

# Hang in there, Oscar Martin!

by Diana Noonan

illustrated by Craig Smith



## Book Summary

Oscar Martin isn't a very good reporter (or photographer), and the school newspaper is suffering. The situation worsens when a neighboring school starts publishing its own newspaper. Oscar is given the task of finding a news story to save the Redmond School News.

## Features of the Book

- The pun in the title
- The example of a newspaper article
- Informal speech – *Oh, yeah?, I'm gonna*
- The humor in Oscar's writing
- The irony in the way Oscar saves the day
- Misleading headlines – *Children Run as Greengrocer Waves Knife*
- Specialized vocabulary – *chief editor, headline, reporter, shot, zoom lens, printer, ready*

## Purpose

*Hang in there, Oscar Martin!* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** drawing on students' prior experience;
- S** identifying the problem in the story;
- S** distinguishing between the main idea and supporting details;
- S** conducting effective interviews;
- S** distinguishing between fact and opinion.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Drawing on students' prior experience
- S** Identifying the problem in the story
- S** Distinguishing between the main idea and supporting details

## Introducing the text

Begin the session by showing the students the front cover of the book.

- *What do you think is happening here?*
- *Where is the boy, and why might he have a camera?*

After the students have shared their ideas, tell them that the boy is the main character, Oscar Martin. Read the blurb on the back cover together and discuss any of the ideas that may be unfamiliar, such as a "lucky break." With this extra information, the students can look at the cover again and make another prediction about what is happening.

- *Where is Oscar, and what is he looking at?*

Before reading the first part of the text together, you could discuss what a reporter does and introduce some of the vocabulary that the students will meet in the story (see Features of the Book).

- *What kinds of skills do you think a reporter needs?*
- *Are there different kinds of reporter? Does a reporter have to be a photographer too?*

Look at a local newspaper and find an example of an article to discuss. Introduce the concepts of headlines, print, and photographs. Look for the acknowledgments for the reporter and photographer on the article.

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently. They can think about the following question as they read:

- *What is the problem, and how do other people want Oscar to solve it?*

As they read, note any difficulties that the students may be having and give support where needed. Encourage the use of word-solving strategies. For example, they could look at the context of the word, read on, look into the word for any information they recognize, or ask for help.

When everyone has finished reading, discuss the students' answers to the purpose-setting question above.

- *Can you predict how Oscar will try to solve the problem.*

Discuss any vocabulary or concepts that the students have had problems with, and when you feel that they are confident with the direction the story is going in, they can read the rest of the story independently.

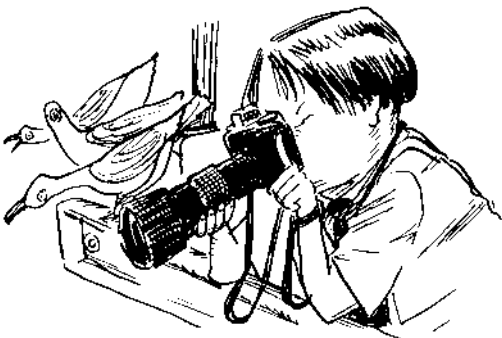
When everyone has finished the book, discuss the way the story line has unfolded. Ask the students to orally retell the story by restating the main ideas in order. Encourage them to question each others' suggestions by asking if the statements are main ideas or supporting details.

Explore the irony in the way the story is resolved.

- *Did Oscar really solve the problem?*

Ask the students to back up their answers by referring to the text. Encourage them to see that it was really luck that helped Oscar to solve the case of the City Bank robbery.

- *Do you think Oscar feels that he will be able to write more good stories to keep his job?*
- *Which words or phrases make you think 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** Conducting effective interviews

Look at an example of a short newspaper article together. Ask the students to find the main idea and then the detail that supports and adds to the idea.

- *What kinds of information has the writer included in the article?*
- *What kinds of questions do you think the reporter had to ask to get the information?*

 Ask the students to pair up and to interview each other on a topic such as breakfast cereal. They should note the questions that were asked and the answers that were given. They can use the blackline master on page 68 to record their topic and write and revise their questions. They could conduct the interview with a friend or family member.

As a group, discuss the forms of the questions and determine which were the most effective. Help the students to understand that open-ended questions are more effective and efficient in an interview situation.


### **S** Distinguishing between fact and opinion

Discuss why it is important to present information clearly and in an unambiguous way, especially when writing for a general audience.

Ask the students to reread the text on page 5.

- *Why do you think Delwyn isn't happy with the headline and story Oscar has written?*
- *What will readers of the newspaper think? (that it's a story of a prison breakout)*
- *Do you think Oscar did this on purpose?*

Newspapers are very careful to state something as a fact only when they are absolutely sure it's true. If they aren't sure, they will usually phrase a statement in language such as "has been reported as saying."

 Ask the students to write their own, clear version of the article on page 5 and to create a headline that is eye-catching but not misleading.