



Overview

This is the final chapter of a humorous science-fiction story designed to “hook” year 3 students into reading chapter books. (The first three chapters are in *Junior Journals* 52, 53, and 54.) The story began with Tai and Ana making a robot for the school science fair – but then the robot was zapped by lightning and came to life, causing a lot of trouble for the twins. Then other machines came to life and started to act strangely. Now there seems to be the potential for even more trouble ahead, and the outcome for the twins and Tidy-Bot is uncertain.

As well as fostering enjoyment, this story gives students an opportunity to develop reading “stamina” on a longer text and to feel what it’s like to read a chapter book. Students in your class will probably be reading at a range of levels on the colour wheel, so this teacher support material provides suggestions for how you can vary your level of support.

A PDF of this chapter (as well as chapters 1, 2, 3) and an audio version as an MP3 file are available at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

The three other chapters of this story (in *Junior Journals* 52, 53, and 54)

Stories with mystery and humour: “The Desk” (JJ 38); “The Pet Day Problem”, “Taniwha Trouble” (JJ 40); “Missing” (JJ 42); “Something Strange Going On” (JJ 46); “Marcus and the Wind” (JJ 47); “Always Great, Never Late” (JJ 48); “I Spy” (JJ 50); “No Big Deal” (JJ 51)

Stories that involve misinterpretation of instructions: “Buried Treasure” (JJ 53, a play)

Text characteristics

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

A mix of explicit and implicit content that requires students to make connections between ideas in the story and their prior knowledge (including knowledge from previous chapters) to ask questions, form and test hypotheses, visualise, and make inferences

Several characters and events and two interwoven storylines (one about Tidy-Bot’s misinterpretation of instructions and one about the strange behaviour of the other machines)

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

Ideas and information organised into paragraphs

Chapter 4: Machine Mayhem
by Renata Hopkins

The story so far:
(You can find chapters 1-3 in *Junior Journals* 52-54.)

Tai and Ana made a robot for their school science fair. They called it “Tidy-Bot”. When the robot was hit by lightning, it came alive! Unfortunately, Tidy-Bot was not very good at following instructions, and the twins had to hide the robot after it caused lots of trouble. Then other machines around town started acting strangely. How much trouble would these crazy machines cause ...?

Tai and Ana had a problem. Tomorrow was the day of the school science fair.
“If Tidy does something crazy, we’ll get the blame,” Tai said. “Again.”
That morning, Tidy-Bot had tried to feed the cat. Only, the robot had emptied the tin of cat food into Dad’s shoe. It had been quite yucky to clean up.
“Maybe we should tell Miss Simpson that we didn’t finish our robot,” said Ana gloomily.

“If Tidy-Bot had an off switch, we wouldn’t have to worry,” Tai replied.
The twins looked at each other.
“What if ...”
“... there is one?”
Tidy-Bot was made from broken gadgets – with lots of buttons. Maybe one of them would work? After checking that their parents were busy, the twins ran to Ana’s room. They took Tidy-Bot out of the wardrobe.
“Hey, Tidy,” said Ana. “Is it OK if we press your buttons?”
“Bleep, bloop,” said Tidy-Bot happily.
Tai pressed a button on Tidy-Bot’s toaster tummy. The little robot giggled. Ana tried another button. Tidy-Bot giggled louder. Then Tai pressed the button for making the toast pop up. At once, Tidy-Bot’s giggles faded, and the little robot slumped.
“Sleep mode!” said the twins, at exactly the same time. Ana pressed the button again, and Tidy-Bot popped upright.
“Bingo!” shouted the twins.

Shifts in time and place, some of which are indicated by the use of three asterisks

Limited illustrative support, requiring students to visualise

Some unfamiliar or unexpected words and phrases (for example, “gloomily”, “off switch”, “slumped”, “Sleep mode”, “Bingo”, “catapults”, “bewildered”, “Pandemonium”, “herd”, “fizzled”, “conked out”, “Wham”, “mechanical mess”), the meanings of which are supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the illustrations

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences and sentences with markers of time, so that students are required to notice and use linking words and phrases and punctuation to clarify the links between ideas

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Processes and strategies:
Selects and reads texts for enjoyment and personal fulfilment

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

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*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?*)

By this time, the students are likely to be setting their own reading purpose(s) based on events in previous chapters. For example:

- To find out what happens when the twins take Tidy-Bot to the science fair
- To find out if Tidy-Bot is ever going to get things right
- To find out what “machine mayhem” happens (and if Tidy-Bot is part of it)
- To find out if there is going to be a happy ending.

Possible learning goals

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

- The students **make connections** between this chapter, the previous chapters, and their own experiences to **form and test hypotheses** and **make inferences**
- They **ask questions** and look for or think about possible answers
- They look for key words and phrases to help them **visualise** events
- They **make connections** between all four chapters to **identify main ideas**
- They form an opinion about (**evaluate**) the overall story
- They **monitor** their reading, and when meaning is unclear, they take action to solve the problem, for example, by rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.



Text and language features

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases: “Mayhem”, “gloomily”, “off switch”, “gadgets”, “toaster tummy”, “faded”, “slumped”, “Sleep mode”, “Bingo”, “catapults”, “fired”, “battery-powered”, “propeller”, “electric steam mop”, “nudged”, “weird”, “This little beauty”, “beamed”, “jiggling”, “bewildered”, “Pandemonium”, “broke out”, “herd”, “lightning bolts”, “uproar”, “ducking”, “confuse”, “charged”, “swerved”, “toppled”, “Cartwheel”, “fizzled”, “conked out”, “Wham”, “mechanical mess”, “crackling”, “Phew”, “zapped machines”

Possible supporting strategies

(Use these suggestions before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

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

- when **decoding**:
 - recognising word chunks or syllables within words (for example, “gloom-i-ly”, “cat-a-pults”, “pro-pell-er”, “Pan-de-mo-ni-um”, “up-roar”)
 - using their knowledge of variations in the sounds of letters and letter combinations (“weird”, “beauty”, “bewildered”, “mechanical”, “Phew”, “machines”)
 - using context and sentence structure to confirm decoding attempts
- when **working out word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence and/or the surrounding sentences
 - using the illustrations, the unfolding meaning of the story, and making connections to their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings, but remind them that they can make a best attempt at a word and come back to it later.

Readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, use a shared reading approach with this chapter. Also see “After reading” for suggestions about exploring and reinforcing vocabulary.



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 to infer what Ana meant when she said, “You’re still the coolest Tidy-Bot”?*
- *What helped you to work out what was happening on the pages where there were few or no illustrations?*

Introducing the chapter

- This teacher support material assumes that students have read the previous three chapters.
- 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. By this fourth chapter, many students are likely to have their own purposes for reading and may choose to read the final chapter without the support of an introductory session.
- For other students, tell them this is the final chapter and have

them recall what happened in the first three chapters. They could also read “The story so far” to confirm their recollections. Encourage them to make connections between the chapter title, “Machine Mayhem”, and “The story so far” to predict what might happen in this final chapter.

- Have the students think, pair, and share their own purpose(s) for reading based on their predictions. *What would you like to find out as you read?* If necessary, prompt them with the ideas suggested in “Possible reading purposes”.

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’ responses and interests. In “The first reading”, the focus is on the students getting the gist of the chapter (for example, by tracking events and making predictions). The suggestions in “Discussing the text after the first or subsequent readings” focus on deeper comprehension. Many of the ideas also lead naturally into “After reading” activities.

Adjust your level of support according to the students’ confidence and ability. If you have students reading below Purple, you could use a mixture of reading to and shared reading, with the students following their own copy of the text. You can provide opportunities for them to reread as they listen to the audio version.

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 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 make connections between the title, “Machine Mayhem”, and the summary of “The story so far” to predict what might happen in this chapter.
- As they read page 26, they notice Ana and Tai are worried about the school science fair and infer the problem is Tidy-Bot. They confirm their inference when they read what happened when Tidy-Bot tried to feed the cat.
- On page 27, the students make connections between the use of ellipses in lines 4 and 5, the context of the conversation, and what they already know about the twins to infer that one twin has started the idea and the other has finished it.
- They use the new information about Tidy-Bot’s off switch to review their predictions about what might happen.
- The students infer that the three asterisks at the bottom of page 27 are there to indicate a break in the story (a change in time and place). They look for clues in the first sentence of the new section (starting on page 28) to help them identify when, who, and what the section will be about. They repeat this behaviour as they come across more examples (on pages 28 and 31).
- The students notice the clue on page 28 (Ana thinking she saw the big electric steam mop jiggle) and make connections with events in previous chapters to predict that Ana is right and that there will be trouble ahead.
- As the science fair proceeds, the students enjoy Tidy-Bot’s success and the praise the twins are getting (at last). They may predict that things are going to turn out well for the twins – but change their predictions again when the mop takes off.
- The students demonstrate monitoring and self-correcting. For example, they may reread the previous sentence or sentences and/or read on to clarify the meaning of words and phrases such as “catapults” (page 28), “bewildered” (page 29), “Pandemonium broke out”, “herd the mop”, and “confuse” (page 30).
- On page 30, the students notice and use key words and phrases (for example, “adults shrieked”, “catapults fired”, “cars zoomed”) to help them visualise the pandemonium in the room.
- The students infer from Ana and Tai’s dialogue that the twins are attempting to solve the problem.
- On page 32, the students infer that the twins have mixed feelings about what has happened to Tidy-Bot. They notice the clues in the twins’ conversation that suggest it may not be the end of the trouble with the machines.

- Remind the students to recall events from the previous chapters as they make predictions about what will happen in this chapter. Check their understanding of what a science fair is.


- Encourage the students to make connections between their prior experiences, the context, and the punctuation to support the unattributed dialogue.

The use of ellipses to show that words have been left out of dialogue can be confusing for English language learners. Support them by explicitly talking about what words may be missing.

- Prompt the students to consider what the discovery of the off switch might mean.
- If necessary, explain the purpose of the three asterisks to indicate a change in time and place. Prompt the students to use the first sentence in the following section of text to help them clarify what the changes are.
- Prompt the students to make connections with ideas from previous chapters (in particular, of Ana or Tai noticing things that no one else notices and of things going wrong) and to check their predictions as they read.
- Remind the students to think about the strategies they can use when meaning is unclear.
- Prompt the students to use key words and phrases to visualise the pandemonium and the characters’ reactions.
- Enjoy the students’ reactions to the rapidly changing situation and to the actions of the twins.
- Prompt the students to think about how the twins are feeling at the end of the story.

Describing feelings can be difficult for English language learners. You may need to help them by providing appropriate vocabulary.

Discussing the text after the first reading

The following suggestions are about you and the students discussing the text. You could also help your students to set up their own literature circle (see After reading). Many of the discussion points listed here also lead naturally into “After reading” activities.  You may find it helpful to project the PDF of the story so that you can zoom in on relevant sections.

- The students share their purpose(s) for reading (what they wanted to find out) and discuss how well they met their purpose. They share their responses to the chapter, particularly in regard to the pandemonium at the science fair and the fate of Tidy-Bot.
- The students use information in the text (particularly markers of time) and illustrations to track settings and events.
- Ask the students to discuss their purpose(s) for reading and what they found out. Encourage them to share their responses to the chapter and their opinions of the overall story. *Does this fit with what you predicted after reading chapter 3?*
- If necessary, support students in tracking the events in the story. Have them identify the situation at the beginning (who, what, where, and when). Discuss the use of asterisks and time markers such as “That morning”, “The next day”, “After dinner”, “Later that night” that show changes in setting. You could start a tracking chart and have the students work in pairs to complete it as an “After reading” activity.

page	where	when	who	what
26 (The beginning of the story)	at home	the day before the science fair	Tai, Ana, and Tidy-Bot	worrying about the science fair
28 (top)	the school hall	the next day	the whole school	setting up for the science fair
28 (bottom)	the school hall	after dinner (at night)	Tai and Ana and their parents	the science fair
32 (the end of the story)	at home	later that night	Tai and Ana and Tidy-Bot (in bits)	talking about what happened

- With support, the students track the outcomes in this chapter of the main ideas from previous chapters (for example, Tai and Ana no longer have to keep Tidy-Bot secret, their parents are impressed that they have made a robot, everyone can see it's the robots not the twins causing trouble, and the twins are the ones who solve the problem at the fair).
- The students think critically about the behaviour of Tidy-Bot and the other machines, building on their ideas from chapter 3. They infer from Tidy-Bot's actions that the robot is genuinely trying to help.
- The students identify a favourite section, for example, the pandemonium at the science fair, and share their ideas about what made it dramatic and funny.
- Encourage the students to build on the discussion from chapter 3 and think critically about the main ideas that run through the whole story (for example, Ana and Tai getting blamed for what the robot does, the twins keeping the robot secret, and other machines behaving strangely). *How are these aspects the same or different in this chapter?*
- Encourage them to think critically about the behaviour of the machines at the science fair. Expect them to identify the steam mop as a catalyst. Encourage debate as to whether the other machines are deliberately acting wildly or if they are being controlled by the steam mop. Revisit the question from chapter 3: *Is Tidy-Bot like the other machines?*
- Ask the students to choose a favourite section and support them to identify aspects of the writing that made it effective (for example, descriptive verbs, the surprise elements, the pace of events, suspense, humour, and the actions of the characters).

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students identify a challenge in the text and explain how they solved it, for example, by working out the meaning of a word or phrase by rereading the sentence, looking for clues in surrounding sentences, thinking about what they already know about the story, and/or referring to the illustrations.
- The students explain how setting their own purpose (and perhaps adjusting it during the reading) helped them, for example, to focus on main ideas and keep track of what was happening.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- Ask the students to identify a challenge they had when reading and explain how they solved (or attempted to solve) it. (Note any aspects to follow up on.)
- *How did setting your own reading purpose help you to read this chapter?*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- The students can reread the chapter as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this chapter (and to reread and enjoy the previous chapters) as well as other texts (see Related texts).
- Encourage the students to read more widely by reading chapter books to them and having the class visit the school or public library. Build up a class list of favourite chapter books. For help with selections, see the [Children's and youth literature](#) page on the National Library website.  You could create a class blog using blog sites such as [Wikispaces](#) or [Blogger](#), where students can post book reviews for the rest of the class to read.
- Help your students to set up their own literature circle to discuss the chapter. (See *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1–4*, page 102, for information about literature circles and *Learning through Talk: Oral Language in Years 1–3*, page 69, for suggestions about how to support group discussions.) Several of the suggestions below could also be used as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Support deeper comprehension (and encourage rereading) by having the students:
 - work with a partner to identify three or four main events in the chapter and recreate them in the form of a simple cartoon strip.  The students could use an online comic/graphic novel application such as [Toondoo](#)
 - work in pairs to draw and write about all the things Tidy-Bot did across the entire story. Alternatively, they could draw and write about four things the robot did that worked well (or that worked well at first) and four things that went wrong. (These could also be presented as cartoon strips.)
 - reread “The story so far” at the beginning of chapter 4 and use it as a guide to complete a brief summary of the whole story
 - draw a picture of the machines going crazy and add speech bubbles or thought bubbles for two or three of the human characters
 - work in pairs or small groups to turn a scene into Readers’ Theatre, encouraging them to build intonation and expression  The students could record and upload their Readers’ Theatre audio to a class blog, using a blog site such as [Blogger](#) or [Wikispaces](#)
 - work in pairs to create a comparison chart or Venn diagram of what Tidy-Bot is like and what the other machines are like, using clues in chapters 3 and 4
 - make their own labelled picture using words and phrases that describe what Tidy-Bot looks like (such as “made from broken gadgets”, “lots of buttons”, “toaster tummy”, “sleep button”, “sleep mode”) and their opinions of the robot (for example, helpful, cheerful, annoying, muddled up, mechanical).
- Ask the students to share their ideas of the sorts of jobs they’d like their own Tidy-Bot to do in their homes and then have them design their own Tidy-Bot. They could research robots before designing their own.  The students could use a digital tool such as [Google Drawings](#) to design and draw their robot.
- Have the students come up with a “What if” scenario for chapter 4 (for example, “What if Tidy-Bot and the mop had never collided?”) and write their own version of what happens from that point.
- Have the students explore how the author uses language that captures the reader’s attention. For example, they could:
 - create a group picture of the pandemonium at the science fair and add descriptive words, phrases, or sentences from the chapter
 - highlight words on a printout of the text that describe or suggest how characters are feeling (such as “gloomily”, “giggled”, “shouted”, “whispered”, “grinned”, “beamed”, “bewildered”, “laughed”, “shrieked”) then work with a partner to sort them into words about feeling good and words about feeling bad. (Note that some words may not belong clearly to either category. The value of this activity is in the students focusing on meaning, rereading the text for clarification, and discussing and negotiating as they make decisions.)
 - act out some of the action verbs. Write some of the verbs (or phrases that include verbs) on cards and have the students take turns choosing a card to act out for the group to guess or for the whole group to act out. Past-tense examples include: “pressed a button”, “giggled”, “slumped”, “nudged”, “stayed completely still”, “grinned”, “welcomed”, “spun round”, “gasped”, “beamed”, “took off”, “dived”, “zoomed”, “laughed”, “shrieked”, “ducked”, “toppled over”, “fizzled and conked out”, “nodded”. This activity would be particularly supportive for English language learners.
- The students might like to email or write to the author, Renata Hopkins, with their feedback on the story or to ask her any questions they may have.
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