

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Adventure Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,117

Book Summary

Sister Sleuth and the Silver Blaze recounts another one of Miguel's adventures as he dives into another Great Gallardo book. In this adventure, he travels into the past, becoming Mr. Watson and solving a mystery with Sherlock Holmes. In a surprise twist, he gets unexpected help from someone he knows. Illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Summarize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of summarizing to understand text
- Draw conclusions using context clues
- Identify compound sentences in the text
- Recognize and use synonyms and antonyms; identify antonyms and synonyms using a thesaurus

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Sister Sleuth and the Silver Blaze* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Summarize, compound sentences, synonyms and antonyms 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 VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:
 Story critical: *colleague* (n.), *detour* (n.), *disguise* (v.), *moor* (n.), *overactive* (adj.), *tracks* (n.)
 Enrichment: *carriage* (n.), *depression* (n.), *Gypsies* (n.), *memoirs* (n.), *obsessed* (adj.), *tweed* (n.), *vaguely* (adv.), *villa* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Discuss the meaning of a *mystery* (a puzzling situation or event that needs to be solved). Ask students to identify the types of people who solve mysteries (police officers, detectives, and so on). Have them explain how these people solve mysteries (they look for clues, interview witnesses, and so on).
- Write the names *Sherlock Holmes* and *Dr. Watson* on the board. Have students discuss what they know about these two fictional characters. Explain that these are characters in a series of mystery stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Provide background about the characters (Sherlock Holmes was a famous detective, and Dr. Watson was his closest friend and colleague).

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 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).
- Ask students to turn to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book, based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Summarize**

- Explain that one way to understand and remember information in a book is to summarize paragraphs, sections, or chapters mentally or on paper. Explain that a summary is a brief overview of the most important information in the text.
- Read pages 4 and 5 aloud to students and model summarizing.
Think-aloud: *To summarize, I need to decide which information affects the meaning or outcome of the chapter that would be important to remember. Then, in my mind, I organize the information into a few words or sentences. For example, on page 4 I learned that Miguel was stuck working in his family's shop. His sister, Teresa, was playing with her horses. She wanted Miguel to play with her. When Miguel didn't want to play, she got upset. On page 5 I learned that Miguel sneaked off to the loft where his great-grandfather's books are. These books transported him to different places. Based on the information on these two pages, I know that Miguel had a conflict with Teresa. How does this conflict affect the outcome and meaning of the chapter? (Miguel was already annoyed for having to work in the shop. The added annoyance from his sister likely caused him to sneak off to the loft.) I will underline the information in the text about the conflict and sneaking off to the loft. Why is the information about Teresa playing with horses and the details of each of the Great Gallardo books not considered important information? (They are details to make the story more interesting and don't affect the meaning or outcome of the chapter.) What information on page 6 could be considered important? (When Miguel read the book, nothing happened.) I will underline this information in the text. Based on this information, a summary for this chapter might be: Frustrated and annoyed with his family, Miguel retreated to the loft to read one of the magical Great Gallardo books. He opened *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* and waited for the magic to begin. However, nothing happened.*
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Draw conclusions**

- Explain that people use clues from past and present events to draw conclusions as a normal part of life. For example, if you step outside in the morning and the ground is wet and you see clouds in the sky, you may draw the conclusion that it has rained recently. On the other hand, if the ground is wet and you see no clouds in the sky, you may look around for other clues, such as a sprinkler nearby. Explain that authors write their books knowing that people draw conclusions as they read. It is a quick process that happens in a reader's mind. Explain that characters in the story can also draw conclusions based on clues from their own experiences.
- Ask students to turn to page 5. Read the first paragraph aloud while they follow along silently. Discuss what Miguel concluded in the last sentence. (*It might be the perfect time to take a little trip up to the loft.*)

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Sister Sleuth and the Silver Blaze

- **Think-aloud:** *I know from our discussion that characters draw conclusions based on clues from their own experiences. Miguel saw that his mom was chatting with a customer, his dad was out of the shop, and his sister was playing. Why would it be important to take the time to notice what his family members were doing? (so he could leave without being noticed) Based on this information, Miguel drew the conclusion that it was a good time to sneak up to the loft. To draw conclusions as I read, I look at the context clues to infer the rest of the author's meaning. I know that I will understand the story better when I do this, so I'm going to draw conclusions in this story as I read.*

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the words *depression*, *moor*, and *tracks* on the board. Explain that these vocabulary words help to explain the setting of the story.
- Give groups of students a large piece of blank paper. Have them divide the paper into three sections. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Have groups discuss and create a definition for each word using prior knowledge.
- Show students the illustration from page 13. Ask students to describe the ground area around the boy in the picture. Point out that the area below the boy appears to be lower than the area surrounding it. Explain that an area that is lower than the surrounding surface is called a *depression*. Invite students to identify synonyms, or words with similar meanings, for the meaning of *depression* (*dip*, *dent*, *indent*, and so on).
- Ask students what they think *moor* means. Read the following sentence to students as they visualize, or picture in their mind, the meaning of the word: *The sun began to set, transforming the sloping plain into a golden field, and casting shadows on the faded ferns lining the low curves of the moor.* Ask students to draw what they pictured on the group paper in the section for the word *moor*. Explain that a moor is a wet area of land covered in moss.
- Ask students to explain how understanding the meaning of the words *depression* and *moor* help to establish the setting (the story must take place in a low, wet area).
- Point out the word *tracks* on the board. Facilitate a discussion about tracks: *What are tracks? How are tracks made in mud or sand? Who or what makes tracks? How might tracks be used to solve mysteries?*
- Explain that vocabulary sometimes provides clues to the events of the story. Ask students to use the vocabulary words to predict what kind of mystery this might be and what kinds of tracks might be left as evidence in the story.

Set the Purpose


- Have students read the book to find out the meaning of *Sister Sleuth and the Silver Blaze*. Remind them to stop after each chapter to summarize the events of the book. Have students to underline or record on a separate piece of paper the important information in each chapter.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 12, underlining or recording important information as they read. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread.
- When students are ready, discuss the important information they identified in chapter 2, "Mysteries on the Moor." Model summarizing the important information in chapter 2.
- **Think-aloud:** *I made sure to stop at the end of the chapter to summarize what I'd read so far. First, I decided what information affected the outcome of the chapter that was important to remember. I read that Miguel transported into the book and became the character of Watson. I also read that Silver Blaze, a horse, disappeared and the trainer was found dead. I will underline this information. What other information might be important to remember in this chapter? (Someone was arrested for the crime, no tracks were found, Holmes and "Watson" began investigating.) Based on this information, what might be a summary of this chapter? (Miguel has become Dr. Watson, and he and Sherlock Holmes have a mystery to solve. Silver Blaze, a champion horse, has disappeared, and people have been found drugged and murdered.)*

- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to page 16. Invite them to share the important information in chapter 3, "Imagining Tracks." Ask students to write a brief summary of the chapter on a separate piece of paper or at the bottom of page 16. (While Miguel is investigating, he fears someone is following him. He learns that the person following him is his sister, who followed him into the story.) Invite students to share what they wrote.
- Ask students to turn to page 14. Have them reread the first paragraph. Discuss Miguel's conclusion that he states at the end of the paragraph. (*There was definitely something or someone, coming.*) Ask students to identify the context clues that likely caused Miguel to draw that conclusion (*leaves rustled, shadows stole toward him, could hear nothing but a faint moan, a light flickered*).
- Have students read the remainder of the story. Remind them to underline or record important details as they read so they can summarize the information as they read each chapter.


 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:** *I know that summarizing keeps me actively involved in what I'm reading and helps me understand and remember what I've read. I know that I will remember more about the events of the story because I summarized the information in my own words as I read the book.*
- Ask students to explain how the strategy of summarizing helped them understand the story.

 Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [summarize worksheet](#) using the final chapter in the book. If time allows, invite them to read their completed summaries aloud.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Have students turn to page 16. Discuss Miguel's conclusion at the bottom of the page (*Teresa, is that you?*) Ask students to identify the clues that likely caused Miguel to draw that conclusion (the eyes looked familiar; the person loved horses; the person had an imagination, which Miguel referred to on page 12).
- Ask volunteers to share examples in which they drew conclusions of their own as they read. For instance, one may safely conclude that Miguel would like to go to the beach or the park instead of working in his family's sandwich shop. Readers know that because the story begins: *Summer was here! The beaches were blazing hot, the parks were packed, but Miguel was stuck working at his family's sandwich shop. To make it worse, his seven-year-old sister was driving him crazy!*
- Discuss how drawing conclusions helps readers to understand and enjoy what they read.

 **Independent practice:** Have students review chapter 17, "Sister Sleuth." Have them identify and circle the conclusion drawn as to the location of the missing horse (the horse was at Mapleton Stables). Ask them to underline the clues in the story that can be used to draw this conclusion (horse tracks were found in the mud, the tracks matched the shape of the horseshoe, a trail of these tracks led to Mapleton Stables).

- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, several clues were examined before a conclusion was made. How does knowing this information give you a better understanding of the phrase *don't jump to conclusions*?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Compound sentences

- Write the following sentence on the board: *The horse statue slid across the smooth wood, and it banged down the ladder.* Ask students to identify two separate sentences within this longer sentence. (*The horse statue slid across the smooth wood. It banged down the ladder.*) Write these on the board.
- Point out that the original sentence is an example of a *compound sentence*. Review or explain that a compound sentence is a sentence consisting of two or more simple sentences separated by a comma and a conjunction.
- Review with students examples of conjunctions (*and, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet*). Write these examples on the board. Ask students to identify the conjunction that joined the two parts of the original sample sentence (*and*).
- Write the following sentence from page 6 of the book on the board: *Miguel read the whole first page, but he remained in the loft.* Read the sentence together. Ask a volunteer to come to the board to identify and circle the conjunction (*but*).
- Have students identify the two sentences the conjunction connects. (*Miguel read the whole first page. He remained in the loft.*) Discuss how the conjunction and comma connect the two sentences together, taking the place of the period and capital letter *H* in the second sentence.



Check for understanding: Say the following words one at a time and have students give the thumbs-up signal if the word begins with the /s/ sound: *happy, sleepy, sorry, girl, scared*.

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

Word Work: Synonyms and Antonyms

- Write the word *evening* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*night*). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*.
- Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *evening* (*morning*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Ask students to explain why the use of synonyms and antonyms is important in writing (they help to describe something in text, they make the writing more interesting, and so on). Have students provide examples of sentences that support their thinking.
- Show students a thesaurus. Review that a *thesaurus* is a tool writers use to identify synonyms, and sometimes antonyms. Write the word *quiet* on the board. Model using the thesaurus to identify a synonym for the word *quiet* (*soft, slight, muffled, faint, and so on*).
- Have students turn to page 13 in the book. Read aloud the following sentence from the second paragraph: *Miguel strained his eyes and ears, but could hear nothing but a faint moan.* Ask them to identify the word that describes the *moan* (*faint*). Ask students to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same as *faint*, as it is used in this sentence (*quiet, soft, and so on*). Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *faint* (*loud, noisy, and so on*).
- **Check for understanding:** Give pairs of students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *grasp* and name the synonyms listed. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them find antonyms for *grasp*. If needed, provide additional practice using a thesaurus.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss students' responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently or with a partner. Encourage repeated timed readings of a specific section of the book.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students model how to summarize a chapter with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Writing and Art Connection

Refer students to page 4, and talk about the use of alliteration found in the second sentence (*beaches were blazing, parks were packed*). Review or explain that alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in words. Invite students to write a short story about summertime, using alliteration to describe things they can see, hear, smell, feel, and taste during the season. Allow time for them to illustrate their work and share it aloud.

Social Studies Connection

Have students become the detective as they search for clues about the life of the fictional character Sherlock Holmes. Have groups of students use the Internet to identify such information as: when he was born, where he lived, which objects he is most known for wearing or having with him, and where and when he died. Invite students to share the information they discovered with the rest of the class.

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:

- accurately use the reading strategy of summarizing to better comprehend text; demonstrate the skill on a worksheet
- consistently analyze the text to draw conclusions as they read and during discussion
- recognize and understand the parts of a compound sentence during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify, select, and use synonyms and antonyms on a worksheet; accurately use a thesaurus

Comprehension Checks

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