

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic Page Count: 24 Word Count: 3,104

Book Summary

The Black Stones tells the story of twins who learn to put aside their differences and get along with each other. Tala finds two obsidian stones and wants to learn more about how they were formed from a scientific viewpoint. Her brother, Paco, isn't interested in science and wants to find out if the stones are lucky charms or have magical properties. Their mother forces them to work together to find the answers. The twins discover that they actually enjoy working together.

Book and lesson also available at levels T and W.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Compare and contrast characters
- Identify and understand the use of adverbs
- Identify and understand the use of three types of figurative language

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Black Stones* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Visualize, compare and contrast, adverbs 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: *intrigued* (adj.), *obsidian* (n.), *preoccupied* (adj.), *sibling* (n.), *talisman* (n.), *translucent* (adj.)

Enrichment: *Apache* (n.), *bicker* (v.), *chasm* (n.), *confront* (v.), *frenzied* (adj.), *hypotheses* (n.), *outrageous* (adj.), *perspectives* (n.), *pestering* (v.), *pilgrimage* (n.), *quarreling* (v.), *scouring* (v.), *scurried* (v.), *subconscious* (adj.), *theories* (n.), *tolerate* (v.), *unison* (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Show students a map of the United States and have them locate Arizona. Point out the general location of the town of Superior, Pinal County, and one of the areas where the Apaches live. Explain that this is the setting of the story.
- Ask students to close their eyes and visualize, or picture in their mind, a translucent black stone glistening in the bright sunlight. Ask them to share what they see.

- Provide photographs of Apache warriors and obsidian stones from a nonfiction children's book or children's encyclopedia, and discuss what students may know about Native American groups in the United States and their history.

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).
- Preview the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. 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: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is based on the words used in the text and what a person already knows about the topic.
- Ask students to close their eyes and listen carefully. Read page 4 aloud to them. 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 the setting. I pictured the swiftly flowing river and the sound it must have been making. I also pictured the black stones as they glowed softly when Tala held them up to the sun.
- Reread page 4 aloud to students, asking them to use the words in the story to visualize. Introduce and explain the [visualize worksheet](#). Have students draw what they visualized from the text on page 4 on their worksheet. Invite them to share their drawing.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Compare and contrast**

- Explain that one way to understand concepts in a story is to tell how the information is similar and different.
- Point out the illustration of the two characters, Tala and Paco, on page 19. Model how to compare and contrast using clues from the illustration.
Think-aloud: In this illustration, I see two people. I see that some things about them are the same, and some things are different. I notice that one is a girl and one is a boy, and that they look related. It looks as if they both like working on the computer.
- Model how to compare and contrast information using a Venn diagram. Draw a Venn diagram on the board. Label the left circle *Tala* and the right circle *Paco*. Explain that information telling how Tala and Paco are similar is written where both circles overlap. Information that is only true of Tala is written in the left side of the left circle. Information that is only true of Paco is written in the right side of the right circle.
- Have students identify other similarities and differences between Tala and Paco. Add this information to the Venn diagram.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the illustrations. Reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.


- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Have students find the bold word *translucent* on page 4. Explain that they can look at the letter the word begins with and then use what they know about syllables and vowels (one vowel sound per syllable) to sound out the rest of the word. Have students look for a clue to the word's meaning in the sentence. Explain that other information in the paragraph or in the illustrations may also provide information about the unfamiliar word.
- Model how to use the glossary or a dictionary to find the word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *translucent* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 4 as you read the sentence in which the word *translucent* appears to confirm the meaning of the word. If time allows, preview other vocabulary words.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to learn about obsidian stones, Apache warriors, and the main characters, Paco and Tala. Remind them to stop to visualize as they read to help them remember and understand what they're reading.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the middle of page 13. Have them draw what they visualized during one or more events of the story on their visualize worksheet. If they finish before everyone else, have them go back and reread.
 - **Think-aloud:** *When I read pages 7 and 8, I paused to picture in my mind how that would look. I envisioned the twins' mom dragging them apart, one on either side of her. I envisioned the big boulders and the rushing water. The author helped me to imagine the scene with her words: The landscape seemed infected with twins' anger.*
 - Invite students to share the drawings of what they visualized while reading. Have them explain their drawings aloud.
 - Review with students the details they read on pages 5 through 13 about Tala and Paco. Discuss any similarities and differences between the characters. (Similarities: both are stubborn like their father; both are very angry; neither likes to lose an argument. Differences: Tala is scientific, Paco is a dreamer; Tala is interested in the hows and whys of nature; Paco thinks the world is full of magic.) Add this information to the Venn diagram on the board from earlier. Save the diagram for future reference.
 - **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the middle of page 16. Have them visualize the information in the text as they read. Ask students to draw their visualization on their visualize worksheet. Invite them to share what they saw in their mind.
 - Have students work with a partner and continue comparing Tala and Paco as they read the remainder of the story.
 - Introduce and explain the [compare-and-contrast worksheet](#). Have students write the information about Tala and Paco on their worksheet.
 - Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to visualize as they read the rest of the story and to record any other similarities or differences among the characters.
-  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

- **Think-aloud:** *On page 20, I read about the Legend of the Apache Tears. I pictured the brave warriors being overpowered by the white men and their guns. I pictured the women weeping and grieving as they learned of the deaths of their men.*
- 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 drawings with a partner.

Reflect on Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review with students the similarities and differences between Tala and Paco. Discuss how students organized the information on their compare-and-contrast worksheet.
- **Independent practice:** Using the information on their compare-and-contrast worksheet, have students create a second Venn diagram on the back and compare themselves to either Tala or Paco.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, two siblings are causing their mother a lot of sorrow with their constant fighting. In the end, they realize that they sometimes need to put their selfish feelings aside for the good of the family. Now that you know this information, why is it important to put yourself in someone else's shoes? How does this practice help you understand other people's feelings and actions?

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 an action 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 4 and read aloud this sentence: *Tala glanced around nervously before snatching up the two black stones.* Ask students how Tala glanced (*nervously*). Explain that *nervously* is an adverb that describes the verb *glanced*. Ask students what the root or base word of *nervously* is (*nervous*).
- Explain that many (but not all) adverbs are formed by adding *-ly* to the end of an adjective (clarify for students that not every word that ends in *-ly* is an adverb—only the ones that modify a verb or an adjective).
- Have students turn to page 6 and read this sentence: *Paco darted forward and grabbed her fist....* Ask students how Paco darted (*forward*). Tell students that *forward* is an adverb that describes the verb *darted*. Remind students that most, but not all, adverbs end in *-ly*.
- Write the words *immediate, loud, 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 fifteen 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 students found that do not end in *-ly*.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [adverbs worksheet](#). When all students have finished, read and discuss the correct answers.

Word Work: Figurative language

- Review or explain that authors use figurative language in their writing to help the reader visualize settings or characters more intensely as well as to make the story “come alive” for the reader, making it more enjoyable and memorable.

- Write the word *simile* on the board. Review or explain that a *simile* is a type of figurative language that compares one thing to another by using the word *like* or *as*. Write the following sentence on the board: *The jet black stones were as dark as a starless night and as smooth as glass.* Ask a volunteer to read the sentence aloud and to locate the similes that use *as* to compare two things. Ask what the stones are being likened to (a starless night and glass). Write the phrases *starless night* and *glass* on the board under the word *simile*.
- Write the word *metaphor* on the board. Review or explain that a *metaphor* is a type of figurative language in which one thing is spoken of as if it were another thing. Write the following sentence on the board: *The foam cresting the muddy water reminded him of whipped cream stirred into cocoa.* Ask a volunteer to read the sentence aloud. Ask what the muddy water is being likened to (whipped cream in cocoa). Write the phrase *whipped cream in cocoa* on the board under the word *metaphor*.
- Write the word *personification* on the board. Review or explain that *personification* means giving human traits (qualities, feelings, actions, or characteristics) directly to a nonliving object. For example, *the trees were dancing with the wind*, or *the sun peeked over the hill*. Write the following sentence on the board: *The river whispered secrets to his subconscious mind...* Ask a volunteer to read the sentence aloud. Ask students what the river is doing that is a human trait (whispering secrets). Write the phrase *whispering secrets* on the board under the word *personification*.
- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to turn to page 5 and read the sentence *She was already irritated, knowing that he would behave like a blood-sucking leech, the way he always did.* Have students turn to a partner and identify the type of figurative language in this sentence (simile). Ask students what two things are being compared (her brother to a blood-sucking leech).



Independent practice: Have students work in pairs to find and highlight at least one example of each of the three types of figurative language in the book. When students are finished, have them share their findings and add examples to the lists on the board.

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. Have students practice visualizing the story with someone at home and discuss how figurative language helps them to visualize more vividly.

Extend the Reading

Realistic Writing Connection

Explain or review with students the points of realistic fiction: the story revolves around characters in a particular setting, and the events of the story take place in a problem-and-solution format. Have students write a story based on a problem-and-solution situation that has happened for them. Explain that while they will include elements based in reality, their story must be a work of fiction. Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Divide the group in half and supply books and links to Internet websites for students to learn more about the Apache group (see *The Apaches*, Level Z) and obsidian glass. Give students index cards and instruct them to write interesting facts on the cards, along with any other information they discover. Lead a roundtable discussion in which students share their findings and discuss the details.

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
- compare and contrast characters during discussion and on a worksheet
- recognize and use adverbs during discussion and on a worksheet
- understand the use of figurative language in discussion and in the text

Comprehension Checks

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