



Overview

Buster has warts, and his friend Ellie decides to help him get rid of them. She asks her family for advice and then sets about making him a “cure”. This light-hearted story leaves the reader with questions about the validity of the remedies, motivating further reading and discussion, not only about warts but about the nature of science. An accompanying article, “FAQs about Warts”, which students could read before or after this story, provides further intriguing information.

“No More Warts” requires students to “confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about” text (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14).

There is a PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

Texts with unusual “ideas” for curing people: *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox

Texts about proven alternative cures: “Rongoā Māori” (JJ 48)

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes that have a solid outline.

Some unfamiliar contexts and settings, for example, the contexts of warts and old home remedies, which may be unfamiliar to some students

Shifts in time and place, for example, in the stories that Grandad and Dad tell of their experiences with warts

Frequent use of dialogue, some of which is not explicitly attributed, and more than one character speaking on a page

“I think they’re kind of interesting,” she said. “But if you want, I’ll make them go away.”

“How?” asked Buster.

“I’ll work something out,” said Ellie.

First she asked Grandad.

“How do you get rid of warts?” Ellie asked.

“When I was a boy, we used to cut up a potato and rub it on them,” said Grandad. “Then we buried the potato. You had to be careful not to tell anyone where you’d buried it.”

“Why?” asked Ellie.

“Because then it wouldn’t work,” said Grandad.

“And did it work?” asked Ellie.

Grandad stretched out his hands. “Must have,” he said.

“No warts there now.”

Next Ellie asked Dad.

“We used to rub our warts with dandelion juice,” said Dad. “You had to pick the dandelions under a full moon. And you had to say:

‘Dandelion, dandelion
Yellow and bright
Warts will soon
Be out of sight.’”

“Did it work?” asked Ellie.

Dad took off his socks and stretched out his toes. “Must have,” he said. “No warts there now.”

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

A mix of explicit and implicit content within the text and illustrations that requires the students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge and make simple inferences, for example, about the effectiveness of the remedies and about Ellie’s personality

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Level 2 – Structure: Show some understanding of text structures.

Science

Levels 1 and 2 – Nature of Science: Understanding about science: Appreciate that scientists ask questions about our world that lead to investigations and that open-mindedness is important because there may be more than one explanation.

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*The New Zealand Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6).

Possible reading purposes

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

- To find out what Ellie does about Buster's warts
- To decide if the remedies could really work (this reading could include the "FAQ" article)

Possible learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for the students to learn more about how to "read, respond to, and think critically" about texts?)

- The students **make connections** between the text and their prior knowledge to make inferences about what Ellie is like.
- They identify descriptive phrases and explanations in the text in order to **visualise** the home remedies.
- They **make connections** between their prior knowledge of healing remedies and the ideas in this text and the article "FAQs about Warts" to **evaluate** Ellie's solution and/or the likely effectiveness of the other home remedies.
- **They monitor** their reading, for example, they notice when something is unclear, and take action, for example, they reread, read on, and/or visualise, to solve the problem.

**Text and language features****Vocabulary**

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases: "magnifying", "clumps", "kind of interesting", "stretched out", "dandelion juice", "cicada", "rolling pin"

Possible supporting strategies

(These suggestions may be used before, during, or after reading in response to the students' needs.)

Readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in a text. For students who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. See [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#) for suggestions. For example, to support the students with understanding the description of Ellie's method, have them reread the description on page 14 and act it out. Have a rolling pin and plastic bag available and something they can crush, ideally cicada shells or you could use peanut shells, egg shells, or even dry leaves.

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- when **decoding**:
 - breaking words into smaller chunks and looking for familiar parts of words ("mag-ni-fy-ing", "dan-de-lion")
 - using their knowledge that letters can have more than one sound ("cicada")
- when working out **word meanings**:
 - rereading or reading on, using the context of the sentence and surrounding sentences.

Have a dictionary available for the students to use to confirm or clarify word meanings but remind the students that they can make a best attempt at a word's meaning and come back to it later. Have bilingual dictionaries available, where appropriate.

Text features

The descriptions of the remedies

- Prompt the students to notice and visualise the key phrases that describe the steps involved in making and applying the remedies.
- You could use a graphic organiser to support the students with identifying and summarising the remedies. Model reading the relevant section of the text and filling it in.

Person	Remedy	Special point/idea
Grandad	1. Cut up a potato. 2. Rub it on the warts. 3. Bury the potato.	Don't tell anyone where you buried it.
Dad		
Mum		

Dad's short rhyme (or "spell")

- Prompt the students to make connections to their prior knowledge of similar rhymes, such as short poems, nursery rhymes, and skipping rhymes, to support them with the structure and rhythm. You could provide extra support, particularly for English language learners, by reading the rhyme with them and/or having them listen to the audio and then saying the rhyme along with the audio.

**Metacognition****HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE METACOGNITIVE**

Here are some ways you can build your students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours are threaded through the notes and indicated by **M**.

- M** What did you do to check the meaning of that word ("magnifying")?
- M** What made you change your ideas about Ellie as you were reading?

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support. Be aware of any students who may have warts, and be sensitive to how they might feel. Note that your introduction to the story will be quite different if the students have already read “FAQs about Warts”.
- Have the students read the title and share what they know about warts. Have a photo or screen image to show them (in addition to the page 11 illustration) in case they have no previous experience of warts.
- Ask the students to read page 11 and identify the characters and what Buster thinks of his warts.
- Tell them that it’s possible to get rid of warts and that people have lots of different ideas about how to do so, just like people have different ideas about the best way to get rid of hiccups. Encourage the students to share any relevant experiences of “home-grown” remedies from their parents or grandparents.
- Explain that sometimes we hear an idea about something that seems quite strange, and we have to decide if it’s true or not. Tell the students that this is what they will need to do as they read this story.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- You could provide the students with small sticky notes to mark things they are not sure about or that they want to think about and come back to.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are listed in the right-hand column of the table below. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students’ needs. These suggestions may apply to the first or a subsequent reading of the text. Let the students read the whole text by themselves, intervening only if it’s clear that a student needs help. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word solving and deeper comprehension on subsequent readings.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until after they have read the text and you are discussing it as a group.

Teacher behaviours

Examples of how you can support your students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

- The students use information on pages 11 and 12 to make inferences about Ellie. For example, her interest in Buster’s warts and her use of a magnifying glass suggest that she likes finding out about things and is interested in science; her comments “I’ll make them go away” and “I’ll work something out” suggests that she is keen to help and likes a challenge. Although she doesn’t know how to fix the problem, she is willing to give it a try. As they read on, they draw on their inferences about Ellie to predict what she might do to help Buster.
- Model your thinking: *I’m wondering why Ellie is so interested in the warts.*
- The students notice and make connections between the descriptions in the text to visualise the possible cures. For example, on page 12, they read Grandad’s description of using the potato and visualise him as a boy rubbing the cut potato on his warts and burying it in the garden.
- Prompt the students to look for clues that will help them to build a picture of what the cures looked like.
- They notice when they have lost meaning and take action to fix the problem. For example, on page 12, if they are unsure of the word “stretched”, they might reread the sentence, read on, and/or look at the illustration to check their thinking.
- Remind the students of what they can do when they are not sure of the meaning of a word or phrase (see Possible supporting strategies above).
- The students note aspects that they are not sure about and might need to come back to.
- Remind the students that they can use a sticky note to mark a place that they could come back to later as they think about ideas they need to clarify.
- The students begin to notice and predict the pattern of Grandad, Dad, and Mum all demonstrating that they have been “cured” of warts and use this to question whether Ellie’s cure might also work.
- Ask a question to help the students make connections between the ideas in the text. For example: *What are you noticing about Grandad’s and Dad’s stories about their cures?*
- The students notice some of the odd aspects of the cures and begin to form their own opinions about the effectiveness of the remedies. (When they read later that Buster’s warts disappeared all on their own, this will support the inference that perhaps the cures weren’t the real cause of the warts’ disappearance.)
- Encourage the students to share their responses to the odd cures.
- On page 13, some students may read the rhyme aloud to better hear the rhythm.
- If necessary, support the students to manage the change of structure with the rhyme by prompting them to reread it aloud.
- As they finish reading, the students reflect on the purpose for the reading. They summarise Ellie’s actions, noticing that while she had no effect on Buster’s warts, she worked hard to help him.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose, and ask them to summarise what Ellie did to try to solve Buster’s problem.

Discussing the text after the first reading

- The students think about any questions they still have about the remedies and reread the text with their questions in mind.
- They return to the descriptions of the remedies to discuss what they are thinking. For example, they make connections to their prior experience of applying ointments to wounds or of herbal remedies to infer that the potato and the dandelion juice might help cure warts.
- They may refer to information from the FAQ article and decide that Grandad's, Dad's, and Mum's warts could have disappeared by themselves, like Buster's, and the remedies didn't really help at all.
- The students could read "FAQs about Warts" before or after this discussion.
- Ask the students about any questions they have around the remedies. Encourage them to think critically: *Were Grandad, Dad, and Mum just teasing Ellie, or do you think they really thought those cures would work?*
Tell the students to think carefully about each step of each remedy. If necessary, prompt their thinking with a question, for example: *What difference do you think it might make when you picked a dandelion, or if you didn't bury the potato? Or make a connection to the article "FAQ about Warts": I wonder how often warts go away by themselves?*
- Ask the students to share their opinions with a partner and give a reason from the story (or from "FAQs about Warts") and/or their prior knowledge to support that opinion. Explain that it's fine to have different opinions provided we support them with evidence.

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

- ▣ The students identify some challenges in the text and describe how they worked them out (or tried to work them out).
- ▣ The students explain what helped them form an opinion about one of the remedies.

Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

- ▣ *What helped you visualise Dad's cure?*
- ▣ *What evidence did you use from the text to help you to make up your mind? Did you have any other evidence from other stories or from home?*

After reading

- The students can reread the story as they listen to the audio. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide opportunities for the students to reread this story as well as other texts related to unusual and alternative ideas about how to cure ailments (see Related texts above).
- Have the students work in pairs to discuss whether Ellie is a good friend to Buster. Have them record their ideas using evidence from the text.
- Have the students take the story home to discuss with older family members and ask those family members if they know any remedies. Build a group list of the remedies the students find out about.
- Have the students work in pairs to write a rhyme for Ellie's remedy, using the structure of the dandelion rhyme as a model.
- Ask the students to select one idea about the remedies that they think might be true and one idea that they think is not true and give reasons for their opinion, using evidence from the text and/or their prior knowledge.