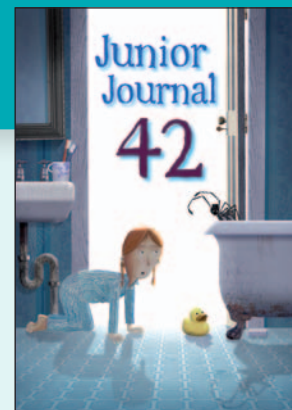


Ebony Beanie

by Nikki Slade Robinson

JUNIOR JOURNAL 42
This text is levelled at Gold 1.



OVERVIEW

In this series of humorous emails to her grandparents, Maia describes the antics of a Captain Cooker piglet that her teacher has brought to school. As well as making connections to their own experiences of raising pets or to texts about pets, students can use this text as a model for writing about personal experiences.

There is an audio version of the text on the *Junior Journal 42 and 43 CD*.

RELATED TEXTS

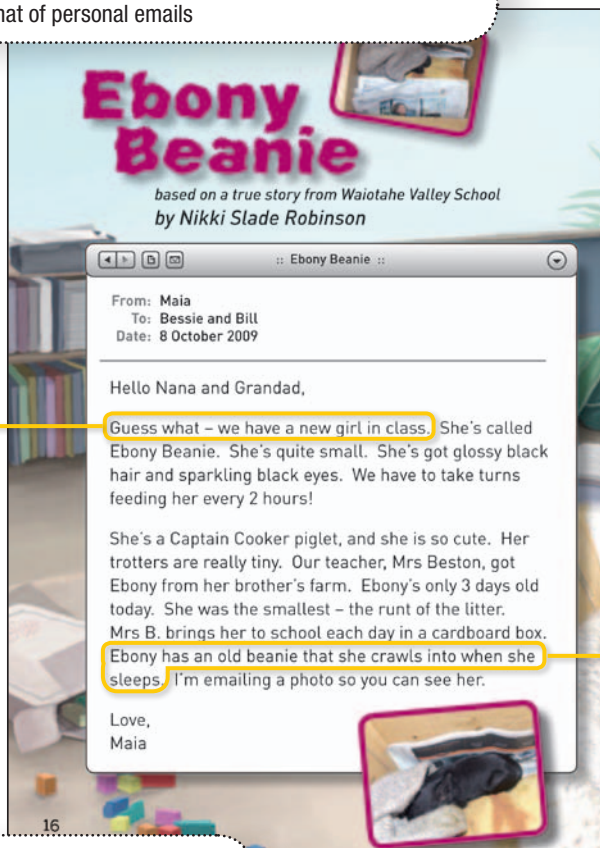
Texts about looking after animals or other creatures: *Duckling Palace* (RTR, Purple); "Rockin' Rooster" (JJ 29), "Wild Orphans" (JJ 41); "What's for Breakfast?" (SJ 1.4.02), "Emily's Hens" (SJ 1.2.06),

Other examples of personal diary-type writing: "Email Runaway" (SJ 1.1.02).

TEXT CHARACTERISTICS

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

The structure of the text as a series of humorous descriptions in the format of personal emails



Guess what – we have a new girl in class. She's called Ebony Beanie. She's quite small. She's got glossy black hair and sparkling black eyes. We have to take turns feeding her every 2 hours!

She's a Captain Cooker piglet, and she is so cute. Her trotters are really tiny. Our teacher, Mrs Beston, got Ebony from her brother's farm. Ebony's only 3 days old today. She was the smallest – the runt of the litter. Mrs B. brings her to school each day in a cardboard box. Ebony has an old beanie that she crawls into when she sleeps. I'm emailing a photo so you can see her.

Love,
Maia



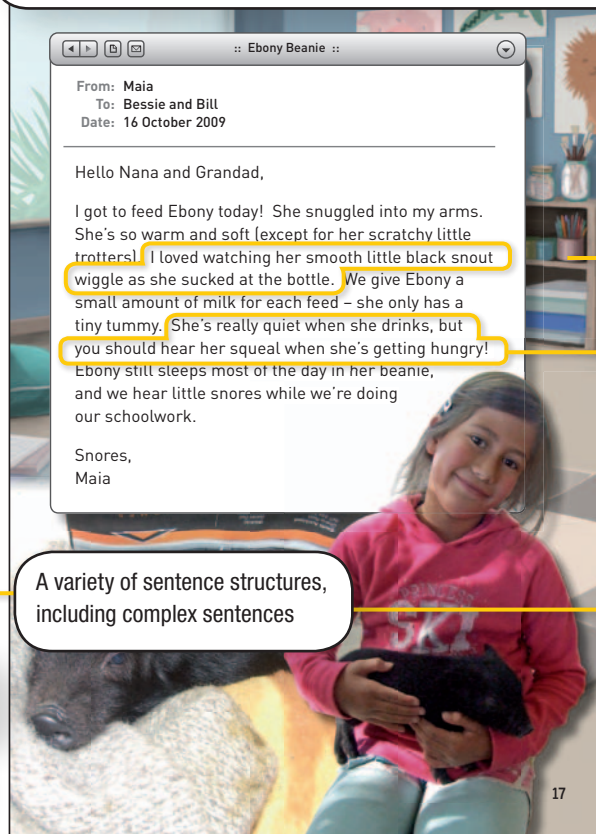
A conversational style (featuring exclamation marks, dashes, colloquial language, and contractions) and the inclusion of jokes and opinions that personalise the text and make it fun to read

Several shifts in time, in particular between the two last emails

The familiar setting (in a school)

A mix of explicit and implicit content within text and illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to make simple inferences, for example, about:

- the reason for Ebony Beanie's name
- why there is such a long gap between the last two emails
- the positive and negative aspects of having a pig in the classroom



From: Maia
To: Bessie and Bill
Date: 16 October 2009

Hello Nana and Grandad,

I got to feed Ebony today! She snuggled into my arms. She's so warm and soft (except for her scratchy little trotters!) I loved watching her smooth little black snout wiggle as she sucked at the bottle. We give Ebony a small amount of milk for each feed – she only has a tiny tummy. She's really quiet when she drinks, but you should hear her squeal when she's getting hungry! Ebony still sleeps most of the day in her beanie, and we hear little snores while we're doing our schoolwork.

Snores,
Maia

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, the meaning of which is supported by the context or illustrations

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

Level 2 – Language features: Show some understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

Science (Living World)

Levels 1 and 2 – Ecology: Recognise that living things are suited to their particular habitat.

SUGGESTED READING PURPOSES

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

- To find out what happened to Ebony Beanie and what it was like to have her in the classroom
- To think about how the audience (who we write for) and purpose affect the way we write.

SETTING A LEARNING GOAL

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically about” texts?)

Some behaviours you could expect to see as the students read in order to meet the reading purpose are suggested below. **Select and adapt** from them to set your specific learning goal(s). Be guided by your students’ particular needs and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

The students:

- make connections between the text and their prior knowledge to visualise and summarise Ebony Beanie’s classroom experience
- think critically about the positive and negative aspects of keeping a pig in the classroom and form their own opinion (evaluate)
- think critically about why Maia has chosen to write her emails in this way (analyse)
- use word-solving strategies to decode, and/or work out the meanings of, unfamiliar words and phrases.

TEXT AND LANGUAGE FEATURES**VOCABULARY**

- Some unfamiliar words and phrases, for example, “Ebony”, “Captain Cooker piglet”, “trotters”, “tiny”, “runt of the litter”, “snout”.

POSSIBLE SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Monitor students’ **decoding** attempts by noticing their use of words from the text during discussion and/or by asking questions that require the students to use target words. Prompt the students to remember strategies they can use, for example:

- breaking words into syllables or familiar chunks or components (“Eb-on-y”, “pig-let”, “Best-on” or “Bes-ton”, “card-board”, “school-work”)
- drawing on knowledge of spelling patterns and phonics (“crawls”, “curl”, “chewed”); awareness of the “ll” sound for “le” endings (“snuggled”, “wiggle”, “bottle”, “nibble”)
- rereading the phrase or sentence around the target word to confirm decoding attempts (“Does it make sense?”)
- using knowledge of word structure (identify the root words in “sparkling”, “snuggled”, “teething”).

Monitor students’ **word-solving strategies** to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases. Prompt students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- thinking of the overall context and making connections to their own experiences, for example, they use context and word knowledge (the meaning of “trot”) to infer the meaning of “trotters”;
- looking for explanations close by in the text (“the smallest – the runt of the litter”);
- rereading or reading on so that they can use the next word or the overall context of the sentence or paragraph, for example, on page 19 to clarify the meaning of “teething”;
- making connections to syntax and oral language knowledge to clarify the meaning of words with apostrophes, for example, to distinguish between contractions (“She’s”, “We’re”, “wasn’t”) and the use of a possessive apostrophe in “her brother’s farm”.

Have a dictionary available to confirm or clarify word meanings.

STRUCTURE


- The complex sentences, including “Ebony has an old beanie ...”, “I loved watching her smooth little black ...”, “She’s really quiet when she drinks ...”, “Ebony still sleeps most of the day ...”, “She can stand up ...”, “Now when she’s awake ...”, “The other day during silent reading ...”

Support the students to read and understand compound and complex sentences by breaking the sentences into separate clauses. Identify the main idea of each clause and how the ideas are connected. Use Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why? as prompts.

INTRODUCING THE TEXT


- Discuss the students' experiences of pets, in particular, of raising them when they are young. *What do you enjoy about looking after baby animals? If you wanted to share the experience with someone who lived far away, how would you do that?*
- Look at pages 16 and 17 together and have the students use the layout and text features to identify the format as email. *Who is sending the emails? Who is she sending them to?* Help the students use the visual features of the emails to clarify that Bessie and Bill are Nana and Grandad. Have the students use the photographs to infer what Maia's emails are about and who Ebony Beanie is.
- Create a chart about Ebony Beanie with headings such as What she is, What she looks like, What she sounds like, and What she does. Take time to talk about some of the vocabulary that your students need support with, pointing to pictures, acting out meanings, explaining, and modelling the pronunciation of new words.
- Share the reading purpose and learning goal(s).

METACOGNITION




Effective readers are metacognitive. They are aware of the processes and strategies they draw on and are able to explain how they used these to successfully make meaning and think critically. Examples of metacognitive behaviours, or strategies that promote metacognitive behaviours, are threaded through the notes and indicated by .

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

-  As they read or reread this text, students notice when meaning has broken down. They draw on a range of strategies to correct the problem and can explain what they did.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

-  Ask questions: *How did you know that bit was wrong? Or I noticed that you reread that bit when you got confused. How did rereading help you?*
-  Use prompts: *How did you know that bit was right? Think about the strategy you used. How did it help you?*
-  Give feedback: *I noticed that you read this as... and then you fixed it up by ...*

READING AND DISCUSSING THE TEXT

In order to meet the reading purpose: **The students make connections between sections of the text and between the text and their prior knowledge to identify and summarise main points about Ebony Beanie's classroom experience. They consider what it would be like to have a pig in the classroom.**

EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOURS

(what to look for, prompt, and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal)

PAGE 16

The students identify key points about what Ebony Beanie looks like, using clues from the text, for example, "glossy black hair and sparkling black eyes" and "Her trotters are really tiny."

They notice the use of a dash to indicate that "the runt of the litter" is connected to the idea of Ebony Beanie being the smallest. They use context to infer that litter means the mother pig's babies (and not rubbish).

They use Maia's descriptions to infer why the piglet is called Ebony Beanie.

They infer that "Mrs B." is Mrs Beston.

They recognise Maia's conversational, joky style as she "talks" to her grandparents.

They summarise what has happened so far and express a view about which part of the text they like.

PAGE 17

The students track the times between the emails.

The students identify the main idea of this email (feeding Ebony Beanie) and can visualise what the experience would be like.

Some students may notice the joke at end of the email: "Snores, Maia".

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO READ, RESPOND, AND THINK CRITICALLY

Prompt the students to look for clues in the text that tell the reader what Ebony Beanie looks like. *How does the writer describe Ebony's hair and eyes?*

What information tells you how small she is? The students might also make connections to what they already know. Draw attention to the phrase "runt of the litter". *What does this tell us?* They may know the word "runt" from *Charlotte's Web*.

If necessary, explain that ebony is another word for black (and also the name for a type of black wood).

Explain what "trot" and "litter" mean if they don't know. Confirm that "piglet" is the word for a baby pig.

Add information to the chart, discussing and clarifying new words.

Model your thinking: *I enjoyed the bit when Maia said there's "a new girl in class".* Prompt students to think, pair, and share the aspects they liked.

Draw attention to the date at the top of the email. *The last email had the date of 8 October; this one is the 16th. How many days have passed?*

Explain that they are going to visualise (make pictures in their mind) to work out how Maia feels about feeding Ebony Beanie. *How does Maia's description help you visualise what it was like to feed Ebony? Can you make a connection to a similar experience you have had?*

PAGES 18–19

The students enjoy and spontaneously comment on Maia's stories and Maia's "sign-offs" ("Oinks", "Nibbles") and their connections to the stories in the emails.

The students summarise the main idea of each email.

They make connections to their own experiences of doing homework to infer the meaning of the sentence "We didn't mind too much!"

They begin to infer that there are both positive and negative aspects to having a piglet in the classroom.

They make connections to their own experiences of siblings or puppies teething to help them visualise Ebony Beanie's need to nibble on things, including toes.

Encourage the students to share their ideas and enjoyment of the text.

Prompt the students to ask themselves what each email is mostly about. Have the students each create a sentence giving the main idea and then have them share it with a partner.

Have the students share their feelings about doing homework. *Tell me the words that tell you how the children in the story feel about homework.*

Model your thinking: *I'm wondering how the class would feel if Ebony chewed up some reading books instead of some worksheets ...*

I notice that Ebony Beanie is nibbling more than the homework sheets. Why is that?

PAGES 20–22

The students discuss the text, visualising the experiences that Maia is describing. They identify clues on page 20, such as "She can't fit into the beanie ...", "We're allowed to take Ebony outside ...", "She doesn't have a bottle ..." and on page 22, "She likes to have her beanie on her head", "Ebony sitting up proudly in the front seat".

They notice (on page 22) clues that Ebony will leave the school soon. For example, "Soon she's going to have to go back to the farm" and "she ripped up a corner ..."

They infer from the illustration on the facing page that another piglet is going to replace her.

Discuss how Ebony is growing up and what this means for her stay in the classroom.

Support the students to visualise what Ebony does and that she has grown. *What words help you to create pictures in your mind about what Ebony Beanie does? What do those words tell us about Ebony Beanie?*

I'm noticing words such as "Soon she is going to have to go back to the farm" which tell me that Ebony's time in the classroom is nearly over.

Have the students think, pair, and share about what they think will happen next. *What clues are in the illustrations on the next page?*

PAGE 23

The students confirm their inference about the piglet and can explain why there is such a big gap between the dates of the last two emails.

If necessary, prompt the students to check the date of the email.

What do you notice?

In order to meet the reading purpose: **The students think critically about why Maia has chosen to write her emails in this way (analyse).**

They identify examples of how Maia has made her emails interesting and entertaining for her grandparents (her choices about which incidents to describe, her descriptive language, jokes and humour, and conversational style).

The students try out some of the features in their personal experience writing, as appropriate.

Have the students reread some of the emails. Ask questions: *How might this be different if Maia was writing a report? How does the audience and purpose make a difference to how we choose to write?*

Model the use of some of these features during shared writing and prompt the students to incorporate some features in their personal writing, as appropriate. Provide focused feedback.

In order to meet the reading purpose: **The students think critically about the positive and negative aspects of keeping a pig in the classroom and form their own opinion about whether Mrs B. should have brought Black Pearl to school.**

The students identify aspects of the text to support their opinions. For example, a negative aspect could be that Ebony Beanie nibbled on the students' toes. A positive aspect could be the way the students took responsibility for looking after her when she was very small.

Prompt the students to share their opinions, using evidence from the text and making connections to their own experiences of pets.

Depending on the needs of your students, provide sentence starters to support giving opinions. For example: Having a pig in the classroom is good/bad because a pig is _____. Having a pig in the classroom is good/bad because a pig/the children _____. Model how you would complete one of the sentences. Have the students share their sentences with a partner.

- With support, the students reflect on their learning. They revisit the reading purpose and learning goals and explain some of the strategies they used, for example, how they visualised Ebony Beanie's behaviour.
- The students identify some challenges in the text and explain how they worked (or tried to work) them out.

- Ask questions: *What words and phrases helped you to visualise that? How did making connections to your own experiences help you?*

Was there anything that you found difficult or confusing?

Did you find that strategy useful? Can you think of something else that could help you? If necessary, model or explain some strategies they could use. (And see Word-solving strategies)

AFTER READING

- Students can reread the story as they listen to the audio version on the *Junior Journal 42 and 43* CD. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide opportunities for the students to practise finding and summarising information. Have them reread the text and work with a partner to fill in a chart to summarising the growth stages that Maia describes and how the class helps out.
- Create a chart of the positive and negative aspects of having a pig (or other animal) in the classroom.