

The Missing Flags

Read the mystery.

Then follow the directions in the Text Marking box.

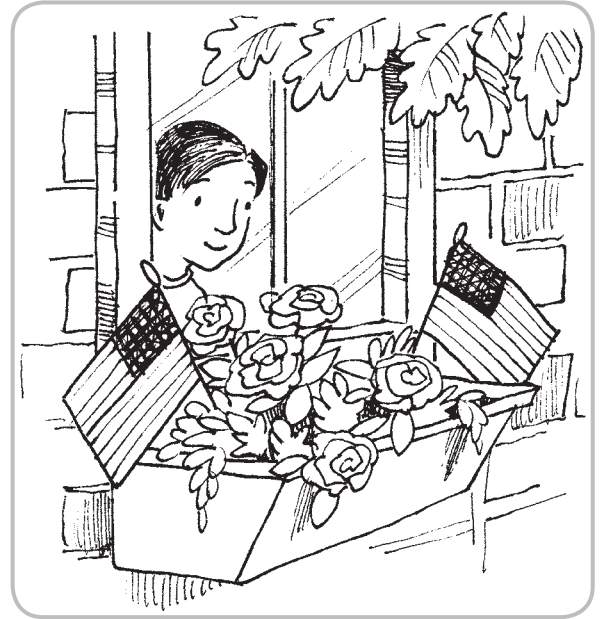
On July 1, Omar put small American flags in the flower boxes outside his family's apartment window. From outside, their home looked festive for Independence Day. But the next morning, Omar was shocked. "All the holiday flags I put out have disappeared!" he complained to his sister.

"Who would swipe flags?" Reba asked. In a huff, the children stuck fresh flags in the boxes. "Thieves wouldn't dare steal them again!"

"It's Saturday, so let's keep watch," suggested Omar. He and Reba took turns looking out the window or sitting on the front stoop to discourage thieves. Although nothing bad happened, by Sunday morning, the second set of flags was also gone.

Omar and Reba were angrily searching for footprints or other clues when Reba heard loud chattering overhead. When she looked up, she saw a messy squirrel's nest in a tree. Instead of being made of the usual leaves and twigs, this nest was bright with red, white, and blue cloth.

"Mystery solved!" Reba announced. "Our thieves are squirrels! We'd better wait until July 4th to decorate."



Text Marking

Find the problem and the solution in the mystery.



Box the signal words.



Circle the problem.



Underline the ways Omar and Reba tried to figure out what was going on.



Check the solution.

The Missing Flags

► Answer each question. Give evidence from the mystery.

1 Where did Omar put the flags?

- A. in a nest B. on the front steps C. in flower boxes D. on a tree

What helped you answer? _____

2 The opposite of *thieves* are people who _____.

- A. run fast B. steal C. climb D. give

What helped you answer? _____

3 What clues helped Reba figure out what happened to the flags?

4 Why do you think the squirrels took the flags?

Teaching Routine for Close Reading and Purposeful Text Marking

Any text can become more accessible to readers once they have learned to bring various strategies, such as purposeful text marking, to the reading process. Here is one suggested routine that may be effective in your classroom.

Preview

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- **Engage prior knowledge** of the topic of the piece and its genre. Help students link it to similar topics or examples of the genre they may have read.
- **Identify the reading skill** for which students will be marking the text. Display or distribute the Comprehension Skill Summary Card that applies to the passage. Go over its key ideas. (See Comprehension Skill Summary Card, page 4, for more.)

Model *(for the first passage, to familiarize students with the process)*

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- **Display the passage**, using an interactive whiteboard, document camera, or other resource, and provide students with their own copy. Preview the text with students by having them read the title and look at the illustration or photograph.
- **Draw attention to the markings** students will use to enhance their understanding of the piece. Link the text marking box to the Comprehension Skill Summary Card for clarification.
- **Read aloud the passage** as students follow along. Guide students to think about the skill and to note any questions they may have on sticky-notes.
- **Mark the text together.** Begin by numbering the paragraphs. Then discuss the choices you make when marking the text, demonstrating and explaining how the various text elements support the skill. Check that students understand how to mark the text using the various icons and graphics shown in the text marking box.

Read

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- **Have students do a quick-read of the passage independently** for the gist. Then they should read it a second time, marking the text as they go.
- **Encourage students to make additional markings of their own.** These might include noting unfamiliar vocabulary, an idiom or phrase they may not understand, or an especially interesting, unusual, or important detail they want to remember. Model how to use sticky-notes, colored pencils, highlighters, question marks, or check marks.

Respond

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- **Have students read the passage a third time.** This reading should prepare them to discuss the text and offer their views about it.
- **Have students answer the questions** on the companion Do More page. Encourage them to look back at their text markings and other text evidence. This will help students provide complete and supported responses

Comprehension Skill Summary Card

To help students review the reading-comprehension skill this lesson addresses and the specific terms associated with the skill, have them use the reproducible Comprehension Skill Summary Card (page 6). The boldface terms on the card are the same ones students will identify as they mark the text.

You might duplicate, cut out, and distribute the Comprehension Skill Summary Card before assigning the passage. Discuss the elements of the skill together to ensure that students fully grasp it. Encourage students to save their card, which they can use as a reading aid to refer to whenever they read any type of literary text.

Tips and Suggestions

- The text-marking process is versatile and adaptable. While numbering, boxing, circling, and underlining are the most common methods, you can personalize the strategy for your class if it helps augment the process. You might have students use letters to mark text; they can, for example, write MC to indicate a main character, D to mark a detail, or 1st for first person and 3rd for third person. Whichever technique you use, encourage consistency of marking.
- You may wish to extend the text-marking strategy by having students identify other aspects of writing, such as figurative language or confusing words, expressions, or idioms.

Comprehension Skill

Character

Characters take part in the events of the story. A character can be a person, an animal, or a thing.

- 4 Read for details that describe how each character looks, speaks, acts, and responds to challenges.
- 4 Notice whether and how a character changes or learns during the story.

A story may have a **main character** and one or more **minor characters**.

- 4 The main character is the most important character in the story. This is the character the story is mostly about.
- 4 A minor character is not the focus of the story but is necessary for it to develop.

Comprehension Skill

Point of View

Knowing *who* is telling a story gives you its **point of view**. Authors usually use one of two points of view.

- 4 **First-person** point of view has a character *in* the story acting as the **narrator**. In first-person stories, readers learn about events from that character's point of view. Look for words like *I, me, and we*.
- 4 **Third-person** point of view has a narrator—someone *outside* the story telling it. That person is the narrator. In third-person stories, readers learn the thoughts, actions, and feelings of many characters. Look for words like *he, she, and they*.

One way to tell a character's point of view is by what he or she says.

Comprehension Skill

Compare & Contrast

Authors often discuss people, places, things, or ideas by describing how they are alike and ways they differ.

- 4 To **compare** means to tell how two or more things are alike.
- 4 To **contrast** means to tell how two or more things are different.
- 4 **Signal words** give clues that help you compare and contrast.

Examples for comparing: *both, too, like, also, and in the same way*.

Examples for contrasting: *but, only, however, unlike, and different*.

Connections to the Standards

This lesson supports the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading for students in grades K–12. These broad standards, which serve as the basis of many state standards, were developed to establish rigorous educational expectations with the goal of providing students nationwide with a quality education that prepares them for college and careers. The chart below details how the lesson aligns with specific reading standards for literary texts for students in grade 3.

These materials also address language standards, including skills in the conventions of standard English, knowledge of language, and vocabulary acquisition and use. In addition, students meet writing standards as they answer questions about the passage, demonstrating their ability to convey ideas coherently, clearly, and with support from the text.

Reading Standards for Literature
Key Ideas and Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
Craft and Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Describe the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

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Problem & Solution

Stories often present a challenging situation to engage readers and then offer one or more forms of resolution.

- A **problem** is a form of trouble or difficulty that has to be worked out or solved.
- A **solution** is the way the problem gets solved to make things better.
- **Signal words** are clues to a problem and its solutions.

Examples for problems: *question, challenge, dilemma, puzzle, mystery, need, and trouble.*

Examples for solutions: *answer, help, idea, plan, solved, improved, fixed, remedy, and saved.*

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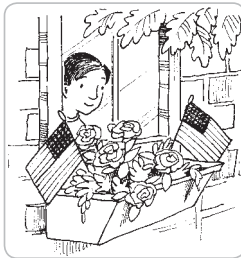
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✓ Check the solution.

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage: The Missing Flags

1. C; Sample answer: The story said this in the first paragraph.
2. D; Sample answer: The text says that thieves steal flags. Since thieves take things that don't belong to them, D is the best opposite.
3. Sample answer: She heard loud chattering, which made her look up. That's when she noticed the nest made with red, white, and blue cloth—the flags!
4. Sample answer: Maybe they used the cloth to make the nest soft and cozy.