



Ticking-clock quicksand

Verity Croker

Focus phonics

ur as in surf, turns, further, fur, turn

ar as in starts, bark, far, arms, hard, barks, start, smart, harder

ai as in wait, tail, waits

Tricky words

all, are, as, be, come, do, go, has, he, her, here, his, I, into, is, like, little, loves, me, my, no, of, oh, one, onto, our, out, pull, push, put, says, she, so, some, the, there, to, we, what, when, you

Book summary

Bud the dog has got stuck in quicksand on the beach. His owners try to get him out, but they need the help of many friends in order to finally bring him to safety.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the r-controlled vowel sounds /ar/, /ur/ and the vowel digraph /ai/ that feature in the story, and extend to other known words with the same phonemes. Also mention adjacent consonants when appropriate, e.g. smart. /s/ /m/ /ar/ /t/

Comprehension:

- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Make inferences from the text
- Make connections
- Answer questions
- Visualise

Fluency:

- Pay attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate, especially for different characters
- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the cover. Ask: What do you think is happening in the illustration? Share ideas. Read the title together. Ask: What is 'quicksand'? (sinking sand) What is meant by the words 'Ticking-clock'? (time could run out) Where do you think this story takes place? Look at the title page to compare the illustration to the cover. Ask: What is different in this illustration? (the dog is in the sand) Who is the author? (Verity Croker) Have you read any other stories by Verity? If so, say the title and what you thought of it. Look at the back cover. Read the blurb and discuss its meaning.

Quick phonics warm-up: Read the words on the inside front cover with the focus phonemes /ur/, /ar/ and /ai/. Flip through the story to find and read words with these same focus phonemes. Build the focus word *surf* with letter cards. Think of words that rhyme with *surf*. List these to read together, e.g. *turf*, *smurf*. Point out any with adjacent consonants like *smurf*.

Vocabulary check:

object (noun) p 10 a thing that can be seen or touched

inch (verb) p 13 to move along slowly and carefully

Morphology: suffix -ing is added to a verb to make the present tense, e.g. grinning, clapping p 24. These two words also have adjacent consonants. Say the words slowly decoding the sounds: /g/ /r/ /i/ /n/ /i/ /ng/, grinning; /c/ /l/ /a/ /p/ /i/ /ng/, clapping. Look for more words in the story with the -ing suffix, e.g. gripping, getting. (Notice the consonant sometimes doubles after a short vowel sound when adding -ing, e.g. grin/grinning.)

Etymology: Quicksand is loose wet sand that sucks things into it; it is not fast moving but is called 'quick' because things that move look like they are alive. Quick is an old word meaning 'living, alive'. From Middle English *quyksande*, from Old English *cwecesand* ('quicksand'), equivalent to quick ('living') + sand. Think of other words starting with quick. (quickstep, quickfire) In these cases the word *quick* does mean fast.

Tricky word practice: Display the tricky words *like* and *has*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words? i-e is the tricky part of *like* as it says /igh/; *like* says /l/ /igh/ /k/; s is the tricky part of *has* as it says /z/; *has* says /h/ /a/ /z/. Practise saying and spelling these tricky words.

During reading

Read the story: If you want to break the reading into two sessions, the end of p 13 is a good point to stop. Students can finish the reading in a second group session or for homework. Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start by reading the text to students, then invite them to take over the reading. On p 3, ask: What made Bud the dog run off? (he was chasing gulls) How does Emma know that he is in quicksand? (she sees Bud sinking in the sand) Which words tell you in the text? (sink, sinking, sunk, deeper and deeper) How far did Bud sink? (to the tops of his legs) On pp 4-5, what are Emma and Trent trying to do? (creep along the sand to reach Bud) What stops them reaching Bud? (fear of sinking in the sand) How can you tell they are afraid? (their faces in the illustration and the text) What do they need? (help) On pp 6-7, ask: What can you say about Bud? (he is sinking further and he looks scared) Ask: What does 'fear oozing from him' mean? (Bud looked really scared) How can you tell Bud is scared? (the look on his face)
- 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 containing the focus phonemes /ur/, /ar/ and /ai/ along with adjacent consonants.

Find words that rhyme in the story, e.g. licks/flicks; grip/slip; link/sink. Say the words slowly to hear each sound and then blend, e.g. /l/ /i/ /k/ /s/, licks.

Locate or display these words: Trent's legs p 11, Bud's tail p 11, Linda's cord p 24, and ask: What

do the apostrophes tell us in these words? (this is a possessive apostrophe showing something belongs to someone) Make up a phrase about something personal for yourself using an apostrophe, e.g. Jane's hat.

Find comparatives in the story with -er on the end. These occur when two things are compared, e.g. p 13 nearer, p 15 higher. Look for more examples in the text. Read the words and remember that er sounds like /u/.

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the text and encourage students to look for connections. On p 7, ask: How do Trent and Kim look? (worried) How would they say the words in the speech bubble? Read the words as though you are them.

On p 13, why is it hard to grip Bud? (because his fur is short and wet) How would you feel if you were Emma? Visualise yourself. What would you be doing?

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What have you learned from this story? Which page is your favourite? Why do you say that? How do you connect with it? Do you think this is a fiction or a non-fiction text and why? Could it have been based on a true story? What did Verity (the author) need to know before writing this text?

Comprehension: Ask: What was the problem and solution in this story? How many people were needed in the human chain to pull Bud out? (8) What were the main things that helped pull out Bud in the end? (the cord Linda brought and Baxter as he was big and strong) How should the word 'pull' be read on pp 21 and 23? (loudly as it's in bold and it tells everyone to pull at the same time) Read the sentence on p 21 together. "'Keep pulling! 1, 2, 3, **pull!**" yells Baxter'. Review the text together retelling the sequence of events and the order that people came to help. Who was first? Next? Was there a funny part to the story? (pp 22-23 when they all fall on top of each other) How did they all feel on p 24? (happy and relieved) Read and discuss the questions on the inside back cover.

Fluency: Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it fluently, paying attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate for different characters. Notice and reflect the speech marks and quotation marks in your reading. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. (echo-reading) Choral-read part of the text together to build fluency and self-confidence. Students then choose another brief passage and read it fluently with expression to their partner, then swap over. They practise speed-reading the list of focus words on the inside front cover to encourage automaticity.

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.

(page 13)

"Can you ring for help? I do not think we can do this with just us," I tell her.

Erin nods, then rings Caz.

"Quick, Caz, quick!" says Erin. "And bring Fred."

Soon Caz and Fred are running up to us. We all get flat on the sand, Caz gripping Fred, Fred gripping Erin, Erin gripping Kim, Kim gripping Trent, and Trent gripping me tight. I inch nearer to Bud. I am near now, but I cannot get a grip on his short wet fur.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

Word sort – ur, ar words. Sort, read and write words.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Fill in a story framework. Find out meanings of words.

Worksheet 3: Science

Do a quicksand experiment.

Worksheet 4: Geography

Read information about quicksand. Where does quicksand occur?