

Overview

This is the first chapter of a humorous science-fiction story designed to “hook” year 3 students into reading chapter books by themselves. (The next three chapters are available online at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz, and hard copies of these will be published in Junior Journals 53 to 55.) In this chapter, twins Ana and Tai build a robot for a school project. Overnight, the robot gets “zapped” by lightning and comes to life, creating all kinds of problems! The chapter ends with the story hanging in suspense – and with an expectation of more trouble to follow.

As well as fostering enjoyment, this story gives students an opportunity to develop reading “stamina” on a longer text and to feel what it’s like to read a text they might otherwise not attempt. Students in your class will probably be reading at a range of levels on the colour wheel, so this teacher support material provides suggestions for how you can vary your level of support.

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

Related texts

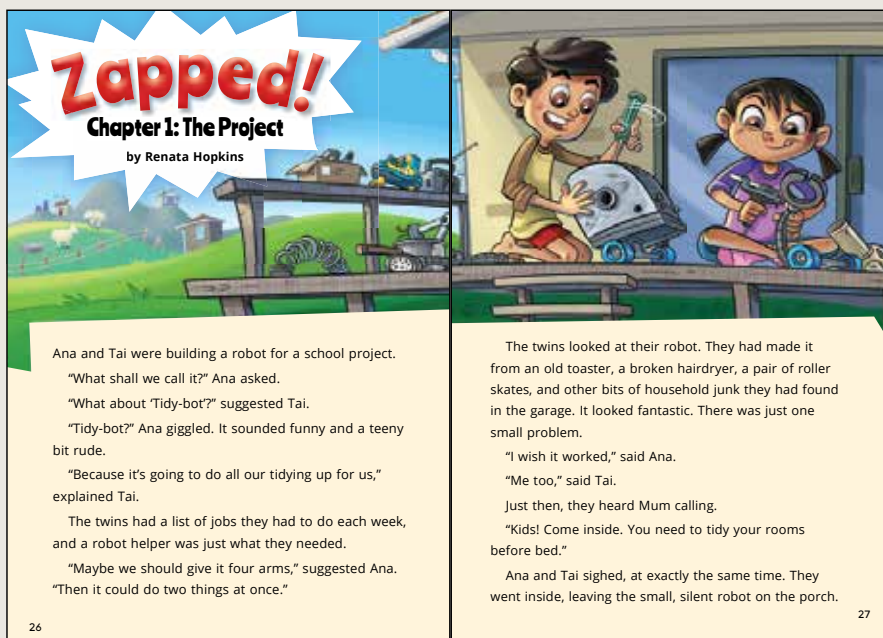
Stories with suspense, mystery, and humour: “The Desk” (JJ 38); “The Pet Day Problem”, “Taniwha Trouble” (JJ 40); “Missing” (JJ 42); “Something Strange Going On” (JJ 46); “Marcus and the Wind” (JJ 47); “Always Great, Never Late” (JJ 48); “I Spy” (JJ 50); “No Big Deal” (JJ 51)

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school, as they relate to this text, are shown in the boxes with the solid outlines. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge to form and test hypotheses and make inferences

Some unfamiliar or unexpected words and phrases including descriptive vocabulary (for example, “Tidy-bot”; “bottle-top eyes”; “bleep, bloop”; “slotted”; “blobbed”; “shrieked”; “on the loose”), the meaning of which is supported by the context, sentence structure, or illustrations



Ideas organised in paragraphs

Frequent use of dialogue, some of which is not explicitly attributed, and more than one character speaking on a page

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

The humour in the made-up words, the robot’s interpretations of the children’s instructions, and the illustrations

Visual language features, such as the exploding shape behind the title and the “zap” lines around the robot on page 28, that enhance the meaning and add drama

Several characters and events and a storyline that involves shifts in time

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Processes and strategies:
Selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment.

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

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 “the project” is and what got “zapped”

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?*)

- The students **ask questions** (who, what, where, and why) and use clues such as the overall story, the title and chapter title, the illustrations, and the unfolding storyline to find answers.
- They **make connections** to their prior knowledge and between ideas in the story to **form and test hypotheses** and **make inferences** about the storyline and the characters.
- They look for key words and phrases to help them **visualise** the events.
- They notice and enjoy the humour in the author's use of language and in the illustrations.
- They **monitor** their reading, and when something is unclear, they take action to solve the problem, for example, rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.

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

(These suggestions may be used before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases: “Tidy-bot”, “giggled”, “teeny”, “explained”, “suggested”, “hairdryer”, “household”, “exactly”, “dreamt”, “fireworks”, “volcanoes”, “lightning bolt”, “gadgets”, “Caterpillars”, “yawning”, “grumbled”, “gasped”, “wailed”, “bleeping”, “blooping”, “Usually”, “cereal”, “slotted”, “toaster head”, “puzzled”, “gripped”, “exploded”, “Meanwhile”, “scooped”, “shrieked”.

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

- when **decoding**:
 - drawing on knowledge of letter-sound relationships to work out the made-up words (“Tidy-bot”, “bleep”, “bloop”)
 - knowing that some letters and digraphs have more than one sound (“explained”, “hairdryer”; “please”, “breakfast”) to confirm attempts
 - recognising word chunks or syllables within words (“ex-plained”, “hair-dry-er”, “house-hold”, “light-ning”, “Cat-er-pill-ars”)
 - using analogies (knowledge of “high” to get “sighed”)
- when **working out word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence and the surrounding sentences
 - using the illustrations, the unfolding meaning of the story, and their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings.

Note that 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. See suggestions in “Introducing the text” and “After reading”. For more ideas, see [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#).

**Metacognition****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.

- *What helped you build a picture of the problem that was developing in the kitchen at breakfast time?*
- *How did you work out the meaning of “they both stopped dead in their tracks”?*

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction provides appropriate support for a successful first reading. Students reading at Gold or above might prefer to read the chapter without any introductory discussion.
 - Tell the students this is the first chapter of a longer story and they will be able to read the rest of the story online or in future journals. Explain that when you read a chapter book, the first chapter introduces the characters and sets the scene, giving an idea of what the whole story will be about.
 - Draw attention to the overall title (“Zapped!”), the chapter title, and the illustrations on pages 26 and 27. Encourage the students to speculate what “Zapped!” might mean. (They may notice the connection to the illustration on the front cover of the journal.)
- Prompt them to think of questions about the story (Who?, What?, Where?, Why?). Expect them to predict from the style of the illustrations that the story is likely to be humorous.
- Ask the students to share what they know about robots from books, movies, television, and the Internet (for example, what robots look like, how they communicate, and what they can do).
 - Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
 - Some students may feel confident at this point in attempting the complete chapter but others may prefer more support to “ease them in”. You could have them read page 26 and discuss the answers they have found to their questions. To provide further support, they could read page 27 and discuss why a robot might be useful. Encourage the students to think, pair, and share their predictions about what will happen next.

Reading and discussing the text

Adjust the reading task according to the students’ confidence and ability. Some students may prefer to read the complete chapter independently, but others may want more support (at least, for part of the chapter). If you have students reading below Purple, you could use a mixture of reading to and shared reading (with the students following the text and joining in with some sections). You can provide many opportunities for them to reread as they listen to the audio version.

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. Some of the suggestions below can also be used to introduce the text. Remember that with personal reading, enjoying the experience and getting the gist of the story is more important than totally accurate word-solving.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Note that much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until after they have read the text and you are discussing it as a group.

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As the students read page 26, they find the answers to their initial questions and review their predictions about what sort of story this might be (for example, true or made-up, funny or serious). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind the students of the key questions (Who?, What?, Where?, Why?). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They make connections between clues in the story (“list of jobs they had to do each week”, “a robot helper was just what they needed”, “I wish it worked”) and their prior knowledge of stories to make predictions about what will happen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You could have the students stop at the end of page 27 and talk with a partner about their predictions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students use the illustrations on pages 28 and 29 to review their predictions and then read on to find further information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt them to use the illustrations as well as the text to clarify what is happening. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students demonstrate evidence of self-monitoring and correcting. For example, on page 28, they may rerun the sentence to check the phrasing of “bottle-top eyes spin” or read on to look for more information to clarify Ana’s use of the word “Caterpillars”. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind the students of strategies they can use when the meaning is unclear. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When they turn the page, they notice the dramatic change in mood between the illustrations on pages 29 and 31 and read to find out what has caused the change.• On page 30, the students use the lively verbs and descriptive phrases to help them visualise how the robot prepares the toast and the cereal. They notice that when Ana tells the robot to “rip” the cereal open, it does exactly that. They predict there will be trouble when she asks for the peanut butter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt the students to look for key words and phrases as they visualise the chaos in the kitchen and notice the twins’ reactions. If necessary, clarify that “bleep” and “bloop” are made-up words. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On page 32, the students make connections between the disappearance of the robot and the chaos in the kitchen to infer why the twins are worried and to predict what might happen next. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask them to think about why the twins look so worried. |

Discussing the text after the first reading

- The students explain what both titles (“Zapped!” and “The Project”) mean.
- The students revisit their predictions as they recall what happened in the chapter. They look for clues on pages 30 and 31 to clarify why things go wrong when the twins give the robot instructions – for example, that it ripped open the cereal and poured the milk just like it was asked, but the twins didn’t tell it to use a bowl.
- They predict the twins will need to give the robot very clear instructions or life will continue to be very complicated.
- The students identify the “up and down” structure of the story and predict that this is likely to continue in the next chapter. They think, pair, and share their ideas about how the story might develop.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose.
- Ask the students to revisit their earlier predictions about the story and to summarise the key events so far. *Why did the robot become a problem? Why couldn't the twins stop Tidy-bot?* Prompt the students to look for clues in the episode about the Rice Delights and the peanut butter.
- Prompt them to think critically: *What do you think the twins might need to do if they are to keep Tidy-bot under control?*
- Draw attention to the narrative structure: *What do you notice about the good and bad things that happen in this story? How did this help you think about what might happen next?* Encourage the students to predict how the story will develop from this point. *Where do you think the robot has gone?*

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students identify words and phrases (for example, “The robot looked at the bag, puzzled”, “exploded”, “Uh-oh”, “Before Ana and Tai could stop it”) that helped them notice that the robot didn’t understand the twin’s instructions.
- The students identify a challenge in the text and explain how they solved it, for example, noticing the references to Ana being “still half asleep” and “yawning” (and possibly, making connections to their own experiences of waking up) to work out that “Caterpillars” was just an odd word that Ana said and not an important part of the story.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- *When did you start to notice what was going wrong with the robot? What helped you?*
- Ask the students to identify a challenge they had when reading and how they solved or attempted to solve it. Listen in and note anything that you might want to return to in a subsequent lesson.

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can 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.
- Before reading further chapters, the students could write the next part of the story, exploring where the robot has gone and the adventures it has.
- Provide opportunities for students to reread this chapter and to read the subsequent chapters as well as other mystery stories (see “Related texts”) and stories about robots. Help them find similar sorts of stories in the school library (in picture books as well as chapter books) and build up a class list of favourites, including e-books and audio books.
- The students could read their favourite parts of the chapter aloud to each other or use parts of the story, for example, pages 30–31, for readers’ theatre.
- Have the students choose some of the misinterpreted instructions on pages 30–31 to draw and write about. They could describe what Tai and Ana wanted the robot to do and what Tidy-bot actually did. Encourage them to generate more ideas about what the robot could misinterpret.
- They could design their own robot made of household junk, adding labels to describe the items they have used and what the robot is able to do.
- Use the illustrations as an opportunity to explore language. For example, Have the students work with a partner to write words and phrases that describe how the children are feeling in the dramatically contrasting illustrations on pages 29 and 31.