

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Personal Narrative Page Count: 26 Word Count: 1,581

Book Summary

In school, Tom Terdle is teased about his name. After being suspended from school for fighting about it, he goes to the beach. There he finds some turtle eggs and a new friend, the Turtle Lady. As they wait for the eggs to hatch, their friendship grows and Tom's sensitivity to his name disappears. This story provides opportunities to discuss teasing and its ramifications, as well as how friends come in all shapes, sizes, and ages.

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 proper nouns
- Recognize and use synonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Turtle Tom* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Character traits, synonyms 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

Content words:

Story critical: *amazing (adj.), provoked (v.), salvation (n.), scurrying (v.), trickle (v.), violators (n.)*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students if they have ever had someone make fun of them. Ask them to tell how they felt. Then ask students if they have ever made fun of someone. Ask them to think about what they said or did and how they felt when they did it. If possible, share a personal experience in order to let students know that a person who makes an unkind statement is not a "bad" person but instead is one who made a bad choice. Help students think of things to do instead of making fun of someone.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Tell students that one way to understand a story is to use the information they read to make guesses about what will happen in the 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 boy at the beach. He looks as if he is digging for something. I wonder what that might be. On the back cover, I see the boy sitting next to a fire with an older woman. I wonder if the woman is his grandmother. Maybe they are on vacation at the beach. Since the title of the book is Turtle Tom, maybe the story has something to do with the boy and his grandmother finding turtles at the beach. I'll have to read the story to find out.
- Encourage students to make predictions about what they might read about the boy in the book. Tell them that what the characters say, think, and do will give them hints about what will happen next.
- Show students the title page. Talk about the information 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 reading 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 the last paragraph on page 11. Have them find the word *tarnation*. Tell students that they can look at the letters the word begins with to help them figure out how to say the word. Tell them that they can then use context clues. Read the sentence with students. Explain that the sentence tells them that the woman speaks to Tom in an angry voice. This tells them that she probably is not saying something pleasant to Tom. Tell students that sometimes they will find a context clue in the same sentence, but at other times they will need to continue reading in order to make sense of an unfamiliar word. Have students turn to page 12. Read the first two paragraphs with students. Ask if they now have a better idea what the unfamiliar word means. Have them substitute the word in the sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- Remind students to check whether words make sense by rereading the sentence.


Set the Purpose

- Tell students as they read the book to make predictions about what will happen in the story. Remind them to revise or confirm their predictions as they learn more about the characters and the story.

During Reading

Student Reading

-  **Guide the reading:** Have students read to page 15. Tell them to underline the words or phrases in the book that tell something about Tom. If they finish before everyone else, they can go back and reread.
- When they have finished reading, have students identify the characters (Tom, the Turtle Lady). Have students tell the words and phrases they underlined. Ask them what they learned about Tom.

- Model making, revising, or confirming predictions.
Think-aloud: Part of my prediction was right—the story has to do with turtles. I need to revise my other predictions because I found out they weren't correct. The woman isn't Tom's grandmother, and they are not at the beach on vacation. That's okay, though. My predictions don't have to be correct. The point is to think about what might happen and then read to find out whether it does happen or whether I need to make a new prediction. I think I need to make a new prediction. I think that when the Turtle Lady finds out that people in Tom's life made fun of his name, she'll be nice to him. Maybe she'll tell him to change his name! I'll have to keep reading to find out.
 - Ask students what they think might happen next. Remind them as they read to pause and think about a prediction they've made that is confirmed by something they read in the story. Tell them to revise their predictions if they learn something that makes them think differently about what is happening in 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 thinking about what the characters say and do in the story and then making predictions about what might happen keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them remember what they've read.

Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze characters**

- **Discussion:** Ask students if they were surprised by the ending. Ask: *Did anyone predict that the Turtle Lady would turn out to be a real person?*
- **Introduce and model:** Review or explain that the characters in a story are the people or animals in it and that some may be more important than others. Review the characters students read about in the story (Tom, the Turtle Lady).
- Review or explain that some writers let their readers get to know the characters through the characters' words, thoughts, and actions. Have students turn to page 3 in the book. Read the first two paragraphs. Ask students what they learn about Tom from his words. (He hates his name.)
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read the last paragraph on page 3. Ask them to tell what they learn about Tom. (He doesn't trust his teachers not to laugh at his name.)
- Have students turn to page 5. Read the paragraph with students. Ask them to tell what they learn about Tom. (He knows that whenever he moves to a new school, he is going to hear people call him names, and he will probably get into a fight.)
- **Independent practice:** Give students the [character traits worksheet](#) to complete. Discuss their responses.

 Have students use the last page of their book to write a short paragraph telling what they learned about the Turtle Lady from what she said and did. Have students share their paragraphs with the group.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Proper nouns**

- Write the words *tom terdle* on the board in lowercase letters. Ask students to look at the words and tell what is wrong with them. Explain that these words are proper nouns that tell a person's name and that a capital letter is always used to begin a proper noun. Write the words correctly.

- Write the word *boy* next to *Tom Terdle*. Tell students that *boy* is also a noun, but because it is not a proper noun, it does not begin with a capital letter.
- Have students turn to page 6. Ask them to read the first sentence and tell the name of the city and state where Tom lives (Port Aransas, Texas). Tell students that the names of cities and states are proper nouns and always begin with capital letters.



Check for understanding: Have students go through the book and circle the capitalized names of people and places. When finished, have students compare their book with a partner. Discuss their responses.

Word Work: Synonyms

- Write the word *mean* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*nasty, unkind*). Review or explain that a word that has almost the same meaning as another word is called a *synonym*.
- Check for understanding by asking students to turn to page 5 to find the word that tells what kind of names Tom is called (*stupid*). Ask students to suggest a word that means the same or almost the same (*dumb*).
- Show students a thesaurus. Explain an entry and how a thesaurus is used. Give pairs of students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *stupid* and have them confirm the synonym.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students complete the [synonyms worksheet](#). Review the instructions. Tell students to think of synonyms and write them on the worksheet. Tell them to confirm the synonyms by looking in a thesaurus. Check students' responses. If needed, provide additional practice using a thesaurus.

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 Personal Narrative

Have students work with a partner to write what Tom might have done if his parents had not let him help the Turtle Lady. Have students share their story endings with the group.

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

Social Studies and Science Connection

Tell students that the Turtle Lady, Ila Loetscher, was an actual person who worked to save sea turtles. She was also the first licensed woman pilot in Iowa, as well as a friend of Amelia Earhart. Provide resources for students to research Ila Loetscher or other environmental activists, such as Jacques Cousteau, Samuel LaBudde (dolphins), or Valerie Taylor (sharks). Have students work together to prepare a poster and oral report on their findings to share with the group.

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, revise, and confirm predictions about events in fictional text
- understand and analyze a character's thoughts, feelings, and actions during discussion and on a worksheet
- capitalize the names of people and places (proper nouns)
- understand and recognize synonyms in text: use a thesaurus to find synonyms during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

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