

The Butterfly Effect

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Year 5



Overview

Henry and Emily's parents are going away for the weekend, and the dreaded neighbour, Mrs Anderson, is coming to look after them. In this humorous fantasy story, Henry and Emily find she is just as awful as they feared, but they come up with a plan to get rid of her for good.

Although the story is simply told, it uses rich descriptions and an ending that is open to speculation. The story offers opportunities

to make connections with the well-known Eric Carle book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* – as well as with their own knowledge of the butterfly life cycle!

Texts related by theme

“Shortcut to School” SJ 3.1.01 | “The Madhouse!” SJ 4.2.01 | “The Evil Drinking Fountain” SJ L3 Feb 2012

Text characteristics from the year 5 reading standard

sentences that vary in length and in structure (for example, sentences that begin in different ways and different kinds of complex sentences with a number of subordinate clauses)

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text



The next morning, they quietly got their breakfast, tidied their rooms, read their books ... and still Mrs Anderson hadn't come downstairs. "Maybe she burst in the night?" Emily said hopefully.

They crept up to the attic, and Henry knocked gently on the door. There was no answer. "Mrs Anderson," he called softly. Nothing.

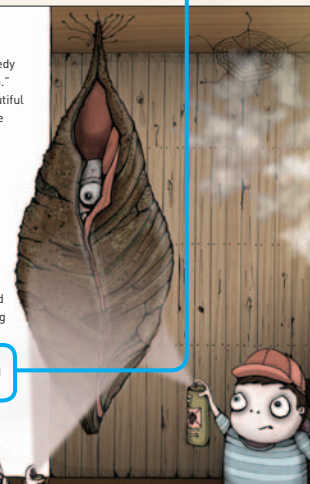
Emily pushed the door open. In the corner, there was a strange arrangement of bubbling liquids and steaming pots. From the ceiling hung a long brown sack, hard-looking and coarse. Henry poked at the sack, and it swung lazily.

"Look at this," Emily said. A big grey book was open on the bed. "How to become a butterfly," she read, then looked up at the strange brown sack.

figurative and/or ambiguous language that the context helps students to understand

"Of course!" cried Henry. "It's a cocoon. She ate and ate like a greedy caterpillar and then spun a cocoon."
"And soon she'll become a beautiful butterfly," said Emily. "Not that she deserves it."
"No, she doesn't," said Henry thoughtfully. "Follow me."
They went downstairs and rummaged under the kitchen sink. Then they went back up to the attic.
"How long do you think we'll have to wait?" whispered Emily.
"Not long," said Henry. He could see the top of the cocoon beginning to split. "Not long at all."

Henry and Emily each raised a can of fly spray. They didn't mind waiting at all.



illustrations by Peter Kelk

illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs that clarify or extend the text and may require some interpretation

Reading standard: by the end of year 5

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 3 – Ideas: Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics.

Possible reading purposes

- To enjoy a fantasy story
- To explore the way an author develops ideas and humour in a story.

See Instructional focus – Reading for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

Possible writing purposes

- To write a story in which unexpected things happen
- To add another chapter to “The Butterfly Effect”.

See Instructional focus – Writing for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

 The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “up north”, “howled”, “lounge”, “doorstep”, “peculiar”, “stretchy”, “tasselled”, “actually”, “stout”, “interrupt”, “slimy”, “attic”, “scientific experiment”, “scuttled”, “muffled”, “overhead”, “mumbled”, “hanky”, “threatened”, “ceiling”, “exhausted”, “arrangement”, “coarse”, “cocoon”, “deserves”, “rummaged”
- Adverbs, including “gloomily”, “sternly”, “politely”, “quietly”, “incredibly”, “surprisingly”, “sulkily”, “hopefully”, “gently”, “softly”, “lazily”, “thoughtfully”
- The word “suitcase” and its shortened form “case”
- Possibly unfamiliar foods, including “drumsticks”, “coleslaw”, “pavlova”, “Brussels sprouts”.

Possible supporting strategies

Identify key vocabulary students will find challenging and use support strategies such as matching words and definitions or identifying spelling patterns within tricky words.

To teach and reinforce the use of adverbs, play “In the manner of” with the class or a group of students. Write a variety of adverbs on small cards or slips of paper. One person is given an adverb card and told to carry out various actions in the manner of that adverb. The rest of the group has to guess what the adverb is. Each student has a turn, with a different adverb each time.

Similar charade-type or miming activities can help students understand the differences between verbs such as “looked” and “rummaged”, “cried” and “mumbled”, and so on.

The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Experience of having babysitters
- Familiarity with fantasy stories, in which unusual things can happen
- Knowledge of the life cycle of a butterfly
- Knowledge of the “fairy tale” text type.

Possible supporting strategies

Most students should be able to understand and relate to the ideas in the story without explicit support. Some students may require support to access or build relevant prior knowledge, for example, of fantasy fiction or of a butterfly’s life cycle. You will need to make judgments about the best time to offer support without spoiling the plot.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Realistic present-day setting (in a family home) within a fantasy story
- The use of dialogue
- Ellipses, exclamation marks, and words emphasised in italics
- The need to infer meaning, for example, about Mrs Anderson and her behaviour
- The use of descriptive verbs and adjectives and the large number of descriptive adverbs.

Possible supporting strategies

Some students may require support to make inferences, but keep this to a minimum. Allow students time to read the story and think for themselves before checking for understanding at specific points.

 Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

English (Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.)

Text excerpts from “The Butterfly Effect”

Students (what they might do)

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

On the doorstep sat a big yellow toad, one of their neighbour’s many peculiar pets. As they watched, the toad shot out a stretchy tongue and wrapped it around a long tasselled rope, which dangled from a silver bell. The toad tugged, the bell tinkled cheerily, the door opened, and the toad hopped inside.

Students **make connections** with their experiences of toads (from reading, TV, and so on) to **infer** that a toad is not a likely pet and probably not able to be trained to ring a bell. They **integrate** this with the word “peculiar” and **predict** what kind of story this will be, for example, that it could be a fantasy in which animals behave like humans.

PROMPT the students to make connections with their prior knowledge and to ask and answer questions.

- Turn to a partner and tell them what you know about toads.
- How realistic is the toad’s behaviour?
- What’s unusual about this story? What questions do you have so far?
- What kind of fiction did this remind you of? Why?
- How might the title and the illustration style support your thinking?

“I don’t want to hear a peep from either of you until dinner. I am finishing an incredibly difficult scientific experiment, and I *must* not be disturbed.”

The students review their **predictions** as they **ask questions** about the unusual character and events so far. They **make connections** between the text and other stories they’ve read, for example, about “mad scientists” and their experiments, as they try to **predict** what Mrs Anderson is up to.

ASK QUESTIONS to support the students to make connections and predictions.

- Were you correct in your predictions?
- What new questions did you have as you read this section?
- What connections were you able to make between this text and other stories you’ve read?
- How is the author building up mystery or suspense?
- Turn to a partner and tell them what you think will happen next.

The children scuttled downstairs and sat down to do their homework. They could hear muffled bumps and yelps overhead, and a peculiar smell began drifting through the house.

Students **evaluate** the word “scuttled”, its connotations, and the feeling of fear it conveys.

DIRECT the students to the word “scuttled”.

- What does “scuttled” mean? Who or what typically scuttles? What does it imply (what does it connote)?
- What creatures scuttle?
- What can you infer about the children’s feelings from the use of the word “scuttled”?

“Of course!” cried Henry. “It’s a cocoon. She ate and ate like a greedy caterpillar and then spun a cocoon.”

The students **make connections** with their knowledge of insect life cycles to follow the children’s understanding of Mrs Anderson’s plan.

ASK QUESTIONS to probe the students’ understanding of the text.

- Were you surprised by the discovery of the cocoon?
- What evidence does Henry use to predict that Mrs Anderson wants to become a butterfly?
- What reading strategies did you use to check Henry’s conclusion about Mrs Anderson’s experiment?
- What does the adverb “thoughtfully” tell you?
- Did you guess what Henry’s plan was? What do you think will happen after the end?

“And soon she’ll become a beautiful butterfly,” said Emily. “Not that she deserves it.”

They use their vocabulary knowledge to **infer** that the use of “thoughtfully” implies that Henry has his own plan. The students **ask and answer questions** about his plan.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You asked useful questions about the text and changed your predictions as you read.
- Close reading of verbs and adverbs is an excellent way to help you understand more about characters and the action.

“No, she doesn’t,” said Henry thoughtfully. “Follow me.”

METACOGNITION

- What did you learn about your use of your own reading strategies when you read the story a second time?
- How does knowing the features of a text type help you to understand a text better?

Reading standard: by the end of year 5

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English (Level 3 – Ideas: Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics.)

Text excerpts from “The Butterfly Effect”

Mrs Anderson was a short, stout woman with curly hair and one long, thick eyebrow, which swept above her eyes, dipping in the middle to create a fierce frown.

“Harry ... Emma ... good morning,” she said sternly.

The next morning, they quietly got their breakfast, tidied their rooms, read their books ... and still Mrs Anderson hadn't come downstairs.

“Maybe she burst in the night?” Emily said hopefully.

They crept up to the attic, and Henry knocked gently on the door. There was no answer. “Mrs Anderson,” he called softly. Nothing.

“How long do you think we'll have to wait?” whispered Emily.

“Not long,” said Henry. He could see the top of the cocoon beginning to split. “Not long at all.”

Henry and Emily each raised a can of fly spray. They didn't mind waiting at all.

Examples of text characteristics

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Authors can describe a character's physical appearance by using nouns and adjectives. They can also describe the character indirectly by showing readers how the character speaks and behaves.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Describing the actions of characters in detail emphasises their responses to events. By adding detailed description, authors elaborate on the events in the text and provide insight into the characters.

IMPLICIT ENDINGS

Stories that finish just before the action is over imply what happened rather than make it explicit. An implicit ending maintains a sense of mystery or suspense. The author assumes readers are able to draw their own conclusions (infer what happens next) by using the clues they have provided and the readers' knowledge of the world. Implicit endings are a great way to keep readers interested in reading the next page, chapter, or instalment of an ongoing story.

METACOGNITION

- How have you used peer feedback to help shape your writing? Was this a useful strategy?
- How did you decide what your readers would already know? Have you given enough clues for them to work out exactly what was going on (i.e., implied)?
- You have used lots of details in your writing without using too many descriptions. How were you able to do this?

Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

PROMPT the students to describe a character to a partner.

- Choose a fictional character from literature or from your own writing.
- Describe the character's physical appearance to your partner.
- Now describe how the character moves and talks. You can do this by acting or in words.
- Give each other feedback on what you've learnt about each other's characters from these descriptions.
- How can you capture a rich description like this when you're writing?

Extend this activity if necessary: ask students to imagine what a character likes to eat, read, and play, what kind of pet they have, and what kind of car. Before asking them to describe this character, you could provide support for vocabulary development by:

- identifying the words and phrases that describe appearance in the story
- identifying the words and phrases that describe actions
- creating vocabulary sets (perhaps in the form of vocabulary maps) that include sub-categories within appearance and within actions
- adding to the vocabulary sets
- exploring further examples of the vocabulary.

DIRECT the students to locate examples of the characters actions in the text. In pairs, they can discuss how the author provided detail about what happened. Provide questions to guide their talk.

- What has the author described?
- What language features are used?
- How has the author used adverbs?
- What impact has the choice of vocabulary made?
- How has this given the reader a clear image of how the characters are feeling?

PROMPT the students to revisit their draft writing to identify places that need more detailed description. They can then recraft, using some of the language features discussed with their partner.

EXPLAIN the difference between explicit and implicit.

- In this extract, the author has implied that the children will use fly spray to kill the butterfly (Mrs Anderson). She doesn't make this explicit because she knows you'll be able to work it out. She expects you to understand what they will do with the fly spray.
- Good writers expect their readers to work some things out for themselves. They supply clues, but it's up to the reader to find and use these clues.

PROMPT the students to review places in their stories where readers can imply meaning rather than being told everything.

- Think about what you expect your readers to know and what effect you are trying to achieve.
- How have you ended your story? Would it work better with an implicit ending?
- Ask your partner to review your story and suggest places you could make some information implicit rather than explicit.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Adding more detail about the way Sharlene stands and walks gave me a better picture of her: I can imagine her now as a really mean bully.
- The way you've ended this story made me stop and reread for clues. I like having to wonder a little about what could happen next: it makes a story more interesting.

 Writing standard: by the end of year 5

 The Literacy Learning Progressions