



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Fantasy Page Count: 16 Word Count: 1,169

Book Summary

The Little Fir Tree is an adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Fir Tree*. It is written from the point of view of a fir tree that aspires to be taken home by people and decorated for a Christmas celebration. Finally he gets his chance and experiences the happiest two days of his life as he watches the family open gifts, laugh, and sing. Although the tree experiences some loneliness when he is placed outside, he finds hope in sharing his adventures with the garden plants. Illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions to better understand the text
- Analyze characters in the text
- Identify and understand the use of pronouns
- Alphabetize content vocabulary

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Little Fir Tree* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Prediction, analyze characters, pronouns, alphabetical order worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

- **Content words:** adventures, bothersome, boughs, evergreen, finery, fir, flitting, glorious, ignored, magical, marveled, ornaments, sprigs, trembled, waning, waxing

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to think about the types of winter holiday traditions in their family. Invite them to describe these traditions.
- Discuss the tradition of decorating holiday trees that some families participate in during the winter season. Encourage students who have seen Christmas trees to describe what they looked like. Ask students what they think happens to the trees after the holiday season is over.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their book. Guide them to the front and back covers of the book and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what kind of book this is 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: **Make, revise, and confirm predictions**

- Explain that good readers often make predictions about what will happen in a book based on what the characters say, do, and think in the story. As they read the story, readers revise or confirm their predictions based on what they learn from reading. Before reading a book, readers can use the title and illustrations as the basis for making predictions.
- Model using the title and cover illustrations to make a prediction as you preview the book.
Think-aloud: Let's look at the front cover. I see four people in the snow, looking at a fir tree. The man has an axe in his hand. I know that an axe can be used to cut down trees. Why do you think they would cut down the tree? Perhaps the man on the cover is the father and all these people are a family. Since it seems as if the people are having a fun time together, maybe the family is looking for a tree to cut down and take home to decorate. I'll have to read the book confirm or revise my predictions.
- Create a four-column chart on the board with the headings *Make, Revise, Confirm, and Actual*. Have students preview all the illustrations in the story. Have volunteers use the illustrations to create a possible beginning, middle, and end for the story. Model writing a prediction in the first column (*Make*).
- Introduce and explain the [prediction worksheet](#). Invite students to fill out the first column with a prediction before they begin reading.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze characters**

- Explain that there are many ways to learn about a character in a story. One way is to look at a character's words or thoughts. Another way is to think about the things the character does. Tell students that a character's words, thoughts, and actions are how the author allows readers to get to know the character's feelings, relationships, and the changes they may undergo during the course of the story.
- Discuss how a character's feelings can change throughout the story. Explain that story clues lead readers to understand what a character is feeling, and that good readers look for these clues to identify any changes that might take place.
- Ask students to turn to page 4. Read the first page of the story aloud while they follow along silently.
- Model how to analyze a character based on the character's actions.
Think-aloud: On page 4, the little fir tree spends his time admiring his neighbors. He wants to be tall and grand, like the oak tree. This tells me that the tree seems jealous of the other trees.
- Have students identify other information on page 4 that reflects how the little tree is feeling jealous (he watched other trees be taken away each year, he thought the trees taken away must be special, the tree's hope was to be special too). Invite students to suggest other possible ways the fir tree might be feeling (self-conscious).
- Introduce and explain the [analyze characters worksheet](#). Have students record the information from the discussion on their worksheet.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following words from the content vocabulary on the board: *sprigs, boughs, fir, evergreen*.
- Give groups of students a large piece of blank paper. Have them divide the paper into four sections. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Have groups discuss and create a definition for each word using students' prior knowledge.
- Show students the illustration on the front cover of the book. Use the illustration to identify each of the vocabulary words. Have students compare the definition of each word from the illustration with their prior knowledge of the word.
- Review or explain that the glossary and a dictionary contain a list of vocabulary words and their definitions.
- Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to find a word's meaning. Have students locate the glossary at the back of the book. Invite a volunteer read the definition for *sprigs* in the glossary. Then have students follow along on page 8 as you read the sentence in which the word *sprigs* is found to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.
- Have the groups use the vocabulary words on the board in the order in which they are written to create a story about a fir tree. Have each student use one vocabulary word to add on to the story. Repeat the activity after reading the book to check for student understanding of the vocabulary words.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book, making predictions about what will happen in the story based on what the characters say, do, and think. Remind them to revise or confirm their predictions as they learn more about the events of the story and as they track changes in the character's feelings during the course of the story.


During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 9. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
- **Model making, revising, and confirming a prediction.**
Think-aloud: *I predicted that the people on the book's cover were a family looking for a tree to take home and decorate for Christmas. This prediction was confirmed. I will put a check mark next to my prediction in the box labeled Confirm and write what happened under the heading labeled Actual. What story clues lead readers to think that the holiday being celebrated is Christmas? (a decorated tree, presents placed under the tree, the mention of Santa Claus). Since the holiday celebrated is likely Christmas, this makes me wonder what will happen to the little fir tree once Christmas is over. As I read the chapter titles in the table of contents, I see that the next chapter is titled "A Lonely Feeling". What might happen that makes the tree feel lonely? Maybe the little fir is thrown away after the celebration is over. I will write this prediction on my chart under the heading Make. I will continue reading to find out.*
- Ask students to explain how the tree's feelings changed from the beginning of the story (he became hopeful and then proud). Invite students to share information from the book that supports each feeling (hopeful: he stopped trembling so a family would pick him, he was sure this was the year to be chosen; proud: the bulbs made him glow inside and out, his deepest center warmed, he would protect the presents). Have students record this information on their worksheet.
- **Check for understanding:** Encourage students to use the information they've read and discussed to revise their predictions. Have them write their new prediction under the heading *Revise* on their worksheet. Remind them that if their first prediction has been confirmed or has not yet been proven, they may write another prediction in the *Make* section of the worksheet. Then have students read to page 11. When they have finished reading, have them share their predictions

and the outcome of their predictions. Remind them to revise or confirm their predictions and write what actually happened.

- Invite students to read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to make, revise, and confirm their predictions as they read the rest of the story.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read the words and figure out their meaning.

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.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask students to explain how the strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions helped them understand the story.
- **Think-aloud:** *I predicted that the little fir tree would be thrown away once the celebration is over. I learned that the tree was placed outside after the holiday was over. I will write this information next to my prediction under the heading Actual. Why wouldn't it be correct to say that the tree was thrown away? (the tree stayed near the house and garden).*
- Ask students to share their predictions about what they thought might happen in the story. Ask them to compare their predictions with what actually happened in the story and to share any predictions that were confirmed. Reassure students by explaining that predicting correctly is not the purpose of this reading strategy. Making, revising, and confirming predictions are ways to organize information to understand and remember what they have read, as well as make the reading more enjoyable.
- Have students fill out the last column of their worksheet, *Actual*, to explain the events that actually happened in the book.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the feelings of the little fir tree that were identified from the first chapter (self-conscious, jealous). Discuss the information from the story students wrote on their chart that supports the feelings. Then review how those feelings changed by the end of page 9 (the fir tree was hopeful that it would be picked by a family, and then it became proud when the family took it home and decorated it). Discuss the information from the story on their chart that supports these feelings.
- Discuss how events that happened in the story caused the fir tree's feelings to change.
- **Independent practice:** Have students reread the last two chapters of the story. Ask them to think about the events in each chapter and how they affected the feelings of the fir tree. Have students complete the [analyze characters worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring Understanding:** The little fir tree wanted to be like the other trees that were taken away each year. In the end, it learned to appreciate what it already had. Now that you know this, how might your thinking change the next time you identify something you want to have?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Pronouns


- Write the following sentences on the board: *The father cut the tree down. The father cut it down.* Ask a volunteer to explain what the word *it* represents (the tree).
- Explain or review that a pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. Examples of pronouns include: *I, you, he, she, it, they, we, me, him, her, us, and them.*
- Ask students to turn to page 10. Write the following sentence from the book on the board: *They kept mentioning Santa Claus.* Ask students to identify the pronoun (*They*) and have a volunteer

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

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underline it on the board. Ask which noun *They* replaces (*The family*). Ask students to identify the proper noun in the sentence (*Santa Claus*). Have a volunteer repeat the sentence using a pronoun in place of the proper noun *Santa Claus*. (*They kept mentioning him.*) Write that sentence under the first example.

- Discuss the reason authors use pronouns in the place of nouns (to make the writing flow better, to avoid repeating the same words, to make the paragraph sound better, and so on).
- Ask students to suggest sentences that contain two or more nouns. Write each sentence on the board. Invite volunteers to rewrite the sentence, replacing the nouns with the appropriate pronouns. Repeat this activity, changing pronouns nouns to pronouns as time allows.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students underline all the pronouns in the book. Then have them write the noun each pronoun represents above the underlined word. If time allows, discuss their answers.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [pronouns worksheet](#). When they have finished, review answers aloud.

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Write the vocabulary words *boughs*, *bothersome*, and *adventures* on the board. Ask students to identify which word comes first in alphabetical order (*adventures*). Have them explain why the word *adventures* comes first (the beginning letter *a* comes before the beginning letter *b* of the other two words).
- Have a student read the two words that begin with the letter *b*. Ask students to identify which word comes first in alphabetical order (*bothersome*). Review or explain that if the beginning letters are the same, the first subsequent letter that is different determines the alphabetical order. Ask a volunteer to explain why the word *bothersome* comes before the word *boughs* (the third letters determine the alphabetical order).
- Write the words *finery* and *fir* on the board. Ask students to identify which word comes first in alphabetical order (*finery*) and why it comes first (the third letters determine the alphabetical order).
- **Check for understanding:** Write the vocabulary words *waning*, *marveled*, *magical*, and *waxing* on the board. Have students write the words in alphabetical order on a separate piece of paper. When students are finished, discuss their answers.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [alphabetical order worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students also take home their prediction sheets and explain to someone at home the process of making, revising, and confirming predictions.

Extend the Reading

Writing and Art Connection

Discuss how this book was written from the point of view of the little fir tree. Have students write a story about the same events through the eyes of the children in the family. Discuss how their point of view might be different from that of the little fir tree. If time allows, invite students to illustrate and share their work.

Social Studies Connection

Have students research winter holiday traditions around the world. Provide a list of holidays for students to choose from, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Holi, Ramadan, Chusok, and Thanksgiving. Ask students to research elements of each holiday celebration, such as food, clothing, activities, and decorations. Invite them to share their findings in the form of an oral presentation.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- make, revise, and confirm predictions about fictional text while reading
- analyze the words, thoughts, and actions of the book's main character; identify changes in the character's feelings in a discussion and on a worksheet
- understand and use pronouns within sentences in a discussion and on a worksheet
- understand how to alphabetize content vocabulary in a discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**