

Ben & Zip: Two Short Friends
Common Core Curriculum Guide Grades K-3
Reading and Writing

Ben is short. Zip is shorter. One day, while they are strolling along the boardwalk, a storm blows in and Zip bolts into the crowd. Pint-sized Ben searches for Zip, but all he sees are knees and bellies...and when the rain chases everyone from the beach, how will Ben find Zip?

Reading

1. What does it mean to be a friend?

- Prior to reading: activate schema and build on prior knowledge regarding boardwalks. What is a boardwalk? If some students have experiences with boardwalks use their knowledge to make some predictions about what people do and see at a boardwalk. If students lack an understanding of boardwalks, display pictures or use the internet to show them some famous boardwalks and build some understanding.
- Initiate a class discussion about friendship. What does it mean to be a friend? How do you know if someone is your friend? What do friends do together? Students can turn and talk about their own friendships. If you went to a boardwalk with a friend, what might you do together?
- During reading: What is Ben's biggest problem as he hunts for Zip? How does Ben show the strength of his friendship with Zip throughout the book?
- How does the author demonstrate the strength of their friendship through her words and through the illustrations?

Common Core State Standards addressed: RLK.4, RLK.7, RL1.4, RL1.7, RL2.4, RL2.7, RL3.3, RL3.7

2. The author uses specific words to supply rhythm and meaning in this story. How would this story be different if the author had used different words? Why do you think the author chose the words she did?

- Reread the story, stopping to identify specific descriptive words. Examples: skipped, swarms of people, sunned, strolled, bolted, scooted, etc. Write the words on the board or overhead. Have students think of less specific words the author might have used (ran, go, went, walked, etc.). Why did the author choose these words? What do we visualize when we use specific nouns and verbs?
- Where does the author use rhyme in the story? How do the rhymes help us understand the story?

Common Core State Standards addressed: RLK.4, RL1.4, RL2.4, RL3.4

3. Illustrations often tell just as much of the story as the words do, and sometimes the illustrations actually tell us even more than the words do. How do the illustrations in this story help us understand the story?

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- While reading the story with the words, ask students to examine the illustrations carefully. Can they find places where the illustrator included extra information that helps us understand the story? What can they find? What do they notice? What can they infer from the pictures? You may want to do this as a later reading after the students have already enjoyed the story and solved the mystery of who Zip really is.
- Afterwards (or at a later time), reread the story again but this time don't read the words. Can the students retell the story using just the illustrations? Prompt as necessary, but it's not important to get every word right as long as the details are there.

Common Core State Standards addressed: RLK.2, RLK.7, RL1.2, RL1.7, RL2.4, RL2.7, RL3.4, RL3.7

Writing

1. The author used many S words in this story. As you reread the story, have students identify as many S words as they can. On chart paper or whiteboard/Smartboard, have students record all the S words they find (hint: some are even hidden in the illustrations)! Individually or in pairs, students can write their own story using as many of these S words as possible. Another option: assign different letters to pairs of students, have them record as many words as they can think of that start with that letter, and then use those words to write a story.

Common Core State Standards addressed: WK.3, W1.3, W2.3, W3.3