

Good as Gold

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School Journal
Level 2, August 2016
Year 4



Overview

“Good as Gold” is a play that combines sci-fi with humour and provides students with an opportunity to read, enjoy, and perform. A number of abstract financial capability concepts are embedded in the story. Two aliens are stranded on Earth and have to grapple with the concept of Earth money. A farmer, a bank manager, a loan shark, and Josh (a helpful boy) introduce them to the concepts of loans, saving, interest, bartering, and wages.

This article:

- follows the conventional play format and structure
- introduces financial literacy concepts in an amusing way
- includes aliens landing on Earth – an imaginary but familiar event, which students will have encountered before
- has six characters, with two scenes, in one setting.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme

“The Ant and the Grasshopper: The Sequel” SJ L2 June 2014 | “Kele’s Car” JJ 49 | “The Ski Trip” SJ L3 September 2014 | “Backyard Chooks” SJ L2 August 2013 | “A Closer Look” SJ L2 August 2012

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

OWEN LEND. ...
one wrist. It's very inconvenient.
ZERG. I haven't got much to exchange, just this *Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*. It's only made out of diamond.
OWEN LEND. Did you say diamond?
SALA. Yes. I guess it's not worth much.
There's lots of diamond on our planet.
But it's hard wearing. It won't break easily.
OWEN LEND. Well, I'd like to help you out.
Here, take my watch. (He exchanges his watch for the guide.) I'm rich ... I mean, I'm richer ... I mean, thank you for this very hard-wearing but not very valuable guide.
OWEN LEND exits, chuckling happily.

some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students' prior knowledge

SCENE ONE: An open field on Earth. SALA and ZERG enter.
SALA (sarcastically). Well, this is just great, Zerg. Now we're stuck here on this strange planet. Why didn't you stop at that last fuelling station?
ZERG. I thought we could make it to the next one.
SALA. “E” means “empty”. It doesn't mean “enough”.
ZERG. Point taken, Sala. Luckily I've brought my *Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*. It will tell us all we need to know about this place. (ZERG reads from the guide.) “Planet Xylan, local name Earth. The locals are mostly friendly but have a strange liking for personal media devices.”
SALA. Here comes one of them now!
JOSH enters, listening to an MP3 player.

some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

OWEN LEND. It's very easy. You put your money in my bank, and some time later, when you ask, I'll give you back your money plus a bit more, which is called interest.
ZERG. And what's in it for you?
OWEN LEND. Well, I take the money you give me, and I lend it to somebody else. That way, I can make a bit of money for myself.
SALA. How much will you give us?
OWEN LEND. The rate of interest is about 5 percent, which means that for every one hundred dollars you give me, I'll give you back your hundred plus another five dollars.
ZERG. How long will it take for this interest to build up so we

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

SALA. We haven't got any money to go to next week!
ZERG. Can you give us more interest?
OWEN LEND. Sorry, times are tough. I've had to make cutbacks.
JOSH. You could try bartering.
SALA. What's that?
JOSH. That's when you exchange goods.
OWEN LEND. If you want gold, I have a gold watch. I could exchange that.

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some words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by illustrations, and/or written explanations

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 2 – Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

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

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

– Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

THE ARTS (Drama)

Level 2 – Communicating and Interpreting: Share drama through informal presentation and respond to elements of drama in their own and others' work.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Financial capability: This play can also be used as a context for exploring the concepts of the purpose of money, bartering, earning money, saving, and simple interest.

Possible first reading purpose

- To enjoy reading a comical play about aliens who are learning how earning and saving money works in our society.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To explore the financial concepts about earning and saving money
- To perform the play to peers and invite responses.

Possible writing purposes

- To write a personal narrative about a time I saved up to buy something I wanted
- To create a dialogue between the two aliens describing their accidental visit to Earth
- To explain the concept of “interest”.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

(Some of the suggestions for possible supporting strategies may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.)

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “sarcastically”, “fuelling station”, “media devices”, “rounding up”, “spa”, “lend”, “borrower”, “rate of interest”, “percent”, “cutbacks”, “bartering”, “hard-wearing”
- Proper nouns, including “*Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*”, “Planet Xylan”.

Possible supporting strategies

- Model the difference between “lend” and “borrow”. *Josh will lend his brother \$1.00. His brother will borrow \$1.00.* This discussion can include reference to the play on words for Owen Lend, Sammy Shark, and Anita Herd.
- Create a chart of banking terms. The students could add additional vocabulary.
- The expressions “rounding up”, “hardwearing”, and “cutbacks” may not be difficult to decode but may need some discussion to support students' understanding.
- Students may not be familiar with the Lonely Planet guide books. They will need to be aware of this guide to understand the *Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Knowledge of the difference between “planet” and “galaxy”
- Understanding of the relative value of gold and diamonds
- Awareness that paper money is representational and not of value itself
- Some understanding of percentages
- Appreciation of the use of irony to amuse.

Possible supporting strategies

- Make explicit links to maths to support understanding of bartering, value, and percentages.
- Discuss the “fairness” of a trade (swap, barter) to compare the exchange of gold and diamond. Explain how banks work (and clarify what “interest” means in this context). You may wish to take this opportunity to discuss words with multiple meanings.
- Lead discussion on the ironic humour by talking about the idea of aliens having a human-like existence on their own planet. Similarly, point out the way Owen Lend speaks and behaves, such as his sneakiness when he realises that he is going to get the better deal with the diamond.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- Conventional play format: character names in bold capitals; stage directions in brackets
- Action in chronological order: two scenes with a brief time lapse between them.

Possible supporting strategies

- Prompt students' prior knowledge of plays. *What do we expect to find in a play?*
- Explain that we will get to see why some of the characters have the names they have as the play progresses.
- Model the reading of dialogue, using expression.
- Explain the use of brackets and italics for stage directions.



Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 2 – Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences; Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

The Arts (Drama) Level 2 – Communicating and Interpreting: Share drama through informal presentation and respond to elements of drama in their own and others' work.

Social Sciences Financial capability: This play can also be used as a context for exploring the concepts of the purpose of money, bartering, earning money, saving, and simple interest.

First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Introduce the text to students. Give students some background. *This play is about two aliens who arrive on Earth by mistake. We'll find out their problem early on.* Prompt prior knowledge of plays. *Talk to the person next to you about what you know about plays.*
- Explain that the play deals with the idea of needing money. Have students discuss their personal experience of money. *Some of you may get pocket money, money for a birthday, or money when you do chores at home. Talk to a partner about how you get cash, and what you do with it.*
- Direct the students to read the cast list and look through the illustrations.
- Explain that they are going to read through the script, taking parts.
- Allocate a student to play each character (six needed).
- Read the play together.

If the students struggle with this text

- Split the play into chunks and have the students read it through silently to themselves. Spend time discussing what is happening. Provide support as necessary.
- Direct students to locate their own character in the illustrations and then skim through the play, finding the name of their character whenever it appears.
- Chunk the play into mini-scenes, for example, Sala and Zerg's dialogue in scene one up to where Josh enters. Check understanding of "planet" and "galaxy". (If appropriate, explain that the title of the aliens' travel guide is based on a real book.)
- Read the next chunk (up to when Anita Herd enters) that introduces the concept of earning money. Invite students to make personal connections. *Does everyone need to work to get money? Have a chat with your buddy about how you get money.*
- As they read the play, check regularly that the students are following what is going on and understanding the jokes.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

The teacher

Check that all students understood what happened in the play.

- *Talk to your buddy and see if you can recall what happened in scene one and scene two.*

Scaffold students' recall with questioning – some literal questions and others to prompt deeper level thinking.

- *Who did we meet first?*
- *Why do you think Josh didn't seem surprised to meet the aliens?*
- *What was the aliens' problem?*

Direct students to the financial aspects of the play. Have them work in twos or threes to create a poster or a chart with words or phrases from the play and any additional terms that refer to money and value. Ask them to discuss the terms to ensure that they all understand what they mean.

The students:

- engage in discussion with a partner to recall the sequence of events and the characters
- identify the parts of the play that deal with money and add these to their poster or chart
- help each other to learn what the terms mean by taking it in turns to explain a term to a partner orally.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

The teacher

Provide students with materials for planning a performance. Encourage them to make decisions about practical aspects, such as costumes, to clarify who is who. This could be a simple paper hat with a name printed on the front.

Explain that they can use the *School Journal* to read their lines as they perform, but to help it go smoothly, they will need to rehearse once or twice prior to performing.

Model clear diction and expression and invite a response from the cast.

Prepare the rest of the students as the audience. Provide a purpose for viewing.

While we are watching, think about how easy it is to know who is who and how clearly you can hear what each character is saying. Do the actors stay in character? Does the humour come through in the performance?

METACOGNITION

- How will this experience help when you next meet a play or a story with different characters?
- Was this a good way of helping to explain some ideas about maths and money? Why or why not?

The students:

- reread the play, in character, and self-evaluate their expression and clarity
- rehearse the play to ensure that they are familiar with their parts and the action so that they can perform it without pauses or confusion
- perform the play and invite responses.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I saw how you used the context to work out some of the mathematical terms and expressions. This is always a good way of making sense of unfamiliar words.*
- *You managed to get into character, and you used expression every time you spoke. That really helped to bring out the humour in the play.*
- *Thank you for helping your partner get the joke about "Owen Lend". You saw the play on words very quickly.*



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics; Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

Text excerpts from “Good as Gold”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 19

SALA (*sarcastically*). Well, this is just great, Zerg. Now we're stuck here on this strange planet. Why didn't you stop at that last fuelling station?

ZERG. I thought we could make it to the next one.

SALA. “E” means “empty”. It doesn't mean “Enough to get you to the next fuelling station”.

ZERG. Point taken, Sala. Luckily I've brought my *Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*. It will tell us all we need to know about this place. (**ZERG** reads from the guide.) “Planet Xylan, local name Earth. The locals are mostly friendly but have a strange liking for personal media devices.”

USING DIALOGUE TO REVEAL CHARACTER

Writers can reveal things about the setting and their characters through use of dialogue.

PROVIDING CLUES FOR THE READER TO HOOK THEM IN

Writers sometimes give clues instead of spelling things out. They prompt the reader to infer and predict what might happen. This can be an effective way of hooking the reader into the story. For example, in this section of the play, the reader will probably be thinking: *Who are they? I wonder where this “strange planet” is. I wonder what will happen next?*

Discuss the impact of the dialogue.

- *What do we find out about them? Can we tell what their personalities are like?*

Have students work in pairs to create a dialogue between the two aliens in a different scenario, for example, describing their accidental visit to Earth.

Direct the students to evaluate what they have written.

- *Have you provided some clues for your reader?*
- *What would happen if you described your visit to Earth, without mentioning Earth? What clues could you give? How could you describe a farm without using the word farm?*

Page 21

SALA. I'm exhausted. Why couldn't you have stopped at that fuelling station?

ZERG. You've already asked me that. It's the past, Sala. I can't do anything about the past.

ANITA HERD (*enters*). That was a good day's work, guys. It saved me doing all those jobs myself. (*handing over some money*) Here's your pay.

JOSH (*enters*). How did it go?

ANITA HERD. I had a very relaxing day.

SALA. I had a lousy day. I'm tired, I smell of sheep, and I'm all greasy.

INCLUDING DETAIL

Writers decide when to explicitly state the details that the reader needs and when to give clues so that the reader will need to make inferences.

Prompt students to recall an experience where they had to work hard. Invite them to share their experiences in pairs. Check in, to ensure that all students have the chance to contribute.

Prepare students to draft a piece of writing where they describe what happened and how it was for them. Prompt prior knowledge about personal narrative.

- *What does your reader need to know?*
- *What details do you need to state and what details will the reader be able to work out for themselves from what happens or from what the characters say?*

After a first draft, guide students with the revision process. Direct them back to the text.

- *How do we know how Sala is feeling?*
- *What does he tell us about his lousy day?*
- *How does that help us to know how he feels?*

Have students reread their draft.

- *Find a place where you have described how you felt. Do you need to make any changes?*
- *Will your readers know how you felt?*

Text excerpts from
“Good As Gold”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 23

OWEN LEND. It's very easy. You put money in my bank, and some time later I'll give you back your money plus a bit more money, which is called interest.

ZERG. And what's in it for you?

OWEN LEND. Well, I take the money you give me, and I then lend it to somebody else. That way I can make a bit of money for myself.

SALA. How much will you give us?

OWEN LEND. The rate of interest is about 5 percent, which means that for every one hundred dollars you give me, I'll give you back your hundred plus another five dollars.



WRITING TO EXPLAIN

Writers draw on what they know about the topic, but they need to be aware of their audience. They think about what their audience knows and how they can make ideas and concepts clear for them. For example, they might include an illustration or a diagram.

Ask questions to help the students think about their explanation.

- *Who will your audience be?*
- *How do you want to present this?*
- *How will you make things clear for your reader?*
- *Will you use drawings or diagrams as well as words?*

Have students work in pairs to plan how to explain a complex concept, such as interest. Model how an explanation might look. Direct students to notice the features of explanation, for example, using specific nouns.

Compare and discuss their explanation with the explanation in the play.

- *Do we still get to understand what interest is if we don't read the questions from Zerg and Sala?*
- *Does the illustration help us to understand interest? If so, how does it do this? If not, why doesn't it help?*

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *Your personal narrative is effective. I can see what happened, and I get to know exactly how you felt when you thought you had enough money. The details you have included give the reader a clear picture of what happened.*

METACOGNITION

- How did your planning help with your explanation?
- When did you decide that it would be useful to explain interest with diagrams?
- What makes your explanation successful?



Writing standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions