

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Fantasy Page Count: 14 Word Count: 275

Book Summary

Uzzle's cousin Cuke has come to visit, and suddenly Cuke's the coolest monster on the block. The other monsters want to play with him—all except Bonk. He's not sure he likes all the fuss. When Cuke gets lost on a bike ride, all the monsters know Bonk is the one to call for help.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make personal connections to the text

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of making personal connections to understand and remember story events
- Analyze character traits
- Orally manipulate medial sounds
- Identify and pronounce words with the ee digraph
- Identify nouns
- Recognize figurative language

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Cool as a Cuke* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Index cards with vocabulary
- [Character web, digraph ee, nouns, figurative language worksheets](#)
- Word journal (optional)
- [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

- High-frequency words: *have, help, who*
- Content words: *Bonk, cousin, Cuke, Lurk, Snag, Uzzle, watermelon, whistle*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students if they have ever disliked someone and then changed their mind later. Ask what made them change their mind about the person. Did they dislike the person because of his or her personality or because of something else?
- If students have read other Monsters stories, create a character web on the board and have students brainstorm the monsters' names and traits.

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 *Cool as a Cuke*. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)
- Show students the title page. Discuss information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- If students have read other Monsters stories, model making connections to previous experiences with the characters.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Make personal connections to the text**

- Explain that good readers think about their own lives as they read and try to make connections to characters in the stories they read.
- Model making personal connections.
Think-aloud: It looks as if one of the monsters is doing a trick on his bike. I remember that when I was young, I always tried to ride my bike without hands. I fell a couple of times, but luckily I was wearing my helmet and pads. I eventually learned how to ride no-handed. (Comments should be tailored to fit personal situations.)
- Preview the inside pages of the book, asking students if they see anything familiar in the pictures. Invite them to relate their experiences to the pictures in the story. Allow students to share personal experiences that the pictures bring to mind. Ask students to look at the picture on page 7 and guess how Bonk might be feeling. Ask: *Why might he feel this way?* Ask if students have ever felt that way themselves.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze character traits**

- Remind students that all stories have characters. We can learn about characters from what they say, what they do, and what others say about them.
- Model how to analyze character traits.
Think-aloud: As I read Little Red Riding Hood, I learned a lot about the Big Bad Wolf. Some of the character traits I learned about him were that he was sneaky and untrustworthy.
- Invite student participation. Have students discuss other traits of the Big Bad Wolf or other characters they have read about.

Introduce the Vocabulary


- As you preview the book with students, reinforce any difficult language patterns or vocabulary. On page 5, say: *What can Cuke do in this picture? Yes, he can spit watermelon seeds.*
- Review with students how to use reading strategies, such as using what they know about sound/symbol relationships, to decode unfamiliar words.
- Point out the word *tricks* on page 3. Ask students how they might figure out this word if they don't know it. Say: *First, I look at how the word starts. It starts with an r-family blend: tr. Next, I try the short vowel sound: iil. The next sound is /k/ because I remember that the letters c and k together make /k/. I see the word ends with /s/. I blend the sounds together and get tricks. Now I'll read the sentence to see if tricks makes sense. I want you to tell me if you think it does.*
- Ask students what a *cuke* might be and discuss the phrase "cool as a cuke."

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to think about how the events and characters in the book are like events and people they know from their own lives

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Give students their copy of the book. Have them read to the end of page 6 and then stop to think about what has happened so far in the story. Encourage students who finish before others to reread the text.
 - **Model making personal connections to the text.**
Think-aloud: As I was reading about Cuke, I remembered a time when a new kid moved into my neighborhood. I remember that the kid gave me a toy and I knew right away that she was friendly.
 - **Check for understanding:** Have students describe what has happened in the story so far. Ask them what they learned about Cuke on these pages, what things Cuke can do, and how they might describe him and his character traits. Ask if they have ever done any of those things or known someone who could. Have students describe any other personal experiences that they linked with the story.
 - Draw a character web on the board with Cuke in the middle. Have students share character traits about Cuke as you record them
 - Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to think about things they have experienced that are similar to the experiences of the characters. Have them stop while they are reading to think about the character traits of the main characters to help them understand and remember the events as they read.
 - As students read, monitor their reading and intervene to help them work out difficult words.
-  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

- Explain to students that thinking about our own personal experiences can help us to connect with and better understand books that we read.
Think-aloud: *I remember when a new student came to my class when I was in fourth grade. A friend of mine was very jealous of all of the attention the new student was getting. After my friend got to know the student, however, they became very good friends, just like Bonk and Cuke.*
- Ask students whether the story reminded them of anything that ever happened to them. Ask how thinking about their own experiences helped them to understand the story.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Refer to the character web the group made describing Cuke. Ask students if there are any new character traits they learned about Cuke as they read the remainder of the story. Ask: *If Cuke can do all these things, what does that tell you about him? What words can we use to describe a person who is good at many things? The person might practice a lot, or he or she might just be really talented.* Write their responses on the web.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [character web worksheet](#) by writing words that describe Bonk. If time allows, discuss their answers after everyone has finished.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, the characters were very impressed by all a newcomer could do. Why is it important to be open to new friendships?

Build Skills

Phonological Awareness: Orally manipulate medial sounds

- Say the word *meet* and have students repeat it. Ask them to tell you the middle sound in the word.
- Tell students you want them to replace the long /e/ sound in the middle of the word *meet* with the short /e/ sound. Ask what word they have made by changing the sound (*met*).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students change the short /e/ in *met* to long /i/. Ask what new word they have made (*might*).
- Have students change the long /i/ in *might* to short /i/. Ask what new word they have made (*mitt*).
- Repeat the exercise with the following: change the long /o/ in *hope* to short /o/ (*hop*); change the short /o/ in *hop* to short /i/ (*hip*); change the short /i/ in *hip* to long /e/ (*heap*); change the long /e/ in *heap* to long /o/ (*hope*).

Phonics: Digraph ee

- Have students follow along as you read the first two sentences on page 3. Have them listen for a word with the long /e/ sound. Write the word *meet* on the board and underline the two letters that stand for long /e/. Explain that these two letters together make what is called a *digraph*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with partners to find other words with the ee digraph on pages 5, 7, 10, 11, and 14. On the board, record the words they find, and have volunteers come up and circle the letters that stand for long /e/ sound.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [digraph ee worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: Nouns

- Explain to students that *nouns* name *people, places, and things*.
- Explain that some of these nouns are called *proper nouns* and that proper nouns need a capital letter at the beginning. These words are individual names, such as *Tom* or *Joan*. They can also be the names of individual places, such as *Baltimore* or *Toronto*. Create two columns on the board: *Proper Nouns* and *Other Nouns*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 3 and find all the nouns (*cousin, Cuke, Uzzle, monsters, tricks, bike*). As students find the nouns, have them tell you in which column they belong. Point out the capital letters in the proper nouns.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [nouns worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: Figurative language

- Explain to students that writers compare things while they write to make their writing more interesting. These comparisons are called *figurative language*. Read the title of the story again and remind students of the saying *cool as a cucumber*. Use one of the students' names with the phrase: *Juanita is as cool as a cucumber*. Talk about how this phrase describes the student.
- Have students follow along as you read the sentence on page 5: *He can whistle like a bird*. Talk about what the whistle is being compared to. Ask students if they think this comparison is accurate. Ask: *Can a whistle sound like a bird? Does this description make you hear the sound of a bird in your head?*
- **Check for understanding:** Provide other oral examples of *figurative language* and have students decide whether they make good comparisons. Some examples are: *black as night; wise as an owl; runs like a cheetah*.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [figurative language worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

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 students share with a family member how their experiences compare to those of the characters in the story.

Extend the Reading

Fantasy Writing

Help students brainstorm an activity that all of the monsters in the story could do together. Have students use the text on page 5 as a model to help them write a paragraph about the activity. The first sentence names the activity. The following sentences tell what each of the monsters does. Remind students to use what they learned about the characters to help them brainstorm what each monster does. The group text might look something like the following: *The monsters have a race. Cuke runs very fast. Bonk runs fast, too. Lurk goes slowly. Uzzle falls down.* After the group writing activity, have each student write his or her own story, using an idea from the brainstormed list on the board.

Math Connection

Have students write subtraction story problems similar to the plot of the story. For example, “Six monsters were playing. One monster went for a bike ride. How many monsters are left?”

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:

- Identify personal experiences to the text during discussion
- infer character traits from characters’ actions and words, and from other characters’ reactions to them during discussion and on a worksheet
- orally manipulate medial sounds to make new words during discussion
- identify and read words with the ee digraph during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and categorize nouns in discussion and on a worksheet
- use figurative language to make comparisons in discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

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