Reading A-Z

Lesson Plan

Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Realistic   **Page Count:** 20   **Word Count:** 1,247

Book Summary
Here comes Charly, again, in her fourth story in a five-part series. In her attempt to put a smile on everybody's face, she has actually made everyone really mad! The drought has come to an end, but now it's raining cats and dogs on the annual Swing into Spring Parade.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy
• Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives
• Use the reading strategy of connecting to prior knowledge to understand text
• Make inferences
• Identify and understand the correct use of exclamation points
• Identify and understand idioms

Materials
Green text indicates resources available on the website

• Book—*Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals* (copy for each student)
• Chalkboard or dry erase board
• Make inferences, exclamation points, idioms 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:** *dragged (v.), experiment (n.), parched (adj.), scattered (adj.), sopping (adj.), tournament (n.)*
> **Enrichment:** *chemicals (n.), cloud-seeding (n.), dangled (v.), freeloading (adj.), glorious (adj.), haywire (adj.)*

Before Reading

Build Background
• Show students a copy of the first three books in the series, *Charly Did It, Charly's New Year's Revolution,* and *Charly Dances 'til It Drops*. Explain that although these are books in a series, they are also like chapters in one book about the main character, Charly.
• Help students recall what they know about Charly from the first three books, reminding them that each book ends with a cliffhanger—an unresolved piece of the story that leaves readers wanting to read the next book in the series to find out what happens.
• Discuss the ending of *Charly Dances 'til It Drops*. The story ends with rain beginning to fall on Charly's garden and the rest of the town.

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 and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Connect to prior knowledge

- Explain to students that good readers use what they already know to understand and remember information and story events as they read.
- Model making a connection to prior knowledge.
  Think-aloud: *Good readers always try to make connections with what they already know and prior reading. This helps them understand a new story more clearly and anticipate what might happen next. I can use what I already know from reading the first three Charly books to help me better understand the story and its characters. So far, Charly has dug up a public garden and made it rain on everyone's parade. I know that Charly means well and tries to be "ma-toor," but ends up getting herself in trouble.*
- Have students discuss the illustration on the front cover and tell what they think might happen in the book based on what they already know about Charly and the previous Charly stories.
- Create a list of Charly's characteristics with students, based on the first three books in the series (she means well but always gets in trouble, she's very curious, she doesn't always think about the consequences of her actions, and so on).
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: Make inferences

- Explain to students that not all information in a book is directly stated. Sometimes readers need to make inferences by using prior knowledge and the details in the story to understand ideas or events in the book. Explain that an inference is a conclusion drawn by connecting clues in text to information that a person already knows. Explain that making inferences allow readers to understand the text on a deeper level.
- Write the following sentences on the board: *I like to go to the movies with my friend Allison. We both love funny movies. I like popcorn, and she likes candy. She always shares her candy with me, but whenever I offer my popcorn, she always makes a face and says, "No, thank you."*
- Create a three-column chart on the board with the headings *Story Clues, What I Know,* and *Inference*. Model making inferences.
  Think-aloud: *I know that authors do not directly state all the ideas in a story and that I must make inferences to understand the story completely. In the story on the board, Allison likes candy. Whenever I offer her popcorn, Allison says no. She also makes a face at the offer of popcorn. I know that when I make a face at something, it is generally because I do not like it. If I do not like something, I would not want it if it were offered to me. Based on these clues from the story and what I know, I infer that Allison does not want popcorn for a snack at the movies because she doesn't like it.*
- Ask students to identify information from the sentences on the board that supports the inference. Write this information under the heading *Story Clues* on the chart. Ask students to identify information from prior knowledge shared during the discussion that supports the inference. Write this information under the heading *What I Know* on the chart. Then write the following sentence under the Inference heading: *Allison does not like popcorn*.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the content vocabulary words on the board and read them aloud with students.

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- Explain to students that they may not always find context clues that define an unfamiliar word. Model to students how they can use the glossary or a dictionary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *glorious* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 3 as you read the sentence in which the word *glorious* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Have students locate each of the remaining content vocabulary words in the glossary. Read and discuss their definitions as a class.
- Divide the group into pairs and assign one vocabulary word to each pair. Ask students to fold a piece of paper into three sections. In the first section, have them write their assigned word. In the second section, have students define the word. In the third section, have students use their assigned word in a sentence. Ask each pair to share their work.

Set the Purpose
- Have students read to find out what happens to Charly next. Remind them to use their prior knowledge of Charly to make connections to this story.

During Reading
Student Reading
- **Guide the reading:** Have students read the italicized text at the top of page 3. Discuss with them that this text is a reminder of what happened in the last Charly book. Discuss how this paragraph connects the three books and refreshes the reader's memory about Charly.
- Have students read to the end of page 6 and then stop to think about the events that have happened so far in the story. Encourage students who finish before others to reread the text.
- Invite students to share how they connected with what they already knew as they read.
- Draw students' attention back to the three-column chart on the board. Model how to use information in the text and prior knowledge to make inferences.
  Think-aloud: *I am going to use my chart to make some inferences about the story. On page 5, Charly says,* I really did it? I made it rain on everyone's parade? *Then on page 6, it says that Charly couldn't keep the grin off her face. I will write these under the* Story Clues *heading on the chart. I know from the last book that Charly really wanted it to rain so her garden in the park would grow. I also know that when you can't stop smiling, it means you are really happy about something. I will write this information under the* What I Know *heading on the chart. When I think about what the text says and what I know from prior knowledge, I can infer that even though everyone in the town is mad at her, Charly is really happy about the rain.*
- Introduce and explain the make inferences worksheet. Have students copy the information about Charly from the chart on the board onto their worksheet.
- Ask students to read to the end of page 8. Guide them to make an inference about Gattie's personality from the information on pages 7 and 8 (she is very particular and puts a lot of emphasis on how things appear to others). Have them share information from the story and their prior knowledge that supports their inference (story: she set out tables with tablecloths and fresh pastries, she makes Charly bathe and look presentable; prior knowledge: when people go to a lot of effort for an event, it usually means they care a lot about how they present themselves to others).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 10. Invite them to share how they connected with what they already know as they read.
- Based on the information in the book and their prior knowledge, ask students what they can infer about the following sentence from page 10: *It was time for another experiment,* and have them write it on their make inferences worksheet (Charly is curious and likes to figure things out for herself; she has done experiments before).

- Have students identify information from the story and prior knowledge that supports their inference and write this information on their worksheet (story: Charly conducts a rain-cloud experiment with a fan and ice cubes; prior knowledge: Charly is always trying to figure out the meaning of people's phrases (idioms), people often conduct experiments to figure out something that is puzzling or that they are curious about).
- Discuss the information students wrote on their make inferences worksheet. Allow students to make corrections to their worksheet as necessary.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for answers to their questions and to use the information they learned to make inferences.

  ✎ 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:** *When I thought about the other Charly stories I've read, it helped me to better understand the characters and events of this story. It also helped me enjoy this story more.*
- Ask students to share any additional ways they connected to prior knowledge as they read this story. Invite them to share how reflecting on prior knowledge also helped them to make inferences while reading.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Ask students to reread page 15. Ask what they can infer about the tomcat (he doesn't get along with other cats). Have students identify information from the text that supports their inference. (The tomcat swatted and dove at the kitten. He also chased the kitten around the room.) Have students identify information from their prior knowledge that supports their inference. (When animals don't get along, they often swat and pounce on each other to show dominance.) Have students write the information from the discussion on the back of their make inferences worksheet.
- **Independent practice:** Challenge students to identify an additional inference and write it on the back of their worksheet. Have them support their inference with story clues and prior knowledge.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this story, Charly once again gets sidetracked by an idea that gets her into trouble. Now that you know this information, why doesn't Charly seem to learn from her past experiences? How has your behavior changed after you have made a mistake or been in trouble?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Exclamation points

- Ask students to turn to page 3 and read the following sentences: *I did it! I really did it!* Point out the exclamation points. Explain or review that an *exclamation point,* or *exclamation mark,* is a punctuation mark used to show strong feelings or excitement.
- Point out to students that the author does not use exclamation points to end every sentence, even though there is a lot of excitement in this story. Explain that the overuse of exclamation points is considered poor writing because it does not accurately convey the feelings of the character(s) and can distract readers while reading.
- Have students turn to page 4 and read the first sentence in the second paragraph. (*"You are always ruining everything!" cried Ethan Jordan, a boy in my class who is also my number one enemy.*) Discuss with students why the author chose to use an exclamation point (to show that Ethan was very upset).

- Ask students to find other examples of exclamation points in the text. Discuss why each example was an appropriate sentence to end with an exclamation point.
- **Check for understanding:** Ask students to write a sentence that ends with an exclamation point on a separate piece of paper. Have them read their sentence aloud and explain why the sentence should end with an exclamation point.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the exclamation points worksheet. If time allows, discuss their response.

Word Work: Idioms

- Write the phrase *raining cats and dogs* on the chalkboard. Have students read the sentence. Explain to students that this is an example of a type of figurative language called an *idiom*. Idioms are phrases or expressions that mean something different from what the words actually say. Authors use idioms to make their writing more vivid, humorous, and enjoyable. Point out to students that in the story, Charly doesn't always understand the idioms her dad uses, which makes the story funny.
- Ask students to explain what they think the idiom *raining cats and dogs* means. Discuss the meaning of the idiom with students (a really hard rain).
- Discuss with students other familiar idioms, such as *I got up on the wrong side of the bed* (*I woke up in a bad mood and the day got off to a bad start*). Ask them to draw on their personal experiences and background knowledge to tell the meaning of these idioms.

  ✏ **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 9 and circle the idiom in the first paragraph (*something the cat dragged in*). Ask students to use the story clues and their prior knowledge to explain what this expression means on a separate piece of paper (looked messy and needed a bath and/or change of clothes).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the idioms worksheet. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently or with a partner. Additionally, pairs of students 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 compare how they connected to prior knowledge with someone at home.

Extend the Reading

Realistic Fiction Writing and Art Connection

Review with students the characteristics of a realistic fiction story (about real people, places, and events; includes characters, setting, problems, events, and solution). Have students write a story about a character who creates a problem when he/she misunderstands something that someone said.

Science Connection

Have students work in pairs and use print and Internet resources to research the concept of "cloud-seeding." Have them locate information such as: what it is, why it's done, and whether or not it works. Give pairs time to report their findings to the class.

Raining Cats, Dogs, and Other Animals

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 connecting to prior knowledge during discussion
- accurately use the text and prior knowledge to make inferences during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify and understand the use of exclamation points in the text and on a worksheet
- accurately identify idioms and understand their use during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- Book Quiz
- Retelling Rubric