



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Historical Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,500

Book Summary

The Message takes place in the 1940s in Caen, France, during Hitler's reign over Europe during World War II. Three young, brave French Resistance workers meet privately to relay important information to other Resistance workers. Using a homemade radio transmitter, they broadcast lifesaving information to help liberate France—but not without facing grave danger. Illustrations and maps 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 understand text
- Analyze characters in text
- Understand the use of a dash as punctuation
- Identify similes

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Message* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- World map
- Prediction, analyze characters, dash, similes 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

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

- Content words:

Story Critical: *alias* (n.), *bunkers* (n.), *clandestine* (adj.), *fabricated* (v.), *liberate* (v.), *reinforcements* (n.)

Enrichment: *aerial* (adj.), *askew* (adj.), *blackout* (n.), *concealed* (v.), *dictator* (n.), *dispatched* (v.), *pungent* (adj.), *scrutinized* (v.), *steeled* (v.), *vacant* (adj.), *warily* (adv.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students a world map and ask a volunteer to locate France on the map. Point to northwestern France, Caen, and the English Channel. Ask students to share what they know about France.
- Discuss World War II, Adolf Hitler, and the German occupation of Europe during the height of the war. Invite students to talk about what they already know about this time in history. Ask them if they have heard of the French Resistance, and discuss the dangerous nature of these people's actions.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. 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 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).
- Ask students to turn to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Make, revise, and confirm predictions**

- Explain to students that good readers often make predictions about what will happen in a book based on the series of events and 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 illustrations to make a prediction as you preview the book.
Think-aloud: Let's look at the illustration on page 5. I see a young man who is peering suspiciously out of a door. I also see two children—a girl and a boy—next to the door with a lantern. It looks as if those children want to go inside the building. Their faces appear to be anxious, as if they are afraid of being caught. The title of the book is The Message. I wonder if the boy and girl are meeting the young man to deliver an important message. If so, it seems as though delivering this message might be dangerous. I predict that the boy and girl successfully deliver the important message to the young man. I'll have to read the book to confirm or revise my prediction. Making predictions helps me better enjoy the story as I anticipate what might happen next.
- Create a four-column chart on the board with the headings *Make, Revise, Confirm, and Actual*. Model writing a prediction in the first column, *Make*. (For example: The boy and girl deliver an important message to the young man.)
- Discuss with students that the reasons behind their predictions are what make their predictions valuable.
- Introduce and explain the **prediction worksheet**. Have students preview the covers and title page of the book. Invite them to make a prediction before they begin reading and write it on their worksheet in the *Make* column.
- 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 examine a character's words or thoughts. Another way is to examine the actions of the character. Explain to students that an author uses a character's words, thoughts, and actions to give the reader insight into a character's personality, relationships, motivations, and the conflicts he or she may face.
- Ask students to turn to page 4. Read pages 4 and 5 of the story aloud while they follow along silently.
- Model how to analyze a character based on his or her actions.
Think-aloud: As I read these pages, I found out that Aimee is a young girl who worked for the French Resistance, a secret group that worked against Hitler during World War II. She was carefully leading a younger boy who needed help finding the location to meet with another Resistance worker. Based on these clues, Aimee appears to be a brave person. This information provides insight into Aimee's personality.
- Have students reread pages 4 and 5. Discuss what the stranger's actions reflect about his personality (careful, distrusting).
- Introduce and explain the **analyze characters worksheet**. Have students write the information from the discussion on their worksheet.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Cut out pages 5 and 8 from an extra copy of the book. Write the following vocabulary words on the board: *warily*, *scrutinized*, and *clandestine*.
- Ask students if they have ever met someone in a situation when they were unsure of what might happen. Show them the illustration from page 5. Talk about facial expressions and other clues from the illustration that show the people are nervous and unsure. Invite them to share what they think might be happening. Point to the word *warily* on the board. Underneath the word, write the following sentence on the board: *He hesitated, then warily opened the door.* Ask students what they think the word *warily* might mean in this context.
- Show students the illustration from page 8. Point out the dim lantern and the bale of hay to sit on. Ask students to explain what they think the people in the picture might be doing (having a secret meeting). Point out their body language and facial clues, and discuss with students their meaning. Ask students if they know a word that means *secret* or *undercover*. Point to the word *clandestine* on the board.
- Have students turn to the glossary or a dictionary and read the definitions for *warily* and *clandestine*. Have them compare those definitions with the definitions that were discussed.
- Showing both illustrations from the book, ask students to explain what they know about the word *scrutinized*. Tell them to keep in mind the definitions just discussed for the words *warily* and *clandestine*. Write the following sentence on the board: *She watched as the stranger scrutinized Jacques's appearance.* Discuss the context clues from the words in the sentence and illustrations. Then have students turn to the glossary or a dictionary to read the definition of *scrutinized*.

Set the Purpose

- As students read the book, encourage them to make 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.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 6 to the end of page 12. Encourage those students who finish early to go back and reread.
- **Model making a prediction.**
Think-aloud: *I predicted that the boy and girl successfully deliver the important message to the young man. As I read, I learned that the boy, Jacques, was able to deliver his important message to Pierre. However, it appears that being in Pierre's company could be very dangerous. I inferred this information because when Aimee entered the barn, she scanned the interior for potential hiding spots in case the German soldiers should appear. I predict that German soldiers find these Resistance workers before they are finished with their meeting. I will write this prediction on my chart in the Make column.*
- Ask students to tell why Pierre might be considered to be brave. (He knew the danger he was facing but wanted to help the Resistance anyway.) Have students write the information from the discussion on their analyze characters worksheet.
- **Check for understanding:** Encourage students to use the information they've read and discussed to make, revise, and/or confirm their prediction. Have them write a new or revised prediction on their worksheet. Model for students how to think through whether their prediction was confirmed, and if not, why not. Help them to think about whether the reasons for their prediction were valid.
- Have students read to the end of page 14. When they have finished reading, have them share the outcome of their prediction(s). Remind them to revise or confirm their predictions and write what actually happened.

- Ask students to explain how Jacques's personality is different from Pierre's. Discuss how they are both brave, but in different ways. (Pierre is resourceful and smart, but cautious; Jacques is loyal and passionate, but not as cautious.) Encourage students to write the information discussed in the character traits section on their analyze characters worksheet. Then have them write clues from the text that support their answers on their worksheet. Have students share their responses from the text.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to make, revise, and/or 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 each word and figure out its 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

- **Think-aloud:** *I predicted that German soldiers would find the Resistance workers before they finished their meeting. My prediction turned out to be partially correct. I learned that German soldiers did come to the barn and that Pierre, Aimee, and Jacques had to hide. However, the soldiers did not find them. They were able to bravely continue their meeting once they came out of hiding, and the message was successfully sent on Pierre's radio. I will write this information next to my prediction under the heading Actual.*
- Ask students to share their prediction(s) 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.
- Ask students to explain how the strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions helped them enjoy the story.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the character traits students identified and wrote on their analyze characters worksheet.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the analyze characters worksheet by identifying additional character traits for Aimee (careful, sense of humor, doubtful, nervous, protective) and clues in the story that support these traits. Have them write the information on their analyze characters worksheet.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, three characters bravely faced danger for the opportunity to help others escape German occupation. Now that you know this information, is placing your life in danger a wise thing to do in an effort to save many lives?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Dash

- Review or explain that a *dash* (—) is a punctuation mark used to indicate a break or omission. It is also used to clarify information within a sentence.
- Direct students to page 12 in the book. Write the following sentences on the board: *But I count steps every day—how many steps across a room, or to the barn—I can remember any number of steps.* Ask students how the dash is used in this instance (to clarify how Jacques counts steps).
- Direct students to page 13. Write the following sentences on the board: *"Radio? But how will we—" Jacques froze.* Ask students how the dash is used in this instance (to show a break at the end of the sentence; Jacques was interrupted).

- Review or explain that *hyphens* are used in compound adjectives, such as *German-occupied France*. Write this phrase on the board. Point out that hyphens are shorter in length and are used to connect two words. Remind students not to confuse a dash with a hyphen.
- Direct students to page 6 in the book. Write the following sentences on the board: “I’m Jacques La—” “Ah-ah-ah,” interrupted Pierre. Ask a volunteer to come to the board and circle the dash (after the words *Jacques La*). Ask students how the dash is used in this instance (to show that Jacques was interrupted). Point out the hyphens in Pierre’s words: *Ah-ah-ah*.



Check for understanding: Have students find and circle the dashes on page 14, and have them explain how the dash is used in each instance. Point out that there is one use of a hyphen on page 14 as well.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [dash worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: **Similes**

- Have students turn to page 4. Write the following sentence on the board: “Come in,” he said in a voice as stiff and cold as the onshore breeze. Have students explain what is being compared in this sentence (a voice to an onshore breeze). Have them identify the signal word (*as*).
- Review or explain that a *simile* makes a comparison by using the word *like* or *as*. Write the words *like* and *as* on the board. Tell students that these words are often signals that they are reading a simile.
- Have students turn to page 11. Read the first two lines aloud while students follow along silently. Ask students to identify the simile. Have students tell what is being compared in this sentence (the German patrol to hawks). Have them identify the signal word (*like*).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to create their own similes. Have them write them on a separate piece of paper to share with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [similes worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to 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 worksheet and explain to someone the process of making, revising, and confirming predictions.

Extend the Reading

Expository Writing Connection

Have students research the French Resistance during World War II. Have them write a report telling who these people were, what they did, and how their actions contributed to history.

Math Connection

Have students review the *Try It!* box on page 12. Take students to an open field to have them conduct the experiment on their own. Have students take rulers or meter sticks with them to measure their strides. Discuss the importance of consistency of the size of their steps. Have them work in pairs to experiment together until they can reach the same spot consistently.

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 reasonable predictions and then modify and/or confirm those predictions during discussion and on a worksheet
- analyze the words, thoughts, and actions of the main character; identify changes in a character's personality during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify the use of dashes as punctuation; distinguish dashes from hyphens during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify similes in the book and tell what is being compared during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

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