



### About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Fantasy    Page Count: 16    Word Count: 367

#### Book Summary

*Why I'm Late Today* is the fantastical tale of a young girl who is late to school after a trip to the planet Norbot. After sharing breakfast with the Norbotians and landing the spaceship in the schoolyard, she must explain herself to the school secretary. Colorful and engaging illustrations support the humorous text. Students will have opportunities to identify cause-and-effect relationships as well as to practice retelling skills.

### About the Lesson

#### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Retell

#### Objectives

- Retell to understand text
- Identify cause and effect
- Discriminate short vowel /i/ sound
- Identify short vowel *i*
- Recognize and use quotation marks
- Understand and use suffix -ed

#### Materials

Green text indicates resources are available on the website.

- Book—*Why I'm Late Today* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Dictionaries
- Sticky notes
- Cause and effect, short vowel *i*, quotation marks worksheets
- Discussion cards



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

#### Vocabulary

\*Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

- High-frequency words: *because*, *their*, *they*, *why*
- Content words:  
Story critical: *aliens* (n.), *creatures* (n.), *eject* (v.), *exchange* (n.), *excuse* (n.), *spaceship* (n.)

### Before Reading

#### Build Background

- Ask students if they have ever been late for school. Have students share stories of a time when they were late and what caused them to be late, such as oversleeping or being stuck in traffic.
- Write the word *excuse* on the board and ask a volunteer to define the word *excuse*. Explain to students that when describing why they were late for school, they are describing their excuse for being late. Tell students that often a parent or caretaker must write a letter, or an excuse, for the student who was late or missed school.

- Write the words *Reality* and *Fantasy* on the board. Have a volunteer explain what each word means. Explain to students that they will be reading a story about a young girl who is late for school and has a very unusual excuse. Discuss with students that as they read, they can look for clues to determine whether the girl's excuse is on the basis of reality or fantasy.

### Book Walk

#### 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, 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: **Retell**

- Explain that effective readers stop now and then during reading to retell in their mind what is happening in the story. Stopping to retell the events of the story helps readers remember and understand what they are reading.
- Explain that when people retell a story or event, they explain the details in order. Point out that people retell stories as part of their daily lives, such as sharing with one another what happened at school or the events of a television show.
- Model retelling a time you were running late.  
**Think-aloud:** *One morning in January I was very late for school. A big snowstorm blew through overnight and covered everything in a deep layer of snow. Because I was not expecting the snow, I was not prepared when I woke up in the morning. As soon as I looked out the window, I jumped out of bed, put on my snow clothes, and started to shovel the driveway so I could get my car out. As I was shoveling, the snow kept falling. At last I had cleared a path. I scraped my car and tried to back it up the driveway. There was ice underneath the snow, so my car kept slipping and would not go up the driveway. Finally, I got out of the car and poured salt on the driveway. As I waited for the salt to melt the ice, I gathered everything I would need for the day. I jumped back in my car and tried again. The car made it up the driveway! As I was driving down my street however, I realized I had forgotten my lunch and had to turn around and go back to my house. Once I was back on the road, I had to drive very slowly because of the snow. Eventually, I made it to school, and luckily, I made it there before my class arrived!*
- Point out to students that when retelling a story or event, it is important to tell the details in correct order. Have students turn to a partner and retell a time when they were late for school, being sure to tell the details in correct order.
- Have students place sticky notes on pages 6, 8, 10, 12, and 15. Explain that as they read, they should stop on these pages to think about what has happened so far in the story. Encourage students to retell in their mind what happens in the story as they read.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

#### Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Cause and effect**

- Explain to students that one way to understand information in a story is to think about what happened and why it happened. Point out that a *cause* is something that makes something else happen, and an *effect* is what happens because of the cause. Explain that asking the question, *why did it happen?* reveals the cause and that asking the question, *what happened?* reveals the effect.
- Create a two-column chart on the board with the headings *Cause* and *Effect*. Model how to identify an effect and its cause.

- **Think-aloud:** *One way to understand a story is to think about the event that happened and to try to figure out the reason why it happened. This keeps me involved in the story and excited about what might happen next. For example, if a character in a story is laughing, I read to find out the reason he or she is laughing. The character might have heard a funny joke. The effect, or what happened, would be laughing, and the cause, or why the laughing happened, would be hearing a funny joke.*
- Write this cause-and-effect relationship on the board. Invite students to suggest other possible causes for the effect of the character laughing (seeing something funny on television, being nervous, and so on). Write these new cause-and-effect-relationships on the board.

### Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following story-critical words on the board: *aliens, eject, creatures, and spaceship*.
- Point out that these words can be found in the story and they help students understand the story as they read. Divide students into two groups, give each group two sheets of blank paper, and assign two of the words. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Create a definition for each word using students' prior knowledge.
- 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.
- Model how students can use a dictionary to find a word's meaning. Have them locate the word *aliens* in the dictionary. Invite a volunteer to read the definition for *aliens*. Have students compare the dictionary definition with the glossary definition. Have them compare these with their prior knowledge of the word.
- Have students follow along on page 4 as you read the sentence in which the word *aliens* is found to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.

### Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out why the narrator is late for school. Remind them to stop reading at the end of each page with a sticky note to quickly retell in their mind the details of the story so far.

## During Reading

### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students 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 early to go back and reread.
- Model retelling.  
**Think-aloud:** *I stopped after a few pages to retell in my mind what I had read so far. I learned that the narrator, a young girl, is late to school because she was having breakfast with aliens called Norbotians on the planet of Norbot. I discovered that the aliens invited her to breakfast because they felt bad when she did a belly flop into their swimming pool that was filled with green slime. Mrs. Gage asks the girl why she would jump into a pool of green slime. I will keep reading to find out.*
- Draw a cause-and-effect T-chart on the board.
- Have students reread pages 3 and 4. Explain to them the cause on these pages is that the narrator has breakfast with aliens called the Norbotians. Explain that the effect will be what happens because she has breakfast with them. Ask a volunteer to tell the effect of the cause (*she is late for school*). Say: *I will write The girl has breakfast with aliens under the Cause heading. I will write She is late for school under the Effect heading.*
- Introduce and explain the **cause-and-effect worksheet**. Have students write information they know so far about the cause-and-effect relationship discussed above in the chart.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Have them retell what they have read so far to a partner. Ask them to write on their worksheet what caused the Norbotians to invite the girl to breakfast (*they felt bad that she did a belly flop into their pool filled with green slime*). Have students record any additional cause-and-effect relationship information on the worksheet.

- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to stop at the pages marked with sticky notes to quietly retell the events of the story. Additionally, remind students to consider the cause-and-effect relationships in the story.



Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be discussed in the section 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

- Model retelling in detail the events of the story after the narrator does a belly flop into the pool of slime.
- **Think-aloud:** *The narrator was launched into the pool of slime because her friend Teresa got scared when she saw the Norbotians coming to say hello, so she pressed the eject button. They felt bad that she landed in the slime, so the Norbotians invited the girls to breakfast. The Norbotians were curious about the spaceship that Teresa had built in her backyard and that they used to fly to Norbot. The narrator used the spaceship to fly back home to go to school, but Teresa stayed and went to school with the Norbotians for the day. At the end of the story, Mrs. Gage is frightened and jumps from her desk when she notices that one of the Norbotians has come to school with the narrator.*
- Have students retell the story from the beginning to a partner. Listen for whether they include the following: correct events in detail, events in order, main characters, problem, and solution.

### Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss the causes and the effects students recorded on their worksheet.
- **Independent practice:** Have students write any additional causes and effects on the worksheet. If time allows, discuss their answers.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, you learn about a young girl who is late to school because she has breakfast with aliens called the Norbotians. What aspects of this story are fantasy? What aspects could happen in real life? How do you know?

### Build Skills

#### Phonological Awareness: Short vowel /i/ sound

- Say the word *ship* aloud to students, emphasizing the short vowel /i/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the /i/ sound.
- Read pages 5 and 6 aloud to students. Have students raise their hand when they hear a word that contains the short vowel /i/ sound.
- **Check for understanding:** Say the following words one at a time and have students give the thumbs-up signal if the word contains the short vowel /i/ sound: *pen, fish, mitt, fan, pin, sing*.

#### Phonics: Short vowel i

- Write the word *sits* on the board and say it aloud with students.
- Have students say the short vowel /i/ sound aloud. Then, run your finger under the letters in the word as students say the whole word aloud. Ask students to identify which letter represents the short vowel /i/ sound in the word *sits*.
- Have students practice writing the letter *i* on a separate piece of paper while saying the short vowel /i/ sound.
- Write the following words that contain the short vowel /i/ sound on the board, leaving out the short vowel: *pit, fin, sting, think*. Say each word, one at a time, and have volunteers come to the board and add the short vowel *i* to each word.



**Check for understanding:** Have students read pages 6 through 8 and underline all the words containing the short vowel *i*.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [short vowel i worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Grammar and Mechanics: Quotation marks

- Explain to students that the narrator and Mrs. Gage have a conversation throughout the book. Ask: *How do readers know when the narrator and Mrs. Gage are talking to each other?* Explain that there are clues in the text that tell readers when someone is speaking (quotation marks and word clues such as *said*, *asked*, and so on). Explain to students that without quotation marks, it would be hard to tell when different characters in the book start and stop talking.
- Ask students to turn to page 3. Read the page aloud to students. Ask them to point to the quotation marks on the page. Then, have them identify what the narrator says (*Sorry I'm late. I was having breakfast with Norbotians*). Have them identify what Mrs. Gage says (*Who are the Norbotians?*).
- Copy the text from page 4 onto the board, leaving out the quotation marks. Read the text aloud to students and invite volunteers to add the quotation marks. Next, have students circle the word clues in the text that tell who is saying what (*explained*, *added*, *asked*).



**Check for understanding:** Have students reread pages 5 and 6 and circle every set of quotation marks. Then, have students work with a partner to identify which character is speaking on each page.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [quotation marks worksheet](#). If time allows, have them share their responses.

### Word Work: Suffix -ed

- Write the word *filled* on the board. Ask students what the root word, or base word, is (*fill*), and explain or remind them that the *-ed* is called the *suffix*. Explain that a suffix always comes at the end of a root word. Point out that this is a past-tense verb and it describes something that happened in the past. Write the term *past tense* on the board.
- Explain that when adding the suffix *-ed* to make a regular past-tense verb, sometimes it is necessary to double the consonant before adding the *-ed*. If the word's last two letters are a vowel followed by a consonant, the final consonant is doubled before adding the suffix *-ed*. For example, the past-tense verb *trip* has a vowel followed by a consonant at the end. So when changing the word to past tense, the final consonant (*p*) is doubled before adding the *-ed* to make it *tripped*. Write the words *trip* and *tripped* on the board.
- Write the following words on the board and have volunteers add the suffix *-ed*: *pin*, *trim*, *trap*.
- Explain that when adding the suffix *-ed* to a word ending in the letter *y*, such as *try*, the *y* is first changed to *i* before adding the *-ed* to create the word *tried*. Write the words *try* and *tried* on the board.
- Write the following words on the board and have volunteers add the suffix *-ed*: *cry*, *pry*, *worry*.
- Explain that when adding the suffix *-ed* to a word that ends in the letter *e*, such as *shine*, the *e* remains, and a *d* is added. Write the words *shine* and *shined* on the board.
- Write the following words on the board and have volunteers add the suffix *-ed*: *decide*, *divide*, *bake*.



**Check for understanding:** Have students reread pages 5 through 7 and circle all of the words containing the suffix *-ed* (*invited*, *asked*, *filled*, *pushed*, *explained*, *snorted*).

## 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 them discuss the causes and effects they identified as they read.

### Extend the Reading

#### Writing Connection

Discuss with students the difference between reality and fantasy. Write the headings *Fantasy* and *Reality* and have students provide examples of each. Invite students to think of a time when they were late or absent from school and required a letter from a parent or caregiver to explain the absence. Have students share these stories with a partner. Then, invite students to brainstorm a list of ideas of a fantasy excuse, such as the one told by the narrator in the story. Have students create these stories using the skills of retelling and share them with a friend. Review with students the basics of letter writing, including formatting, greetings, salutations, and so on. Have students write or dictate a letter explaining their outrageous excuse for being late or absent from school. Have students address the letter to the principal of their school. If time permits, invite the principal into the classroom and have students read their excuses aloud.

Visit [WritingA-Z.com](http://WritingA-Z.com) for a lesson and leveled materials on writing.

#### Science Connection

Engage students in a discussion about the Solar System. Have them share and record any prior knowledge they may have about the planetary system. Invite a local astronomer to come talk to the class. Have students prepare questions in advance to ask. Invite students to discuss with the astronomer why this story is fantasy rather than realistic.

#### 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 retelling to understand text
- accurately identify cause and effect during discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately discriminate short vowel /i/ sound during discussion
- identify and write the letter symbol that represents the short vowel /i/ sound in text, during discussion, and on a worksheet
- correctly understand and identify quotations marks in the text and on a worksheet
- understand and identify the use of suffix *-ed* during discussion and in the text

#### Comprehension Checks

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