

Focus Question:

What happens at a science fair?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Humorous

Have you ever seen a model volcano explode or watched a rat power a robot? You can read about these and other exciting student science experiments in *Science Fair*. Whose project will win the school science fair prize? Detailed illustrations and engaging text will keep readers captivated with this story. This book can also be used to teach students how to identify story elements as well as the proper use of pronouns.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Identify characters, setting, and plot
- ☐ Describe information provided by illustrations
- ☐ Segment syllables
- ☐ Identify long vowel *i*
- ☐ Recognize and use pronouns
- ☐ Identify and use the high-frequency word *work*

Materials

- ☐ Book: *Science Fair* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Story elements, long vowel *i*, pronouns 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.

- **High-frequency words:** *at*, *up*, *work*
- **Words to Know**
 - Story critical:** *helicopter* (n.), *leaked* (v.), *prize* (n.), *robot* (n.), *science fair* (n.), *soda volcano* (n.)
 - **Academic vocabulary:** *chart* (n.), *instead* (adv.), *plan* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Place on the board a photograph of a scientist. Ask students what a scientist does. Discuss times when students have been scientists. If they have trouble thinking of ideas, prompt them with examples such as baking, mixing, and gardening.
- Discuss with students what a science fair is. Talk about types of experiments and projects that students get to complete. Have students think about a science experiment they would want to do and have them draw a picture of their idea. Invite volunteers to share their picture with the rest of the class.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Science Fair*. 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: Retell

Explain to students that engaged readers stop now and then while they are reading to retell in their mind what has happened so far in the story. Stopping to retell the events of the story helps readers understand and remember what they are reading. Explain that when retelling a story or event, it's important that the details are explained in order. Point out that people retell stories as part of their daily lives, such as what they did at school or what happened in the movie they just watched. Use a book that the class recently read or a familiar story, and demonstrate how to retell a story in the correct order. Invite volunteers to help you with the retelling.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Story elements

- Explain to students that all stories have certain parts: *characters* (who or what the story is about), *setting* (where and when the story happens), and *plot* (the events that happen in the story). Explain to them that this book has all of these elements.
- Review with students a story the class has previously read. Have students work in groups to determine the story elements, and guide students to a class consensus.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Point out that these words can be found in the story and that understanding the meaning of each word will help them better understand what they read. Read the words aloud to students and, as a group, discuss the meaning of each word. On the basis of the definitions discussed, have students work in groups to illustrate each vocabulary word on a poster. Have students share their posters with the class.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about what happens at the science fair. 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 do you think the students are excited about the science fair?* (level 3) page 3
- *What is Ronald’s problem with his science experiment?* (level 1) page 5
- *How does Valerie feel before she does her experiment? How does she feel after?* (level 2) pages 6 and 7
- *What things does a plant need to grow?* (level 1) page 11
- *Which science fair project did you like the best? Why?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *Why did the author write this book about a science fair?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Illustrations

Explain to students that one important part of reading is paying close attention to the pictures, which are also called illustrations, because they provide readers with extra information. Readers can use this information, combined with what they already know, to draw conclusions about the story. Have students work with a partner to review the picture on page 3. Ask students: *How does this picture help you understand what a science fair is? How does the picture add more details to your understanding than if you just read the text?* Have students work with a partner to review the remaining illustrations and discuss how the pictures help them to better understand the text.

Skill Review

- Model retelling the events of the story using the illustrations to assist you. Remind students that retellings include details and descriptions about the events of a story in the correct order. Ask students to retell the beginning of the story to a partner.
- Have students work with a partner to discuss the story elements. Have them discuss the characters, the setting, and the plot.
- Model how to identify story elements.
One of the ways to better understand a story is to identify the story elements while reading. This story doesn’t have a main character; instead the story has many characters. Some of the characters are Ronald, Valerie, Hector, and Joy. This story doesn’t tell me where the events happen. However, I can use the pictures to help me figure out that the setting is a school. I will continue reading to identify the plot of the story and retell the events of the plot in the correct order.
- Model how to complete the [story elements worksheet](#). Have students identify the characters, setting, and plot.

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: Story elements

Review the story elements worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class. Discuss with students how identifying the story elements helps them better understand what they read.

Comprehension Extension

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided for extension activities.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Sample: *At a science fair, students get to demonstrate and test their science experiments. Sometimes the science experiments don't work, and sometimes they do. There are prizes given to students with the best projects.*)

Comprehension Checks

- Book quiz
- Retelling rubric

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: Segment syllables

- Say the word *science* aloud to students. Have students repeat the word *science* aloud. Say the word *science* again, but clap two times as you say the word. Have students repeat the word and clap two times. Explain that every word contains one or more parts and that these parts are called *syllables*, or units of sound. Point out that the word *science* has two syllables.
- Say the word *work* aloud to students. Have students repeat the word aloud. Say the word *work* again, but clap one time as you say the word. Have students repeat the word and clap one time. Explain that the word *work* has one syllable, or unit of sound.
- Have students work with a partner to count the number of syllables in various words in the book. Give students a number of syllables, such as two, and have them search for words with two syllables. Repeat with another number of syllables.

Phonics: Long vowel i

- Write the word *prize* on the board and read it aloud with students. Have students say the long vowel /i/ sound aloud. Then, run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letter represents long vowel /i/ sound in the word *prize*.
- Write the word *it* and read it aloud with students. Have students discuss with a partner the similarities and differences between the two words. Point out that *it* has the short vowel /i/ sound while *prize* has the long vowel /i/ sound.
- Have students work with a partner to locate words with the long vowel /i/ sound in the book. Invite volunteers to share the words they found and record them on the board.

- Write the following words on the board: *drive*, *fish*, *like*, and *hit*. Say each word, one at a time. Have students work with a partner to sort the words into groups: long vowel /i/ sound and short vowel /i/ sound. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class. Have the class give a thumbs-up signal if the students sort the words correctly.
- Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [long vowel i worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Pronouns

- Review that a *noun* is a word that names a person, place, or thing. Ask students to share some examples of nouns and record them on the board.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Joy had given the four plants water and sunlight.* Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle the nouns (Joy, plants, water, sunlight).
- Erase the word *Joy* and replace it with the word *she*. Explain that a *pronoun* is a word that takes the place of a noun. Reread the sentence aloud with students and ask students to give the thumbs-up signal if the meaning of the sentence is the same with the pronoun.
- Have students turn to page 4 and read it aloud with a partner. Have students locate and underline the pronoun *he* and circle the noun it replaces (*Ronald*).
- Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [pronouns worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: High-frequency word work

- Write the word *work* on the board and read it aloud with students. Explain to students that they will often see this word in books they read and they should memorize it so they can decode it right away.
- Spell the word aloud while students write each letter in the air.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *We will work hard on our science project.* Read it aloud with students and discuss with them the meaning of the word *work* as it is used in the sentence.
- Have students practice spelling *work* using alphabet stamps.
- Have students work in pairs to create oral sentences using the word *work*. Call on students to share a sentence with the rest of the class, and ask other students to give a thumbs-up signal if they used the word *work* correctly.

Connections

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