings, a diagram, subject-specific vocabulary (some of which is indicated by bold print or the use of quote marks), and the abbreviations a.m., p.m., and A4.

Students need to make connections between ideas and information within the text (for example, between problems and responses and between words in bold print and relevant details in the photographs) in order to fully understand what the students in the text are learning about bridge structures.

The teacher chose this text to use in the reading programme because it supported the knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to read a factual text. In addition, it supported the big ideas that students were exploring in the technology curriculum.

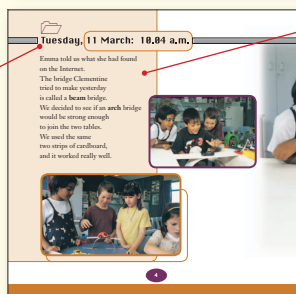
The following example highlights the sorts of reading behaviours teachers could expect to observe in students who are meeting the standard. Sometimes these behaviours will be in response to teacher prompts and questions, and sometimes they will be spontaneous as the students notice and respond to the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

During the introductory discussion, the student uses the photographs on the cover to make connections to their prior knowledge of the features of bridges. The student can predict some words and/or information about bridges that they would expect to find in the text and is interested in finding out what an “impossible” bridge might be.



The student notices the word “impossible” on page 3 and speculates as to whether the students will be able to build a bridge out of cardboard or (from page 14) out of paper.

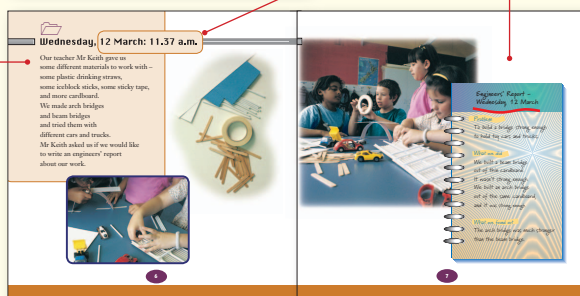
The student uses the diary headings to note the passage of time and monitor the progress the class is making in constructing stronger bridges. With teacher support, the student can use their knowledge of “p.m.”, from page 2, to work out what “a.m.” means.



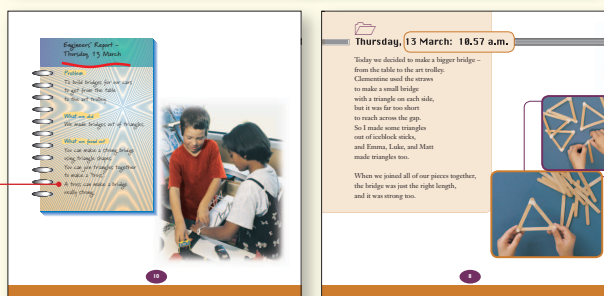
The student can make connections between the text and photographs on pages 4 and 5 to explain what an arch bridge is and can refer back to pages 2–3 to explain how an arch bridge is different from a beam bridge.

The student uses visual language features (for example, font size and type, the folder image, and the frame around the date and time) to distinguish the diary entries from the engineers’ reports.

The student draws on multiple sources of information to work out unfamiliar subject-specific words. For example, they may look for recognisable chunks in the word “materials” and draw on context and the punctuation (the use of the dash to signal the list of items) to work out that “materials” is being used here as the collective name for a group of items.



The student notices the use of quote marks for “truss”. They can make connections between the word “truss”, the phrase “join triangles together”, the photograph, and what they recall from the diary entry and photographs on page 8 to explain that a truss is constructed out of triangles joined together.



When discussing the text after reading, the student can identify something interesting they discovered about bridges. The student can explain why the title is *The Impossible Bridge*, using evidence from the text. In discussion, the student shows that they understand how pieces of paper and cardboard can be folded and/or combined with other pieces or other materials to increase their strength.