

Who Froze Farrell Flint?

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Year 6



Overview

This TSM contains a wide range of information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The materials provide multiple opportunities for revisiting the text several times.

Minnie Sharp, detective, is the narrator of this science-fiction story. The setting is a futuristic research centre on Mars. Minnie has a mystery to solve following the discovery of a frozen scientist in the Cryogenic Storage Room. As she interviews the other scientists working in the laboratory, Minnie is gradually able to build a picture of what might have happened. The first two scientists interviewed have a clear motive for attempting to get rid of the title character, Farrell Flint, but the truth is not as simple as it seems.

This story:

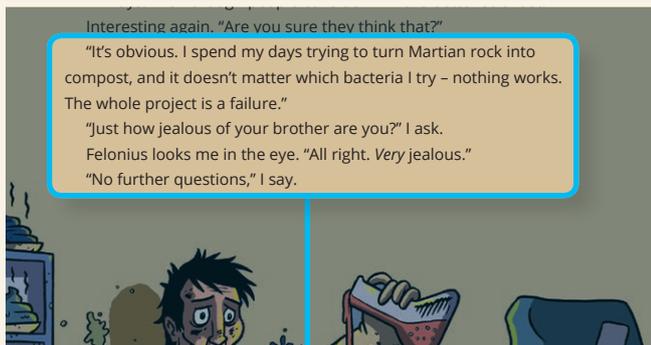
- includes humour
- introduces a number of characters
- uses dialogue to advance the storyline
- combines characteristic elements of science fiction and detective stories
- makes connections between what we know of our world and what might be in an imagined future.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Texts related by theme

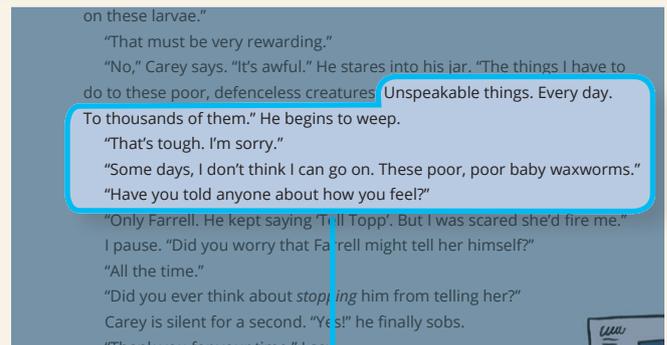
“Cancel the Invasion” SJ L3 Nov 2016 | “Boost” SJ L3 Aug 2015 | “Olden Days” SJ L3 Nov 2014 | “The World Will End, Said the Cat” SJ L4 Nov 2016

Text characteristics from the year 6 reading standard



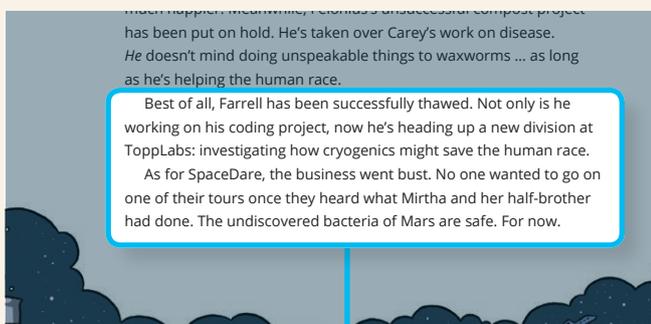
Interesting again. “Are you sure they think that?”
“It’s obvious. I spend my days trying to turn Martian rock into compost, and it doesn’t matter which bacteria I try – nothing works. The whole project is a failure.”
“Just how jealous of your brother are you?” I ask.
Felonius looks me in the eye. “All right. *Very* jealous.”
“No further questions,” I say.

abstract ideas, in greater numbers than in texts at earlier levels, accompanied by concrete examples in the text that help support the students’ understanding



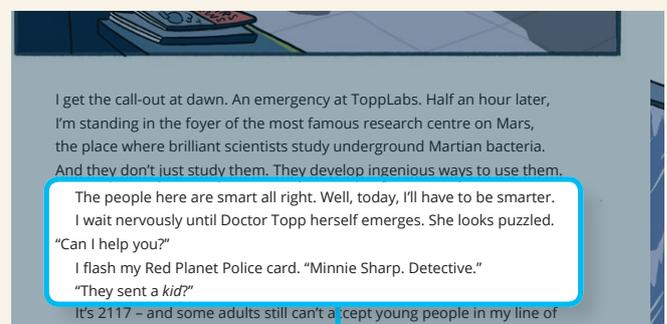
on these larvae.”
“That must be very rewarding.”
“No,” Carey says. “It’s awful.” He stares into his jar. “The things I have to do to these poor, defenceless creatures. Unspeakable things. Every day. To thousands of them.” He begins to weep.
“That’s tough. I’m sorry.”
“Some days, I don’t think I can go on. These poor, poor baby waxworms.”
“Have you told anyone about how you feel?”
“Only Farrell. He kept saying ‘Till Topp’. But I was scared she’d fire me.”
I pause. “Did you worry that Farrell might tell her himself?”
“All the time.”
“Did you ever think about *stopping* him from telling her?”
Carey is silent for a second. “Yes!” he finally sobs.
“Thank you for your time.” I say.

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text



Best of all, Farrell has been successfully thawed. Not only is he working on his coding project, now he’s heading up a new division at Topplabs: investigating how cryogenics might save the human race.
As for SpaceDare, the business went bust. No one wanted to go on one of their tours once they heard what Mirtha and her half-brother had done. The undiscovered bacteria of Mars are safe. For now.

sentences that vary in length and in structure (for example, sentences that begin in different ways and different kinds of complex sentences with a number of subordinate clauses)



I get the call-out at dawn. An emergency at Topplabs. Half an hour later, I’m standing in the foyer of the most famous research centre on Mars, the place where brilliant scientists study underground Martian bacteria. And they don’t just study them. They develop ingenious ways to use them.
The people here are smart all right. Well, today, I’ll have to be smarter. I wait nervously until Doctor Topp herself emerges. She looks puzzled.
“Can I help you?”
I flash my Red Planet Police card. “Minnie Sharp. Detective.”
“They sent a *kid*?”
It’s 2117 – and some adults still can’t accept young people in my line of

figurative and/or ambiguous language that the context helps students to understand



Reading standard: by the end of year 6

VOCABULARY

Possible supporting strategies

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “call-out”, “foyer”, “ingenious”, “assure”, “encoding”, “decode”, “compost”, “infuriating”, “ecosystem”, “campaign”, “lured”, “mortified”, “transparent”, “fermenting”
- Some scientific terms, including “research”, “bacteria”, “materials”, “antibiotics”, “ecosystem”, “cryogenics”
- Colloquial language, such as “let it get to me”, “make millions”, “banging on”, “went bust”
- Noun phrases, including “line of work”, “the crime scene”
- Some unusual names of people and places: “Felonius”, “Mirtha Dare-Sweetly”
- An unusual plural: “larvae”
- Point out that there will be some scientific terms in the text. The students will be familiar with some, but may need support to work out others. For example, have the students look for root words (ferment, encode) to help work out word meanings, or explore prefixes (eco-, in-) and suffixes (-ing, -ed) to predict what the word might mean.
-  The students could collaborate on a Google doc, projected so that everyone can see, to identify and find the meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Remind students about the strategies to work out unfamiliar words.
- Prompt students' recall of the features of stories where colloquial language is used, especially in dialogue. Remind them to use the context surrounding the phrases to work out their meanings. Tell students that the meaning cannot be found in the individual words.
- Encourage students who are speakers of other languages to consider the meaning of vocabulary and concepts in their first language.
- Some words may require direct explanation. Your knowledge of your students will guide you in this.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Possible supporting strategies

- Some understanding of what is involved in research
- Some understanding of bacteria
- Some understanding of cryogenics
- Some knowledge of the planet Mars
- Some knowledge of science-fiction or futuristic stories
- Some knowledge of spy agencies and detective stories
- Explain what “cryogenics” means and make links to the title.
- Make sure that English language learners understand that this story is fiction but that the vocabulary and concepts are real.
- Provide background information about the use of bacteria in research.
- Discuss why NASA scientists are sending space missions to Mars and how increasing our knowledge about Mars might benefit humans.
- Direct students to the illustrations and discuss how we can get information from these to support our understanding.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

Possible supporting strategies

- A futuristic story with traditional narrative structure, including some elements of a conventional detective story
- A lot of the story told through dialogue, much of it unattributed
- Remind students of other science-fiction and detective stories they may have encountered.
- In pairs, ask the students to look closely at the pictures and predict what might happen.
- Direct students to the title and use questioning to support predictions. *The title is a question. What would that suggest? Do you think the question is going to be answered?*
- Have one student take the role of Minnie and another take the role of one of the suspects and have them read the dialogue aloud to identify who is speaking.
- Use a text reconstruction activity to help students notice text connectives and pronominal reference chains (by identifying the pronouns in a text and tracking these back to the nouns they refer to – these links can be difficult for English language learners to notice and to follow). Make copies of the text and cut them into natural chunks of language (whole paragraphs, separate sentences, or separate pieces of speech, depending on your language focus). Give pairs of students a copy of a set of the muddled-up text chunk and ask them to recreate the original text.



Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

– Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 3 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

– Structure: Organise texts, using a range of appropriate structures.

Possible first reading purpose

- To enjoy an entertaining story in which humans are living on Mars and where there is a problem that a child detective is sent to solve

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To compare the events in the story with our world reality
- To identify the structural features of this narrative: the problem, the characters, the setting, and the events

Possible writing purposes

- To write a dialogue that reveals character
- To write an alternative ending that explains what happened to Mirtha after she was taken away
- To create a story map or a comic strip to show the structure of the story
-  Students could use an online comic or graphic novel application such as [Pixton](#), [Toondoo](#), or [Storyboard](#) to create and share their stories.



Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 3 – Ideas : Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Structure: Show a developing understanding of text structures.

First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Have the students discuss with a partner what to expect from a story.
- Tell the students that the story’s setting is Mars in 2117 – a faraway place and a faraway time.
- Discuss the title and how that sets us up for predictions.
- Have the students read the first page. Ask them to talk with a partner about what to expect in the rest of the story. Share some of the responses.
- Have the students read the rest of the story to themselves. Ask them to think about the evidence that Minnie gathers as they read.

If the students struggle with this text

- Direct them to the illustrations and lead a discussion about the role of Minnie Sharp. *It looks as if this character is the detective. Will she answer the question in the title?*
- Explain that when we meet characters in stories, we get to know them and what they are feeling. Prompt critical thinking with questioning. *Do we know what it’s like to feel sad? Do you think that people who lived a century ago knew what feeling sad was like? Is it likely that people of the future will experience sadness?*
- Prompt prior knowledge about research laboratories. *Who are the people who make new discoveries? Are some research projects more important than others? Have a chat with your partner about some of the things scientists might be researching.*
- Check in with students to ensure that they are following what is happening. *Who have we met so far? What is Minnie thinking now? How do we know?*
- Use the students’ knowledge of sentence structure to identify the narrator’s voice (first person).
- Chunk the text based on the interviews Minnie conducts with each suspect. Stop the students after each interview to discuss what’s happened.
-  You could project the PDF of the text and zoom into each section as you discuss it.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

The teacher

Prompt responses from the students.

- *Would this story work if it were set in a different time or a different place?*
- *Would a detective get a call-out at dawn nowadays?*
- *What about the idea of a kid working as a detective – is that an option today?*

Ask questions to support students to identify the ideas that are universal or recognisable to us, such as “research centre”, “detective”, “crime scene”, “corridor”, “cryogenics”.

Lead discussion around the main idea – that a human had been frozen and then successfully thawed.

- *Is this process happening today?*

The students:

- respond to prompts and questions and find the ideas in the text that support their answers
- make connections between the story and their knowledge of today’s world
- identify ideas that represent today’s reality and those that are only future possibilities (These ideas could be added to a chart.)

Ideas from reality	Futuristic ideas
research centre	using Martian bacteria to create fizzy drinks
cryogenics	tourism on Mars

- synthesise and evaluate the ideas in the story in relation to your questions or their questions
- think critically about the underlying themes of the story.



Reading standard: by the end of year 6



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Subsequent readings (cont.)

The teacher

Explain that all texts have a structure.

- *Writers choose what they want to say, and they choose how best to organise and sequence their ideas.*

Guide students to identify the purpose of specific parts of the story.

- *Look at the first page ... we have the narrator telling us where we are and what her job is. We also meet another character.*
- *We can use a “story map”, like a timeline, to map what happens. We’ll do the first couple of pages together.*

Model how to include labels on the story map, showing the setting, the characters, and the events.

- *We can write 2117 at the start of the line. What will I write to show where the story is set?*

The teacher

Remind students about purpose and audience.

- *Why do writers create a mystery for their readers?*
- *Why is it important for writers to organise their ideas in a certain way?*
- *How do writers make sure their readers can follow what’s going on? Do they introduce a lot of characters all at once or one at a time?*

Have the students work collaboratively to identify the structural features and the main ideas, including the setting (time and place), the problem, the characters and when each of them is introduced, and the events as they unfold. They could use their story map to retell the story orally to a partner. This creates an opportunity for students to reuse new vocabulary and concepts and allows you to check their understanding.

 You could create a digital story map template using Google Drawings to project your map for the class and then add specific feedback to selected text from the students’ story maps.

METACOGNITION

- *What prior knowledge helped you to make connections with the story? Is it more satisfying when a writer provides us with a positive outcome? Why or why not?*

The students:

- locate and identify the purpose of the first page (to introduce the narrator and the setting) and the second page (to introduce the problem)
- label the story map – “the introduction”, “the problem”
- locate the clues to motive in the first two interviews and on subsequent pages
- label the story map: “Motive – Felonius is jealous of his brother” and continue to add to the map as they read
- work collaboratively in pairs or in small groups to identify and record how the ideas are organised.

The students:

- think critically about the language and features the author has used
- evaluate the effectiveness of the author’s choices
- offer opinions about how well the author has achieved her purpose.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You have made some connections from life now to life as it might be in 2117. I can see from your grid that you have identified many aspects of this futuristic setting and evaluated them in relation to life today. What were the main differences?*



Reading standard: by the end of year 6



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English Level 3 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

Text excerpts from “Who Froze Farrell Flint?”

Page 37

“Have you told anyone about how you feel?”

“Only Farrell. He kept saying ‘Tell Topp’. But I was scared she’d fire me.”

I pause. “Did you worry that Farrell might tell her himself?”

“All the time.”

“Did you ever think about *stopping* him from telling her?”

Carey is silent for a second. “Yes!” he finally sobs.

“Thank you for your time,” I say.

Examples of text characteristics

DIALOGUE

Writers can describe character with dialogue – we find out what sort of character they are by what they say. Dialogue is also used to convey action and to move the story along.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Ask the students to read the excerpt of dialogue. Check that all students are familiar with the use of speech marks to show which words are actually spoken. Clarify the conventional use of other punctuation in direct speech (commas, full stops, question marks inside the speech marks). Direct students to the unattributed speech.

- *How do we know who is speaking here? If the dialogue isn’t attributed to a speaker, how can we tell who is saying it?*

Students could identify pronominal reference chains by drawing arrows from each pronoun back to the noun it relates to.

Discuss what we learn from the words spoken.

- *Sometimes the speech moves the story along; sometimes it gives us clues to the character.*
- *What does this dialogue tell us about Carey’s character? Jot down a word to describe Carey. Share it with a partner.*

Discuss alternative ways to record speech, such as the use of speech bubbles in a comic strip or as dialogue in a play. You could provide a model of speech bubbles or a play format if necessary.

Ask the students to create a dialogue between Farrell and Felonius Flint.

- *What would Felonius want to say to his brother? How could you show how jealous he was?*

Provide the students with choices of how to present the conversation. Before they begin, clarify the task. *In your conversation between the brothers, you will be choosing what they say and how they say it. It will help us to learn more about each of them and what their relationship is like.*

Page 41

As for SpaceDare, the business went bust. No one wanted to go on one of their tours once they heard what Mirtha and her half-brother had done. The undiscovered bacteria of Mars are safe. For now.

ENDINGS

There are different ways to end a story, including:

- *satisfactorily resolved, with all the loose ends tied up*
- *a plot twist, to provide an unexpected ending*
- *a traditional fairy-tale ending, where everything works out and the “hero” is left in a better place*
- *open-ended, to leave the readers wondering, for example, “Are the bacteria really safe or will someone try to harm them again in the future?”*

Lead discussion about the variety of possible endings. Talk about the endings of other stories they have read or that you have read aloud to them, or revisit short stories or picture books that have been shared. Have the students reread the last paragraph of “Who Froze Farrell Flint?” Ask questions to reach agreement about the ending.

- *What is the effect of the last sentence: “For now.”?*
- *How does that leave us feeling?*

Direct students to the way the paragraph begins:

“As for SpaceDare ...”

- *What are those words setting us up for?*
- *How might we use the phrase if we want to provide a bit more information about what will happen to Mirtha.*

Have them write an alternative ending beginning “As for Mirtha ...” Tell them they can decide whether to tie up the loose ends, add a twist, create a “fairy-tale” ending, or leave readers wondering.

Text excerpts from
“Who Froze Farrell Flint?”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Pages 40 / 41
... hurry to his lab.
Seconds pass ...
After ...
Two weeks later ...
Meanwhile ...
... now.

VOCABULARY

Writers choose the best words to say what they mean and make it clear for their readers. When telling a story, writers include words and phrases to make the sequence clear.

METACOGNITION

- *What did you think as you created the dialogue between the two brothers? Did you need to step into the shoes of each one before you decided what they would say? Can you explain the process for me?*

Have students look at their draft writing where they describe what happened to Mirtha.

- *How have you let the readers know how much time has passed?*
- *Have you said what you meant to say?*
- *Are there any words to describe sequence and time that you need to change or add?*

You could have students use a text reconstruction activity to help them notice the use of time connectives (see “Text and language challenges” on page 2).

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You’ve created a believable addition to the story with your description of what happened to Mirtha. And the mention of the ray gun she has hidden in the last sentence leaves us wondering if she will escape. You might have to write a sequel!*



Reading standard: by the end of year 6

The Literacy Learning Progressions