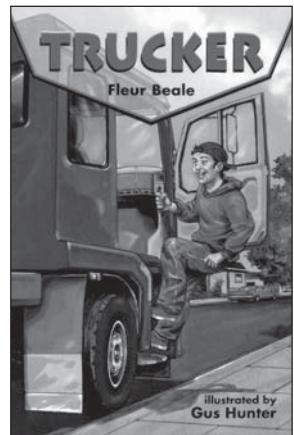


Trucker

by Fleur Beale

illustrated by Gus Hunter



Book Summary

Jack is crazy about trucks but not about his mom's boyfriend, Steve. On Jack's birthday, Steve gives him a surprise present – a ride with a trucker in a big rig. When an emergency situation develops, Jack starts to see Steve in a different light.

Features of the Book

- The theme of stereotyping
- The use of similes – *the light around the cab twinkled through the gloom like birthday candles*
- First person point of view
- Technical vocabulary – *straddle, hydraulic, articulated*
- The alternatives to “said” – *muttered, called, gasped*
- The different viewpoints of the characters
- The technical detail in the illustrations
- The use of irony and sarcasm in the conversations

Purpose

Trucker can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- identifying stereotypes and how stereotypes influence us;
- interpreting and analyzing characters' feelings and actions;
- using text to support opinions;
- identifying the different viewpoints of characters;
- identifying change of opinion within a story.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Identifying stereotypes and how stereotypes influence us
- Interpreting and analyzing characters' feelings and actions
- Using text to support opinions

Introducing the text

Look at the title, the front cover illustration, and the blurb on the back cover. Ask the students to predict the theme of the book using the clues they find. Ask them to qualify their responses and take note of their ideas for later confirmation.

- *What does the last sentence in the blurb mean?*
- *What kind of picture do you have in your head for the word “trucker”?*

Draw on the students' existing knowledge and their vocabulary as much as possible. List any trucking terms they know. Encourage them to use this list while they are reading the story.

Read the first page of chapter 1 together and discuss the relationships between the characters.

- *How would you describe Jack's feelings toward Steve?*
- *Why might he feel this way?*
- *Why would Jack object to Steve being calm and friendly?*

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the rest of chapter 1 and focus their reading with the following suggestion:

- When you've finished reading, we're going to discuss the characters and how they interact with each other.

When they have finished reading, discuss the characters that have been introduced.

- Who do you think the main character is?
- Can you see a problem developing?
- Can you predict what might happen? Which part of the text makes you think that?

Help the students to identify the two characters who have conflict (Jack and Steve).

- Why do you think Jack doesn't like Steve?
- Where does Jack get his opinion?
- Are nurses always supposed to be female?

Ask the students to close their eyes and picture a huge Kenworth truck.

- Think back to the picture you had in your head for the word "trucker."
- Is the driver male or female? What is he or she wearing?

Introduce the term "stereotyping" (having a fixed idea or opinion about a kind of person).

- Does Jack have a fixed idea or opinion about Steve and his job? Find the place in the story that tells you that.

Now let the students read the rest of the story. As they read, suggest that they think about the following questions:

- How does Jack react to Steve, and where do his opinions come from?
- How does Jack's opinion of Steve affect how he acts and talks?

When they have finished reading, ask the students:

- Why didn't Jack get a present from Steve? Use the text to support your suggestion.
- What passages in the text show that Jack has a "stereotyped" view of Steve?

Make a list of the words and phrases Jack used about Steve.

- Do they paint a particular picture in your mind?
- Does that picture match your opinion of what Steve was like?
- How was your picture different?
- Look at Steve's actions and speech. Is there really any evidence that he is "wimpy"?

Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Identifying stereotypes and how stereotypes influence us

- What other stereotypes can you find in the story? (male truck drivers, boys building models of trucks, men not crying)

Ask the students to use examples from the text to support their answers.

Help the students to make two lists of occupations: one showing those usually carried out by women and the other showing those usually done by men.

- How have these roles come about?
- Are men and women better at some jobs than each other?

Do some research on famous people who do not have stereotypical jobs.

S Identifying the different viewpoints of characters

Ask the students to choose a character, for example, Steve. Compare how the other characters in the book view this person.

- What does Jack think of Steve at first? (wimpy, not a real man, interfering)
- How does Mom see Steve? (man she is going to marry, generous, a man who keeps his promises)
- How does Dan view Steve? (good friend, kind, knows what to do in an emergency)
- How does Finn view Steve? (caught between supporting Jack and actually liking Steve)

S Identifying change of opinion within a story

Ask the students to skim the text to find an answer to the following question:

- Which point in the text clearly shows that Jack has changed his opinion about Steve?

Discuss the students' suggestions and ask for evidence supporting why this is a turning point for Jack.

The students can use the blackline master on page 63 to show how Jack's opinions change. They should find evidence from the text to support their ideas.