

The Bad Dad List

by Anna Kenna

illustrated by David Elliot



Book Summary

Chloe's dad has lost his job. Her mum has gone back to work, and Dad looks after Chloe and the family home. Unfortunately Dad forgets to do things, and Chloe compares him unfavourably with her mum. She starts to make a list of all the bad things he has done.

Features of the Book

- Personal narrative
- The strong cover illustration
- Theme many students will relate to
- Descriptions of characters' feelings
- The list of Dad's failings
- Changes in typeface for effect
- Mixture of direct and indirect speech
- Deliberate gaps in the storyline to encourage the reader to make their own assumptions

Purpose

The Bad Dad List can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** comparing students' experiences with those of the characters;
- S** identifying the feelings of characters and noting how these feelings change;
- S** recognising inferences;
- S** clarifying the author's intention.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Comparing students' experiences with those of the characters
- S** Identifying the feelings of characters and noting how these feelings change

Introducing the text

Discuss a recent event where things haven't gone the way a student wanted them to.

- *What happened? How did you feel?*
- *Can you think of other words for these feelings?*

Make a list of the words the students use to describe their feelings. List similar feelings beside each other (angry, annoyed, furious, sad, unhappy, upset).

- *Who did you blame? What happened in the end?*

Look at the cover of the book.

- *What do you think has happened? How can you tell?*
- *What do you think the title means?*

Discuss the title and illustration and ask the students to predict what might be on a "bad dad" list. Then read the text on the back cover with the group. This provides the setting for the story and outlines the beginning of the plot.

- *Was your prediction correct?*
- *What do you think will be number six on the bad dad list? (They may predict that missing the bus will be number six.)*

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first chapter of the book.

- As you read, think about how Chloe is feeling and which parts of the story tell you this.

As the students read independently, encourage them to clarify the meaning of unknown vocabulary.

When the students have finished the first chapter, discuss the purpose-setting question. Write up the students' suggestions and allow the others time to respond to these. They could include:

- Sometimes I feel like firing my dad!
- ... I don't think he's very good at it.
- I was so angry, I bit my tongue.

Ask the students to discuss how they would feel if they were Chloe.

- Would you feel differently? If so, why?

Ask the students to read to the end of the book independently. You could use the following purpose-setting question. Write it on the board for the students to refer to.

- Find out what happened at the café. Why did it change the way Chloe felt about her father?

✎ As the students finish reading, they could write a brief answer to the purpose-setting question. The conversation in the café, where Chloe's dad tells her how he really feels, is the turning point in the story. Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to comment on this.



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 the feelings of characters and noting how these feelings change

Discuss how the feelings of Chloe and her dad change as the story unfolds.

✎ The students can use the blackline master on page 62 to record the changes in Chloe's feelings on a graph. They could then make another graph showing Dad's feelings and how they change throughout the story.

Use the graphs to compare the feelings of both characters. Ask questions to encourage the students to think beyond what is stated in the story. For example:

- How do you think Dad felt when he found Chloe's list?
- How do you think Chloe felt when she realised Dad had found her list?
- Why do you think Dad wrote the good things he had done on the back of Chloe's list?

S Recognising inferences

Ask the group to read the text on page 27.

- Does Chloe say she has eaten all the pie? What tells Dad she has eaten it? (the look on her face and the way she says "Whoops" and "Sorry")

The information about the pie is not given to Dad directly, but the reader can infer it from the conversation and the illustration.

Discuss the students' own experiences of recognising inference.

S Clarifying the author's intention

In parts of the story, the author has left the details of events to the reader's imagination. Reread the end of chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4.

- What do you think happened when Dad stopped the car?
- Why do you think the author left out the details?

Look at the beginning of chapter 7.

- What do you think Chloe and Dad talked about before they stopped at the café?