

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Adventure Page Count: 16 Word Count: 1,147

Book Summary

In this book from The Hollow Kids series, April Fool's Day pranks are disrupting the entire school, and Principal Taylor isn't happy about it. Worst of all, innocent people are being framed as pranksters! *April Fool's* follows Qynn and Sarah as they attempt to discover the culprit and find themselves in the basement of the school with another mystery on their hands. Students will enjoy detailed illustrations that support this suspenseful and exciting text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions

Objectives

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions
- Analyze plot to understand text
- Identify and use contractions
- Identify and use synonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*April Fool's* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Sheets of poster board
- Thesauri
- *Analyze plot, contractions, synonyms worksheets*
- *Discussion cards*



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the 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: *evidence* (n.), *innocence* (n.), *prank* (n.), *protests* (n.), *punishment* (n.), *stifle* (v.)
 Enrichment: *bologna* (n.), *corralled* (v.), *fluorescent* (adj.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the phrase *April Fool's Day* on the board. Ask students to share what they already know about April Fool's Day.
- Explain to students that April Fool's Day is not an official holiday, but it is celebrated on April first in the United States and many European countries. Explain to students that April Fool's is a light-hearted day in which people play pranks, or tricks, on one another.

- Write the word *prank* on the board. Ask students to share what they know about the word *prank*. Have students share experiences of either arranging a prank or being the victim of a prank. Ask students if they have ever been blamed for a prank they did not play. Discuss with students the difference between pranks that are meant to be lighthearted and funny and pranks that are mean-spirited. Explain to students that April Fool's Day is a day for creating humor and fun.
- Explain to students they will be reading a story about a school where someone has pulled many April Fool's pranks, and the principal is not happy about it.

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 (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, and illustrator's name).

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

- Explain to students that effective readers pause often while reading to guess, or predict, what will happen next in the story. This strategy helps readers to understand, remember, and enjoy what they have read.
- Explain to students that often, a table of contents is a helpful tool in gaining clues about what a book might be about and helping the reader make predictions. Point out that *April Fool's* does not have a table of contents. Ask students to suggest other aspects of the book they could use to make initial predictions (covers, title page, illustrations, and so on).
- Model making predictions.
Think-aloud: *One way to make initial predictions is to preview the illustrations and look for clues. As I look at the cover of this book, I see two girls who look nervous and scared. I also see a man walking with a flashlight. The girls seem to be worried about the man finding them. I notice one girl is holding a bag in her hand and seems to be trying to hide it. Since I know the title of this book is April Fool's, I wonder if these girls are worried about being caught for the pranks they have played. On the basis of the clues I see in this illustration, I predict the girls played pranks on their classmates and they are trying to hide the evidence. Maybe the man is the janitor and he is searching for the students who pulled the pranks. As I continue to read, I will pause often to reflect on my predictions. If my predictions are correct, I will confirm them. If my predictions are incorrect, I will revise them. When making predictions, it is not important whether the prediction is correct or not, it is only important that it is made on the basis of the information provided in the story. Making, revising, and confirming predictions will help me understand, remember, and enjoy what I have read.*
- Have students share their predictions on the basis of the cover-page illustration. Remind students that the accuracy of their prediction is not as important as being able to support the prediction with clues from the text and illustrations.
- 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 plot**

- Explain or review that fictional stories contain various story elements including *characters*, *plot*, and *setting*. Write the word *plot* on the board. Ask students to share their definitions of the word *plot*. Guide them to the understanding that the plot is made up of all of the events that happen in the story.

- Point out to students that the plot of a story can be broken down into five parts. Explain that a well-written story contains all five aspects and that identifying parts of the plot helps a reader to understand and remember the text. Write the following information on the board:
 1. Introduction: Usually describes the setting and characters
 2. Rising Action: Introduces the problem and explains how the characters plan to solve it
 3. Climax: The most exciting part of the text, in which the problem is often solved
 4. Falling Action: Explains what happens as a result of the character's response to the problem
 5. Resolution: Loose ends are tied up and the book ends
- Review the above information with students. Introduce and explain the [analyze plot worksheet](#). Explain to students they will be identifying the five elements of plot as they read the story.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following story-critical words on the board: *evidence, innocence, protests, punishment*. Read the words aloud with students and ask them to share what they know about each word. Point out to students that using familiar words might help them identify the meaning of each word. (For instance, the root word of *punishment* is *punish*.)
- Write each of the words listed on the board on separate sheets of poster board and hang the posters in various places around the classroom. Have students work in small groups and assign each group a poster. Have students discuss what they know about the meaning of the word and write or draw a definition on the poster board. Rotate the groups and have them repeat the process with the remaining words.
- Review all four words as a class. Read the students' definitions aloud and discuss their prior knowledge. Create a single definition for each word and write it on the board.
- Have each student work with a partner and use each word in a complete sentence.
- Have a volunteer read the definition for each word in the glossary. Compare students' definitions with the glossary definitions. Use the comparison to modify the definition for each word or phrase on the board.

Set the Purpose

- Remind students to pause as they read to create, revise, and confirm predictions on the basis of clues found in the story. Encourage students to identify and analyze elements of plot.

During Reading


Student Reading



Guide the reading: Have students read pages 3 through 6. Have students underline or circle any words, phrases, or clues in the illustrations that help them predict what will happen next. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.

- Model making, revising, and confirming predictions.
Think-aloud: *After reading pages 3 through 6, I will pause to consider the predictions I have already made and to make new predictions about the remainder of the story. Before beginning the story, I predicted the two girls on the cover page were guilty of pulling the April Fool's pranks at the school. I predicted they were hiding the evidence and were afraid of being caught by the janitor. My prediction that the girls were guilty of pulling the pranks was incorrect. I learned the girls were called to the principal's office, along with many other students, and were blamed for pranks they did not arrange. On the basis of this information, I must revise my prediction. I read the girls received a strange phone call with an unknown voice telling them to look in the basement of the school. On the phone call, the girls also heard the sound of children's laughter. Because the cover page illustration shows the girls in the basement of the school, I predict the girls will listen to the voice on the phone and go to the basement. I also predict they will find some kind of clue in the basement about who arranged all of the pranks in the school.*

- Invite students to share any clues they found in the story and share their predictions. Ask students if there are any predictions they need to revise. Remind students it is not important that their predictions are correct, only that their predictions are formed from clues in the story.
- Have students turn to a partner and share their predictions about the remainder of the story. Remind students to support their predictions with clues from the story.
- Direct students to the analyze plot worksheet. Review the five elements of plot as a class. Say: *After reading the first few pages of this story, I will pause to consider what has occurred so far in the plot of the story. I know the first element of plot is the introduction. Remind students that the introduction usually describes the setting and the characters.*
- Ask students to share their thoughts about the introduction element of the plot. Have them record this information on their analyze plot worksheet.
- Review the second element of plot, rising action. Remind students that the rising action in a story introduces the problem and explains how the characters plan to solve it. Say: *I know the problem in this story is that someone has pulled a bunch of April's Fools pranks and many students who did not do the pranks are being blamed. I also know the girls receive a strange phone call with a voice that tells them to look in the basement, followed by the sound of children's laughter. I do not know yet how the girls plan to solve these mysteries.*
- Have students reread page 6. Point out that although the problem in the story is clear, we do not yet know how the characters plan to solve the problem. Explain that the rising action of the story has been introduced but will not be complete until we have a better idea of how the characters will proceed.
- Have students read pages 7 through 10. Remind them to pause to make, revise, and confirm predictions. Additionally, have students identify the rising action in the plot.
- Invite students to confirm or revise their predictions as a class. Have them share their predictions for the remainder of the story with a partner. Remind students to use clues in the story to support their predictions.
- **Check for understanding:** Guide students to the analyze plot worksheet. Have them discuss the rising action in the story with a partner and then as a class. Have them record this information on the worksheet.
- Have students read the remainder of the story. Remind them to continue to pause to make, revise, and confirm their predictions. Additionally, have them identify elements of plot.

 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 the girls would listen to the voice on the phone and go down to the basement. This prediction was confirmed. I also predicted the girls would find some kind of clue about who pulled the pranks. I learned the girls found Rob Turtle's bag was full of leaves, vegetable oil, and other pieces of evidence. At this point in the story, I thought it was clear that Rob Turtle was responsible for the pranks, so I predicted the girls would turn him in and avoid punishment. As I continued to read however, I learned Rob had planned to pull the pranks but had lost his bag and was not able to. The mystery of the April Fool's pranks was not solved, and all the students received their punishment, including the girls.*

- Ask students to share predictions they created while reading. Reinforce how making, revising, and confirming predictions as they read helped to keep them engaged in the reading process. Remind students that the accuracy of a prediction is not as important as the prediction's being supported by clues in the text.


Reflect on the Comprehension Skill


- **Discussion:** Discuss with students how stopping to consider the elements of plot while reading a fictional story helps them to understand and remember the text. Review the five elements of plot.
- **Independent practice:** Have students work with a partner to complete the analyze plot worksheet. Review students' responses as a class.
- **Enduring understanding:** This story does not have a clear solution to the problem of who played the April Fool's pranks and leaves the reader wondering. Why do you think the author wrote the story in this way instead of telling the reader directly who was guilty?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Contractions

- Review or explain that a *contraction* is a word formed by joining two words together with an apostrophe to show where one or more letters have been removed.
- Guide students to page 3 and reread the second paragraph. Have students locate the contraction *didn't* in the second sentence. Ask students which two words were joined together to make the new word (*did* and *not*). Write the contraction and the two words used to create the contraction on the board. Ask students which letter was dropped to create the contraction.
- Have a volunteer read aloud the sentence with the contraction and substitute *did not* for the contraction *didn't*. Ask students if this sentence makes sense using *did not* instead of the contraction. Invite students to discuss why the author might choose to use a contraction rather than two separate words.
- Point out to students that an author will often use contractions when a character is speaking directly. Ask students why this might be. Explain that when we talk, we are more likely to use contractions in our day-to-day speech. An author might use contractions when a character is speaking to make the text more natural.

 Direct students to page 5 and have them identify and circle all the contractions (*he's*, *it's*, *it's*, *can't*). Check students' responses as a class. Have students locate the following words on page 5: *brother's*, *boy's*, *Jake's*. Explain to students that these words are not contractions. Although there is an apostrophe present, these words are possessive nouns. Point out to students when they come across a word with an apostrophe, they must pause and notice if the word is a contraction or possessive noun. Ask students how they will know the difference between a contraction and possessive noun.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students reread page 7. Ask students to circle all of the contractions and then write the two words that make up each contraction in the margin of the page. Review student responses as a class.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [contractions worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

Word Work: Synonyms

- Write the word *Synonym* on the board. Explain that a *synonym* is a word that *means the same or almost the same as another word*.
- Guide students to the illustration on page 10. Say: *The girls in this illustration appear to be scared*. Write the word *scared* on the board. Ask students to give examples of words that mean the same or almost the same as *scared* (*frightened*, *fearful*, *afraid*, *nervous*, and so on).

- Ask students why the use of synonyms is important in writing (synonyms help to describe something in the text, they make the writing more interesting and varied, and so on).
- Guide students to page 7 and have them locate the third sentence. Read the sentence aloud: *We've heard that creepy laughter before.* Write the word *creepy* on the board. Have students work with a partner and think of as many synonyms as possible for the word *creepy*. Have students share their responses with the class and record them on the board. Answers may include: *weird, eerie, disturbing, menacing*, and so on. Provide each pair of students with a thesaurus. Have them look up the word *creepy* in the thesaurus and share any additional synonyms they found.



Check for understanding: Have students continue to work with their partner. Ask them to locate the word *whimpers* in the first sentence on page 8. Have students locate the word *whimpers* in the thesaurus. Then, have each group reread the sentence, replacing the word *whimpers* with a synonym. Invite each group to create an original sentence using a synonym for the word *whimpers*.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss answers aloud after they are finished.

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 them discuss the connections they made to the book with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Writing and Art Connection

Have students consider a time when they were blamed for something they did not do. Have students share these experiences with the class. Provide each student with another copy of the analyze plot worksheet. Review the five elements of plots that are present in effective stories. Have students complete the worksheet using the events from their personal experience. Once students have completed the worksheet, have them translate this information into a rough draft. Provide an opportunity for students to peer edit and to create a final draft. If time allows, invite students to illustrate their narrative.

Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on writing.

Science Connection

Introduce students to the science of invisible ink writing. Discuss with students how invisible ink writing could be used on April Fool's Day. Provide groups of students with the following ingredients: half a lemon, water, spoon, bowl, Q-tip, white paper, lamp or other light bulb. Have students squeeze some lemon juice into the bowl and add a couple of drops of water. Next, mix the water and lemon juice. Dip the Q-tip into the mixture and have students write a message on the white sheet of paper. Wait for the juice to dry until it becomes completely invisible. To see the message, heat the paper by holding it close to the light bulb. Explain to students that because lemon juice is an organic substance, it turns brown when heated, and thus the secret message can be seen.

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:

- consistently make, revise, and confirm predictions to comprehend the text
- accurately analyze plot during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify contractions in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet
- accurately identify synonyms during discussion, in the text, and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- Book Quiz
- Retelling Rubric