

HighWire
MAGAZINE

Hoaxes and Cons

**Unbelievable ...
and Undone**

The history of
being conned

A Slippery Scheme

When a practical joke
goes too far

Gotcha!

Pranksters at work

Volume 9, Issue 7 Teacher Guide

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High Wire Magazine – Hoaxes and Cons Teacher Guide

Series Consultants:

Nina Hess
Karen Hume
Brad Ledgerwood

Series Publishing Team:

Joe Banel
Rivka Cranley
David Friend
Darleen Rotozinski
Susan Ure

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Hoaxes and Cons

Teacher Guide

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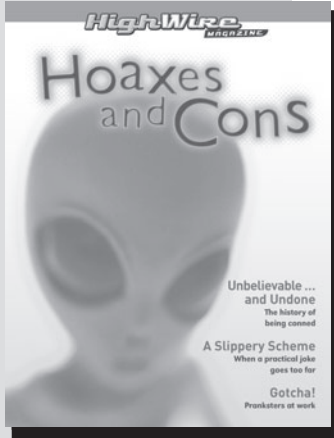
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The lesson plans in this Teacher Guide are supported by the *High Wire Magazine* Program and Assessment Guide. The Program and Assessment Guide contains:

- an overview of the components and features of *High Wire Magazine*
- a scope and sequence chart that outlines the key reading strategies that are highlighted in each issue of *High Wire Magazine*
- supporting information about the needs of adolescent readers
- descriptions of the instructional strategies, approaches, and activities used in the lesson plans
- assessment masters for the key reading strategies.

Brief explanations of instructional strategies are provided in the sidebar of the lesson plans alongside the first use of each strategy.



Hoaxes and Cons

Key Reading Strategy: *Drawing Conclusions*

The lesson plans in this issue of *High Wire Magazine* highlight the reading strategy Drawing Conclusions. Opportunities to practice this strategy are indicated by the symbol ★. For more information on this strategy, see page 10. **Assessment Master 5** in the Program and Assessment Guide can be used for this strategy.

Curriculum Links: social studies, science

Introducing the Magazine

Setting the Scene

Tell the students that because they are so far ahead in the English curriculum, they will go to the movies next week in class time. Give them a few minutes to get really excited – then explain that you were playing a practical joke.

Tell them that this issue of *High Wire Magazine* is about hoaxes, pranks, and practical jokes. Ask:

- What is the difference between a practical joke and a hoax? (Have the students use a dictionary to find the definitions, then discuss them.)

Making Connections

Explain that people have been playing practical jokes and inventing hoaxes throughout history. Ask if anyone knows of any TV shows or movies that involve practical jokes or hoaxes.

Ask the students to recall a practical joke that they witnessed or were involved in. Ask questions such as the following:

- How did the victim react?
- Was anyone hurt?
- Did the victim try to get back at the prankster by playing another practical joke?

Lesson Focus

Making predictions
Drawing conclusions

About This Selection

Even scientists get hoodwinked by hoaxes. This article describes several infamous hoaxes and how the world reacted before and after the truth was revealed. Hoax-busting hints are included.

Word Talk

Glossary words: *petrified, exhumed, bogus, debunk*

Other vocabulary: *astounding, hoax, fragments, awe, paleontologists, fraud, reputation, elaborate, cannibals, vivid, prehistoric, intrigued, hovering, gullible, genuine*

Anticipation Guide

An Anticipation Guide contains several statements that relate to the text topic or theme. Students use the guide to prompt their thinking before they read a text.



Teaching Tip

Modeling is a powerful way to explicitly teach a skill. Use examples to support learning. Refer to pages 16 and 17 for more information on drawing conclusions.

Unbelievable ... and Undone

page 2

Before Reading

Making Predictions

Write the title of the article on the board. Ask the students questions such as:

- What do you think “Unbelievable ... and Undone” means?
- What do you think the article is about?

Anticipation Guide

Hand out copies of **BLM 1**, Anticipation Guide, which contains general statements related to “Unbelievable ... and Undone.” Read aloud each statement as the students follow along. Ask them to write in the left column whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

New Vocabulary

Tell the students that they are going to create a “top ten” list of unfamiliar words from the article. To create the list, they should skim the article for unfamiliar words. Remind them to look at the fact boxes and captions as well as the text.

Next, have the students work in groups to create a master list of ten unfamiliar words. To do this, tell them to take turns sharing their words. Only those words unfamiliar to all should be added to the group list. When the list of unfamiliar words is complete, it can be added to the word wall along with the meaning of each word.

During Reading

★Drawing Conclusions

Tell the students that drawing conclusions involves using prior knowledge and opinions to think critically about a text. Good readers think about what they have read and combine this new information with what they already know. They then come to a conclusion about what they believe. Activate the students’ prior knowledge and encourage them to think critically by asking questions such as the following:

- What is a hoax?
- What are some examples of hoaxes?
- Why might some people believe a hoax?
- Why might some people disbelieve a hoax?

Tell the students that while they are reading “Unbelievable ... and Undone” they should ask themselves, “What makes a hoax believable?”

Hand out copies of **BLM 2**, I Read, I Think, Therefore ... Read and discuss the instructions and model the process for the students. Read aloud pages 2 and 3 while you model selecting the text, recording your thinking, and drawing conclusions. Have the students use this process as they read the rest of the article.

Extra Help

Gather those students who need direct instruction into a small group. Read aloud and complete the organizer together.



Assessment Tip

Look for the students who are able to draw conclusions related to the purpose for reading.

After Reading

★Drawing Conclusions

Repeat the BLM activity as a class. Photocopy and enlarge a blank copy of the BLM. Ask the students to share the evidence they recorded in the first column. Discuss and add their thoughts about the evidence in the second column. Finally, lead the discussion to support the students' critical thinking as they draw conclusions. They should base their conclusions on the information and thinking that was generated. Record the conclusions under "Therefore ..."

Anticipation Guide

Have the students look back at the statements and their responses. Ask:

- After reading the article, have you changed your ideas?

Tell the students to add their new responses to the "What I Learned" column. Have a whole-class discussion. Ask:

- How did your ideas change?

Featured Graphic Organizer: Timeline

A timeline is a useful way of organizing and presenting information in a chronological sequence. It can help readers to understand the timeframe of major events, to track change over a long period of time, and to distinguish the key events within a larger one.

Reading and Discussing the Page

Discuss why timelines are used. Explain the term “chronological sequence.” Ask the students to share with a partner major events from their lives, starting from the earliest event to the most recent. When they have finished, ask:

- How would you organize a timeline of your life? For example, would you record the events of every year, every two years, or every five years?

Tell the students to examine the timeline for the events of Piltdown Man. Ask questions such as the following:

- How is this timeline organized?
- Where is the date of the main event located?
- When two events happened close together, how is the information placed on the timeline?
- Why is there a large space between 1940 and 1950?
- Which event happened before the Piltdown Man was revealed to be a hoax?
- Which event happened after the hoax was revealed?

Hand out copies of **BLM 3**, Timeline. Read aloud and discuss the instructions. After the students have read “Gotcha!” have them plot each hoax and prank along the timeline. They could extend the timeline and add hoaxes, pranks, and cons from other selections in the magazine.

Lesson Focus

Reading fluency
Drawing conclusions

About This Selection

This article tells the story of Lonely Girl, a girl who began a popular video blog. Many people were shocked when they learned that the blog was a hoax, but there were positive opportunities for the Lonely Girl actress.

Word Talk

Vocabulary: *blog, episode, webcam, prime time, vague, betrayed, deceptive*



Teaching Tip

Remind the students that taking note of punctuation while reading will help to create the natural rhythm of the text and improve their reading fluency.



Assessment Tip

Look for the students who are able to read fluently using appropriate intonation and phrasing.

The Lonely Girl Hoax

page 12

Before Reading

K-W-L Chart

This strategy helps to set a context and a purpose for reading the text. Use a K-W-L chart to find out what the students already know, what they want to know, and what they have learned about the Lonely Girl hoax. Introduce the chart using the following steps:

1. To complete the “What I Know” column, use the Think-Pair-Share strategy. Ask questions such as the following:
 - What do you know about the video-sharing website YouTube?
 - What do you know about the video blog Lonely Girl?

Tell the students to turn to a partner and share what they know. Ask each pair to share a new piece of information with the class.

2. Use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to generate questions for the “What I Want to Know” column. Ask:
 - What questions do you have about Lonely Girl?

During Reading

Shared Reading

Shared Reading is a particularly useful strategy for developing reading fluency. The students should each have a copy of “The Lonely Girl Hoax.” The focus will be on using appropriate inflection and phrasing when reading aloud.

Read aloud the article while the students follow along. Pause at the end of each section to discuss how to follow the punctuation. For example, the last sentence in the first paragraph of How It Began contains an ellipsis and quotation marks. Ask the students to listen carefully as you reread the sentence aloud, modeling the appropriate inflection and phrasing. Ask questions such as the following:

- What did you hear when I came to the ellipsis?
- What did you hear when I came to the quotation marks?

The students can now reread the article with a partner, each reading a different section. Tell them to give each other feedback on their reading fluency and expression.

After Reading

K-W-L Chart

As a class, fill in the “What I Learned” column. Ask:

- What new information did you learn from the article?

★Drawing Conclusions

Take a quick survey to see if any of the students followed the Lonely Girl blog as it was unfolding. Ask questions such as the following:

- Why do you think people were interested in Lonely Girl's video blog?
- How do you think people felt when they found out it was a hoax?
- Knowing that Lonely Girl was a hoax, do you feel more skeptical or mistrustful about other blogs on the Internet? Why?
- What conclusions can you draw about the creators of the Lonely Girl hoax?

Creative/Aesthetic Response

The students could:

- write a letter to the actress who played Lonely Girl, explaining what they think of her idea to keep a hoax video blog and why;
- write a list of ways people can check whether a blog is genuine;
- write a script for a Lonely Girl episode. Encourage the students to make the plot dramatic and exciting.

Key Reading Strategy: Drawing Conclusions

To draw a conclusion, readers think about the ideas, facts, and information in a text, then they compare this new information with their prior knowledge of the topic. When drawing conclusions, good readers also consider the author's opinion.

Reading and Discussing the Page

Have the students turn to page 16. Read aloud the introductory paragraph as the students follow along. Ask questions such as the following:

- What kinds of people do you think would create the Lonely Girl blog?
- What kinds of people would follow the Lonely Girl story?
- Would a person need to be lonely or similar to Bree to become a fan of her blog?

Read aloud Drawing Conclusions while the students follow along. Prompt them to identify how we draw conclusions, and make a list of these strategies. Model drawing a conclusion from “The Lonely Girl Hoax,” demonstrating how you are using your prior knowledge as well as information from the text.

Read aloud For Real while the students follow along. Discuss the students' experiences about drawing conclusions when they want to buy something. Ask questions such as the following:

- When was the last time you had to convince your parents that you needed a new game or piece of clothing?
- How did you justify that the purchase was important?

Hand out copies of **BLM 4**, Drawing Conclusions, to help the students complete Try It Out. Read aloud and discuss the instructions. Complete the first activity together, and then have the students reread the article to identify clues about the kinds of people who fall for hoaxes. Have the students complete the activity independently. They can then do the second activity. When they have finished, ask them to share their conclusions with the whole class or in small groups.

Lesson Focus

Making predictions
Making connections
Summarizing and note taking

About This Selection

People fall for pranks all the time. This article discusses the traditions of hidden camera TV shows and April Fools' Day and describes how pranks can make people smarter.

Word Talk

Glossary words: *jesters*, *footage*

Other vocabulary:
revealed, *prankster*,
celebrities, *scenarios*,
unsuspecting, *harvest*

Word Splash

Key words from the text are "splashed" or written onto an overhead transparency or chart paper. Students use the words to predict the content of the text.

Marking the Text

Students can use sticky notes or plain paper bookmarks to mark their thoughts, questions, predictions, or comments.

Gotcha!

page 18

Before Reading

Word Splash

Write the words from Word Talk onto chart paper or a transparency. Discuss their meanings with the students. Tell them they will be reading an article that contains these words. Ask them to think about the words and predict what the article is about. Have them record their predictions, then have a class discussion. Ask questions such as the following:

- What do you predict the article is about?
- How did you arrive at that prediction?

Making Connections

Help the students make connections to the article by asking questions such as the following:

- Have you ever been tricked by anyone? How did you feel?
- What TV shows do you know of that trick people?
- On what day of the year do people traditionally play tricks?
- What do you know about how the April Fools' tradition began?

During Reading

Tell the students that they will be reading an article called "Gotcha!" Ask:

- Based on that title, what predictions can you make about the article?

Summarizing and Note Taking

Explain that note taking helps readers to monitor for meaning and to remember what they have read. When students are taking notes, they should:

- look for the main idea and the key words and phrases;
- use bullet points to limit the number of words they use;
- use words they understand.

Ask the students to turn to page 18. Tell them that they will be recording key information on sticky notes and that later, they will summarize this information. Model note taking using the Think Aloud strategy. Read aloud the introductory paragraph in red while the students follow along. Share your thinking as you decide on the key information in the paragraph. Record this on a sticky note.

Read aloud the first paragraph on page 18. Ask the students to work in pairs to identify the key information. Discuss their ideas and clarify the key points. Record this information on a sticky note.

Extra Help

Work in a small group with the students who are struggling with writing a summary. Discuss the main ideas and help them organize their sticky notes. Create a group summary.

Ask the students to read the rest of the article independently. They should pause after reading each paragraph to record key information. Remind them that they may need to reread the paragraph a few times to understand the ideas clearly.

After Reading

Summarizing and Note Taking

Tell the students to work in pairs and compare sticky notes. They can refine or add to their notes.

Tell the students they will be writing summaries. They should use their notes to create short but accurate versions of each of the original topics.

Lesson Focus

Making connections
Asking questions
Drawing conclusions

About This Selection

Using a photograph of an Apollo astronaut on the moon, this hoax-busting page debunks the “evidence” that has been used to discredit the 1969 moon landing.

Word Talk

Glossary words: *refute*,
atmospheric pressure
Other vocabulary:
astronauts, *lunar*,
overexpose, *crater*

Ask an Expert: Out of This World

Page 22

Before Reading

Word Splash

Write the words from Word Talk onto chart paper or a transparency, and discuss their meanings with the students. Tell them they will be reading an article that contains these words. Ask them to predict what they think the article is about. Have them record their predictions.

Making Connections

Generate discussion and make connections to the text by asking questions such as the following:

- What do you know about the first moon landing?
- Do you know anyone who believes it was a hoax? Why do they think it was a hoax?

During Reading

Asking Questions

Ask the students to turn to page 22. Read aloud the title and the question and answer while the students follow along. Ask them to look at the photograph and read the caption. Encourage them to generate as many questions as possible about the photograph. Ask questions such as the following:

- Based on the evidence in the photograph, why do you think some people thought that the 1969 moon landing was a hoax?
- Does anything in the photograph look unreal to you? Explain.

Record the students’ responses on the board or chart paper.

Guided Reading

Read aloud Evidence on page 22 while the students follow along. Ask:

- Why do you think the stars aren’t visible?

Have the students read the Hoax Buster’s explanation. Ask:

- Does the Hoax Buster’s answer sound reasonable? Why/why not?

Repeat this process with page 23, asking the students to justify their responses to the images and then read the Hoax Buster’s explanation independently. In each case, they should explain whether they think the Hoax Buster’s answer is reasonable.

Finally, ask questions such as the following:

- ★What conclusions can you draw about people who say the moon landing is a hoax?
- What conclusions can you draw about the Hoax Buster?
- Using your own knowledge and evidence from the text, what conclusions can you draw about the moon landing?

After Reading

Word Splash

Have the students revisit their predictions. Ask questions such as the following:

- Did you predict that the article would discuss the first moon landing?
- Which word was the clue?

Asking Questions

Review the questions that the students generated when examining the photograph. Check off any questions that were answered during reading. Challenge the students to find the answers to unanswered questions by using the Internet or a library.

Role-play

This text can be easily adapted to use as readers' theater or as a talk show. While the students are practicing their roles, they are rereading, which helps to deepen their understanding and develop their reading fluency.

Lesson Focus

Making connections
Making inferences
Drawing conclusions
Summarizing and note taking

About This Selection

Elliott loves playing practical jokes. When he pulls a prank on his swimming coach, his friends remind him that practical jokes can get out of hand.

Word Talk

Vocabulary: *prankster, freestyle, whiff, extract, relay, allergic, engraved*

Probable Passage

The teacher lists key words from the selection and the students discuss them. They may be asked to arrange the words into categories. The students then use the words to fill in the blanks of a Probable Passage (one that might occur in the text) to write their own Probable Passage.

Double/Triple Entry Journal

Two- or three-column charts are used for students to record parts of the text and their inferential or critical thinking about each part.



Teaching Tip

Modeling is a powerful tool to explicitly teach a skill or concept. Use examples from the text to model making inferences.

A Slippery Scheme

page 24

Before Reading

Making Connections

Generate discussion and make connections to “A Slippery Scheme” by asking questions such as the following:

- Have you ever played a practical joke? Explain.
- Do you know of someone getting hurt as a result of a practical joke?
- Have you had a practical joke played on you? How did you feel?
- What does “going too far” mean?

Probable Passage

Hand out copies of **BLM 5**, Probable Passage. Discuss the words that are listed, including the contexts in which they are used. Ask the students to predict what the article will be about. Have them write a Probable Passage.

During Reading

Making Inferences

Tell the students they will be using a Double Entry Journal to record their thinking as they read. Tell them that authors don’t always explain everything; that sometimes readers have to consider the information and use background knowledge to understand what was meant. This is called making inferences, or inferring. Ask the students to do the following:

1. Draw up a two-column chart.
2. Write the heading “Quotation from the Story” in the left column
3. Write the heading “I Infer” in the right column.

Model the process using chart paper or a transparency. Read aloud page 24, pausing to write quotations in the left column that require the reader to infer to fully comprehend the ideas. Write an explanation in the right column, using the words “I infer” and adding why you came to this conclusion. (Refer to the example below.)

Quotation from the Story	I Infer ...
“I come from a long line of pranksters.” (page 24)	From reading the sentence before the quotation, I infer that coming from a long line of pranksters is the reason that Elliott can’t help playing practical jokes. From the sentence following the quotation, I infer that the “long line” means Elliott’s father and mother. The last sentence in the paragraph (“Pranks are in my blood.”) implies that the habit of playing pranks was passed to Elliott from his relatives.

Extra Help

For the students who are struggling with making inferences, work with them in a small group. Read aloud and discuss the story. Have the students record the quotations and explanations that were discussed.

Somebody Wanted But So

Students choose a character from the text and create a sentence saying what the character wanted, what stands in the character's way, and how the conflict is resolved.



Assessment Tip

Check to see if the students are able to use the information from the Somebody Wanted But So chart effectively in their summaries.

Ask the students to continue reading the story independently. Tell them to use their Double Entry Journal to record the quotation, page number, and a full explanation of their thinking about the quotation. They should make at least four separate entries in the journal.

★Drawing Conclusions

Tell the students to reread the story. While they are reading, they should think about the practical joke Elliott played on Mr. Travis and the conclusions they can draw about Elliott's personality. Generate a discussion about their conclusions by asking questions such as the following:

- Was Elliott concerned about Mr. Travis's personal safety? Why/why not?
- How did Elliott react when his friends warned him against pulling the prank?
- How did Elliott react when his friends told him that Coach Travis was going crazy in the bathroom and it may have had something to do with the banana extract?
- How did Elliott feel about being the brunt of a joke?
- When you consider all of these things, what conclusions can you draw about Elliott's personality?

After Reading

Summarizing and Note Taking

Explain that summarizing allows readers to organize their ideas and draw conclusions. Tell the students that they will be carrying out a Somebody Wanted But So activity to summarize "A Slippery Scheme." On chart paper, a transparency, or the board, make a chart with four columns. Use the headings "Somebody," "Wanted," "But," and "So."

Ask questions such as the following:

- What is the name of the main character? (Write "Elliott" in the "Somebody" column.)
- What did Elliott want? (Write what he wanted in the "Wanted" column.)
- What stood in his way? (Write the problem in the "But" column.)
- How was the conflict resolved? (Write the outcome in the "So" column.)

Continue this process until all the main characters have been included on the chart. Have the students use the information to write a summary of the story.

Featured Project: Report a Hoax

Materials required: paper, writing materials, access to research material (the Internet, newspapers, a library)

Tell the students that they will be writing a report on a hoax of their choice. Have them turn to page 32. Read aloud the introduction as the students follow along. Share two new hoaxes with the students, then have them brainstorm a list of other hoaxes. Ask:

- What hoaxes do you know of that have not been mentioned in this magazine?

Ask the students to select one hoax from the list to write a report about.

Discuss how to use the Internet and a library for research. Ask questions such as the following:

- Where would you search on the Internet to find the relevant information?
- How could you refine your search?
- What kinds of books might have the information you want?

Read aloud the elements that the report should contain. Remind the students to refer back to the project page when they are writing and editing their reports to make sure they have included everything.

Combine the reports as a book for the students to read during independent reading sessions.

Anticipation Guide

Name: _____ Date: _____

What to do:

- Before reading “Unbelievable ... and Undone” (*Hoaxes and Cons*, pages 2–9), read the statements in the table below. In the first column, write your response: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.
- Read the article, then look back at the statements. Have you changed your ideas? Write your new response, or rewrite your original response, in the final column.

Response before Reading	Statements	Response after Reading
	A man named Charles Dawson discovered the missing link between apes and humans in 1912.	
	The word “hoax” comes from a Roman emperor, Hoaxsus, who liked to play tricks on people.	
	Hoaxes remind us to be careful about what we believe.	
	Crop circles were made by aliens.	
	When scientists say that a hoax is true, people are more likely to believe it.	
	People can make a lot of money by passing on a chain letter to friends.	

I Read, I Think, Therefore ...

Name: _____ Date: _____

What to do:

- As you read “Unbelievable ... and Undone” (*Hoaxes and Cons*, pages 2–9), ask yourself, “What makes a hoax believable?”
- Select evidence from the text that suggests the hoax is believable. Write it in the “I Read” column.
- Write your thoughts about this evidence in the “I Think” column.
- Reread the two columns, then write your conclusions in the “Therefore ...” box.

I Read	I Think

Therefore ...

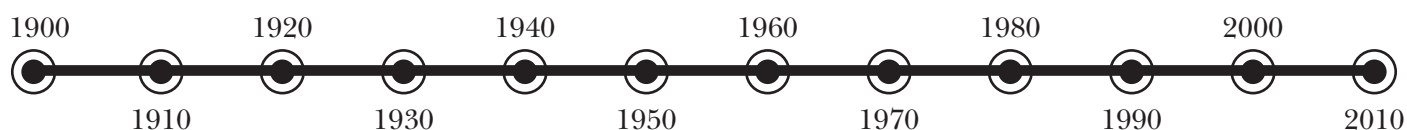
Timeline

Name: _____ Date: _____

What to do:

- As you read “Gotcha!” (*Hoaxes and Cons*, pages 18–21), use sticky notes to record examples of hoaxes and pranks.
- Summarize the hoaxes and pranks.
- Write the date and the summary for each hoax and prank in the boxes. Draw a line from the box to the appropriate date on the timeline. (Use pages 10 and 11 from “Gotcha!” as an example.)

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Drawing Conclusions

Name: _____ Date: _____

What to do:

- Read the questions from “The Lonely Girl Hoax” (*Hoaxes and Cons*, pages 12–15) and “Gotcha!” (*Hoaxes and Cons*, pages 18–21) in the first column of the tables below.
- Reread the articles and look for clues in the text.
- Complete the tables below.

Reread “The Lonely Girl Hoax.” Look for information about the kinds of people who fall for hoaxes.

Questions	I Read	I Conclude
Why did many viewers believe that Lonely Girl was true?		

Reread “Gotcha!” Look for information about how people have been fooled over time.

Questions	I Read	I Conclude
The spaghetti harvest trick worked because the BBC was a respected news source. Why do you think that this made the trick easier to believe?		

Probable Passage

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

What to do:

- ➔ Read and discuss the following words from “A Slippery Scheme” (*Hoaxes and Cons*, pages 24–31).
- ➔ Use a dictionary or thesaurus to find the meanings of any words that you don’t understand.
- ➔ What do you predict this article will be about? Write a short passage using the words below.

pranksters

crazy

coach

sense of humor

bananas

joking

furious

worried

trouble

target

allergic

sick

[illegible]