

Einstein – Champion of the World

by Alan Trussell-Cullen

illustrated by Lorenzo Van Der Lingen



Book Summary

In this second adventure with the crazy cat Einstein, we meet the new neighbors and their pets, get a lesson from Dad on how not to barbecue steak, and find out how Einstein changes from a scaredy-cat to the hero of the street.

Features of the Book

- Exaggerated illustrations for effect
- A sequel with known characters
- The use of caricature
- Text in illustrations
- The unusual names of the pets
- Text features – footnote, labels, speech bubbles
- Punctuation and italics to indicate pace and style

Purpose

Einstein – Champion of the World can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- calling on prior knowledge to make sense of the text;
- describing the features of humorous writing;
- exploring the use of speech bubbles;
- reading aloud with attention to phrasing and punctuation;
- using illustrations as a source of information;
- comparing texts by the same author.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Calling on prior knowledge to make sense of the text
- Describing the features of humorous writing
- Exploring the use of speech bubbles

Introducing the text

If the group has already read *Ask Einstein!*, review the plot and discuss some of the characters and their traits.

- Who are the main characters in *Ask Einstein!* and who are the minor ones?
- Which characters would you expect to meet in this new story?

Look at the cover of the new book together. Ask the students what the title and illustration suggest to them.

- Does Einstein really look like a champion?

Now read the blurb on the back cover together and discuss what this tells you about what may happen in the book.

- What do you predict might happen? If Einstein runs away, how can he be the “champion of the world”?
- What do you think could make him a champion?



Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently. This sets the scene and introduces the beginning of the story line.

- *Can you predict why new neighbors might cause a problem for Einstein? Read the blurb again for clues.*
- *Who is telling the story?*

The students can now read chapter 2 independently. This introduces the new neighbors and their unusual pets. Explain that some of the illustrations in this book have speech bubbles to give extra information.

When the students have finished reading, ask them to find an illustration without a speech or thought bubble and to write one for it themselves.

Discuss whether the examples that the students have written will add extra meaning to the text or reinforce an important point.

- *What do the speech bubbles on page seven tell you about the characters' opinions of Einstein?*
- *How would these sentences have been written if they had been in the text of the story?*

When you feel that the students are confident about the developing theme of the story, ask them to read the rest of the book independently. As they read, they could think about the following questions:

- *How did Einstein become a champion? Did he deserve the title?*
- *Which events in the story line helped Einstein to be thought of as a champion? (Dad making the salsa too hot and Napoleon eating it; Dad yelling at Einstein and chasing him out of the house; Napoleon running down the ladder)*

When everyone has finished the book, discuss how things may have turned out if any of the events above hadn't happened. Lead the discussion to show that the events that result in Einstein being declared a champion happen by chance. Einstein was really just in the right place at the right time.

Revisiting the Text

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

S Reading aloud with attention to phrasing and punctuation

Revisit chapter 4 of the book and look at the punctuation used on pages 20 and 21. Discuss the effect that the author hopes to achieve by using the ellipsis, the italics, and the exclamation points.

- *How do you think the author would want you to read this text aloud?*

Give the students the opportunity to practice reading the text on these two pages in pairs and then ask them to read it aloud to the rest of the group. Discuss the way each reader has interpreted the punctuation and how they would use it for a similar effect in their own writing.

S Using illustrations as a source of information

Lorenzo Van Der Lingen has included a lot of information in his illustrations for this story. Look again at pages 20 and 21 and discuss the two pictures.

- *What information has the illustrator included here?*

Ask the students to look at other examples and discuss these together. The way the illustrator has used facial expression and exaggerated movement could be two areas to focus on.

S Comparing texts by the same author

Ask the students to reread *Ask Einstein!* and compare it with the style and format of this new adventure.

- *Is the narrator the same in both stories? Is the style of writing similar?*
- *Which story do you prefer? Why?*
- *Do you learn anything new about the characters in the second story?*

Ask the students to look at one character common to both stories and to build a profile using the blackline master on page 67. For each of this character's traits, ask them to locate supporting evidence in the text.