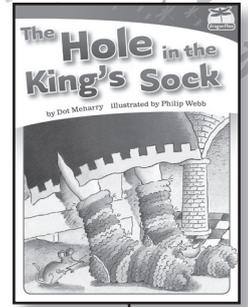


The Hole in the King's Sock

by Dot Meharry

illustrated by Philip Webb



Overview

In this humorous fairy tale, the King commands his servants to mend a hole in his sock. Nothing works until, finally, the Queen comes up with a solution that means the King will never have cold feet again.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of making and confirming predictions and noting details in illustrations. Repetition in the text provides support for less confident readers.

Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the clear narrative structure
- the fairy tale elements
- the characterisation of the King and Queen
- the use of imperative language by the King
- the humour and in the inclusion of modern elements in the illustrations
- the visual sub-plot involving the mouse
- the use of exclamation marks for emphasis
- the possessive apostrophe in the title
- the irregular verbs – *came, gave, made, wove*
- the double consonants – *knitted, knitting, running*
- the words with silent letters – *dough, knit, knitted, knitting, stitched, wriggled*
- the “old” rime – *cold, gold*

Possible challenges

- the words – *learned, thread*
- the concept of knitting

Setting the scene

Ask the students to study the illustrations on the front and back covers and read the title. *Who is this person? Where does he live? What might you expect to see in a book about a king?* Don't introduce the idea of knitting in case you give away the ending of the story.

If you want to focus on the fairy tale aspects of this text, ensure that the students have heard and read other more traditional examples.

The first reading

Read the title and the names of the writer and the illustrator. Talk about the use of the possessive apostrophe in “King's”.

Back cover – Read aloud the preview question. Discuss the students' predictions.

Ask the students to read the text silently, pausing at various points for discussion or to clarify any difficulties.

Page 2 – *What is the King's problem? Who does he send for?*

Page 3 – *What did the Royal Menders do?*

Page 4 – *Did that solve the problem? What do you think the Royal Cooks will do?* Draw on the students' knowledge of fairy tales (events happening three times) and encourage them to predict what might happen next.

Have the students read page 8. *Did things happen as you thought they would? What else has the King tried? Why didn't that work?* You may need to explain that "wove" (page 7) is the past tense of "weave". *What could he try next?*

Page 9 – *What does the Queen suggest?* Draw attention to the exclamation mark and encourage the students to read the King's response expressively. If necessary, explain what knitting is. The illustrations on pages 10 and 11 will help.

Page 12 – Encourage the students to think critically. *How is the Queen feeling? How do you know? How is the King feeling?*

Ideas for revisiting the text (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Listen while the students reread the text with a partner, observing their use of expression and how they deal with the challenges in the vocabulary.
- Explore the narrative structure of the story. Identify the problem, complication, and resolution.
- Look at the characters of the King and the Queen. Use a simple character continuum to plot how clever they are.
- Study the imperative language the King uses. *Why does he speak like his?*
- Make a list of the fairy tale elements in the text (the characters, the setting, the task attempted three times, the imperative language of the king, and the happy ending). *How is this story different from other fairy tales you know?*
- Focus on the detail in the illustrations. Discuss the humorous elements, such as the expressions on the servants' faces on pages 3 to 7, the silliness of their ideas, or the incongruity of the modern elements in the setting. *What things can you see that wouldn't have been around in those days?*
- Track the visual sub-plot of the mouse and discuss the story from his viewpoint.
- Focus on the irregular past-tense verbs "came", "gave", "made", and "wove". Talk about how most past-tense verbs can have "ed" added to them (like "stitched" on page 3) but that some can't. Explain that the students need to think about what sounds right to help them when they're reading. For the students whom English is a second language, it would be helpful to use the irregular verbs in conversation so that they have many opportunities to hear them.
- Write "dough", "knit", "knitted", "knitting", "stitched", and "wiggled" on the board. Tell the students that some words have silent letters. Read the words on the board together. Ask them to identify the silent letters.
- Write the verbs "knitting" and "running" on the board. Identify the root words. Talk about how you need to double the final consonant before adding "ing" to some verbs.
- *How were the King's feet feeling? Find a word on page 3 that rhymes with "cold".* Ask the students to think of other words that include the "old" rime and list them on the board.

Suggestions for further activities

- The students could design some socks for the King or invent other ways of mending his sock.
- Innovate on the text, using a title like “The Crack in the King’s Crown”.
- Make the story into a song based on “There’s a hole in the bucket ...”
- Make a wall story and add speech bubbles.
- Dramatise the text. Have the students make props and costumes and present the play to the class.
- Read other fairy tales and talk about the elements they have in common.
- BLM word activity: use irregular past-tense verbs

The students can discuss and identify irregular past-tense verbs. They can write the past tense of each verb. They can then write each verb in a sentence.

- BLM comprehension activity: innovate on the story to create own versions of stories, plays
The students can write their own version of the story using the same structure.