



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic Page Count: 12 Word Count: 314

Book Summary

It's never easy to lose someone (or something) you love. In *When Bad Things Happen*, a young boy is very sad when his pet lizard dies. But with the help of his parents, he learns some ways to deal with his feelings. Younger readers will relate to the main character, and adults can use the story as a springboard to a discussion of grief.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge


Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of connecting to prior knowledge to understand text
- Identify problem and solution
- Discriminate *r*-controlled /er/ sound
- Identify *r*-controlled *er* letter combination
- Recognize and use irregular past-tense verbs
- Recognize and form compound words

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*When Bad Things Happen* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Problem and solution, *r*-controlled /er/, irregular past-tense verbs 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 Vocabulary a-z.com.

- High-frequency words: *could*, *make*, *there*, *why*, *would*
- Content words:
 Story critical: *bury* (v.), *remember* (v.), *right* (adv.), *sad* (adj.), *understand* (v.), *worship* (n.)
 Enrichment: *candles* (n.), *church* (n.), *clump* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask how many students in the group have a pet. Ask if anyone has ever experienced their pet getting sick and dying. Lead a discussion on how students felt about losing their pet.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Show students the front and back covers of the book and read the title with them. Ask what they think they might read about in a book called *When Bad Things Happen*. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)
- 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 connecting to prior knowledge using the information on the covers.
Think-aloud: When I read a book, I try to think about what I already know about the topic of the book before I begin reading. When I read the title of this book, I knew it was going to be about how bad things sometimes happen. It reminded me of when I got in a car accident, even though I wasn't doing anything wrong. The other person just didn't see me in time, and his car hit mine. I felt scared and sad about it, but I wasn't hurt, and I knew it wasn't my fault.
- Invite students to share how they connected to prior knowledge, on the basis of 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: **Problem and solution**

- Explain to students that every fictional story has certain parts, or elements. Write the words *Problem* and *Solution* on the board. Explain that in most stories, the main character is faced with a problem that needs to be solved, and the solution is how the character works through the problem and finds a way to deal with it.
- Create a chart on the board with the headings *Problem* and *Possible Solutions*. Write the sentence *I lost my dog* on the board under the *Problem* heading. Model identifying possible solutions to the problem.
Think-aloud: I know that when a problem arises, I can deal with it in different ways. If I lose my dog, I know that I have to think of a way to find him. One possible solution might be to put up signs in my neighborhood with the dog's picture and my phone number. Another possible solution to this problem is to walk around my neighborhood and call my dog's name. I could also place an ad in the local newspaper. I've identified three possible solutions to the problem.
- Model filling in the chart on the board with the information for this problem.
- Write the following sentence on the board under the *Problem* heading: *I forgot my lunch*. Discuss possible actions that a person might take to solve this problem and list them on the board under *Possible Solutions*.
- Have students think of other possible problems to share. Discuss and list possible solutions.
- Remind students that good readers look for problems and solutions as they read.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Model strategies that students can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letters and sounds, base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can also use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Have students find the word *understand* on page 3. Ask how they might read this word if they don't already know it. Suggest that they might recognize that the word is made up of two smaller words that they know, *under* and *stand*.

- Remind students that they should check whether a word makes sense by rereading the sentence in which it appears. Have them look for other clues in the sentences before and after the sentence containing the unfamiliar word in order to find or confirm the meaning of the word. Have a volunteer read the sentence aloud, and ask others to confirm whether it makes sense and whether they know the meaning of the word.
- Repeat the activity with other vocabulary words as time allows.

Set the Purpose

- Have students use what they already know about losing someone or something important to them, like a pet, to help them understand how the main character might feel. Remind them to think about the problem the main character is having and possible solutions to help him deal with this problem.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book. Have them read pages 3 and 4, and study the pictures on both pages.
- Model connecting to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: Before I started reading the story, the title of the book made me think about when something bad happened to me. I used my own experience to predict what kinds of bad things could happen to the main character in this book. After reading these first two pages, I now know that the boy is sad because his pet lizard died. I know the bad thing that happened to him. This made me think about when I was young and my dog died. I think I know exactly how this boy feels.
- Invite students to share how they connected with what they already knew as they read. Allow time for students to discuss how their experience might be similar to the main character's, if they lost a pet. If a student volunteers an experience involving the death of a family member, allow them to share.
- Model identifying the problem stated on pages 3 and 4.
Think-aloud: I learned on page 3 and 4 that the main character in the book is very sad because his pet lizard died. He feels very bad because he did everything right to take care of his lizard, but it still died. I think this is the boy's problem. I will have to keep reading to find out what the boy does to solve or feel better about his problem.
- Introduce and explain the [problem-and-solution worksheet](#). Ask students to record the problem on their worksheet and one possible solution the boy might try on the *Possible Solutions* side.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 8. 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 recall the possible solutions that the boy's family suggested to help him feel better (*make a card with bright colors; write a letter and tell about good times that were shared; go to church, light candles, and pray; put flowers by a photo*). Have students record these on the *Possible Solutions* side of their worksheet.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to use their previous experiences to help them think about how the boy in the story might solve his problem of feeling sad about his pet lizard's death.



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 the discussion that follows.

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 11, I thought about my dog that died when I was young and how we buried her in the backyard. We put wildflowers on her grave and had a little ceremony. It did make me feel a little better, even though there were times when I would still miss her and be sad.*
- Have students draw a picture on a separate piece of paper showing how they connected to prior knowledge while reading about the boy and his lizard. Invite them to share and explain their picture to the rest of the class, if they choose.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss with students which of the possible solutions the boy in the story chose. (He decided to make Izzy a card and put it with Izzy's favorite rock where they bury him in the backyard.)
- **Independent practice:** Have students record this solution on their worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses and which of the possible solutions they would have chosen.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about a boy who was very sad about the death of his pet. He didn't know how to solve his problem of sadness, but his parents helped him to come up with a solution, even though it was going to take some time. Now that you have read this story, why is it important to sometimes let family members or other people who care about us help us solve problems?

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: **Discriminate r-controlled /er/**

- Say the word *were* aloud to students, emphasizing the *r*-controlled /er/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the *r*-controlled /er/ sound. Ask where they hear the /er/ sound (at the end of the word). Explain to students that many words have this same sound, either at the beginning, middle, or end.
- Say the following words from the book, one at a time: *letter, color, better, candle, church, good, shoulder*. Ask students to give the thumbs-up signal when they hear a word with the *r*-controlled /er/ sound, as in the word *were*.
- **Check for understanding:** Repeat the /er/ words, one at a time, and have students tell you where in the word they hear the /er/ sound: beginning, middle, or end.

Phonics: **R-controlled er**

- Write the word *better* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Explain to students that the letter *r* can affect the sound of the vowel before it. Reread the word *better* as you run your finger under the letters in the word. Ask students to identify the two letters that stand for the /er/ sound in the word *better*.
- Write the *er* letter combination on the board. Have students practice writing the letter combination on a separate piece of paper while saying the sound the combinations stands for.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board, leaving out the *er* letter combination: *her, letter, shoulder, grandmother, ever*. Have students complete and write each word on a separate piece of paper. Then have them read each word aloud to a partner.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **irregular-past-tense verbs worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: **Compound words**

- Write the word *everything* on the board. Ask students which two words were joined together to make the word *everything* (*every* and *thing*). Explain that this word is called a *compound word*. A compound word contains two words that together create one word. Explain that the meanings of the two separate words can often help students figure out the meaning of the bigger word (*everything* = all things).

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

When Bad Things Happen

- Have students turn to page 5 in the book. Read the following sentence: *My dad said sometimes bad things happen, tt even when you do everything right.* Have students identify the compound words (*sometimes* and *everything*). Ask them to also identify the two separate words that make up each compound word (*some* and *times*; *every* and *thing*). Ask a volunteer to use the definitions of the two smaller words to figure out the meaning of the first compound word.



Check for understanding: Have students turn to page 7. Ask student pairs to underline the compound word (*homework*). Then ask them to circle the two separate words that make up the compound word. Discuss the definition of the compound word, using the smaller words to figure out its meaning.



Independent practice: Have student pairs search the remainder of the book to locate other compound words (*grandmother*, page 8; *backyard*, page 11). Have them underline each compound word and circle the two smaller words in each one.

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 identify the main character's problem and the possible solutions to someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Personal Narrative Writing and Art Connection

Ask students to think about a time when they lost someone or something, or an event that made them very sad. Ask how they solved their problem of feeling sad. Have them write a narrative describing what they did to feel better.

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

Social Studies Connection

Arrange to have the school counselor visit the class and share age-appropriate strategies for dealing with grief. Share other books on the topic, such as *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, by Judith Viorst. Lead a discussion on things kids can do when they feel sad.

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 problem and solution of the book during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately discriminate *r*-controlled /er/ sound during discussion
- correctly associate the *er* letter combination with the *r*-controlled /er/ sound during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and use irregular past-tense verbs during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify and form compound words from the text and during discussion

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)