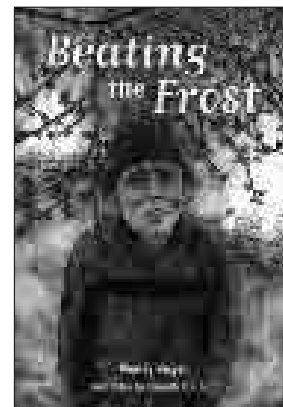


Beating the Frost

by Mandy Hager

illustrated by Elspeth Alix Batt



Book Summary

The Krissler family lost half their cherry crop in the big frost last year, and now money is tight. It's Jack's eleventh birthday soon, but there doesn't seem to be much to celebrate. This narrative explores Jack's feelings as he comes to terms with what's really important.

Features of the Book

- Figurative language – similes, metaphor, alliteration
- Descriptive language
- Themes of responsibility, self-questioning, and reflection

Purpose

Beating the Frost can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** analysing character development;
- S** analysing descriptive language;
- S** using texts as a model for writing;
- S** exploring how science and technology play a role in local challenges.

Investigation Tools

- Looking Closer – From Buds to Fruit, page 29
- Step by Step – Frost, pages 30–31
- Making Connections – Water That Grows, page 32

The Guided Reading Lesson

S Analysing character development

S Analysing descriptive language

Introducing the text

- *Why can good things come out of difficult experiences?*
(A difficult experience can teach valuable lessons.)

Encourage the students to think of difficult times in their lives. Discuss how surviving these kinds of experiences can often make you stronger.

- *What kinds of hardship can be caused by weather?*
- *What emergencies have been caused by extreme weather conditions?* (Examples could include, damage caused by floods, accidents or power outages caused by ice and snow, and illness caused by extreme temperatures.)
- *Why do these emergencies often bring people together?*

Encourage the students to discuss how disasters can bring people together.

- *How could a crisis make someone stronger?*
- *Why do people make sacrifices or take risks in a crisis?*

Explain to the students that they are about to read a story about a family working together in a crisis. Hand out the books, then ask them to use the title, the cover illustration, the blurb on the back, and the contents page to predict what this book will be about.

- *How might the frost affect Jack's birthday?*

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first two chapters.

- *Describe how moving to the cherry orchard has been good but difficult for Jack's family.*
- *How could frost destroy half of their crop?*

Ask the students to read "From Buds to Fruit" on page 29 and "Frost" on pages 30 and 31. Discuss how orchard owners are vulnerable to the weather.

Ask the students to return to chapter 2.

- *Why was Pop reluctant to change? (He didn't understand why they should plant new trees.)*
- *What do his feelings represent? (resistance to change)*
- *What sacrifices do you think the family will have to make?*
- *How might this change them?*
- *How have your predictions changed?*

The students can now read to the end of the story, looking for the ways that Jack changes.

- *How does the ordeal change Jack?*
- *Find the passage that shows how Jack discovers strength he didn't know he had. (page 21)*

Discuss how the author uses descriptive language to make the setting and the experiences of the characters come to life.

- *How does the author make the ordeal seem like a battle? (fires, smoke, people fighting a common enemy, and helicopters overhead, pages 22–23)*
- *Find the metaphor in chapter 5 that describes the comfort brought by the sun (compared to a human caress, page 25).*
- *Why is this description effective? What feelings does it bring to mind?*

Invite the students to generate other metaphors about the warmth of the sun or the danger of frost.

- *How did the author describe the falling temperature on page 18? (compared it with a race)*

Discuss personification with the students. Ask them to describe the frost by giving it human qualities.

- *What simile on page 3 describes how Dad speaks? (like spat cherry stones)*
- *What simile describes smoke on page 22? (like a swirling roof)*
- *Can you think of other similes for ways of speaking or for smoke?*

Revisiting the Text

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

S Using texts as a model for writing


Ask the students to find the place in chapter 4 where Jack reveals his inner thoughts (Why had he cared ... ? page 20). The students can use this example to write a self-reflection about an experience that has changed them. Encourage them to use this text as a model by including vivid images and interesting verbs. Point out the following examples: yabbering (page 11), plummet (page 12), belched (page 17), drape (page 18), gobbled (page 19), withered (page 23).

S Exploring how science and technology play a role in local challenges

Ask the students to locate the place in chapter 3 that explains the tools they'll use to fight the frost (page 15).

- *What tools did the Krisslers use?*
- *How was their neighbour's technology more advanced?*

Discuss some other examples of people using technology to solve problems. Identify different natural disasters and provide the students with resources, such as books, magazine articles, and the Internet, to conduct further research.

 The students can use the blackline master on page 66 to describe some technological solutions to natural disasters.