

Finding Mum

by Don Long

illustrated by Gus Hunter

Overview

This recount explores a situation, familiar to many children, of getting lost in the supermarket. The boy searches unsuccessfully for his mother but then manages to find her by returning to his starting point. There is a strong Pacific theme in this story, reinforced by the foods mentioned and the realistic illustrations. A book at the Orange level, *Mum's Octopus*, features the same child.

Curriculum links: health and physical education, social studies

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the initial consonant blends “cr”, “st”, “tr”
- the digraphs “ch” – “chop”, “which”; “sh” – “fish”; and “th” – “there”, “that”, “think”
- the silent letter “k” in “knew”
- the contractions “wasn’t”, “wouldn’t”, “couldn’t”
- the use of words ending in “ed” – “tried”, “stopped”, “walked”, “looked”, “wanted”
- the compound words “forgets”, “coconut”, “everywhere”, “maybe”
- the names of the food items – “taro”, “chop suey”, “raw fish”, “coconut cream”, “noodles”
- the dramatic start to the story
- the use of ellipses
- the use of large print and italics for emphasis on the last page
- the speech bubble on page 12
- the expressive illustrations.

Setting the scene

Discuss supermarket shopping. *What are some of the things Mum or Dad always buy at the supermarket? Do you help them to find things? How can you find your way around?*

Discuss “getting lost”. *Why are supermarkets easy to get lost in? Have you ever been lost? What did you do?*

For children who are unfamiliar with Pacific Islands foods, it may be helpful to introduce words such as “taro”, “chop suey”, and “raw fish”. Look at the illustrations in the book and focus on the visual features of the words. Talk about what the foods might taste like and how they would be used.

The first reading

Use the title and the cover illustration to establish the setting for the story and what the boy's problem might be. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Pages 2 and 3 – The children may need help with the word “only”. Encourage them to read to the end of the sentence to make use of meaning and structural cues. Remind the children of the different sounds that “o” can have. *What sounds better/makes sense in this sentence?*

Listen to the children read the text themselves, offering support as necessary.

Pages 4 and 5 – The word “knew” may be unfamiliar to some children. Write “new” or “few” on the whiteboard so that they can recognise the “ew” rime. Remind them that a “k” in front of an “n” is silent.

Study the structure “Mum wouldn't be there”. Write “wouldn't” on the whiteboard. Cover up the ending to show the known word “would”.

How do you think the boy is feeling? What would you do?

Pages 6 and 7 – Draw out the idea that he has to have a think. *What is he doing now? Why does he look like that?*

If needed, show the children how they can work out “raw” from the known word “saw”.

Page 8 – Encourage the children to make predictions about what the boy is going to do. From this page on, the interest words of the preceding pages are repeated and the pace of the reading should become more fluent.

Page 12 – *Why is the print bigger on this page? How is the boy feeling? What might Mum say? What do you think she was doing while the boy was looking for her?*

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing the strategies they use to make meaning. Focus on any of the initial consonant blends or digraphs that the children may have been unsure of. Locate the words in context and make a list of other words that start the same way.

Ask the children to locate the sentences in the text that include contractions. Practise reading these sentences expressively. Talk about the use of contractions to make text sound more natural.

Study the compound words in the story. Add them to a class list of compound words.

Draw the children's attention to the use of capital letters when “Mum” and “Dad” are used as names.

Locate verbs in the text that end in “ed”. Identify the root words. Talk about the changes that have to be made to the verbs “try” and “stop” before adding the “ed” endings.

Study the uses of the exclamation mark in the book. On page 8, the exclamation mark is used to express the suddenness of the boy’s idea, and on page 12, it is used for emphasis.

Discuss the use of the ellipses for anticipation. Encourage the children to use ellipses, when appropriate, in their writing.

Discuss the strategies the boy used to solve the problem of being lost. *What else could he have done?*

Suggestions for further activities

Make a story map to show the boy’s path round the supermarket.

Revisit the names of the food. The children could make lists of food that the boy went past.

Draw up lists of food that your family would buy at the supermarket.

Make a chart of favourite family foods. Draw on the variety of experiences of children from different ethnic groups in the class.

Ask a parent or caregiver to come to school and show a group how to make chop suey or another Pacific food.

Share the Ready to Read book *Mum’s Octopus*.

Write instructions about what to do if you get lost.