

Learning to Fly

by Ali Everts

Summary

Dallas has always wanted to be a trapeze artist, but the effects of a bad dream means he has to change his plans.

Features of the Text

- First-person narrative
- Character development
- Orientation, problem, climax, resolution
- Theme

Purpose

Learning to Fly can be used for the following purposes:

- introducing the ideas and vocabulary in the associated nonfiction title;
- exploring the structure of a narrative;
- analyzing the theme.

Guided Reading Summary

Introducing the text

Ask the students to look at the cover and make some predictions about this story.

- *What is the setting of this story?*
- *What would it be like to grow up in a circus?*

Following Up

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 79 to describe the important elements in the story
- research acrophobia (fear of heights)
- write a journal entry from Dallas's perspective describing his dream and exploring his feelings of disappointment.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of page 3.

- *What have you learned about Dallas?*

Explain that many narratives begin by introducing the setting and characters.

- *What are some other elements of a narrative?* (events, problem, climax, resolution)

Ask the students to read to the end of page 8 and to identify the character's main problem.

- *What is Dallas's challenge?*
- *How might it be resolved?*

Explain to the students that stories often have a climax (a high point in the tension and action) followed by a resolution (solution to the problem). Then ask them to read to the end of the story and identify the moment of greatest tension (page 12).

- *What caused this tension?* (feeling a failure, fear of disappointing his dad)

Explain that authors often use the way a problem is resolved to explore a theme or life lesson.

- *What lesson is the author trying to teach us?* (admitting fear takes courage, achieving dreams may involve adjustments)
- *Where in the story did Dallas learn this lesson?*

Point out that this moment is the resolution of the story.