



Running words: 272

Book Summary

This story looks at how to solve problems by thinking of new ideas. Mickey Mole is lost in the woods at night. His family want to search for him, but they are worried about losing their way in the dark. At first, they think the moonlight might light their way, but the night is cloudy. Mindy then suggests that they use fire sticks. The family sets out by firelight and finally finds Mickey. A sudden downpour puts out the fire sticks leaving the family unsure of how to find their way back home. In the end, Mindy has another idea to solve the problem. She catches fireflies in a jar and uses them to light their way back through the dark woods.

Themes

Animals, birds, and insects; Invention; Problem solving

Features of the Book

- The information contained in the illustrations
- Content words for discussion: *bright, idea, know, use*
- Phonics and phonemic awareness: consonant blends – *fl* and *th*; long vowel sounds – *moon/oo/poor* and *meeting/ee/tree*; word endings – *-ight*

Strategies

A Bright Idea introduces and reinforces the following strategies:

- determining main ideas;
- determining cause and effect;
- making predictions.

Materials

- Copies of the Sentence Strips reproducible for this book, cut and ready for use
- copies of the BM, pencils

A Bright Idea

by *Kitty Thomas*

Introducing the Text

Begin by asking the students to think of the times when their family has faced a problem. Write their answers in a list.

- *What problem did your family face?*
- *Did your family talk about the problem? Did you brainstorm possible solutions together?*
- *Did your family find a solution to the problem?*

Reading the Text

Hand one book to each student. Ensure that the content words (bright, idea, know, use) are integrated naturally into the discussion. An understanding of these terms will help the students appreciate the author's purpose and the decisions the characters make in the story. Encourage the students to use the information in the illustrations and text to make predictions, then to revise or confirm these as you work through the book.

Cover

Together, read the title and the name of the author on the cover and the title page. Look at the illustrations

- *Who is on the cover?* (a group of moles)
- *Where are these characters?* (in the woods at night)
- *What are they carrying?* (burning torches and a bag)

Pages 2 to 3

- *What do you think is happening on these pages?* (The moles are looking for something and then talking about it.)

Read the text together. Confirm that the mole family are searching their home for Mickey, who is missing. When they can't find him, they have a meeting to discuss what to do next. Have a student point out the speech marks. Remind the students that these marks indicate who is speaking in the story.

- *What problem do the moles face?* (trying to find Mickey in the dark)
- *How do you predict the family will solve the problem?*

Pages 4 to 5

- *What idea do you think Grandpa Mole has?* (using moonlight)
- *What idea do you think Mindy has?* (using the burning lights)

Read the text together. Confirm that Grandpa Mole has suggested using moonlight to find their way, while Mindy suggests using the fire sticks.

- *Why can't the moles use the moonlight?* (it's too cloudy)
- *Would you have thought of using the fire sticks like Mindy did?*

Pages 6 to 7

- *Does Mindy's idea work?* (Yes, the moles use the fire sticks to search the woods and find Mickey.)

Read the text together. Confirm that the moles have searched using the fire sticks and finally found Mickey.

A Bright Idea

Pages 8 to 9

- *What has happened to the firesticks?*
(Rain has put out the flames.)

Read the text together. Confirm that a sudden downpour has put out the fire sticks.

- *What problem do the moles face now?* (finding their way home in the dark)
- *How do you predict the family will solve the problem?*

Pages 10 to 11

- *What idea do you think Mindy is suggesting?* (using fireflies)

Read the text together. Confirm that Mindy has noticed the fireflies and caught them in a jar to use as a source of light.

- *Would you have thought of using the fireflies like Mindy did?*

Page 12

- *Does Mindy's second idea also work?* (Yes, the moles are headed home.)

Read the text together. Confirm that the moles can find their way home using the light of the fireflies.

Revisiting the Text

- Revisit the list of problems the students made at the beginning of the story and of the ways their families tried to solve those problems. Have them compare how their families approached a problem with how the moles approached their problem in the story. Then ask the students to conclude what the main idea of the story is. (Brainstorming can result in ideas that solve problems.)
- Find and list the “fl” and “th” consonant blends in the story. With the students, add any other words they know that contain these blends.
- Write the words *moon/oo/poor* and *meeting/ee/tree* on the board in two lists. With the students, add any other words they know that contain the long “oo” or long “ee” sound.
- Find and list the words in the story that end in “-ight”. With the students, add any other words they know have this ending.

Following Up

- Encourage the students to think about the story in terms of a chain of causes and effects. What events led to the problems the mole family faced and the solutions they found? With the students, place the story’s events on the board with an arrow between each event, showing cause and effect. For example, Mickey becomes lost, which causes his family to need a way to search for him in the dark. This causes Mindy to think of using the fire sticks, which causes the family to enter the woods. This results in them finding Mickey, and so on.
- Give the students copies of the BM for this story. They can draw Mindy’s two solutions in the boxes and explain how her ideas worked.