

Pirate Pie

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illustrated by Christine Ross



Book Summary

In this story, two mean and nasty pirate cousins, Hector Humbug and Horatio Hogswoggle, attack Peg Leg Lil in order to steal her secret recipe. The book describes Peg Leg Lil's cooking efforts, the confrontation with the pirates, and their unexpected business success.

Features of the Book

- The exaggerated, racy language
- Onomatopoeia – *whizz, whap, splat!*
- Illustrations that support the tone of the text
- Specialized vocabulary – *barnacles, jellyfish, bilge, rigging, galley, bosun*
- The rhyme in the pirates' dialogue – *I'll be a blue-bellied bass!*
- The names of the pirates and the ships
- Text in the illustrations
- The slapstick humor and fast-moving plot

Purpose

Pirate Pie can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** analyzing the structure of fantasy narrative;
- S** describing the mental images evoked by the text;
- S** distinguishing between “real” and “invented”;
- S** writing with metaphors and similes;
- S** comparing texts on similar themes in different genres;
- S** using role-play to explore a text.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Analyzing the structure of fantasy narrative
- S** Describing the mental images evoked by the text
- S** Distinguishing between “real” and “invented”

Introducing the text

Discuss the title and the cover illustration.

- *What does the illustration tell you about the characters you will meet in the story?*
- *What kinds of activity and language do you expect to find in a book about pirates and the sea?*

List the students' predictions on the board for later reference.

Briefly look at the illustrations through the book, noting the text that appears in several of them.

- *When you look at the pictures, what do you think this story is about?*
- *Do you think this is a serious story about pirates?*

Read the text on the back cover. This offers the opportunity to discuss the convention of having a blurb.

- *What do you think the purpose of a blurb might be?*

Note also the convention of an author's dedication. There is a lighthearted example on the inside front cover.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently.

- *As you read, think about the specialized and invented language in the story. Why do you think the writer has used these words?*

When the students have finished reading, briefly review the list of their predictions.

- *From your reading so far, do any of you want to change your views?*

Check whether any students have any difficulties with the language and discuss these.

The students can now read the rest of the book independently. When they have finished, allow them a few minutes to enjoy the story and share their responses.

- *Was there a particular word or expression that really caught your attention? Why do you think it is effective?*

Some examples might be:

- I'll be a rusty cutlass
- You blubbering barnacle
- I'll be a purple polka-dotted porpoise
- Ahoy, seadog!
- *What kinds of things do these sentences make you think of? Can you describe the pictures that the words "paint" in your mind?*

Discuss the mixture of the realistic and the fantastic in the characters and the vocabulary that is used.

- *What is real about Peg Leg Lil and the other two pirates? (It is possible that Lil could have a wooden leg. It is impossible, and therefore fantastic, that she could create tasty food by shooting it out of a cannon.)*




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 Writing with metaphors and similes

To explore the language used in the story, ask the students to look for similes, metaphors, and other figures of speech. For example:

- like a cyclone
- as flat as a jellyfish
- stomping like a stranded sawfish.

 Ask the students to try to write this kind of poetic, exaggerated writing themselves.

- *Imagine you are the author. Can you write a short story using the same kind of language, for example, about going to school on a wet day or having an adventure with dinosaurs?*

Ask the students to choose some of the objects in the story and to create their own metaphors or similes for these. They can use the blackline master on page 71 to record their work for discussion.

S Comparing texts on similar themes in different genres

The students can read pirate stories by other authors, such as Margaret Mahy. Contrast and compare the language.

- *How is the language the same? How is it different?*

You could also provide the students with a range of informational texts about piracy. Consider these factual accounts of piracy and compare the structure of the texts and the language used with those in *Pirate Pie*.

S Using role-play to explore a text

This story lends itself easily to role-play. The students could work in groups of four, three taking a character each and the fourth being the narrator. This kind of activity develops speaking and listening “oral language” skills. Ask each group to develop a small dramatic scene from the story to present to the class.