

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Fantasy Page Count: 22 Word Count: 1,344

Book Summary

Hattie and her two friends, Sybil and Sarah, go on a picnic. When Sara and Sybil are away for a moment, Hattie discovers a mermaid—but Hattie's two friends don't believe the mermaid is real. Frustrated, Hattie offers proof of the mermaid's existence in the pages of her diary. Readers will enjoy this fun and whimsical trip into the world of a spirited third grader.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making, revising, and confirming predictions
- Analyze characters
- Identify adjectives and the nouns they describe
- Recognize and use contractions

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Mermaid in a Teacup* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- **Character traits, adjectives and nouns worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

- **Content words:** *annual, crochety, equestrian, mermaid, monstrous, pasture, reflection, squirmed*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Discuss mermaids. Ask students what a mermaid is, whether or not it is real, and what a mermaid would need in order to live if she were real. List students' responses on the board. Tell students to look for these points in the book as they are reading.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Tell students that a fun way to read that will help them understand a story is to guess what they think will happen in a book.
- Give students a copy of the book and have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Make, revise, and confirm predictions

- Model how to make a prediction as you preview the book.
Think-aloud: Let's look at the front cover. I see a mermaid in a teacup. On the back cover, I see the mermaid sitting in someone's hand. Since the title of the book is Mermaid in a Teacup, I think this might be a story about a mermaid who lives in a teacup in someone's house. I'll have to read the book to find out.
- Encourage students to make predictions about what they think they will read about the mermaid in the book.
- Show students the title page. Talk about the information that is written on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- As students read, they should use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for words within words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to page 5. Have them find the words *super equestrian*. Model how they can use context clues to figure out the meaning of the phrase. Ask students to look for words in the sentences around the phrase that might be clues to the meaning of the unfamiliar phrase (fell off her little sister's pony). Have students follow along as you read the sentence on the page to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Remind students that they should check whether a word makes sense by rereading the sentence in which it occurs.

Set the Purpose

- Tell students as they read the book to make predictions about what will happen, based on what the characters say, do, and think. Remind them to revise or confirm their predictions as they learn more about the characters.

During Reading
Student Reading



Guide the reading: Have students read to the end of page 11. Tell them to find something the girls did that they weren't sure they should do. Have them underline the words or phrases in the book that tell how the girls felt about it. If they finish before everyone else, they should go back and reread.

- When they have finished reading, ask students to tell what the girls did and how they felt about it. (The girls decide to have a picnic in the middle of the pasture. They feel this is more mature than having it in Hattie's backyard.)
- Model making, revising, and confirming predictions.
Think-aloud: So far my prediction is right. I thought the story might be about a mermaid who lives in someone's house, and it looks as though that's what it's about. From what I've read about Hattie, she sounds convinced that the mermaid is real. On page 4, she says she has "proof." I don't know anyone who has a real, live mermaid, so I think Hattie might be a little confused. I think she might find out that the mermaid isn't real.
- Direct students to page 4 in the book. Read the sentence *Sybil and Sarah are liars, fibbers, and tellers of untruth*. Ask students what this tells them about how Hattie feels about her friends. Ask if they think she will change her mind or if the girls will no longer be friends.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Mermaid in a Teacup

- Encourage students to continue to make, revise, and confirm their predictions as they read the remainder of the story.

 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

- Discuss how making predictions about what will happen in the story keeps students actively involved in the reading process and helps them understand and remember what they read.

Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze characters**

- **Discussion:** Ask students to identify the characters in the story (Hattie, Sybil, Sarah, the mermaid), their ages, and what the illustrations tell about them. Ask students how they get to know the characters of Sybil and Sarah (through Hattie's words). Ask how they think the story might sound if Sybil or Sarah were telling it instead.
- **Introduce and model:** Explain that there are many ways to learn about a character in a story. One way is to look at a character's words. Another way is to look for things the character does. Tell students that a character's words, thoughts, and actions are how the author lets the reader get to know the character and form an opinion about him or her.
- Read pages 3 and 4. Ask students what Hattie's words tell about her. (Hattie says she found a mermaid. Since mermaids aren't real, she must be making it up. This tells the reader that either Hattie tells fibs or she has a great imagination.)
- Read the third paragraph on page 4 again. Ask students what Hattie's words tell about Sarah and Sybil. (Hattie thinks they are untruthful.)
- **Check for understanding:** Read the last paragraph on page 4 again. Ask students what Hattie's actions tell about her. (She is willing to share her diary to prove that she is telling the truth.)
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the [character traits worksheet](#). Get them started by reminding them about Hattie's claims from page 3. (She claimed she found a mermaid.) When students are done, discuss their responses.

 **Extend the discussion:** Discuss the plot and whether or not students think it is believable and why. Instruct students to use the last page of the book to write which character they believed and why. Have students read their page to the group.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Identify adjectives and the nouns they describe**

- Review or explain that *adjectives* are words that describe nouns or pronouns. An adjective tells *which one, how many, or what kind*.
- Write the following sentences on the board. Ask students to count the number of adjectives in each sentence. Tell them to hold up the same number of fingers as there are adjectives in each sentence. Have individual students circle the adjective(s) in each sentence. Then have them tell the noun that each adjective describes.

Harriet found a tiny mermaid. (1)

The spotted cows graze in the green pasture. (2)

The small pool was filled with clear water. (2)

Lesson Plan *(continued)*


Mermaid in a Teacup

- **Check for understanding:** Have students complete the [adjectives-and-nouns worksheet](#). Go over the directions and guide them through the first sentence. Have them complete the remainder of the worksheet on their own.

 Have students go through the story and underline all of the adjectives.

Word Work: **Contractions**

- Review or explain that a *contraction* is a word formed by joining two words and that an apostrophe shows where the letter or letters have been left out.
- Direct students to page 4. Ask them to find two contractions (*wasn't*, *that's*). Ask them to identify the two words that have been joined to make each word (*was* and *not*, *that* and *is*).

 **Check for understanding:** Have students underline the contractions in the book and count how many they found. Discuss their answers.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to 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.

Extend the Reading

Writing Connection

Show students how to make a web that will help them write character descriptions. Elicit headings, such as physical characteristics, family, age, friends, hobbies, pets, and so on. Instruct students to first choose a character and write his or her name in the center circle of the web. Then have students fill in the web. When students have completed their web, have them write short descriptive paragraphs using the information they have written and then draw pictures of the characters. Post on a bulletin board titled "What a Character!"

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

Social Studies Connection

Reread pages 21 and 22 of *Mermaid in a Teacup*. Discuss the implications of teasing other students. Using their responses, make a chart that shows different types of teasing, the feelings a teased person might have, and strategies for coping with teasing.

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:**

- make logical predictions, based on available pictures and text; revise and/or confirm predictions as they preview and/or read the book
- analyze the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the book's characters; identify the main character's actions and traits on a character traits worksheet
- identify adjectives and the nouns they describe on the board and in worksheet text
- recognize contractions in text and identify the two words that are joined to make each contraction

Comprehension Checks

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