

# The Great Piano Hoist

by Jo Wilson

illustrated by Tony Rush



## Book Summary

Carlos is excited when he inherits his great-aunt's piano, but getting the piano into his apartment is going to be tricky. This story shows how Carlos's problem is solved through the creative use of pulleys and levers.

## Features of the Book

- Problem solving
- Specialised vocabulary – *pulley, lever, dolly*
- Descriptive language – *rummaged, musty, peered, maestro*
- Historical references
- Factual information in a fiction text

## Purpose

*The Great Piano Hoist* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** visualising to make sense of a complex text;
- S** asking questions to deepen understanding of a subject;
- S** using strategies to make meaning of unknown words;
- S** exploring how pulleys and levers move objects.

## Investigation Tools

- Digging Deeper – Move That Load, page 29
- Looking Closer – Pulleys, pages 30–31
- What's the Background? – Changing Neighbourhoods, page 32

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Visualising to make sense of a complex text
- S** Asking questions to deepen understanding of a subject

## Introducing the text

Distribute the books and ask the students to make some predictions about the story based on the title and the cover illustration.

- *What questions can you ask based on your predictions? (Why do they look worried? Why do they need to hoist the piano?)*

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1, then “Changing Neighbourhoods” on page 32. Ask them to imagine a street lined with factories and warehouses near a port.

- *What images, smells, sounds, or impressions come to mind?*
- *How do you think Carlos’s building would have looked when it was a warehouse?*
- *How would it be different today?*
- *Describe how the atmosphere of the neighbourhood might have changed.*

Ask the students to read to the end of page 18. When they have finished, discuss the strategy of asking questions to help understand something.

- *What questions could we ask about their dilemma?*

Model a few questions for the students:

- *How could the piano be moved without using the elevator?*
- *How could the fact that the building was once a warehouse make it easier?*
- *What questions might Carlos have?*

Encourage the students to look for how the building’s design and some simple tools might solve the problem as they read the rest of the story.

- *What questions do you have about pulleys or levers?*
- *How can rereading and visualising help us answer our questions?*

Invite the students to reread the description of lifting the piano on page 22. Discuss how they imagine the pulley working.

Ask the students to read pages 30 and 31. Discuss how they can use this information to visualise how the piano was moved.

- *How can visualising help you to understand how something works?*

## Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

### **S** Using strategies to make meaning of unknown words

Ask the students to find “pronto” (page 9), “presto” (page 20), and “maestro” (page 25) and work out their meanings using strategies such as the context or their prior knowledge.

- *Have you heard these words before?*
- *What language might they come from? (Italian)*
- *What other foreign words do we use in English?*

 Ask the students to complete the blackline master on page 71 using strategies to work out the meanings of the words.

### **S** Exploring how pulleys and levers move objects

Draw a lever and fulcrum on the board. Explain to the students that a lever is a device like a see-saw that helps lift something. Discuss the parts: the lever (the board or plank) and the fulcrum (the pivot point).

- *How could you use a lever to move something heavy?*

Ask the students to reread “Move That Load” on page 29 and “Pulleys” on pages 30 and 31. Working in pairs, the students can list different uses for these devices. Ideas might include:

**Pulleys** – using cranes to build skyscrapers, hoisting sails on yachts, working elevators or tow trucks, raising a flag

**Levers** – pulling nails with a hammer, removing a staple, using a crowbar or shoehorn, riding a see-saw

Each pair can then use a ruler, a small block, and weights of various sizes to experiment with how a lever works. Encourage them to change the place of the fulcrum to see how it affects the balance.

 Ask the students to record their observations on the Looking Closer investigation tool on page 89.