

Danny's Dream



Before Reading

Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of this text is to entertain the reader with a story about Danny, the skinniest kid in school, who watches the Olympic marathon and dreams of winning the school cross country.

Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- title
 - illustrations
 - chapter headings and blurbs.
- Ask, "What type of book is this?" (Narrative).

Visual Literacy

Look at the front cover. What do you think Danny is dreaming about? Look at the first few pages. Where and when is the story set? Why do the characters appear to be from the present time? How do the illustrations make this story more interesting?

Background Knowledge

Ask students to describe their best friends. What do they have in common? What differences do they have? Read the chapter titles. What is a marathon? Why could a skinny kid run a marathon?

Phonological Awareness

Ensure students know these phonological patterns:

- /ur/: further (p.9), first (p.11), nervously (p.18)
 - /u/: doesn't (p.4), enough (p.7), marathon (p.8)
 - /ar/: laughed (p.6), fast (p.8), starving (p.24)
 - long e: skinniest (p.5), Eddy (p.6), breathing (p.22)
- Revise these sounds: long o: Bones (p.4), elbows (p.4); /ch/: champion (p.18), switch (p.20); /or/: You're (p.4), thought (p.9). Write the above phonological patterns on separate charts. Ask students to scan the text to locate three words containing each phonological sound and write the words onto the charts. Underline letters that represent each phonological sound. Locate words in the text with silent letters: knees (p.4), knobbly (p.4), crumb (p.5), write (p.6), muscles (p.8), answered (p.15). List other words containing the same silent letter patterns.

Vocabulary

champion, cheering, cross country, dream, elbows, jogged, knobbly, lunchbox, marathon, medals, muscles, Olympic, popular, pranks, skinny, sprint, stadium, stride, style, television, victory

High Frequency Words

advised, altogether, blew, broke, crammed, dripping, enough, fifteen, further, joked, lengthened, matter, nervously, nine, proudly, raised, Saturday, second

Before showing the words, dictate each word to the students. Check students' spelling. What strategies did you use to decode the words? Show students the words. Have them memorise the words, then dictate the words again. How did your spelling improve? What strategies helped you to recall the words?

During Reading

Vocabulary in Context

Discuss the meaning of each vocabulary word.

Write *skinny* and *skinniest*. What comparative adjective is missing from this group? (*skinnier*) Create comparative and superlative adjectives for other adjectives in the text: *funny, happy, short, strong, safe*. Discuss irregular adjectives, e.g. *popular, good*.

Write word families for vocabulary words, e.g. *dreamed, dreamt, dreamer*. Use a dictionary to locate less familiar words, e.g. *muscle, muscles, muscly, muscular*. How does the base word change when suffixes are added?

Checking for Meaning

Literal:

Describe Danny and Eddy. (Danny is short and skinny and funny. Eddy is good at everything, including sports.) Why does Danny feel sad? (Because he can't read and write as well as the other kids and isn't good at sports.) What events lead to Danny competing in the cross country? (Danny watches the men's marathon on TV, and realises that the runners are like him. He knows that he can run further than Eddy.)

Inferential:

What is Danny's dream?
What did Eddy mean when he said that Danny 'had the build for the cross country'?
What actions indicate Danny is determined to win?

Response:

Why did Danny's dream come true?
How did Danny's attitude help him to win the race?
What do you think is the message behind this story?
Do dreams come true?

Grammatical Patterns

Make sure students understand these components of a narrative:

- Orientation – introduces the main characters and setting: *Danny is the skinniest kid in school and wants to be better at sports like his friend Eddy.* (pp.4–7)
- Complication – the sequence of events develops a problem for the main character: *Danny watches the marathon race, dreams of winning and decides to compete in the school cross country.* (pp.8–17)
- Resolution – the problem is solved and things return to normal: *Danny competes in the cross country and wins.* (pp.18–24)
- Use of nouns to refer to characters and things: *Danny* (p.4), *marathon* (p.8), *cross country* (p.12), *race* (p.18), *runners* (p.22)
- Use of adjectives and noun groups: *knobbly* (p.4), *the skinniest kid* (p.5), *more funny pranks* (p.6), *big muscles* (p.8), *long, slow jogs* (p.17), *a bunch of nine runners* (p.22)
- Use of adverbs and phrases of time, manner and place: *At the start of each day* (p.5), *when nobody was around to see him* (p.6), *nervously* (p.18), *like a champion* (p.22), *proudly* (p.24)
- Use of action verbs and verb groups: *crammed* (p.5), *sprint* (p.9), *training* (p.14), *arrived* (p.18), *lengthened* (p.20), *dripping sweat* (p.22), *breathing hard* (p.22)
- Use of speaking verbs: *advised* (p.15), *puffed* (p.16), *yelled* (p.23), *grinned* (p.24)
- Use of similes: *like a sack full of broken sticks* (p.4), *like a switch had been turned on* (p.20)

Fluency/ Punctuation Patterns

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- Use of apostrophes to indicate contractions: *I'd* (p.4), *That's* (p.12), *What's* (p.24)
- Use of apostrophes to indicate possession: *men's* (p.8), *schools'* (p.12)
- Use of capital letters for proper nouns: *Danny* (p.4), *Olympic Games* (p.8)
- Use of quotation marks and appropriate punctuation for direct speech: *"You go too fast for me," he puffed.* *"I'll see you in class."* (p.16)

Locate similes in the text and demonstrate reading them. *His chest looked like a sack full of broken sticks.* (p.4) *He felt like a switch had been turned on.* (p.20)

Groups of simple sentences build descriptions and drama. Locate examples in the text: *He told more jokes. He pulled more funny pranks. But Danny wasn't always happy.* (p.6) Demonstrate reading these groups of sentences for dramatic effect, pausing at the full stops. Have students echo your reading.

Critical Literacy

What physical descriptions helped you to picture Danny and Eddy? Read: *His chest looked like a sack full of broken sticks.* What does this simile tell you about Danny's chest?

What actions by the characters helped you to understand their personalities, feelings and motivation? For example, what action tells you that Eddy was excited by Danny's win? (p.23)

Linking Visual and Written

Look at the illustrations of Danny throughout the story, focusing on pages 7, 9, 13, 14, 18, 22 and 23. How has the illustrator conveyed Danny's feelings at different times?

After Reading

Ask students to retell the story to another person, keeping the details of the characters and plot. Ask students to share their ideas for other stories in which the main character 'comes from behind' to achieve his/her dream.

Activities

Students will:

- answer comprehension questions about the story
- write words from the text containing specified phonological patterns
- change base words to fill gaps in sentences
- write a retelling of the story.

Comprehension (meaning) Vocabulary (structure) Phonics (visual) Writing (structure)

