



River's roar

Heather Haylock

Focus phonics

j written as ge as in challenge, surge, large

ai written as ey as in they, hey

ai written as ea as in great

Tricky words

any, anyone, friends, laughed, parents, their, there, two, where, wide-eyed

Book summary

Josh is Deaf so he and his friend Lin communicate using Sign. On a white-water rafting trip, disaster strikes when Lin tumbles out of the raft into the fast moving river. The river's loud roar makes communication with her impossible but Josh and Lin's ability to communicate using Sign keeps Lin calm and the rescue goes well.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the focus phonemes of /j/ spelt ge; and /ai/ spelt ey and ea, in the text and extend to other known words with the same grapheme-phoneme correspondences, e.g. barge, strange; grey, prey; steak, break.

Comprehension:

- Retrieve and record information/key details from the text
- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Summarise main ideas
- Make inferences from the text
- Make predictions that fit with information given in the text
- Make connections (text to self, text to text, text to world)
- Ask questions
- Visualise

Fluency:

- Read at a natural speaking pace with minimal sounding out
- Pay attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate
- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the front cover and read the title together. What does the apostrophe mean in *River's*? (the river makes a roaring noise so the roar belongs to the river) What is the picture of? (people rafting down the river) Who is the author? (Heather Haylock)

Share knowledge and views of any other books written by Heather. (In the Reading Road series, Heather has also written Let's go camping, Eagle eyes, Secrets of the sea, A problem called Scamp, Shipwreck! Shipwreck!) Invite students to share any prior knowledge of rafting, and make predictions about what might happen in the story. Keep a note of predictions and return to them later. Read and discuss the blurb on the back cover. Flick through the book to get an idea of the story. Do you think this is a fiction or non-fiction text and say why.

Quick phonics warm-up: Read the words on the inside front cover together, with the focus phonemes of /j/ written as ge and /ai/ written as ey, ea. Flip through the text to locate and read words with these same focus phonemes. Discuss the meaning of these words. There are many ways of writing the /ai/ sound, including ey and ea. Sort words into the way /ai/ is written, e.g. they, great, grey, steak, prey, survey, break. Then read the words.

Vocabulary check:

signed p 4 communicated using Sign Language

surge p 14 sudden powerful movement, especially caused by a natural force such as the tide

Morphology: assistant means someone who helps or assists; the suffix -ant means a person or thing that does a specified thing.

Etymology: plummeting means to fall down rapidly – 1620s, “to fathom, take soundings”, from plummet (n). Meaning “to fall rapidly” is recorded from 1933, perhaps originally among aviators. Middle English plumben, also meant “to plunge downward”.

Tricky word practice: Display the tricky words *parents* and *wide-eyed*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words?

parents – the tricky part is ar which says /air/.

wide-eyed – the tricky part is eye which says /igh/.

Practise reading and spelling these tricky words.

During reading

Read the story: This book may not fit into a single reading session. The end of Chapter 3, p 15 is a good point to break the reading. Students can finish the book in a second group session or for homework.

Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start by reading the text with students, then invite them to take over the reading. On p 2 ask: What ways were Josh and Lin alike and not alike? (They both liked sport, climbing trees and reading. Lin could hear, Josh was deaf.) On p 3, ask: What was Miss Donna's role? (she helped Josh by signing what the teacher said) What does it mean by “Their hands danced as they chatted.”? (As they signed quickly to each other it looked as though their hands were dancing.) Students continue on reading.
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each student in turn as they read a brief passage.
- Divide the book up between groups of students; they read a chapter each and then summarise the main ideas to report back, e.g. if there was a problem, how was it solved.

Phonics support: Remind students to sound out and blend the letters as necessary to read any unfamiliar words, but encourage them to read words with familiar letters and sounds fluently on sight if they can, without sounding out. If students get stuck on a word, model how to sound out and blend the sounds in the word. Encourage students to help each other with sounding out and

blending and praise good use of this strategy, especially words with the focus phonemes of /j/ written as ge and /ai/ written as ey, ea.

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the story and encourage students to find and retrieve key details from the text, e.g. at the end of p 4, ask: How were Lin and Josh feeling? (a bit scared) What did Lin think the roar of the river sounded like? (an angry dragon) What does vibrating mean? (moving with quick short movements continuously)

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What have you learned about rafting and people who are Deaf? On p 10, ask: Why did Lin decide to go on the raft even though she was scared? (she wanted the challenge) How was Josh feeling now? (excited) What did Heather (the author) need to know before writing this text?

Comprehension: Review the predictions made earlier. Were they correct? Were there any surprises? On p 12, ask: How many paddles does each person have? (one) Who does the steering of the raft? (the instructor at the back – Tim or Kayla) On p 22, how did Josh help with Lin's rescue? (by signing when she couldn't hear the instructor) What was Josh's priority once Lin had been rescued? (a hotdog to eat) Read and discuss the questions on the inside back cover. Ask students to choose a chapter or a page and retell part of it. Together they retell the story in order, chapter by chapter. Do you think this story could be based on a true story? Could it have really happened? Look at p 4. Find the sentence about the river's roar sounding like an angry dragon. This is a simile. It describes the noise of the river using 'like'. Make up another simile for the river's roar, e.g. It sounds like rumbling thunder. Read the first line of p 18 and find the example of assonance where the same vowel sound is repeated. (swirling whirls) Ask: Why do authors use these techniques in their writing? (to make the writing interesting) Find three or more descriptive words used in the story to describe the river, e.g. rumbling, booming, roaring.

Fluency: Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it fluently paying attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. (echo-reading) Students choose another brief passage and read it at a natural speaking pace with minimal sounding out to their partner, then swap over. Read parts of the text together (choral-reading) to build fluency and self-confidence. Students practise speed-reading the focus words from the inside front cover to encourage automatic recall (words that can be recalled automatically have been orthographically mapped to students' long-term memory).

Spelling and writing through dictation: Read out the following passage for students to write. It uses words and sentences from the text as these are decodable. The focus is on encoding (spelling) rather than creating content.

(page 4)

Today, they were excited. They were going on a rafting trip. They had spent weeks training in the school pool. On the way to the river, Lin signed, "I'm a bit scared."

"Same here," signed Josh. "Just stick close to me. We will be okay."

When they arrived at the riverbank, the water was still. But Lin heard a distant roar from the rapids. "It sounds like an angry dragon!" she signed.

Josh felt the river vibrating under his feet as they all walked over to the instructors.

(page 6)

One of the instructors, Tim, explained what to do.

"All right, team," he said. "Get a lifejacket and a helmet from these crates."

Miss Donna signed his words to Josh.

"Push the clips in and pull the straps tight," said the other instructor, Kayla. She and Tim walked around, checking. They tugged some students' straps more firmly.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

/ai/ spelt ea and ey. /j/ spelt ge.

Word sort.

Write sentences.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Complete a Venn diagram about similarities and differences between Josh and Lin.

Fill in a story framework and use it to retell the story.

Worksheet 3: Health/Communication/Science

Use the Sign Language alphabet to sign words to a partner.

Answer questions about using signs to communicate and the history of Sign Language.

Worksheet 4: Sport/Social Science

Design a safety poster for river rafting.