

Phil's Machines

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Overview

This biography describes how Phil Saunders' childhood love of diggers has developed into a business. It includes descriptions of some of the machinery that Phil uses every day.

Suggested teaching purposes

- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategy of **inferring**.
- To engage the students in reading about a man who has loved working with machines since he was a boy.

Suggested learning goal

I am learning to look for clues in this article to make inferences about what Phil is like.

Success criteria

I will be successful when I have:

- made connections to what I already know about reading non-fiction and about heavy machines
- asked questions as I read about what sort of person Phil is
- looked for clues in the text and read between the lines to build a detailed picture of what Phil is like.

Features of the text

What features of this text support the teaching purpose?

- The structure of the text as a biography supplemented with factual information about diggers and how the workers keep safe when using them
- The information (explicit and implicit) about Phil, from his childhood to the present
- The positive message about Phil loving his work
- The topic-specific vocabulary, including weights and measures
- The supportive photos, some of which are labelled
- The use of highlighted text and boxes for key words
- The conversational tone
 - informal language "These days", "roots and all"
 - use of contractions
 - personal opinion of the author "The tree grab is great for ..."
- The use of inverted commas to indicate the figurative use of the word "arms".

Readability

Noun frequency level: 9–10 years for guided reading

What prior knowledge or experience might help my students to read this text?

- Knowledge of heavy machinery (including toy versions)

- Knowledge of weights and measures
- Experience of using toy diggers and trucks
- Knowledge of the vocabulary and sentence structures of non-fiction articles.

What text features might challenge my students and require a prompt or a brief explanation?

- The technical terms, such as “tonnes” and “horsepower”
- Particular words and concepts including “quarries”, “scrapers”, “horsepower”, “paperwork”, “armoured glass”, “attachments”.

A framework for the lesson

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

Before reading

- Tell the students you have a text for them to read that’s about a man who really likes machines. Have the students read the title and preview pages 20 and 21 to find out what sort of machines Phil likes. Explain that you want them to read this text to find out why Phil likes machines so much. (Summarising)
- Discuss the concept of inferring and how, as readers, we can read between the lines to discover information not directly stated in the text. You may want to introduce the terms “explicit” and “implicit”. (Inferring)
- Share the learning goal and success criteria with the students.

Reading and discussing the text

Refer to Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 for information about deliberate acts of teaching.

- Have the students read the text through, supporting them as necessary with any concepts or vocabulary that need clarifying. (Analysing and synthesising)
- On the whiteboard or in your group reading book, create two charts (see below). Explain that sometimes information and ideas are explicit (clearly stated and easy to identify) and sometimes implicit (needing more “digging” and “reading between the lines”). You could describe these as “what we know” and “what we think”. Have the students reread page 20 and identify one example of what they “know” (or what is explicit) about Phil from this page. Record this data in the What I Know chart. Ensure that the students are able to justify their ideas with evidence from the text. (Summarising; inferring)

What I Know	Evidence
Phil loves machines	“Phil Saunders has always loved machines.”
He has more than one brother	“he and his brothers”

- Next have the students identify one example of what they “think” (or what they have to read between the lines to work out – to infer) about Phil from page 20. Record this data in the What I Think chart. Again, ensure that the students are able to justify their ideas with evidence from the text. (Inferring)

What I Think	Evidence
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Phil enjoys his job	"He learnt all he could"
Phil is ambitious	"It was time to set up his own business."

- Once the students have understood what is required, give out copies of the charts and have them work in pairs to complete them. Explain that there are ideas and facts about Phil mixed in with the information about the machines themselves. Remind the students that they need to provide evidence to back up their ideas. (Inferring, analysing and synthesising)

After reading

- Have the students share their findings with the rest of the group and incorporate them into one group chart. Compare the explicit and implicit information. "Is there more of one sort than the other? Why might this be?" (Inferring; analysing and synthesising)
- "What is the overall impression that you get about Phil? Why do you think the author wrote this text?" (Inferring; identifying the author's purpose)
- Briefly discuss any words or phrases that the students found difficult and the strategies they used (or could have used) to work them out.
- Reflect with the students on how well they have met the learning goal and how the success criteria helped them. 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?

- Interview someone who is passionate about his or her job and write a brief biography about them.
- Complete a What I Know/What I Think chart on another text, such as "Hooked on Hockey" (SJ 1.5.07), "Golf Champ" (SJ 1.1.07), or "Jiani" (SJ 2.3.00).