



Fit to finish

Erin Howard

Focus phonics

ai as in rain, aim, wait, raining, aimed

-er as in better, fitter, under, winners

ur as in turn, turns

Tricky words

all, are, as, be, do, go, have, he, I, into, is, me, my, no, of, oh, out, so, the, there, to, was, we, you, your

Book summary

This is a play for four characters. Two girls are practising their football skills at home when it is too wet to go to the park. They want to get fitter so they can finish their matches strongly and have a better chance of winning.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words in the book with the focus phonemes of /ai/, -er (schwa /u/), and /ur/ and to extend to other known words containing them.

Comprehension:

- Retrieve key details from the text
- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Make inferences from the text

Fluency:

- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the cover illustration and read the title together. Ask: What do you think the title means? What is happening in the illustration? (practising ball skills and getting fit indoors) What game do you think the girls need the ball skills for? Read and discuss the back cover blurb. Students share experiences they have had when needing to get fit for an event. Turn to the title page. Notice the difference in the layout. This story is written as a play for students to act out. The four characters are listed along with the props (things needed to act out the play). Read the names of the characters together. Ask: Who do you think Tom is? Why do you say that? What props are needed for this play? Who is the author? Have you read any other books by Erin? What did you think of them? Have a quick flip through the pages to see how the character parts are written. (First there is the name of the character, followed by the words the character says.)

Quick phonics warm-up: Read the words on the inside front cover together with the focus

phonemes of /ur/, /ai/, and -er (schwa /u/). Flip through the text to find and read words with these focus phonemes. Note that the -er on the end of a word sounds like /u/. Think of words that rhyme with *turn*. (burn, return)

Vocabulary check:

coach p 16 someone who trains a sports team or athlete

arch p 17 the part under and on the inner side of the foot between the toes and heel. It curves up and is sometimes called the instep.

Morphology: *fitter* has the suffix -er. *Fitter* is the comparative of the adjective *fit*. If you are fit, you can do a sport easily. If you are fitter this means you are more fit than someone else. If you are the fittest (superlative), you are the fittest of more than two people. (Because fit has a short vowel /i/, the t is doubled when adding a suffix.)

Etymology: *fit* - the original meaning of *fit* (adjective) "suited to the circumstances, proper," mid-15c., of unknown origin, perhaps from Middle English noun *fit* "an adversary of equal power" (mid-13c.). In athletics, "in condition, properly trained for action," from 1869.

Tricky word practice: Display the tricky words *of* and *oh*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words? (f is the tricky part of *of* because f makes the /v/ sound; o is the tricky part of *oh* because o makes the /oa/ sound). Practise reading and spelling these tricky words.

During reading

Read the story: Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start on the title page by reading the text with students.
- Choose students or groups of students to be the characters. They read their parts of the play with expression. Ask: Why did the children decide to practise inside the house? (it was wet outside) What did Kit mean when she said on p 6 "We will not get under your feet'. (they will keep out of Dad's way) What did they need to set up on p 8? (a box to kick the balls into) What did Kit mean on p 9 when she said "Your aim is a bit off" (Liz's kick wasn't on target) Students continue reading, aiming for a smooth and fluent reading, but pausing to sound out and blend any words that they cannot read on sight. Practise segmenting and blending the word *turn* /t/ /ur/ /n/ on p 10.
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each student in turn as they read a brief passage.

Phonics support: Remind students to sound out and blend the letters as necessary to read any unfamiliar words, but encourage them to read words with familiar letters and sounds fluently on sight if they can, without sounding out. If students get stuck on a word, model how to sound out and blend the sounds in the word. Encourage students to help each other with sounding out and blending and praise good use of this strategy especially with words using the focus sounds of /ai/, /ur/ and -er (schwa /u/).

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the text and explain the meaning of words in context. Ask: What can you say about the characters now? What have you learned about their personalities so far? On p 14 ask: What did Tom mean by 'tap-the-top'? Can you demonstrate? (tap the top of the ball with one foot and then the other repeatedly) What was different about the bell tap on p 17? (you use the arch of your foot) What does the word *I'm* mean on p 20? (*I'm* is short for *I am*) Locate and discuss other contractions from the story. (*it's* p 2, *let's* p 23, *that's* p 6, *he's* p 20)

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What have you learned about keeping fit inside? (you can improvise with a box as a target and do particular skills like the bell tap) How does being fit help you win matches? (helps you to keep going to the very last kick of the game)

Comprehension: Ask: Why did Kit say "It is not a dog, Liz" on p 16? (because Liz was telling the ball to stay still as though it was a dog) Ask: What did Liz mean by "shoot hoops" on p 18? (Liz wanted to throw the ball into the box as though it was a basketball hoop) What stopped her? (Dad said no) Discuss the questions on the inside back cover. Ask: Who put the most work into trying to get fit? Who ended up being the fittest? (Kit) What was Liz's joke at the end of the play? (she was fit to read a book)

Fluency: Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it fluently as though you are the character in that situation. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. Act out the play in groups of four taking a character part each. Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text. Choral-read the text together for building fluency and self-confidence. Students practise speed-reading the list of focus words on the inside front cover to encourage automatic recall.

Spelling and writing through dictation: Read out the following passage for students to write. It uses words and sentences from the text as these are decodable. The focus is on encoding (spelling) rather than creating content.

(pages 14-16)

KIT: But we need to get fitter if we are going to be winners.

LIZ: Yes, if we are not fit, we will not finish.

KIT: And if we do not finish, we cannot win. We have to be fit to finish!

LIZ: Then let's keep going.

TOM: Can you do tap-the-top? Tap the top with this foot. Then, tap the top with that foot. This foot, then that foot, and so on. But do not kick it!

KIT: If you can do it, Coach Tom, we can, too! Yes, I'm doing it!

LIZ: Tap, tap. Oh no! I kicked it. Sit right there, you!

KIT: It is not a dog, Liz. It will not do as you tell it!

LIZ: Tap-the-top seems hard

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

Words with ai and er.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Complete the sentences. Fill in a chart of things to do when it is raining.

Worksheet 3: Physical education

Do the ball drills from the book. Draw a diagram of how to perform one of the ball skills in the book.

Worksheet 4: Science and maths

Compare breathing rates when resting to rates after exercise.