



Overview

Grandad wants Vika and Kele to help him in the garden, but they don't share his enthusiasm. Vika manages to come up with an excuse, leaving Kele with all the work, but then the tables are turned and Vika becomes the one who has to help Grandad. The humour in this story arises from the contrast between Vika's attempts to get out of helping, Dad's determination to make sure she does her fair share, and Grandad's lack of awareness that anything is going on. These characters also appear in "Kele's Car" (Gold 2) in *JJ 49*.

This text 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 the same characters: "Kele's Car" (a play, *JJ 49*)

Texts that involve ironic humour: the play "Invisible" and the poem "Nothing Ever Happens" (both in *JJ 47*); "Ring Ring!" (*JJ 49*)

Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes below.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make simple inferences, for example, that the title and much of what Vika says is ironic (doesn't mean what it seems) and that Dad and Grandad have very different opinions of Vika

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences and sentences where the ideas are separated by ellipses or dashes

"Come on, you two," laughed Dad. "The 'umu is tomorrow. If you don't garden, you don't eat!" Kele sighed and went to get his shoes.

As soon as Kele left the room, Vika sighed, too. "Oh, Grandad," she said. "I'd love to help you – really I would, but I promised to help Rishi with his maths homework." She ignored Dad's surprised look and sighed again. "I suppose I *could* help you, instead," she said. "Rishi *might* be able to figure it out on his own ..."

Dad raised an eyebrow, but Grandad smiled at her. "You go and help your friend," he said. "Kele can help me."

"Thanks, Grandad," said Vika, and she went to get her maths book.

"Such a helpful child!" said Grandad. Dad shook his head.

When Kele came back with his shoes Vika beamed at him. "I'm sorry, Kele. I won't be helping you with the gardening after all," she said.

Kele dumped his shoes on the floor. "What?" he said. "Why not?"

"She's helping a friend instead," said Grandad. "Come on, Kele. This will only take a couple of hours." He put on his gardening hat and went outside.

Just then, the phone rang. Dad went to answer it.

Kele stomped outside. He sat on the steps and yanked on his shoes.

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

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations

Several characters and events and more than one storyline

English (Reading)

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

Level 2 – Language features: Show some understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

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 happens when Grandad asks for help in the garden
- To form an opinion about why the author has chosen this title

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 ideas in the story and their own experiences to **form and test hypotheses** about the characters' attitudes to helping Grandad.
- They **identify** and **summarise** the events in the story.
- They **make inferences** about the connections between the characters' behaviour and the meaning of the title.
- They **monitor** their own reading and take action (for example, rereading a sentence or looking for clues close to the word) to clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.

**Text and language features****Possible supporting strategies**

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

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases: “Time to get into”, “hauling”, “veges”, “pitchfork”, “sighed”, “ignored”, “surprised”, “figure it out”, “raised an eyebrow”, “beamed”, “a couple of hours”, “stomped”, “yanked”, “umu”
- Colloquial language: for example, statements where the first word is omitted (“Time to get into the garden” meaning “It’s time ...”; “Such a helpful child” meaning “She’s such ...”; “Sorry I can’t help” meaning “I’m sorry I can’t help”)

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 more suggestions.

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

- when **decoding**:
 - recognising words within longer words (“pitch-fork”, “finger-nails”)
- when working out **word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence and surrounding sentences
 - using the illustrations, the unfolding meaning of the story, and their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

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.

If necessary, discuss the meaning of “umu”. Draw students' attention to the glottal stop to help pronunciation (spoken as a little catch in the voice). Tongan is the only Pasifika language that uses a glottal stop at the start of this word.

For English language learners, you may need to point out the word “veges” and explain that this is a shortened form of the word “vegetables”.

Text features

- The ironic humour, for example:
 - the illustrations showing the contrast between Grandad (thinking that Vika is really being helpful) and the other characters
 - Vika saying the opposite to what she really means (and the reader realising that Grandad believes her)
 - the non-verbal reactions within the story (“surprised look”, “raised an eyebrow”, “shook his head”, “rolled her eyes”).
- Support the students to understand that Vika doesn't always mean what she says by having them make connections to their own experiences of coming up with an excuse when asked to do things they don't want to do. They could read aloud Vika's dialogue on page 28, using the italics and punctuation to convey meaning. They could also role-play Dad's reaction when Grandad calls Vika helpful (raising his eyebrows and shaking his head).

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

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

- *What helped you infer that Vika isn't really sorry about not helping Kele?*
- *When Dad “raised his eyebrow”, what was that telling you?*

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 for a successful first reading.
- Have the students read the title and the first two lines on page 27. Ask them to look at the illustration and predict what they think the characters might be feeling about helping in the garden. Encourage them to share their experiences of being asked to do jobs they don't want to do. Depending on your students' cultures, there may be different expectations about what they are responsible for at home.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- Prompt the students to share the strategies they can use to work out words and phrases they are not sure of.
- You could provide the students with some sticky notes to record ideas or questions they wish to come back to later.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are 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.

Encourage the students to read the whole text by themselves, intervening only if it's clear 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.

Deliberate acts of teaching

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 the information on page 27 to confirm their earlier predictions about how Vika and Kele feel. They use their previous knowledge of the characters and about how stories work to predict that there will be a complication of some sort.
- Encourage the students to think critically: *As you read, think about why the author has chosen this title.*
- As they read page 28, the students infer from the way Vika talks to Grandad that she is hoping she can get out of helping in the garden. They use clues in the text to confirm Grandad thinks she is being helpful, but that perhaps Dad doesn't believe her. As they read on, they infer from verbs such as "dumped", "stomped", and "yanked" what Kele thinks of Vika's excuse.
- Ask questions to help the students think about the way the characters react to Vika's excuse: *What do Dad, Grandad, and Kele think about Vika's excuse? What makes you think that?*
- The students demonstrate evidence of self-monitoring and correcting. For example, in the last paragraph on page 29, they are unsure of what "yanked" means. They take action to fix the problem by rereading the sentence and the paragraph to check their thinking.
- Remind the students of strategies they can use when the meaning is unclear.
- They notice how pleased Vika looks as she speaks to Kele on page 29, and make connections to Dad's reaction on the previous page, to infer that Vika is not really "sorry".
- At the end of page 29, you could stop for a quick discussion to alert the students to the irony: *What are you noticing about Vika and Dad?*
- On page 30, the students notice that Dad is looking pleased as he runs down the steps. They predict it has something to do with the phone call on the previous page. As they read on, they confirm their prediction and infer he's pleased because Vika will now have to help in the garden.
- If necessary, draw their attention to the developing situation: *I wonder why Dad is looking so pleased.*
- On page 31, the students wonder why Dad nudges Kele, and they look for clues. As they read on, they predict that because Grandad approved of Vika helping Rishi, he will want Kele to help Matt.
- Prompt them to notice and think about what Dad is doing: *Why do you think Dad nudges Kele and asks him what Matt wanted? I wonder if Grandad is listening to their conversation.*
- As the students finish, they reflect on their purpose for reading. They scan through the story to review the events and what they thought about the characters' actions and reactions, as well as any questions they have, such as why Dad asked Kele about Matt.
- As the students finish reading, remind them to think about the reading purpose.

Discussing the text after the first reading

- The students work in pairs, checking back and clarifying the storyline. They share and discuss their inferences about the characters and why they behave as they do, using evidence from the text to clarify their thinking. For example, they infer from the different ways Kele and Vika act on page 28 why Dad responds by doubting Vika and (later) helping Kele.
- They think critically about the characters, tracking their actions through the story and the responses of the other characters. For example, they gather evidence of Dad not believing Vika and of trying to make sure that Kele is treated fairly. (They may notice that Grandad doesn't seem to notice that any of this is going on!) They use this evidence to form an opinion about the relationships between the characters.
- The students share their ideas about what the title means and locate evidence in the text and illustrations to justify their opinions.
- Explain that when there is a lot happening in a story, it can be useful to go back and check what happened. If the students need support with this, use prompts and questions to help them identify the main events on pages 27–28. You could create a story map to record this. Have the students work in pairs to summarise the rest of the story in this way.
- Prompt the students to think critically:
 - *What does this story suggest to you about Vika and Kele? Why does Dad shake his head about Vika (on page 28) but give Kele a nudge (on page 30)? What words might you use to describe each of the children?*
 - Encourage them to share and justify their ideas about the title, using prompts and questions to stimulate discussion: *Who was helpful in this story? Grandad says Vika is “Such a helpful child” on page 28. Do you agree?*

Supporting metacognition

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

- The students explain how reviewing the text helped them to clarify their understanding of the story.
- The students identify some challenges in the text and explain how they tried to work them out.

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

- *How did checking back through the story help you work out why Dad asked Kele about Matt?*
- *What helped you work out what was meant by “Vika beamed at him”?*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can reread the story as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation (particularly of characters' names), intonation, and expression.
- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this story, as well as other related texts (see Related texts, above).
- Have the students add thought bubbles to the illustration on page 31 to convey what Kele and Vika are thinking.
- Extend their understanding of the relationships between the characters and the humour by getting the students to read the story as readers' theatre.
- Select some sentences from the story and ask the students to make inferences about what the sentences really mean, using evidence from the story. They could work in pairs and use a graphic organiser like the one below.

Lines from the text	What the character really means	How I know this
“Have fun,” said Vika, smiling as she went past with her maths book. “Sorry I can't help.”		
“I knew you wouldn't mind,” said Dad. “After all, you love to help Grandad in the garden!”		
Vika rolled her eyes. Then she laughed. “Fair enough,” she said.		

- Have the students write about a time when they were asked to help with something and made up an excuse to get out of it.
- Build awareness of how words can create different shades of meaning. Provide a selection of verbs from the story (for example, “beamed”, “dumped”, “groaned”, “hated”, “ignored”, “laughed”, “liked”, “loved”, “rushed”, “sighed”, “smiled”, “stared”, “stomped”, “yanked”) and have the students work in pairs to place them on a continuum ranging from “happy” to “unhappy”. Note that the meaning of these verbs can vary according to the context, so the students will need to refer to the text and justify their placement on the continuum.

happy

unhappy

- The students could choose two of the characters in the story and write about how they were helpful (whether it was intentional or not).