

Overview

Shannon's dad is very shy. When the family moves, he is happy to work around the house. Inspired by the garden project at Shannon's school and a section that needs clearing, Dad finds friends and a way to belong in his community. He even finds a new job. This story has themes of sharing and belonging.

"That's the Idea" 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). You may want to read the story over two sessions to allow time for giving careful support as the students develop confidence in making inferences and in forming and reviewing their hypotheses.

There is an audio version of the text on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45 CD* as well as on an MP3 file at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Text characteristics

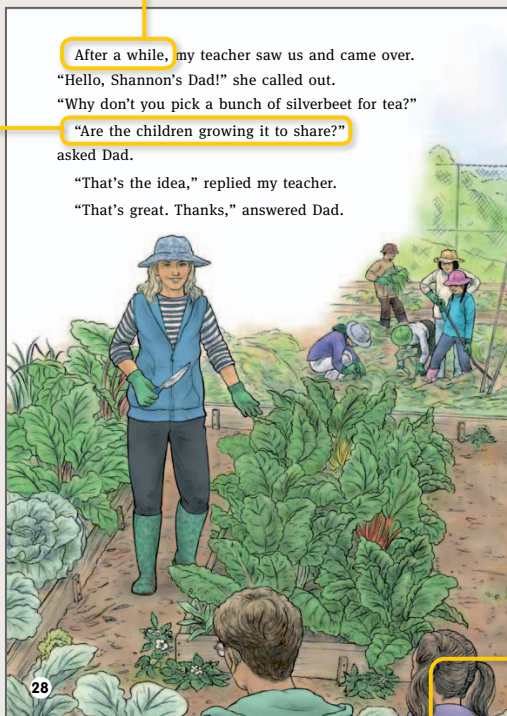
Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline.

The possibly unfamiliar context of growing food and having a garden

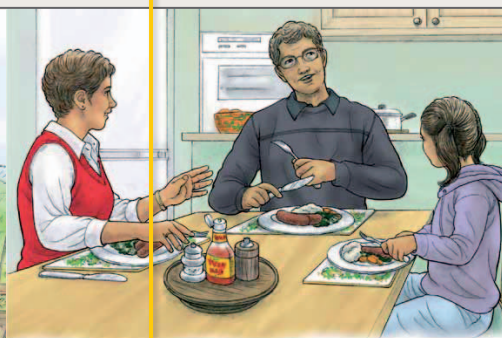
Shifts in time/and or place

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations

After a while, my teacher saw us and came over. "Hello, Shannon's Dad!" she called out. "Why don't you pick a bunch of silverbeet for tea?" "Are the children growing it to share?" asked Dad. "That's the idea," replied my teacher. "That's great. Thanks," answered Dad.



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That night as we ate our dinner, Mum said to Dad, "The section is looking much better without all that long grass. But there's still enough grass for a sheep to graze on! You should borrow a lawnmower from one of our new neighbours."

Dad was silent for a moment. "Yeah, maybe," said Dad.

I could tell he was getting nervous just thinking about it. But all of a sudden, his face lit up with a sparkly twinkle. I know that look.

It means he has an idea.

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A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make simple inferences and form and test hypotheses, for example, about:

- what the idea could be
- the theme of the story

Frequent use of dialogue and more than one character speaking on a page

English (Reading)

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

Social sciences

Level 2 – Understand how people make choices to meet their needs and wants.

Suggested reading purpose

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

- To find out what Dad's idea is and the effect the idea has on him and other people

Setting a learning goal

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

Select from and adapt the opportunities below to set your specific learning goal or goals. In addition to using the information you have gathered about your students from a range of reading assessments, be guided by their particular strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

The characteristics of this text provide opportunities for students to:

- make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge to make simple inferences
- use clues to form and test hypotheses
- identify and think critically about the theme of the story
- use word-solving strategies to decode, and/or work out the meanings of, unfamiliar words and phrases.

Text and language features**Vocabulary**

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, such as “section”, “frowned”, “shyness”, “silverbeet”, “graze”, “lawnmower”, “his face lit up”, “excitement”, “neighbours”, “parsley”, “pūhā”, “neighbourhood”, “exchange”, “compost”, “Tawhai”, “whānau”
- The adverbial phrases and vocabulary of place, such as “our new house”, “around the section”, “down the busy road”, “over to the school garden in the back corner”
- The sentence “That’s the idea.”

Possible supporting strategies

Draw and display a rough map of the places in the story and use it to support English language learners with the associated adverbial phrases and vocabulary of place. During the reading, trace where the characters go and identify and label each place on the map.

English language learners may need support with the sentence “That’s the idea.” Explain to them that it means “That is the intended purpose or reason.”

Monitor the students’ **decoding** attempts by noticing their use of words from the text during discussion. Prompt them to remember strategies they can use, for example:

- breaking words into syllables or familiar chunks (“ex-cite-ment”, “neigh-bour-hood”, “com-post”)
- drawing on knowledge of spelling patterns and phonics (“ex-cite-ment”, “neigh-bours”).

Monitor the students’ use of **word-solving** strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Prompt them to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- putting the meaning of words together to understand compound words (lawn+mower).

Have a dictionary available to confirm or clarify word meanings. If possible, have appropriate bilingual dictionaries available for students who have a first language other than English.

Specific knowledge


- Gardens or gardening at school, at home, or on a marae.

If your students have not had direct experience with gardening, tour the school grounds to observe plants growing. Talk about the seasons and the things that happen in a garden at different times of the year. Visit the school vegetable garden if you have one and talk about what grows there. Encourage students who have experience or knowledge of plants and gardening in other countries to share their knowledge. If they have a first language other than English, they could write about it in this language, draw a picture, and share their work with others.


Have photos of the plants mentioned in the story to support students who may be unfamiliar with silverbeet, parsley, pūhā, sunflowers, and fruit trees.


Discuss how a lot of people get pleasure from gardening.

Metacognition

Effective readers are metacognitive. They are aware of the processes and strategies they draw on and are able to explain how they use these to successfully make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours, or strategies teachers can use to promote metacognition, are threaded through the notes and indicated by .

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

 Ask questions: *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or: I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*

 Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*

Introducing the text

- Have the students read the title and look at the illustrations on pages 26 and 27 to form a hypothesis about what “the idea” could be. Model your thinking. *I see that on page 26 Dad looks as if he has pulled up lots of long grass and on page 27 Dad and the girl are in a vegetable garden. I’m thinking “the idea” might have something to do with gardening.* Have the students think, pair, and share their hypotheses and record these on a chart to refer back to.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s) with the students. Depending on the prior knowledge of your students, you may need to explore some of the vocabulary and concepts associated with gardening. See the Text and Language Features section for strategies to support your students.

Reading and discussing the text

Below, in bold, are the sorts of behaviours (derived from the learning opportunities for this text) that you want your students to demonstrate as they read and discuss the text on the first or subsequent readings. Instructional strategies you can use to support the students to demonstrate those behaviours are in the right-hand column. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students’ needs and experiences.

- The students make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge of belonging to make simple inferences.**
- They use clues to form and test hypotheses about “the idea” and identify the themes of the story (sharing, belonging, working together).**
- They use word-solving strategies to decode, and/or work out the meanings of, unfamiliar words and phrases.**

What to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal

Pages 26–27

The students read page 26 and identify Dad as the main character in the story, which is told in the first person by his daughter. They make connections between the text and their experiences of moving house and review their hypotheses about the nature of “the idea”.

The students start to make connections between clues in the text, the illustrations, and their own or other people’s experiences of shyness to make inferences about Dad and the narrator. They use the context and their own experience to work out the meaning of “section”.

As the students read page 27, they make connections between words in the text (“Dad frowned and looked nervous, but he came anyway”) and their own experiences in new situations to infer that Dad wants to go to the school but it is hard for him to overcome his shyness

The students infer that the girl is very proud of the school garden and wants her father to see it.

The students read on and use information in the last sentence (“Dad forgot his shyness ...”) to review their hypotheses about “the idea”.

How you can support students to read, respond, and think critically

Allow time for the students to identify and discuss the explicit and implicit information on these pages. Model the way you use information to form a hypothesis as you start reading:

I’ve read the title and the first page, and I’m still wondering what “the idea” might be. I’ll keep looking for clues as I read.

Refer back to the chart from the introduction. Encourage the students to review their hypotheses about what “the idea” might be.

Prompt the students to think what they have found out about Dad.

Start a chart like the example below to support them to make inferences. Model the first example by thinking aloud as you record the details on the chart.

The story says the family has just moved to a new house. I’m thinking about how people usually make friends when they move to a new neighbourhood. I think that moving house would be hard for Dad because he’s so shy.

What the story tells us	What we know	Our inferences
Dad is very shy. He prefers to stay at home. The girl thinks school is cool.	Shy people find it hard to meet new people or go to new places.	Moving house was hard for Dad. He might get lonely. His daughter isn’t shy – she likes her new school.

Show your partner how you frown and look nervous. Even though he is feeling nervous, what does Dad do? How easy do you think that is for Dad? You could prompt the students to think of a time when they were feeling nervous about doing something but did it anyway, for example, sharing news in front of the class.

How does the girl feel about the school garden? Why does she take Dad to see it?

Discuss the illustration and the last sentence. *What do you think is happening so that Dad forgets his shyness?*

You could prompt the students to think about the word “inspected”. *What word in the text tells you that Dad is looking closely at the plants? What does that tell us about how interested he is?*

Prompt the students to check their hypotheses about “the idea”, using evidence from the text to explain any changes they need to make. If necessary, share your own thinking by modelling: *I’m wondering if he’s getting an idea about gardening, but I’m not sure how it fits with the title yet. I’ll need to keep thinking about that as I read on.*

Page 28

The students make connections between what they know about school, and information in the text and illustration, to infer that this is an after-school activity and the teacher and children enjoy working in the garden.

The students use what they know about gardens and food to make connections with the text and infer the purpose of the school garden.

The students connect the words “That’s the idea” with the title and review their hypotheses.

Page 29

The students read the page and consider why Dad is getting nervous. They infer that borrowing a lawnmower would mean talking to the new neighbours. They read on and make predictions about why his face lights up. The students use their predictions to revise their hypotheses and prepare to look for evidence as they read on.

Pages 30–31

The students review their predictions about what Dad is thinking and look for evidence that will confirm their hypotheses about the title of the story.

They add further inferences to the chart (using information from the text and their own knowledge) and are able to use evidence as they describe the changes in Dad.

As they continue to read these pages, the students start to make deeper connections within the text between Dad’s actions and those of the teacher at the school garden. They are able to revise their hypotheses again based on evidence (of his sharing) from the text.

Page 32

The students are able to confirm their hypotheses, using evidence from the text. They identify a theme of the story (that sharing can have benefits for everyone). They think critically about the effect of Dad’s idea, including: Dad makes friends in the neighbourhood and gets a job doing something he likes; Mrs Tawhai becomes part of the family and won’t be lonely; Shannon also has Mrs Tawhai as a member of her family and they have an affectionate relationship; and the people in the community can share the fruit and vegetables from Dad’s garden.

☑ With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or goals and explain some of the things they did to meet them, for example, how they formed their hypotheses as they read and why they changed them.

☑ The students identify some challenges in the text and how they worked (or tried to work) them out.

Continue to add to the inference chart, thinking aloud then writing an entry under “What the story tells us”, such as: *The teacher and the children are working in the garden.* Note that it’s the illustration that shows this, rather than the words. Under “What we know”, think aloud then write: *Shannon has come home, so school must be over for the day.* Share, then write, your inference: *They must really enjoy gardening and are proud of their garden.*

Encourage the students to contribute their ideas to the chart, for example, about the purpose of the garden, its importance to the school and the community, and how it works.

The teacher’s last words on this page seem familiar. I’m wondering where I’ve seen them before.

English language learners many need support with understanding this colloquial sentence. If necessary, explain it means: “That is the intended purpose or reason.”

Ask questions to support the students as they review their hypotheses: *What does the teacher mean? How did you work that out?*

If necessary, explain the meaning of “his face lit up”. You could talk about how, when people have thought of a good idea, their face seems to brighten and they look happy. You could have the students try different facial expressions to illustrate this point.

You could have them summarise what they have learnt so far about Dad and the school garden.

What do you think is going through Dad’s mind here? First he is silent and nervous, then he looks happy. I wonder what his idea could be. His problem is that he has long grass, so what do you think he might do?

Ask the students to share their predictions about what Dad might do and their revised hypotheses. *What evidence will you be looking for now as you keep reading?*

Prompt the students to check their predictions, using evidence from the text. *What has Dad done? I wonder where his idea came from. Who has he met so far? What’s changing in his life?*

I feel this garden is important to Dad and other people. What clues can you find in the text that tell the reader the effect this garden is having?

If necessary, prompt the students to think about what happens when the neighbours stop and chat and when Dad gives away cabbages and sunflowers.

As the students read on to the end of page 31, prompt them to make connections within the text and to look for evidence that could support their hypotheses. *How is what Dad is doing similar to what the teacher and children were doing with the school garden?*

Prompt the students to make connections and inferences:

What was Dad’s idea? How has growing a garden changed things for Dad? What has changed for Shannon? How do you think she feels about her dad’s idea? Where did his idea come from? How did the idea grow?

How has this garden helped Mrs Tawhai? What are the clues that tell you this?

What do you think about the idea of sharing fruit that hangs over the fence? Is that usually OK? Why or why not?

Remind the students that they should always check with the owner of the house before picking any fruit hanging over a fence and that they should take an adult with them when they ask.

What “big idea” or theme does this story have for you?

Revisit the reading purpose and learning goal or goals.

☑ Ask questions: *How did making connections to your own experiences help you to understand how Dad was feeling? When did you realise what he was going to do? What helped you?*

☑ *What strategies did you use to help you solve any difficulties you had when reading this text? If necessary, model or explain some strategies the students could use.*

After reading

- Students can reread the story as they listen to the audio version on the *Readalong 2012: Ready to Read and Junior Journal 44 and 45* CD or MP3 file. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Using the clues from the text, have the students draw and write thought bubbles to show what Dad or Shannon are thinking at three significant points in the story. To accompany each thought bubble, have the students write one or two sentences to explain what their character is thinking and why.
- Provide opportunities for the students to practise and consolidate their skills of using clues in the text and illustrations to make simple inferences about characters across other texts. See the Related texts section below for examples of texts you could use in a guided reading session. Provide a chart similar to the one used for this story and have the students complete each column. Remind them that they need to find evidence for their inferences by finding words from the text and clues in the illustrations.
- Students can explore some of the key vocabulary in the text, for example, by constructing word webs around the concepts of “shyness”, “neighbourhood”, or “sharing”.

Related texts

Texts that require students to make inferences about characters, for example: the RTR texts *Giant Soup* (Purple) and *Wheke* (Gold); “Friends” (JJ 37), “Taniwha Trouble” (JJ 40), “Where’s My Gumboot?” (JJ 44).