

Memories

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Overview

Sophie is angry, and she's taking it out on Mum. But after she has stormed off to her room, she starts to remember happier times and she finds she is ready to face the world again. This deceptively simple narrative offers readers many opportunities to infer as it sensitively explores family relationships.

Suggested Teaching Purpose

Based on the information I have about my students' learning needs, what would be an appropriate teaching purpose for this session?

Examples of an appropriate teaching purpose are listed below.

•	To support the students in developing the comprehension strategies of inferring , asking questions, or making connections.
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Features of the Text to Consider in Context

What features of this text would support the teaching purpose?

•	The questions raised in the text about what has happened to the family and the lack of an explanation that require the reader to infer
•	The very strong sense of loss (of her father, her horse, and of happier times)
•	The contrast between happy times in the past and a troubled present
•	The change in tone as Sophia works through her anger
•	The dramatic opening paragraphs that set the scene
•	the vigorous verbs “pounded”, “kicked”, “snatched”, “slumped”
•	the vivid adjectives, including verbs used as adjectives “satisfying”, “mud-caked”, “rubber-tyred”, “retreating”, “scowling”, “fierce”
•	the alternatives to said: “snarled”, “yelled”, “mouthed”
•	The significance of the memory box to the narrative (moving the action, recording the passing of time, and connecting the ideas in the text)
•	The concept of collecting and cherishing treasures and their importance as markers of special occasions
•	The relationship between Sophia and her mother
•	Sophia's implied acknowledgment by the end of the story that she can help to make things better.

Readability

Noun frequency level: 9.5–10.5 years

What other features of this text might constitute challenges for my students? (For example, features that may require a prompt or a brief explanation)

•	The use of the past perfect tense (“the vet had come”, “she had knelt”) to indicate events that have happened in the more distant past
•	The words and concepts: “inset with pāua”, “bestest”, “delicate”, “turquoise”, “wedged”, “bach”, “teasing it out”, “gymkhana”, “tuft of mane”, “stowed”, “manoeuvre”.

What prior knowledge would support my students in reading this text?

•	Experiences of loss or anger
•	Awareness of the implications of a parent being confined to a wheelchair.

Sharing Learning Outcomes with Your Students (select one or two)

I will be able to:

•	ask myself questions about this family's experiences and look for answers in the text as I read;
•	look for clues in the text and connect them with my own experiences to infer what is happening;
•	talk about why the memory box is important in this text.

A Framework for the Lesson

How will I help my students to achieve the learning outcomes?

In the sections below, particular comprehension strategies, reading processes, and links to other aspects of literacy learning have been identified in brackets. Many of these relate directly to the highlighted teaching purpose, but others have also been identified where appropriate.

Before reading

•	Introduce the title and discuss memories with the group. "What memories stay most clearly in your mind?" "What people can you remember most strongly?" Draw out the ideas that memories often involve strong emotions, that often a small memento or a photograph can trigger memories, and that we treasure special memories. (Making connections)
•	Tell the students that the main character in this narrative is recalling her past, which is very different from her present. Explain that, as they read the story, you want them to ask themselves questions about what has happened and read between the lines to find the answers. (Asking questions, inferring)
•	Clarify the learning outcome(s) with the students.

During reading

•	Have the students read to "and somehow it calmed her" on page 29. "What's happening here?" "How does the author make it clear that Sophia is angry?" (Inferring; analysing and synthesising)
•	"What questions does this page raise for you about this text?" If necessary, prompt the students by asking "What have you noticed about Mum?" (Asking questions)
•	Have the students read to the end of page 31 and explain what Sophia has been doing. (Summarising)
•	Have the students talk with a partner about each item in the box and the memory it links to. If necessary, clarify the writer's use of the past perfect tense (for example, "the vet had come") to distinguish between the current actions in the story and the events Sophia is recalling from the more distant past. (Making connections)
•	Ask the students to use the information about Sophia's memories to consider what it is that the text <i>doesn't</i> say. Clarify that the students have got the idea that Sophia's life was happier in the past than it is now. "What questions do you have about Sophia's life?" (Making connections; asking questions)
•	As a group, discuss possible answers to the questions. Ask the students to share the evidence for their inferences. (Inferring)

•	Encourage the students to make connections between the inferences they've made from the text and any new ideas from the group discussion to predict how the text will end. (Making connections; forming hypotheses)
•	Have the students read to the end of the text and review their predictions. (Testing hypotheses)
•	"What does the last section of the text (when Sophia is in the kitchen) suggest about Sophia?" (Inferring)

After reading

Select from these suggestions according to your purpose for the reading and what you've observed about the students' needs during the reading.

•	Focus discussion on the memory box. "Why is the memory box important in this narrative?" Draw out the idea that the writer uses the box as a way to suggest but not tell what has happened in Sophia's life, which creates a sense of mystery, and also that the idea of a memory box is something that is likely to make connections to any reader's experience. Ask the students to draw on their own experience and to the events in the text to probe more deeply into its significance. For example, the fact that Sophia keeps the box at the back of her drawer suggests that it is private and precious. She gets it out when she's feeling angry and upset, which suggests that the objects in it provide comfort for her. The unanswered questions in the text (especially about Dad and why Mum is in a wheelchair) suggest that the memories are both sad and happy. (Making connections; inferring)
•	Draw up an organiser chart like the one shown below to help the students reflect on the thinking behind their inferences.

I inferred that	because
the box was special	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad gave it to her • Sophia hides it in her drawer • she keeps her treasures in it
Dad is still around but he doesn't live with Sophia and her mum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't want to think that he's dead • if he were dead, I think Sophia would have something else special about him in the memory box (not just the box) • Sophia doesn't think sad thoughts about Dad in the story and if he were dead, I think she would

Reflect with the students on how well the learning outcome has been achieved and note any teaching points for future sessions.

Links to further learning

What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate and/or extend their new learning?

•	Have the students work in pairs to write a prologue or an epilogue for the story. (Inferring)
•	The students could draw or make a treasure memory box of their own and write a list of objects they would put in their box, complete with an explanation of why they would choose each object. (Making connections)

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