

The Cardigan

Ideas for The Cardigan

This is a warm story about a man who becomes attached to a scruffy cardigan which his wife got at a jumble sale. But the more he likes it, the more his wife regrets buying it. The writer's robust descriptions bring the story vividly and touchingly to life, and the expressive illustrations give it an emotional tug.



The story is 478 words long, with a SMOG grade of 6, so it can be read by Entry level readers.

Some poor readers and many poor spellers have memory problems. The 'Picture this' activity suggested on page 2 below is about visualisation, a technique which can help us to train our memories. It is useful in many contexts, such as remembering people's names or what we need from the shops. If they have an MP3 player with a voice recording facility, readers could use this as another way to help them remember important personal details.

The 'It won't wash' activity links the story to real life and the practical uses of reading, and helps readers to develop their use of visual clues to determine meaning.

The 'Tug of war' activity will help readers to identify particular points of view, and demonstrates how stories are often built up from the different perspectives of the characters.

Activity ideas

1 Cardigans are like friends

There is plenty to discuss in this story. First, there is the cardigan itself. Read the comment by Henry Normal on the back cover of the book. Have readers got an item of clothing which means something special to them? Why is it special? One reader told this story: *'My mother died suddenly and I was in shock. Almost without thinking, I went to the wardrobe and got out a pullover she had knitted for me and put it on. When I wore it I felt surrounded by her love for me. I will never throw that pullover away.'*

SLlr/E1.5 Listen to and identify simply expressed feelings and emotions

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2 Picture this

After the first reading of the book, ask the readers if they can say what clothing the man put on to keep warm. Go back to page 6, re-read it, and ask the readers to picture the scene in their mind as each layer is added. Then try the memory test again. Explain how this technique can help you in other ways, for example, if you are going upstairs to fetch something, picture yourself going to the drawer and getting the item out, before you set off.

Rt/E2.1 Trace and understand the main events

Rt/E3.8 Obtain specific information through detailed reading

3. Tug of war

The story is also about the characters of the man and his wife and how they interplay. Read pages 1 and 2, to establish what each of them thinks. Then see how their attitudes are reversed by the end of the story (see page 10, for example). Can readers role-play the story by turning the action into dialogue?

You could help them by 'hot seating' the characters. Ask a confident female reader to imagine she is the wife. The members of the group ask her questions which she answers in role. You could demonstrate by asking the first question, such as *'I saw you at the jumble sale and you were buying a cardigan. Who was it for?'* After the questioning has run its course, ask a man to take the hot seat in the role of the husband. This might lead to recording the story as a play.

Rt/E2.1 Trace and understand the main events of chronological texts

SLc/E2.4 Ask questions to clarify understanding

4. Imagery

Part of this book's attraction is the plausible way in which it is told: it has authentic natural language and honest characterisation. It also has strong imagery which brings it to life. Look at pages 4 and 5 to see how the writer describes a cold morning. He uses a technique called simile (comparing someone or something to another thing): on page 4 'I was shivering *like* a leaf' and on page 5 'She was lying there with steam coming out of her mouth *like* a kettle on a stove.' Can readers find another simile on page 8? Are there any other 'colourful' passages which appeal to them? Use the worksheet to complete sentences, and explain how (used in moderation) such comparisons can enrich a piece of writing and make it more vivid.

Wt/E2.1 Use written words and phrases to record or present information

- **Worksheet: choose a simile (page 4)**

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5. It won't wash

Have readers ever washed a favourite cardigan only to find it has changed colour, shrunk, stretched or become matted? Ask your readers for tips on washing to avoid problems. Then have a look at some laundry labels inside items of clothing. The symbols are used internationally so that they can be interpreted by anyone, whatever their language. Use the worksheet to help readers know what the basic symbols mean. There are many more symbols than those shown on the worksheet. By putting 'laundry symbols' into a search engine, it is easy to find the complete set.

- **Worksheet: laundry symbols (page 5)**

Rt/E2.4 Use illustrations and captions to locate information

Rt/E2.3 Identify common sources of information

6. Superlative!

A superlative is when we describe something at the limit – the most it can be. When the describing words end in 'y', to form the superlative we have to knock off the -y and add -iest. Pick some examples to show readers how this works, ('speedy-speediest' 'runny-runniest' 'angry-angriest' 'lucky-luckiest'). Then ask readers to think of some words to describe the cardigan. Pick the ones which end in y to demonstrate the rule. Use the worksheet to practice.

- **Worksheet: y spelling rule (page 6)**

Ww/E3.2 Use developing knowledge of sound/symbol relationships and phonological patterns to help spell a greater range of words and longer words

The Cardigan (D)

Complete the phrases with a strong image

Use the pictures as clues if you need help



The sun set like _____

I was as cold as _____

It happened as quick as _____

I would not trust him further than _____

He was as strong as _____

The cake was light, like a _____



a feather



a block of ice



I could throw him



an orange ball



a brick wall



a flash

The Cardigan (E)

Activity 5 – washing symbols

Machine wash

Hand wash

Iron

Do not tumble dry

Do not dry clean

Do not bleach













A cross over a symbol means _____

- Put **laundry symbols** into the computer search to find more labels.

The Cardigan (F)

Activity 6 – y spelling rule

Change y to iest

scruffy

scruffiest

happy

comfy

funny

dirty

smelly

nasty

itchy

