

LEVEL Z

Grades

5 and above

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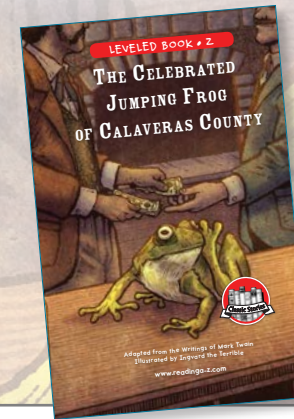
Vocabulary A-Z

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The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

Author: Mark Twain

Illustrator: Ingvard the Terrible

**Book Summary**

The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County is a classic American short story written by one of America's most celebrated writers and humorists. The story is told by a seasoned old miner about a gambling man who will place a bet on anything, including horse races, dogfights, and eventually a high-jumping frog. What happens when the gambling man meets another trickster as devious as him? Twain's account of these adventures is about as tall a tale as you can get!

Reading Strategy: Make, Revise, and Confirm Predictions
Comprehension Skill: Analyze Character

Level Z • Fiction/Classic • 1 Part

How to Use the Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is designed to be used with Reading A–Z’s retelling of *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. Assign and teach the book as a whole-class lesson. Or assign it to a reading group and teach all or part of the lesson in a small-group setting. Worksheets support the learning objectives of the lesson. Discussion cards can be used to set up literature circles. A culminating comprehension quiz is included and covers the entire story.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make, Revise, and Confirm Predictions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions before and during reading
- Analyze characters in the text
- Identify and use contractions
- Identify and understand the use of colloquial phrases
- Recognize and understand the use of hyperbole

Materials

- Book: *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (copy for each student or group)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Recorded version of the text (optional)
- Student notebooks
- Make, revise, and confirm predictions; analyze character; contractions worksheets



Before Reading

Build Background

- Explain to students that *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* is a story written in the tradition of the tall tale, meaning that the characters and their claims are deliberately exaggerated for humorous effect. Even though tall tales are so exaggerated as to be unbelievable, they are told as if the events being described actually happened. Much of the humor comes from the contrast between the ridiculousness of the tale and the serious manner in which it is delivered.
- Share with students several tall tales using books, art, or videos. Have students work in small groups to discuss these tall tales. Guide their discussion by asking questions such as the following: *What do all tall tales have in common? Who are the subjects of tall tales? What sorts of things happen in tall tales?* Then, have students create a tall tale character who lives in 2017, with exaggerated characteristics and abilities. Have students draw or write a description of their character, and then invite volunteers to describe their potential tall tale character to the rest of the class.

Introduce the Book

- Distribute copies of *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* to students.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: *Make, Revise, and Confirm Predictions*

- Remind students that engaged readers often make predictions, or educated guesses, about what will happen in a story. Readers predict on the basis of information in the story combined with their own experience and background knowledge. As the story unfolds, readers can confirm or revise their initial predictions as they read new story developments.
- Have students preview the title and the cover art. Ask students to make predictions, based on the title and cover illustration, about what the story might be about. Have them share predictions with a partner.
- Create two columns on the board. Label them *Prediction* and *Support*. Have students share both their predictions and the details from the title, image, or their own prior knowledge that supports each prediction. Record these details on the board.

- Remind students that making reasonable predictions helps readers anticipate what will happen next in the story. Point out that the process of revising or confirming predictions helps keep readers engaged.
- Introduce and explain the make, revise, and confirm predictions worksheet. Ask students to record their predictions as they read.
- Encourage students to use other reading strategies in addition to making, revising, and confirming predictions.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: *Analyze Character*

- Review with students that characters are the people, animal, or creatures in a story. Have students work in groups to create a list of characters they have read in other stories. Invite volunteers to share their list with the rest of the class, and record character names on the board.
- Explain that there are several ways for readers to learn about a character: one way is to listen to what the narrator says about a character, another way is to listen to what characters say about each other, and a third way is to pay careful attention to how a character behaves. Point out that sometimes what a character says and what a character does are inconsistent. Explain that often in a story, readers have to make inferences and draw conclusions about what a character is really like because authors don't always directly state what a character thinks or feels.
- Refer to the character names on the board. Have students work with a partner to choose three characters and prepare a description of each. Call on students to share their character descriptions with the rest of the class. Have other students identify the character traits that are given in each description. Remind students that character traits are the details that describe characters, such as what they look like, their personalities, and how they behave.
- Explain to students that as they read *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, they will use a separate sheet of paper to take notes about character names and traits. Then, after reading the story, students will use these notes to complete a worksheet about the characters in the story.



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Introduce the Vocabulary

- Point out to students that *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* contains a lot of colloquial speech. Remind students that colloquial speech is an informal way of speaking. Explain that this kind of speech is very much connected to a specific time and place. In other words, the colloquial speech of a nineteenth-century U.S. mining camp will be very different from the colloquial speech of a twenty-first-century U.S. middle-school classroom. Explain that Mark Twain intentionally used this kind of speech in his story to add realism and humor.
- Have students work in groups to skim the first five pages of the story and highlight one example of language that appears to be colloquial. Ask groups to discuss the word on the basis of its context and share their thoughts on its meaning. Then, have each group pair up with another, share their colloquial example, and again discuss its meaning. Finally, call on each group to share its example and proposed meaning with the rest of the class, and guide students to an accurate understanding of the word. Then have students draw a picture that illustrates the meaning of the colloquial word or expression. After reading, have students use a similar strategy to review and learn vocabulary words from the glossary at a deeper level.
- Remind students that they can determine the meaning of unknown words by using context clues, examining affixes and base words, rereading with synonyms, and referring to a dictionary when these strategies don't help. Point out to students that they can also use the glossary when they encounter unknown words and that only boldface words are in the glossary.

Set the Purpose

- Explain to students that their purpose in reading *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* is to answer the following focus question: *How does the author use humor to address themes of honesty, dishonesty, and cunning?* Point out that to accomplish this purpose, they will use the reading strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions as well as other comprehension skills, in particular analyzing characters.
- Remind students that a general purpose of all fiction is entertainment. Point out that Mark Twain is such a celebrated American humorist that there is an award named after him: the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. It is given to an American who has made significant contributions to humor.

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During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** While reading, periodically stop to have students record predictions on their worksheet and share them with the rest of the class.
- Periodically stop to have students jot down traits of the characters in the story.
- Explain that *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* is a short story and they will divide the reading into two parts.
- Assign the entire story to all students or divide the class into small groups and have them work on the story together.

Check for Understanding Section by Section

Pages 3 through 9

- **Summary:** The story opens with the narrator, a man from the East, making a journey to a Western mining camp. The narrator explains that a friend of his has asked him to look up a man called Simon Wheeler, who lives at the camp, and to ask him about Leonidas W. Smiley. When the two men meet, Wheeler launches into an extraordinary tale about Jim Smiley, a man who so loved gambling that he would place a bet on absolutely anything, no matter how ridiculous. This part of the story ends with Wheeler recounting the tale of Smiley's dog, Andrew Jackson, who lost a fight to another dog with no back legs. Jackson was so downhearted about his loss that he crawled into a corner and died.
- **Explanation:** Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) was the seventh president of the United States, from 1829 to 1837. Jackson was known for his toughness, hot-temper, and military prowess. He fought the British in the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812 and engaged in wars against the Seminole Indians. His presidency is associated with many controversies, including removing Indians from their native lands. Andrew Jackson was a democrat and a populist.
- **Comprehension (Character Point of View):** Remind students that point of view in a work of fiction refers to who is telling the story. Explain that there are primarily three types of point of view: first-person, third-person

limited, and third-person omniscient. (Point out that there is second-person, but it is rarely used.) Review with students each kind of point of view. Have students work with a partner to go back into the text of this section and identify the character point of view (first-person). Ask them to provide specific details that indicate the first-person point of view. Explain that this story is unusual because it really has two first-person narrators. Have students work in groups to identify and discuss the two narrators, and then discuss with the class how and why Twain set up this unusual narrative structure. Have students rewrite the first paragraph of the story using the third-person limited point of view. Ask volunteers to share their rewrites with the rest of the class. Guide a discussion about how changing the character point of view changed the tone of the story. Ask: *Why do you think the author chose to use a first-person narrator for this story?*

Pages 10 through 15

- **Summary:** Simon Wheeler continues his tale about the cunning gambler, Jim Smiley. According to Wheeler, Smiley caught a frog, named him Daniel Webster, and claimed that it could jump higher than any other frog in Calaveras County. One day, a stranger wanders into the camp, and Smiley bets him forty dollars that his frog can outjump any other frog in town. But when Smiley isn't looking, the stranger fills Daniel Webster with quail shot to weigh him down. The frog can't jump, Smiley loses the bet, and the stranger makes off with the forty dollars before Smiley realizes the man was cheating.
- **Explanation:** New Hampshire-born Daniel Webster (1782–1852) was a celebrated lawyer, congressman, senator, and twice secretary of state. Webster was a strong supporter of the federal government and an opponent of slavery. He is famous for his skills as an orator and was the most gifted orator of his generation.
- **Comprehension (Author's Purpose):** Remind students that authors write for a variety of reasons and the author's purpose affects the content and tone of a piece of writing. Write the words *Inform*, *Persuade*, and *Entertain* on the board, and review these three broad purposes with students. Read a short paragraph of informational text to students. Ask students to identify details from the text that indicate it is informational. Record these on the board. Do the same thing with a piece of persuasive text. Finally, read aloud the first paragraph on page 9 to students. Have them discuss specific details that indicate that this text is meant to entertain. Finally, in pairs,

have students locate a paragraph from this second section that they found particularly entertaining. Ask them to note what specifically made the paragraph they selected entertaining. Ask volunteers to read aloud the part they found most entertaining and explain to the class the elements that caught their interest.

- **Vocabulary:** *ante up, buttonholed, dilapidated, enterprising, flush, garrulous, inclination, indifferent, interminable, monotonous, reminiscence, shot*

After Reading

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Review with students the predictions that they made. Have students share predictions they confirmed or predictions they decided to revise. Guide a discussion about how making predictions helped students stay engaged as they read.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete their make, revise, and confirm predictions worksheet. Then, with a partner, have them exchange worksheets to compare and contrast predictions made, revised, and confirmed.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- Have students review and share with the rest of the class the characters and their traits that they kept track of during reading. Record on the board a list of characters shared and their associated traits. Guide a class discussion on whether the class agrees on the traits assigned to each character. Encourage students to justify the traits they ascribed to particular characters.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete their analyze character worksheet. Call on groups to share their short narratives about characters.
- **Independent practice:** Have students select one character from the story. Ask them to imagine that this character has a Facebook page. Ask them to draw and describe in words what their profile, cover photos, and background information would be.

Reflect on the Purpose

- Refer students back to the focus question: *How does the author use humor to address themes of honesty, dishonesty, and cunning?* Have students work in groups to discuss their thoughts regarding the focus question. Ask groups to share their ideas with classmates.
- **Enduring Understanding:** In *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, we encounter a character, Jim Smiley, who seems to have no problem deliberately deceiving people for his own amusement and gain. Ask students the following questions: *Have you ever been tricked by another person? How did you feel about it? Under what circumstances, if any, do you think it is appropriate to deceive another person?*

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: *Contractions*

- Review or explain that *contractions* are words that are formed from merging two words together. Remind students that apostrophes are used to replace letters in the contraction. Model for students how to identify and deconstruct contractions with the words *isn't*, *I've*, and *you're*.
- Have students reread the last paragraph on page 9 and circle all the contractions (*he'd*, *hadn't*, *don't*). Have students identify to a partner what words each contraction stands for.
- Remind students that just because a word has an apostrophe does not mean it is a contraction. Point out that Twain shortened many words in the story to mimic a Western dialect and colloquial speech; for example, the words *warn't* and *ain't* are not contractions.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to locate and list four contractions from the story and then write the words that make up the contraction.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the contractions worksheet. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Colloquial Phrases

- Explain to students that in *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* Twain uses colloquial phrases and speech to help make Simon Wheeler sound like an authentic Western gold miner.
- Remind students that colloquial speech is informal speech that is associated with a particular time and place. Point out that colloquial speech is very much like slang.
- Provide students with a few examples of contemporary colloquial speech and ask them to discuss what these phrases mean. Then, in small groups, have students brainstorm at least three more colloquialisms to share with classmates.
- Have students turn to the second paragraph on page 4 and ask them to follow along as you read aloud (using a Western dialect) to the end of page 5. Have students underline any examples of colloquial speech that they hear (*feller*, *feller'd*, *curiousest*, *uncommon lucky*, *setting*, *reg'lar*, *anywheres*, *foller*).
- Have students work in pairs to examine the remainder of the story to identify and underline additional examples of colloquial speech. Ask them to discuss with their partner how Twain's use of colloquial speech creates realism in the story.
- Have students work with a partner to select one paragraph from the story and read it aloud in the voice of Simon Wheeler.
- **Independent Practice:** Have students write a short review of *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* using contemporary colloquial phrases and speech. Invite volunteers to share their reviews with classmates and have other students identify the colloquialisms they hear.

Literary Element: Hyperbole

- Remind students that hyperbole, or exaggeration that is meant to create a particular effect, is a common element in tall tales. Point out to students that Twain used hyperbole to create a humorous story.
- Have students work in groups to find and circle examples of hyperbole in the story. Have students discuss in their groups what effect each example has on the story and on them as readers. Invite volunteers to share their favorite examples of hyperbole from the story with the rest of the class and explain what makes them funny.

- **Independent Practice:** Have students write a paragraph that describes a typical school morning and uses at least three examples of hyperbole to add suspense and excitement to the description. Invite volunteers to read their descriptions aloud.

Build Fluency**Independent Reading**

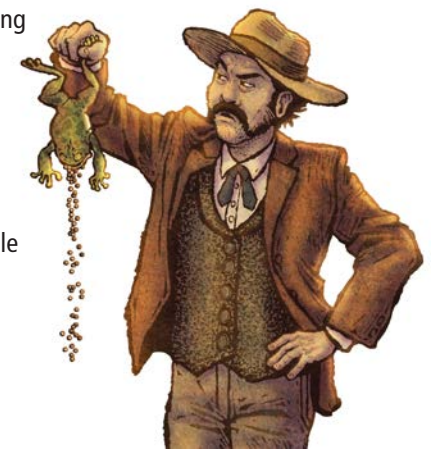
- Encourage students to read the story independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the story to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their copies to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Encourage them to practice the reading strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions with family members.

Assessment**Monitor students to determine whether they can:**

- consistently make, revise, and confirm predictions during discussion and on a worksheet
- effectively analyze characters during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly use contractions in discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify the examples of colloquial phrases in the text
- correctly identify and use hyperbole in the text and during discussion

**Comprehension Check**

- Retelling rubric
- Book quiz