

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic Page Count: 16 Word Count: 353

Book Summary

Maria and her family are preparing for Christmas and waiting for their family from Mexico to arrive. Once her family arrives, Maria meets her new cousin, Ruben, for the first time. The family celebrates Christmas by attending church, opening gifts, and eating Christmas dinner. Students will have the opportunity to sequence events and compare their winter holiday celebrations to Maria's as they read this book.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of connecting to prior knowledge to understand text
- Sequence events
- Identify long /e/ digraphs
- Recognize and use quotation marks
- Place words in alphabetical order

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Maria's Family Christmas* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Dictionaries
- Sequence events, long /e/ digraphs, quotation marks 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: *agreed, attended, Christmas, decorating, drape, Navidad, relatives*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *Christmas* on the board. Ask students to share how their families celebrate Christmas. If some students don't celebrate Christmas, find out what winter holiday they celebrate and what traditions are associated with the holiday. Encourage students to talk about the foods they eat and traditions they share with family and friends during the holiday. Record student responses on the board.
- Have a discussion about the meaning of Christmas. Discuss why people celebrate with some of the traditions listed on the board, for example, decorating a Christmas tree, attending church, and so on. Also discuss some of the traditions associated with other winter holidays that students mentioned.

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, fiction or nonfiction, 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: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Explain to students that good readers make connections between what they already know and new information they read. Remind students that thinking about what they already know about the topic of the book will help them understand what they read.
- Model using prior knowledge to read and understand text.
Think-aloud: When I read a book, I try to think about what I already know about the topic of the book before I read the story. When I read the title, I know this book is about Christmas. I already know many things about Christmas. My family gets ready to celebrate by decorating a Christmas tree and wrapping presents. On Christmas Day, we gather with our family to eat and open presents. After dinner, we gather around the piano and sing Christmas carols. I wonder if Maria and her family will do some of the things that my family does to celebrate Christmas.
- Invite students to share how they connected to prior knowledge, based on the covers and title page of the book.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Sequence events**

- Explain that stories are generally told in order from beginning to end.
- Model sequencing the main events of a story about a birthday party. Write key words about each event in order on the board as you describe them to students.
Think-aloud: If I want to tell someone a story about my birthday party, I need to include certain events in order to tell the story correctly. In my birthday story, first we went to the park. Next, my friends and family came to the party and brought presents. Then I blew out the candles on my cake while they sang "Happy Birthday." Next, I opened all of my presents. Last, I thanked my family and friends, and we all went home.
- Explain that certain words are often used to explain a sequence of events. Use the key words on the board to tell the story in order to students, including words such as *first*, *next*, and *last*. Ask students to identify these sequencing words from the example.
- Tell the story using key words on the board to sequence the events of the story out of order. Ask students to explain why the order of the events is important (the sequence of events does not make sense when told out of order). Discuss with students that a story does not make sense when the events are out of order.
- Point out the difference between the sequence of events listed on the board and a retelling of the story of the birthday party (the retelling contains more detail and description; the list shows only the events that are most important for someone to understand the story). Ask students to provide details for each event from the story.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- While previewing the book, reinforce the vocabulary words that students will encounter. For example, while looking at the picture on page 3, you might say: *It looks as though Maria and her family are decorating the Christmas tree while they are waiting for their relatives to come.*
- Write the following words from the content vocabulary on the board: *Navidad, decorating, attended, relatives.*

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Maria's Family Christmas

- Point out that these four words can be found in the story and that they tell about Maria's Christmas celebration with her family. Give groups of students four pieces of blank paper. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Create a definition for each word using students' prior knowledge.
- Model how students can use the dictionary to find a word's meaning. Have them locate the word *relatives* in the dictionary. Invite a volunteer to read the definition for *relatives*. Have them compare the definition with their prior knowledge of the word.
- Have students follow along on page 3 as you read the sentence in which the word *relatives* is found to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.
- Remind students to look at the picture and the letters with which a word begins or ends to figure out a difficult word. For example, point to the word *drape* on page 4 and say: *I am going to check the picture and think about what would make sense to figure out this word. The picture shows Maria's brother putting white lights on the Christmas tree. When I look at the first part of the word, it starts with /drl/. However, the word putting starts with the /p/ sound, so this can't be the word. I know that when lights are placed around a Christmas tree, they can be draped or placed loosely around it. The word drape starts with the /drl/ sound. The sentence makes sense with this word. The word must be drape.*

Set the Purpose

- Have students use what they already know about Christmas to help them read the book. Remind them to think about the sequence of events as they read.

During Reading


Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book. Have them read to the end of page 6. Encourage students who finish before others to reread the text.
- Model connecting to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: *Before I read the story, I thought about my family's Christmas celebration. I used my experiences to predict what would happen to Maria in the story. When I read the first part of the story, I realized that many of my family's Christmas traditions were the same as the ones Maria and her family have. We both have relatives who visit at Christmas, and we decorate a Christmas tree. However, we decorate our tree right after Thanksgiving instead of right before Christmas Day.*
- Invite students to share how they connected with what they already knew as they read. Allow time for students to discuss how Maria's Christmas celebration might be similar and different from their holiday celebration. Refer to the responses on the board created in the Before Reading section.
- Write the following events on the board: *Maria waited for her relatives to arrive from Mexico. They decorated the Christmas tree. Maria hung a tin angel from Mexico on the tree. Her brother draped lights on the tree. Maria's aunts, uncles, and cousins arrived.*
- Discuss and circle the events that are most important to correctly tell the story. (Maria waited for her relatives to arrive from Mexico. They decorated the Christmas tree. Maria's aunts, uncles, and cousins arrived.)
- Ask students to tell what the story is mostly about so far (Maria and her family getting ready to celebrate Christmas). Review the circled events on the board. Point out that the other information includes details that are not necessary to the sequence of events.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 12. Encourage them to share how they connected to prior knowledge as they read. (Accept all answers that show students understand how to connect to prior knowledge.)
- Ask students to name additional important story events and locate them in the book. Discuss the important events as a class and write them on the board in order.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Maria's Family Christmas

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to use what they already know about Christmas to help them understand new information as they read.

 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:** *When I read page 13, I thought about all the work it takes to get ready for a holiday celebration. At Christmas, we all bring different foods to the celebration. We also help set the table and wash the dishes after we are finished eating a delicious holiday meal. Everyone works hard, but we have fun doing the work together.*
- Have students draw a picture on a separate piece of paper showing how they connected to prior knowledge while reading about Maria's Christmas celebration. Invite them to share and explain their picture to the rest of the class.
- Ask students to explain how thinking about what they already knew helped them to understand and remember the story.


Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the sequence of events in the story. Explain that good readers think about the sequence of events in the story to help them remember what they read.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain and have students complete the [sequence events worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned that Maria invited Mr. Lewis to share Christmas dinner with their family. Why might it be a good idea to invite someone who is alone to celebrate with your family?

Build Skills

Phonics: Long /e/ vowel digraphs

- Write the word *tree* on the board. Have students find the word on page 3 and read the sentence in which it is found.
- Ask students what vowel sound they hear in the word (long /e/). Circle the ee in the word and explain that in some words, two vowels together, called a *vowel digraph*, make one sound. Have students brainstorm additional examples of ee words and have them write the words on the board (*green, seen, peep, sleep, bee*, and so on).
- Write the word *cream* on the board. Have students find the word on page 14 and read the sentence in which it is found.
- Ask students what vowel sound they hear in the middle of the word *cream* (long /e/). Circle the ea and explain that ea is another common digraph for the long /e/ sound. Have students brainstorm additional examples of ea words and have them write the words on the board (*eat, fear, leave, beat, team, neat*, and so on).

 **Check for understanding:** Have students look through the book to find and highlight examples of long /e/ vowel digraphs. Encourage them to compare their answers with a partner.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [long /e/ vowel digraphs worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Quotation marks

- Write the following sentence on the board: *"They'll be here soon, Maria," said Maria's mother.* Ask students what words are being spoken. Explain that quotation marks are the punctuation marks around dialogue in the book. Discuss the difference between what is being said aloud by the character (*They'll be here soon, Maria*) and what is not (*said Maria's mother*).
- Have students turn to page 6 in the book. Read the page aloud as students follow along. Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal while dialogue is being read aloud and give the thumbs-down signal when a character is not speaking.
- Discuss the different words used in the text to indicate dialogue. Point out that words come directly before or after the quotation marks to show which character is speaking. Ask students to find the words used in the text. Write them on the board as students find them (*said, asked, laughed, explained*).



Check for understanding: Have students work in pairs to locate dialogue in the text. Instruct them to underline the words that indicate dialogue (*said, asked, laughed, explained*) and circle the quotation marks.

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

Word Work: Alphabetical order

- Review or explain the process of putting a list of words in alphabetical order. Remind students that if the first letter of two words is the same, they must compare the next two letters instead.
- Write the words *hung* and *placed* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order (*hung*) and why (because *h* comes before *p* in the alphabet).
- Write the words *sister* and *school* on the board. Point out that the words begin with the same letter (*s*). Ask a volunteer to tell which word would appear first in alphabetical order and to explain his or her thinking (*school*, because the second letter, *c*, in *school* comes before the second letter, *i*, in *sister*).
- Write the words *Maria* and *Mexico* on the board. Have a volunteer explain which word would appear first in alphabetical order and why.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *relatives, drape, attended, agreed, decorating, Spanish, Navidad*. Have students write the words in alphabetical order.

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 retell the sequence of events in the book to someone at home.

Extend the Reading
Realistic Fiction Writing and Art Connection

Discuss with students the Christmas traditions that Maria and her family celebrate. Compare and contrast these traditions with the students' holiday traditions listed on the board in the Build Background section. Have students compare and contrast Maria's Christmas with their own winter holiday celebration. If students also read *Feliz Navidad, Carlos*, have them compare and contrast the Christmas traditions of Maria and Carlos using a Venn diagram.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Provide books and Internet resources about how winter holidays are celebrated in Mexico and in other countries around the world. Make lists of the holiday traditions. Discuss the similarities and differences in the traditions. Encourage students to discuss why people might celebrate differently.

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 connect to prior knowledge to understand text
- accurately identify the sequence of events in the book during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify and write words that contain long /e/ digraphs during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and identify quotation marks during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly place words in alphabetical order to the second letter

Comprehension Checks

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