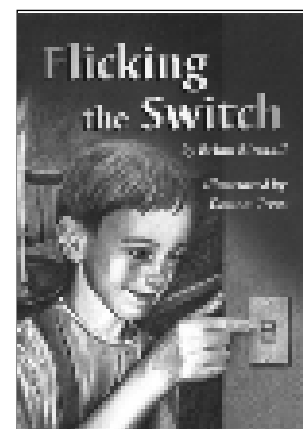


# Flicking the Switch

by Brian Birchall

illustrated by Donna Cross



## Book Summary

This text invites the reader to imagine what life was like 150 years ago with no electricity. It does this by comparing the life of a boy born in 1851 with the lives of children today. It also provides information about how some modern electrical appliances work.

## Features of the Book

- Nonfiction text features – diagrams, photographs, glossary, index
- Written instructions
- Different illustrative styles for past and present
- Familiar activities and events used to compare past and present
- Use of a child to evoke past times
- Simple explanations of familiar technology
- Specialized vocabulary – *electricity, refrigerators, stove, kindling, coil, signals*
- Punctuation – question marks, apostrophes

## Purpose

*Flicking the Switch* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** recognizing and discussing the organization of a book;
- S** finding the main idea;
- S** locating important information;
- S** reading and writing procedural text;
- S** making comparisons within a book.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Recognizing and discussing the organization of a book
- S** Finding the main idea

## Materials needed

- A copy of the text for each child and one for the teacher
- A dry erase board or chart paper and markers
- Examples of electrically operated appliances, such as a toaster and/or a lamp
- Optional: a copy of the blackline master and a pencil for each child

## Introducing the text

Show the group at least one electrical appliance.

- *What do you know about how this works?*
- *What would we do if we didn't have electricity?*
- *How do you think people managed in the days before electricity?*

Encourage the children to think about the ways people cooked, warmed their houses, or had light at night before electricity.

Tell the children that they are going to read a book that will tell them more about the ways in which electricity has changed our lives. Discuss the cover of the book and read the blurb together.

## Reading and discussing the text

This can be taken over two days. If your group can read the book with less support, adjust the lesson plan accordingly.

### Day One

Look at the title page illustration and the photograph on page 3 together.

- *Why do you think this book has illustrations and photographs?*

Read page 3 together to answer this question. Tell the children to read on to the end of the first chapter.

Write the title of the book on the board. Underneath, write the name of the first chapter. (Allow room for making notes about each chapter as the children read and discuss the book.)

- *What is the main idea in this chapter?*
- *How has the author introduced this idea to us?*

Tell the children to read chapter 2 and then record the main idea on the board together.

- *How did the author make the comparisons between then and now?*
- *Look at the next chapter heading. How do you think we will learn about light at night?*

Tell the children to read to the end of chapter 3. Add more information to the chart.

### Day Two

Review the chart and discuss the different ways in which the author provides information in *Flicking the Switch*.

- *How do you keep warm at home?*
- *How do you think Jack's family kept warm?*

Tell the children to read to the end of chapter 6 independently and then add to the main idea chart together.

Ask the children the question that starts chapter 7:

- *How do you think Jack would feel if he could see you in your home?*

When the children have finished reading the book, ask them to imagine life without electricity.

- *What would you miss the most?*
- *How do you think life will change over the next 150 years?*

## Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson or during later reading sessions as mini-lessons or individual activities.

### S Locating important information

Look through the index with the group. Notice the way it uses main and subheadings.

- *How is this index organized?*
- *How can an index help us?*
- *How is the index different from the contents page and glossary?*

Suggest that the children work in pairs to ask each other questions and to find information in the book using the index.

### S Reading and writing procedural text

Look at the instructions given on page 7 for making a hot drink in Jack's time. Discuss the way the process is described. Ask the children to tell you orally how they would make a hot drink at home.

Tell the children to write instructions for making a hot drink now, using appropriate facts and details.

### S Making comparisons within a book

Ask the group to compare pages 12 and 13. Discuss and list the differences between the two pictures. Tell the children to find another picture and photograph in the book to compare and discuss.

**B** The children can now complete the blackline master on page 85.

