

Focus Question:

What do you learn about Hansel's and Gretel's characters from what they say and do in the story?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction / Fairy Tale

Hansel and Gretel is a retelling of the classic German fairy tale in which a brother and sister find themselves held captive by a deceitful and wicked old woman. Will the clever pair of siblings be able to escape before the old woman's unsavory plan can unfold? The book can be used to teach students how to make inferences and draw conclusions and to understand the use of quotations in dialogue.

The book and lesson are also available for levels O and U.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Make inferences and draw conclusions
- ☐ Describe information provided by illustrations
- ☐ Recognize and use quotation marks
- ☐ Identify and use synonyms and antonyms

Materials

- ☐ Book: *Hansel and Gretel* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Make inferences / draw conclusions, quotation marks, synonyms and antonyms worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

Words to Know

Story critical: *frustrated* (adj.), *gemstones* (n.), *remarkable* (adj.), *stepmother* (n.), *treasure* (n.), *wicked* (adj.)

Enrichment: *echoed* (v.), *glimpse* (n.), *sarled* (v.)

- Academic vocabulary:** *enough* (adj.), *finally* (adv.), *instead* (adv.), *remember* (v.), *suggest* (v.), *through* (prep.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to name different fairy tales, and list the titles on the board. Point out to students that fairy tales are a genre of literature. Have students discuss some of the similarities among all fairy tales. Explain that many fairy tales have outlandish plots and are written to teach the reader a lesson.
- Write the word *wicked* on the board and read it aloud. Have students work in small groups to discuss the meaning of the word *wicked*. Explain to students that when someone or something is wicked, it is very mean or bad. Point out that oftentimes in a fairy tale, one or more characters are wicked and try to trick or do harm to the main character or characters. Ask students to cite examples of wicked characters from familiar fairy tales. Explain that students will be reading a fairy tale that includes a very wicked character.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Hansel and Gretel*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

Explain to students that engaged readers *summarize*, or create a brief overview, as they read. Explain that summarizing helps readers sequence the events in a story. Point out that a summary often answers the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Create a chart on the board with the headings *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Read aloud a summary from the back of a familiar book. Ask students what information is included in the summary and what information is omitted. Remind students that a summary only includes the most important details.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Make inferences / draw conclusions

- Explain to students that authors may give information to readers without explicitly writing it in the story. Discuss how they provide readers with clues and how readers use those clues and what they already know to make inferences or draw conclusions about what is happening in the story.
- Read page 4 aloud to students as they follow along. Point out that on the basis of this information, readers can conclude that Hansel is a clever boy. Discuss how even though Hansel is very hungry and wants to eat the bread his father gives him, he decides to use it to make a trail as he and Gretel walk farther into the woods. Point out that the author does not state this information directly, but readers can draw this conclusion on the basis of other information in the story.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word, its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Hansel and Gretel’s escape. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *Why does Hansel use the bread to make a trail of crumbs rather than eating it?* (level 2) page 4
- *Why does Hansel and Gretel’s father lead them into the forest?* (level 1) page 5
- *Why do Hansel and Gretel go into the stranger’s house?* (level 1) page 7

- *What happens to Hansel and Gretel once they enter the old woman’s house?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *What can you tell about Gretel on the basis of her actions to free Hansel from the cage?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *Why does the old woman want to fatten up Hansel?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How do Hansel and Gretel find their father again?* (level 2) pages 14 and 15

Text Features: Illustrations

Explain that illustrations, or drawn pictures, provide readers with detailed images of the characters and setting of the story. Emphasize that they also help explain the plot to readers. Have students work with a partner to review the illustration on page 8. Ask students: *What information is shown in this illustration that is not written in the story? How does this illustration make the text come to life?* Have students review other illustrations in the book and discuss in groups how they help create strong images and aid the reader in understanding the story.

Skill Review

- Remind students that a summary of a story describes the most important events and characters. Have students work in groups to describe the characters in the story and identify the most important events. Direct them back to the chart on the board and review that a summary often includes *who, what, when, where, and why*. Invite students to share details with the rest of the class, and record this information on the board.
- Have students work in groups to create a summary of what they are reading, referring to the list on the board. Call on groups to share their summary with the rest of the class.
- Model making inferences and drawing conclusions. **Think-aloud:** *As I read the story, I notice that the author does not give all the details about why the old woman is keeping Hansel in the cage. I know that the woman keeps feeding him sweets and wants him to get fat. I also read that the old woman tells Gretel to boil a pot of water and then goes over to open the cage. On the basis of this information, I can infer that the old woman wants to cook Hansel. Although the author does not say this directly, I can use the clues from the story to draw this conclusion.*
- Model how to complete the [make-inferences / draw-conclusions worksheet](#). Have students identify details from the story and prior knowledge they have about those details. Then, have students make inferences on the basis of that information. Have students discuss their inferences with a partner.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer:

Make inferences / draw conclusions

Review the make-inferences / draw-conclusions worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to discuss their inferences as a class and share why and how they made those inferences.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Sample: *On the basis of Hansel and Gretel's actions and words in the story, we know they are thoughtful, clever, brave, and so on.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Quotation marks

- Write the following sentence on the board: *"When she tries to grab your arm, give her this instead," Gretel whispered.* Read the sentence aloud and ask students who is speaking and what she is saying. Circle the quotation marks and explain that they are placed before and after the words spoken by the character. Point to the comma and explain that the comma is placed inside the second set of quotation marks.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Father whispered, "This is our last bit of bread."* Have students explain how this sentence differs from the first. Point out that the quotation marks are still around the speaker's words but that the comma is now placed before the spoken words, and the period at the end of the sentence is placed inside the quotation marks.

- **Check for understanding:** Choose several sentences from the story that include quotation marks and write them on the board without the quotation marks or other correct punctuation. Invite volunteers to the board to add the quotation marks and other punctuation as needed.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **quotation marks worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Synonyms and antonyms

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Then his happy smile fell.* Underline the word *happy* and ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*joyful*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*. Ask students to name words that mean the opposite of happy (*sad, upset, and so on*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Use a thesaurus to look up the word *happy* and show how a thesaurus is used. Give students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *happy* and have them confirm the synonyms the class suggested. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them find antonyms for the word. Explain to students that some dictionaries also list synonyms and antonyms for words.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in groups to reread pages 3 through 7 and locate five adjectives. Then, invite students to generate a synonym and an antonym for each word. Have groups share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.