

Pop! Pop! Pop!

Overview

This book contains two texts about making popcorn and includes a contents page. “Toni’s Popcorn” is a humorous family narrative about a girl and her younger sister who find out how *not* to make popcorn. “Mmm, Popcorn!” is a lively onomatopoeic poem that imitates the form of a recipe. An audiotape accompanies this text.

Suggested purposes

Both texts lend themselves to expressive reading and provide excellent models for writing. They have strong links to science and technology (and there is an example of making popcorn in *Making Better Sense of the Material World*). “Toni’s Popcorn” supports the comprehension strategies of making connections, hypothesising, analysing, and evaluating. “Mmm, Popcorn!” supports the comprehension strategies of making connections and analysing and synthesising. The poem could be linked to dance and musical activities.

“Toni’s Popcorn”

by Dot Meharry
illustrated by Philip Webb

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the dramatic and lively nature of the text
- the strong narrative structure
- the humour in the text and the illustrations
- the characterisation of Jo
- the expressive dialogue
- the use of italics, larger sized print, repetition, onomatopoeia, and exclamation marks for effect
- the lively verbs – “jumping”, “pushing”, “popped”, “squealed”
- the adverb “madly” on page 7
- the many alternatives for “said” – “asked”, “called”, “cried”, “laughed”, “squealed”
- the indicators of time – “After a few minutes”, “After a time”, “After a while”, “Soon”
- the contractions “couldn’t”, “wasn’t”, “won’t”, “wouldn’t”
- the variety of forms of some verbs – “laugh”, “laughed”; “make”, “making”; “popped”, “popping”; “tried”, “trying”
- the possessive apostrophe in “Toni’s”
- the “ur” sound in “burn” and “turned”.

Possible challenges

- the words “enough”, “spoonfuls”, “squealed”
- the idea of a gas stove
- the term “popping corn”.

Introducing the text

Link your introduction to the children’s experiences of making popcorn. *Who has made popcorn at home? Where did you buy the popping corn?* Briefly review the steps for making popcorn, drawing out the idea that the volume of the cooked popcorn is much greater than that of the uncooked popcorn.

During the reading

Talk about the information on the contents page. *Why is a contents page helpful? What does this contents page tell you? What page does “Toni’s Popcorn” start on?*

Talk about the use of the possessive apostrophe in “Toni’s”.

Ask the children to read the text silently, pausing at various points for discussion or to clarify any difficulties with the reading.

Ask the children to read page 3. *What have you found out about Jo?* Draw out the idea that Jo is confident about making popcorn.

Page 4 – If the children are unfamiliar with gas stoves, you may need to explain what “turned on the gas” means.

Page 5 – *How does the writer want you to read “all”? Do you think Jo is right? What could happen?*

Pages 6 and 7 – *While you’re reading these pages, think about how the writer is making the story sound exciting. What word does the writer use on page 7 to show how the popcorn was jumping?* Draw out the idea that the writer is letting the reader know that something exciting is going to happen!

Pages 8 and 9 – Encourage the children to focus on the illustrations and savour the drama before reading the text. After the reading, ask the children to tell you about the things that are happening. Draw out the idea that there are a lot of things happening at once.

Pages 10 and 11 – Review what caused the problem and what they might do about it now. *Is this how you make popcorn?*

After the reading

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen while the children reread the text with a partner, noting their use of expression and phrasing.

Discuss the personalities of Toni and Jo. *What did you think of Jo at the beginning of the story? What do you think of her now? How do you think Toni feels about her sister?*

Focus on the narrative structure. Identify the problem, the complication, and the resolution.

Talk about the ways the writer made this story sound exciting. You could focus on the vocabulary, for example, the lively verbs, the dialogue, and the adverb “madly” on page 7, or on the print features, such as the use of italics, larger sized print, and exclamation marks, or other language features, such as repetition and onomatopoeia.

Look at the indicators of time in the text. *On page 3, what part tells you when they started to make the popcorn? On page 6, when did the corn begin to pop?* Ask the children to find other examples on pages 8 and 9. Draw out the idea that phrases like this help the reader and also make the text sound more interesting.

Identify and record the alternative words for “said”. Discuss why the writer might have used them. Display the list and encourage the children to add other examples as they discover them in other texts.

Write the contractions “couldn’t”, “wasn’t”, “won’t”, and “wouldn’t” on the whiteboard. *What is the same in all these words? What would these words sound like if they were written out in full?* Ask the children to read the last two lines on page 5 using “will not” instead of “won’t”. Draw out the idea that contractions make language sound more natural.

Focus on some of the verbs in the text that occur in different forms (“laugh”, “laughed”; “make”, “making”; “popped”, “popping”; “tried”, “trying”). Create a chart with the word endings “s”, “ing”, and “ed” across the top and ask the children to fill in the other forms of these verbs. Discuss such aspects as the irregular verb “made”; the need to delete the final “e” from “make” to form “making”; changing the “y” in “try” to “ie”; or doubling the final consonant in “pop” to make “popping”.

Focus on the “ur” sound in “turned” and “burn”. List other examples on the whiteboard (“burned”, “fur”, “hurt”, “turn”, “turtle”) and ask the children to underline the “ur” sound in the words. You could investigate other ways of spelling this sound, such as “ir” (“bird”, “shirt”), “er” (“her”, “person”), and “or” (“word”, “work”) but don’t do this at this point if you think it will confuse the children.

Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audiotape. Ask the children to focus on how the reader and the sound effects make the story sound exciting.

Read “Mmm, Popcorn!” and compare the two texts.

Make popcorn.

Write instructions for making popcorn.

Think of another title for the story and/or write an alternative ending.

During shared writing, model the use of some of the text features that make this story so dramatic.

Explore where popcorn comes from and why it is called “popcorn”.

“Mmm, Popcorn!”

by Philippa Werry

illustrated by Margaret Clarkson

Text features

- the lively nature of the poem and the illustrations
- the irregular and playful use of rhyming words
- the recipe-like structure
- the many examples of onomatopoeia
- the use of repetition, exclamation marks, and variation in text size for effect
- the use of commas
- the use of an ellipsis for anticipation
- the “at” in “clatter” and “rattle”.

Possible challenges

- the speed at which the poem needs to be read to get the rhythm going
- the word “element”.

Introducing the text

This poem is ideal for reading aloud together. If you feel the children might need support for the vocabulary in the poem, make some popcorn with them first and feed in any of the words that you think might be unfamiliar, such as “oil” and “element”. If the children have read “Toni’s Popcorn”, you could use that text as a basis for a discussion about making popcorn. Tell them that the poem they are about to read tells them how to make popcorn and provides lots of sound effects along the way.

During the reading

Tell the children that before you are going to ask them to read the poem out loud, you want them to read it silently, thinking about how it might sound if it was read out loud. The examples of onomatopoeia provide opportunities for the children to practise their decoding skills. After the silent read-through, discuss any difficulties the children might have had with the vocabulary and then ask them to tell you about the text features that give clues about how the writer might want people to read this poem. You may want to draw special attention to lines 9 to 11.

Draw out the idea that the gradual increase in text size and the use of a comma and then an ellipsis create a feeling of anticipation.

Ask the children to read the poem out loud together, noting their level of involvement and use of expression.

After the reading

List the rhyming words in the poem. The writer uses rhyme in different places within lines rather than following a regular rhyme scheme. Write the words “clatter” and “rattle” on the whiteboard. *What parts of these words sound the same?*

List the examples of onomatopoeia. Talk about how they make the poem sound lively and interesting.

Talk about the structure of the poem. Draw out the idea that it’s like a recipe. Ask the children to identify the imperative verbs. *How is it like a recipe? How is it different?*

Compare the processes of making popcorn in this text and in “Toni’s Popcorn”. Draw up a comparison chart to record the children’s ideas.

Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audiotape, focusing on the use of sound effects to create atmosphere.

Read the poem “Pancake” in *Thank You*. This poem uses a similar structure.

Perform the poem for the class. Some of the children could recite the instructions, and the others could say the sound words.

Make the poem into a song, using percussion instruments for the sound words, or use it as an idea for a dance. Encourage the children to put together locomotive and non-locomotive sequences and share them with others in the class.

Ask the children to choose an example of onomatopoeia and write the word in a way that reflects its meaning.