

The Playhouse

by Pauline Cartwright
illustrated by Donna Cross



Book Summary

This book explores how the past can be pieced together from artifacts and oral history.

Features of the Book

- The clear beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- Illustrations that support the text and provide additional information.
- The use of descriptive narrative in the first person.
- The use of past and present tense.
- The use of a historical perspective on pages 8 and 9.
- The use of sepia tones in the illustration on page 8 to indicate a scene from the past.
- The range of prepositions – “in,” “by,” “on,” “beside,” “from,” “after,” “next to,” and “under.”
- The compound word “playhouse.”
- The concept of “pretending.”

Purpose

The Playhouse can be used in a guided reading setting to introduce and reinforce the following skills and strategies:

- S** discussing the organizational structure of the text;
- S** discussing the relationship between cause and effect within the story;
- S** developing the ability to write specifically about the detail of the setting of the story.

Introducing the text

Look at the cover illustration.

- What do you think this girl is doing?
- Where do you think the story takes place?
- Do you have a playhouse or a treehouse at home? What is it made of?

Read the title and the names of the author and illustrator to the group.

Reading the text

- S** Discussing the organizational structure of the text.
- S** Discussing the relationship between cause and effect within the story.

Pages 2 and 3

- What do you suppose this wall belonged to many years ago? How did it become old and broken?

Pages 4 and 5 – The word “treasure” is used here to mean something special rather than gold or jewels.

- Where do you think these “treasures” came from in the first place? Who left them there?
- Do you think they are valuable/worth a lot of money?

Pages 6 and 7

- What things might have been sold in the shop?

Pages 8 and 9 – The sepia tones in the left-hand illustration are used to evoke the idea of the past.

- Look at the two pictures. What has changed?
- What happened to the rest of the shop?

Pages 10 to 12

- What does “pretend” mean?
- What other “treasures” do you think they might find?
- Do you think the girl is really watching for the river to rise again?

Children now read the book independently.

Revisiting the text

Look at page 8.


- Which words tell you that this happened in the past?

Discuss the changing form of verbs to indicate tense – “came,” “come” and “found,” “find.”

Look also at the verb “put” (page 4), which does not change with different tenses.

Following Up

- S** Developing the ability to write specifically about the detail of the setting of the story.

 With the group, rewrite pages 10 to 12 in the past tense or interview a parent or grandparent or older friend about “Then and now.”

- B** Complete the blackline master opposite.