



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Fantasy Page Count: 24 Word Count: 2,533

Book Summary

Tyler has writer's block. He can't think of anything to write for his English class assignment—until his pen starts talking to him! Using sage advice from his pen, Tyler unleashes his imagination and soon creates an amazing story. Readers will be amused by Tyler and his talking pen while learning all about story elements such as character, setting, and plot.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Identify author's purpose
- Identify and use adverbs
- Identify syllable patterns

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website.

- Book—*Scratching a Good Story* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- **Visualize, adverbs, syllable patterns 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: **character** (n.), **climax** (n.), **conflict** (n.), **plot** (n.), **setting** (n.), **tension** (n.)

Enrichment: **compose** (v.), **dialogue** (n.), **revise** (v.), **scheme** (n.), **scribe** (n.), **traits** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *story* on the board. Draw a circle around it and draw spokes radiating out. Ask volunteers to help you fill out the graphic organizer with the parts of a good story. Begin by writing the word *characters* at the end of one of the spokes. Guide and discuss with students as you add to the spokes.
- Ask students how they go about writing a good story—how do they get started? Where do they get their ideas? Do they ever get stuck? Discuss and share what you do during the writing process.

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: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is on the basis of the words used in the text and what a person already knows about a topic.
- Read page 4 aloud to students. Model how to visualize.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a book, I always pause after a few pages to create a picture in my mind of the information I've read. This helps me organize the important information and understand the ideas in the book. For example, on page 4, the author describes Tyler as he is trying to write a story. I pictured the frustrated look on his face and how unhappy he is when he sees kids playing across the street. Then I pictured how surprised he must look when he hears a voice speaking to him when he knows he is alone in the room.
- Reread page 4 aloud to students and ask them to use the words in the story to visualize. Introduce and explain the [visualize worksheet](#). Have students draw on their worksheet what they visualized from the text on page 4. Invite students to share their drawings. Reassure them that their artwork does not need to be highly detailed or perfect.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Author's purpose**

- Explain to students that an author usually has a reason or purpose for writing a book. The purpose is either to *inform*, *entertain*, or *persuade*. Explain that to *inform* means to give someone information about something; to *entertain* means to amuse someone; and to *persuade* means to convince someone to think or do something in a new way.
- Read the title page and the first paragraph on page 4 aloud. Model how to identify author's purpose.
Think-aloud: When authors write, they have a reason, or purpose, for writing their book. They want to inform me, entertain me, or persuade me. After reading the title and the first page of this book, I think the author wants readers to be entertained by the story of a boy writing a story. Sometimes authors write for more than one purpose, so I will keep reading to see if he also wants to inform us or persuade us.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the illustrations. Read the title of the book again and ask volunteers for any ideas about what "scratching a good story" might mean.
- Have students find the bold word *character* on page 6. Have them look for clues to the word's meaning in the sentence containing the word *character* and the sentences following it. Read the sentences out loud and have students tell you what they think the word means. Explain that clues are not always present in the same sentence, but that other information in the paragraph often explains it or gives examples of it. Show students how the author works in the definition of *character* through the dialogue between Tyler and the pen.
- Explain to students that sometimes a word's meaning is provided directly in the text by the author. The author of this story has cleverly woven the definition for many words right into the story through the character of the pen. Ask them to be on the lookout for the meanings of bold words embedded in the text.


- Point out the glossary at the back of the book. Review or explain that a glossary and a dictionary contain lists of words and their definitions.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out about Tyler and his story. Remind them to stop after every few pages to visualize the events and places in the story and to think about the author's purpose as they read.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 4 to the end of page 5. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread. Have students draw what they visualized during one or more events of the story on their visualize worksheet.
 - Model visualizing and identifying author's purpose.
Think-aloud: On page 5, I found out who was talking to Tyler—it was his pen! I pictured the look of astonishment and disbelief on Tyler's face when the pen started talking. I imagined what it would look like if a pen could talk. Where would its mouth be? Does it have a face?
 - Invite students to share their drawings of what they visualized while reading. Have them explain their drawings aloud.
 - *Think-aloud: So far, this story seems to be a fantasy because pens don't really talk. I know that authors usually write fantasy stories to entertain the reader. I think that is the author's purpose, but I will keep reading to be sure.*
 - **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 11. Have them visualize the information in the text as they read. Ask students to draw what they visualized about Tyler, his pen, and the story that Tyler is developing on their visualize worksheet. Invite them to share what they visualized as they read. Have students look at the illustrations in the book. Encourage them to add details such as facial expressions to their own drawings.
 - Have students look over pages 6 through 11 for bolded words. Have them compare the bolded words with the graphic organizer you created on the board in the Build Background activity. Ask students if the author has given the reader any facts within the fantasy story. Discuss with students how the author has creatively embedded a new purpose for writing the story: to inform. Remind them that authors often have more than one purpose.
 - Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to visualize as they read the rest of the story. Remind them to continue thinking about the author's purposes.
-  Have students make a small 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: On page 21, I was completely surprised by the ending Tyler chose. I pictured Mountain with a shock of green hair and a somewhat sad and embarrassed expression on his big face.*
- Ask students to explain how the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and enjoy the story. Ask volunteers to share examples of the things they visualized.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the visualize worksheet. If time allows, have them share their drawing with a partner.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review the three main purposes that authors have for writing. Ask students if they think the author had more than one purpose for writing. Discuss whether they feel that the author informed and entertained them as readers.
- **Independent practice:** Ask students if, after reading, they were persuaded of anything. If not, how might the author have done that?
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about a boy who has to write a story and gets a little help from an imaginary advisor (his pen). The pen helps the boy to understand that he actually knows a lot about story writing and to trust his ideas. Now that you know this information, how will it help you the next time you write a story?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Adverbs**

- Review or explain that *adverbs* are words that describe verbs or adjectives. Adverbs express the *time, manner, or degree* in which a verb occurs. They usually tell how something happens. They may also tell *how often, how many, or how much*.
- Write the question *How?* on the board. Have students turn to page 5, and read aloud this sentence: *"It's extremely rude not to reply when you are asked a question."* Explain that *extremely* is an adverb that describes the adjective *rude*. Ask students what the root or base word of *extremely* is (*extreme*). Explain that many adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to the end of a word. Have students find this sentence on page 5: *"I have to write a story for English class," he answered shyly.* Ask students how Tyler answered (*shyly*). Tell students that *shyly* is an adverb that describes the verb *answered*. Remind students that most, but not all, adverbs end in *-ly*.
- Write the words *quick, perfect, and sudden* on the board. Have volunteers add *-ly* to each base word and use the resulting adverb in an oral sentence.



- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to find and highlight at least ten adverbs in the book and identify the verb or adjective that each adverb describes. When students are done, have them share and discuss their list. Pay special attention to any adverbs found by students that do not end in *-ly*.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the [adverbs worksheet](#). When all students have finished, read and discuss the correct answers.

Word Work: **Syllable patterns**

- Review with students that a *syllable* is a unit of sound in a word. A syllable contains a vowel and possibly one or more consonants. Point out to students that the word *pen* contains one syllable, the word *conflict* contains two syllables, and the word *character* contains three syllables. Explain that many words have multiple syllables, such as the words *conversation* and *exceptional*. Tell students that knowing how to break words into syllables can help them read and spell longer or unfamiliar words.
- Write the word *conflict* on the board. Say the word aloud, stressing the syllables, and place a dot over each of the vowels in the word. Then draw a line to divide the word into its two syllables. Say: *Notice that the vowel o is in the middle of the syllable con, and it is closed in by the consonants c and n on either side. The vowel sound is short in the syllable con. We call this a closed syllable. Often, vowels in closed syllables are short vowels. I can use this strategy when I am trying to sound out unfamiliar words.*
- Repeat the process above with the word *revise*. Demonstrate that the syllable break comes after the vowel, so the first syllable (*re*) is an open syllable—there is no consonant closing it in at the end. Explain that the vowels in open syllables are often long.

- **Check for understanding:** Write several more words from the book on the board (*compose, writing,* and so on), making sure to choose from three- or four-syllable words as well. Ask student volunteers to come to the board, divide each word into syllables, and explain whether the first syllable is open or closed. If students are ready, have them identify whether the second and/or third syllable is open or closed.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [syllable patterns worksheet](#). Discuss their answers aloud after they have finished.

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 read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them share their drawings from the visualization worksheet with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Fantasy Writing Connection

Ask students to help you create a planning sheet for composing their own story, much as Tyler did. Have them reference the book's glossary and the web you created on the board in the Build Background activity. Then have them use these to plan and write their own story, making sure to include characters, setting, plot, conflict, tension, climax, and an ending.

Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on fantasy writing.

Social Studies Connection

Have students choose a favorite author and research him or her on the Internet. Ask them to find out where their favorite author gets his or her ideas for writing and what process he or she goes through when writing a book (many author websites contain interviews or biographies). Have students report back to the group and discuss what they have learned.

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 use the strategy of visualizing to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify the author's purpose during discussion
- correctly identify adverbs in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet
- correctly recognize and understand the use of syllable patterns within words during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

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