



Overview

In this humorous retelling of Rumpelstiltskin, the author surprises and delights the reader with modern twists. This story provides opportunities for students to make connections to their knowledge of other fairy tales and to enjoy and explore the author's use of language. This story is accompanied by a humorous poem "Naming the Goblin Baby."

This text 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).

A PDF of this story and an audio version as an MP3 file are available at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

The traditional version of Rumpelstiltskin

Other traditional fairy tales, in particular those with "patterns of three", resourceful heroes, and/or memorable villains (for example, The Three Little Pigs, The Billy Goats Gruff, Jack and the Beanstalk)

Stories that play with the features of fairy tales, for example, *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch, *Princess Smartypants* by Babette Cole, and the Ready to Read shared book *The Three Princesses*

Text characteristics

"Rumpelstiltskin" includes the following features that help develop the reading behaviours required at Gold.


A mix of explicit and implicit content that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge to make predictions (for example, that the Goblin will spin the gold for Maddie) and make inferences (for example, why the characters behave as they do)

Descriptive vocabulary including literary phrases (for example, "gasped with surprise", "spread far and wide", "quicker than the eye could see") and alternatives to "said" (for example, "muttered", "boasted", "continued", "ordered", "asked", "cried", "repeated", "replied", "chortled", "called") some of which may be unfamiliar, the meaning of which is supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the illustrations

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs

Contexts and ideas that may be unfamiliar to some students

"This is all Dad's fault," she muttered. It had all started a few weeks before, when Maddie's father had been talking with some other farmers.



"My daughter is the most beautiful in the land," boasted one farmer.

"My daughter can sing like a bird," said another.

"Well, my daughter can ... spin," said Maddie's father. The other farmers stared at him. Her dad couldn't stop himself - he had to exaggerate. "I haven't finished," he continued. "My daughter can spin straw into gold!" The other farmers gasped with surprise.

The story spread far and wide, and it wasn't long before the King heard about Maddie. He sent for her to come to his castle.

"Spin my straw into gold," he ordered.

"And what if I don't?" Maddie asked.

"I'll throw you into my deepest dungeon," replied the King.

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So now, here she was - shut in a room with a spinning wheel and a pile of straw. Maddie looked at the straw. There was no way she could spin it into gold. "What can I do?" she cried.

Then she heard a voice.

"Girl, what will you give me if I help you?"

Maddie jumped. A strange, ugly little goblin was standing in front of her. "How can you help me?" she asked.

"I can spin straw into gold," said the goblin. "What will you give me?" he repeated with a sly smile.



Several characters and events including shifts in time both backwards and forwards, requiring students to notice changes in illustrations, punctuation, and key words and phrases to keep track of

Frequent use of dialogue, some of which is not attributed

A variety of sentence structures, including compound and complex sentences, requiring students to notice and use linking words and phrases (for example, "with", "and", "But", "So", "if", "In fact", "as"), indicators of time ("Once upon a time", "a few weeks before", "when", "now", "Then", "In a flash", "The next morning/night", "once again"), and punctuation to clarify the links between ideas

Humour created through the modern setting and language, the characterisation, and Maddie's attempts to guess Rumpelstiltskin's name

English (Reading)

Levels 1 and 2: Selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment.

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

Level 2 – Language features: Show some understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

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

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6*).

Possible reading purpose

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

- To find out what happens to Maddie
- To think about how this story is the same as and different from the original story of Rumpelstiltskin

Possible learning goals

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

This text provides opportunities, over several readings, for students to:

- **make connections** to their prior knowledge (including knowledge of “Rumpelstiltskin”) to **make predictions and inferences**
- **ask themselves questions** about aspects they are not sure of and attempt to find answers
- identify and track the main ideas and events in the story (**summarise**)
- use information in the text to **visualise** and **make inferences** about the characters
- **make connections** to their knowledge of fairy tales to identify some common features
- **analyse** (identify and discuss) some examples of how the author has used language for effect
- **monitor** their reading, and when something is unclear, take action to solve the problem, for example, by rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.

**Text and language features****Possible supporting strategies**

(Use these suggestions before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar vocabulary: “spun”, “fleeces”, “fault”, “boasted”, “exaggerate”, “continued”, “straw”, “deepest dungeon”, “goblin”, “sly”, “shiny gold”, “bowed”, “disappeared”, “overjoyed”, “cheerfully”, “in despair”, “promise”, “first-born child”, “weird”, “complete”, “cunning”, “panic”, “creature”, “searched”, “chortled”, “GPS tracker”, “claim”, “nowhere near”
- The names that Maddie suggests

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- when **decoding**:
 - recognising word chunks or syllables (for example, “over-joyed”, “cheer-ful-ly”, “Band-y-legs”, “Slug-master”)
 - using analogies to known words (“bun”, “run” – “spun”, “dungeon”; “tiny” – “shiny”)
 - drawing on their knowledge of common digraphs (for example, “boasted”; “surprise”; “triumph”) and their knowledge that some letters or letter combinations can have more than one sound (“exaggerate”, “dungeon”, “promise”)
 - using context, sentence structure and illustrations to confirm decoding attempts
- when **working out word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence and the paragraph
 - making connections to their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information, including looking at the next word or words to help clarify a noun phrase
 - noting terms they are not sure of and want to find out more about.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings, but remind them that they can make a best attempt at a word and come back to it later.

Readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. For more ideas, see [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#).



Introducing the text

A short video on the importance of introducing the text is available at: <https://vimeo.com/142446572>

Use your knowledge of the students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in building or activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading.

Select from and adapt the following suggestions:

- A few days before, tell or read the traditional version of Rumpelstiltskin to build (or confirm) students' prior knowledge. (This could be a whole-class activity.) This is particularly important for students who may not be familiar with traditional English fairy tales. You could also show a video clip to build students' understanding of what a spinning wheel does.
- Support the students to identify some of the common features of fairy tales (for example, a setting in a distant time and place, a king and/or queen, tasks to complete, events happening in threes, magical events, heroes and villains, happy endings).
- Support the students in reading the title, drawing attention to how it is "chunked" (by colour) into syllables. Remind them that

the story involves attempts to guess Rumpelstiltskin's name and that they will need to work out how to say the names. Review some of the word-solving strategies they might try, such as breaking the word into chunks, looking for the biggest familiar part of the word, and drawing on their knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

- Have the students look at the illustrations on pages 14–15. They are likely to notice the contrast between the modern-day New Zealand sheep farm setting on page 14 and the traditional fairy tale setting on page 15. Encourage them to speculate as to how the illustrations might be connected (keeping in mind what they know about the traditional story of Rumpelstiltskin). Check that they recognise the spinning wheel in each illustration and prompt them to recall its role in the traditional version. You could record any questions or predictions they have about these pages.
- Together, set the purpose for reading. Share the learning goal(s) for the first reading. You can address other goals on subsequent readings.
- You could give the students sticky notes to mark aspects of particular interest or parts they might want to return to later.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column of the table below. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students' needs.

Encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it's clear a student needs help. During the first reading, the focus is on students experiencing and enjoying the story, following the events, and making and reviewing predictions (forming and testing hypotheses). Much of the processing that they do is "inside their heads", and may not be obvious until the discussion after the reading. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word-solving and comprehension on subsequent readings.

Student behaviours

Examples of behaviours that will help the students achieve their learning goal(s).

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support individual students (if needed).

The first reading


- The students use information in the text and illustrations and draw on what they already know about the story of Rumpelstiltskin to make predictions and inferences. They use punctuation and indicators of time and place to track the sequence of events. For example:
 - at the end of page 14, they infer from the phrase "But one day" and the ellipsis that the story about Maddie getting into "big trouble" is about to start
 - they recognise on page 15 that Maddie is in "big trouble" and predict that the following pages will explain how this happened
 - they use the phrase "It had all started a few weeks before" on page 16 to confirm their prediction
 - on page 21, they predict that the GPS tracker will play an important part in the story and look for further clues about how it affects the action as they read on.
- They begin to notice (and anticipate) the patterns in the story (the setbacks and the solutions and the patterns of three – three tasks, three nights for Maddie to guess the name).
- They use the illustrations and look for key words to clarify their understanding and help visualise events and characters. For example:
 - on page 14, they use the illustration and the words associated with farming to confirm the setting and build a picture of Maddie and her everyday life
 - on page 17, they use the illustration, the descriptive language ("strange, ugly little goblin", "sly smile"), and the goblin's repeated requests for Maddie to give him something, to visualise him as a tricky character.
- Prompt the students to keep in mind their questions or predictions about the apparent mismatch between pages 14 and 15 and to make connections with what they know of the traditional version as they look for clues.
- Encourage the students to think about the characters and to look for clues about them in the text (including the dialogue) and the illustrations.


- The students demonstrate self-monitoring and problem solving. For example:
 - they use sentence structure and the overall context of the paragraph to infer the meaning of “spun their fleeces” on page 14
 - on page 17, they make connections to their knowledge of the original tale to infer what “sly” means and look for further clues as they read
 - they draw on a range of decoding strategies to attempt the names Maddie suggests on pages 21 and 23
 - on page 22, they look for clues to confirm their understanding of what a GPS tracker is and why Maddie has used it
 - they mark aspects that may be unclear or of particular interest.
- Remind the students of strategies they can use when the meaning is unclear.
- Provide support with decoding the names as required.
- Encourage the students to note things they want to come back to. Remind them that asking themselves questions and making notes or marking sections will help focus their thinking.
- As they finish reading, the students check any notes they have made and reflect on how the story is similar to and different from the traditional tale.
- Encourage the students to think about their reading purpose and to review any notes they’ve made.

Discussing the text

You can revisit this story several times, focusing on different aspects and providing opportunities for the students to build comprehension.

Select from and adapt the suggestions according to your students’ needs and responses to the reading. Many of the suggestions can be explored further as “After-reading” activities.

 For some suggestions, you may find it helpful to project the PDF of the article so that you can zoom in on relevant sections.

- The students share their initial responses to the story, identifying their favourite part.
- The students explain what they have discovered about the link between the illustrations on pages 14 and 15.
- They identify and discuss the sequence of events in the story.
- The students identify text features that helped them (for example, specific indicators of time and place, the illustrations, and punctuation such as the ellipsis at the end of page 14 indicating that the main story is about to start and the three asterisks on page 19 indicating the end of the first part of the story).
- The students identify examples of descriptive language, illustrations, and dialogue that helped them build a picture of the characters and events.
- They use clues in the text and illustrations and make connections to their own experiences to clarify the meanings of unfamiliar words or phrases.
- The students discuss some aspects of how the author has made this story entertaining, and they identify some favourite examples.
- The students identify similarities and differences between this version of the tale and the traditional version. They think critically about the two versions and share their opinions of the differences.
- Enjoy the students’ responses to the story – and to the names that Maddie suggests for the goblin.
- Remind them of the reading purpose and their specific questions or predictions about pages 14 and 15, and have them summarise the story (what happened and why). Ask questions to prompt their thinking, for example, *Why did Maddie get locked up by the king? What was her plan to find out the goblin’s name?* Encourage them to refer to the story to clarify points.
- Ask the students to identify features of the story that helped them track the sequence of events.
- Have the students think, pair, and share words and phrases that helped them understand what was happening or build a picture of a character.
- Use questions or prompts to support the students to understand unfamiliar vocabulary, for example: *What is a dungeon? Show me how you might “gasp with surprise”. What are some other words we could use instead of “sly”? Why was the goblin “grinning in triumph”? Show me the clues that helped you work out the meaning of “rage.”*
- Ask the students to think critically about how the author has shaped the story to entertain the reader. Support them to notice such aspects as:
 - the change to a modern setting
 - the use of dialogue to convey character
 - the characterisation (Maddie as the hero, her foolish Dad, the greedy king, and the sly goblin)
 - the ridiculous-sounding names
 - the conversational style (for example, the use of ellipses and the author’s comment “(and rich)” on page 19
 - the vivid descriptive language.
- Have the students compare this version of the story with the traditional tale (keeping in mind that traditional versions also vary). You could create a comparison chart and begin filling it in together, and then have the students work in pairs as an after-reading activity to explore a particular aspect. (See After reading.)
-  You could use Google Docs to create and share the comparison chart.
- Encourage the students to think critically about aspects of the story that could (and could not) happen in the real world.

How you can support your students to be metacognitive

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students describe how they addressed challenges in the text. For example:
 - reading on, using the illustrations, and thinking about the meaning of the sentence or paragraph to work out unfamiliar words or phrases
 - using the context (who the characters are, what the previous sentence or piece of dialogue has been about), speech marks, and paragraph indents for new speakers to track the unattributed dialogue on pages 17, 19, and 21.

Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

- Ask the students to identify a challenge they had when reading and how they solved or attempted to solve it. Note any aspects you might want to return to in subsequent lessons.

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should arise from your monitoring of the students' needs during the lesson and should provide purposeful practice and reinforcement. Where possible, make links to other reading texts, including texts generated by the students, and to the wider literacy programme (oral language, writing, handwriting, word games and activities) and other curriculum areas.

- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this text and other similar stories (see Related texts). They could reread the story as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Read other fairy tales (including humorous adaptations) or trickster tales to the class. Enjoy exploring the common features or interesting differences in the tales, for example, the pattern of "three". (The TSM for *The Three Princesses* includes a useful summary. <http://instructionalseries.tki.org.nz/Instructional-Series/Ready-to-Read/The-Three-Princesses>)
- Invite the students to role-play a favourite part of the story. They might interview a character using cue cards, for example (to Maddie), "How did you feel when the goblin showed up the first time?", "What other things could you have given the goblin?", or "Do you blame your father for all this?" The students may be able to use some of the questions they thought of as they first read the story.
- The students could work with you or in pairs to create a comparison chart started earlier (as shown below).

| | Features in "Rumpelstiltskin" | |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Story features | This version | The traditional version |
| Main good character (the hero) | Maddie, a farmer's daughter | |
| Main bad character (the villain) | Rumpelstiltskin, a goblin | |
| Other characters | King, father, other farmers, ... | |
| Important places | farm, castle, Maddie's house, beside the river | |
| The time setting (when the story happens) | the present day when Maddie is a child and when she is an adult | |
| Patterns of three | Three times Rumpelstiltskin spins straw into gold Three things Maddie offers Rumpelstiltskin Three nights to guess the goblin's name | |
| Goblin names guessed | Creepy McCreepy Face, Bandylegs, Cragglehop ... | |

 You could use Google Docs to create and share the comparison chart.

- Provide opportunities to practise making inferences, using explicit and implicit information in the story (in text and illustrations). Ask the students to add descriptive phrases or sentences to pictures of Maddie and/or Rumpelstiltskin.
- Explore the use of the suffix "est" in the superlative adjective "deepest" ("deepest dungeon"). Discuss the meaning in this context, then experiment with adding "er" and "est" endings to the root word (deep, deeper, deepest). Build comparative and superlative adjectives from other root words in the story (for example "big", "strange", "ugly", "sly", "cool", "shiny", "angry.")
- Start (or add to) a class collection of interesting words and phrases, including figures of speech (for example, "quicker than the eye could see", "in a flash", "dark with anger"). Use opportunities to incorporate some of the phrases into shared writing and encourage the students to use them (where appropriate) in their own writing.
- The students could work in pairs to make up their own goblin names. They could make up entirely new names, or innovate on Maddie's suggestions (or those in the "Naming the Goblin Baby" poem) by changing just a few letters (for example, Bandylegs – Bendylegs, Cragglehop – Crogglehopper, Slobbydosh – Sluggydasher, Foodlewoodle – Feedleweedle).