



Helicopters that help

Julie Ellis

Focus phonics

or written as au as in astronauts, haul, launched
oo (moon) written as ou as in you, wounded, group

Tricky words

because, people, their, there, through, where, who

Book summary

Helicopters are used for mountain rescues, shark watching, air support, fire fighting and a lot of other things besides. This book examines some of the many and various ways that helicopters can help us.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the phonemes /or/ spelt as au; and /oo/ (as in moon) spelt as ou, that feature in the text and extend to other known words with the same grapheme-phoneme correspondences, e.g. August, haunt; cougar, grouper.

Comprehension:

- Retrieve and record information/key details from the text
- Explain the meaning of words in context
- Summarise main ideas
- Make inferences from the text
- Make predictions that fit with information given in the text
- Make connections (text to self, text to text, text to world)
- Ask questions
- Visualise

Fluency:

- Read at a natural speaking pace with minimal sounding out
- Pay attention to punctuation when reading, pausing and changing tone as appropriate
- Read with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the front cover and read the title together. Ask: What is the helicopter doing? (helping to put out a fire by dumping water on it) Compare with the title page illustration. What is the helicopter doing? (helping by winching up a person from the sea) Who is the author? (Julie Ellis) Share knowledge and views of any other books written by Julie. (in the Reading Road series Julie has also written Robots) Invite students to share any prior knowledge

of or experience with helicopters and make predictions about what kind of information might be given in the text. Keep a note of predictions and return to them later. Read and discuss the blurb on the back cover. Flip through the book to get a sense of the contents. Do you think this is a fiction or non-fiction text and say why.

Quick phonics warm-up: Read the words on the inside front cover together, with the focus phonemes of /or/ written as au and /oo/ (as in moon) written as ou. Flip through the text to locate and read words with the same focus phonemes. Discuss the meaning of these words. Build the focus word *haul* with letter cards. Think of words that rhyme with *haul* or have the /or/ phoneme. List these to read together. Sort these words by the way the /or/ sound is spelt, e.g. crawl, maul, Paul, ball, tall, shawl, also. Then read the words.

Vocabulary check:

hoist (noun) p 10 equipment used to lift heavy things or people

capsule p 21 case or container, possibly round

Morphology: mountainside p 14 has the suffix -side, meaning next to or alongside; mountainside means next to or on the side of the mountain.

Etymology: patrol (verb) p 17 to keep watch over; "to do the rounds in a camp or garrison, march about as a guard", 1690s, from patrol (n) and in part from French patrouiller.

Tricky word practice: Display the tricky words *where* and *there*. Ask: What are the tricky parts of these words?

where – the tricky part is ere which says air.

there – the tricky part is ere which says air.

Practise reading and spelling these tricky words.

During reading

Read the story: This book may not fit into a single reading session. The end of p 15 is a good point to break the reading. Students can finish the book in a second group session or for homework.

Reading could follow one or more of the following approaches:

- Start by reading the text with students, then invite them to take over the reading. On p 2, ask: What is better about a helicopter compared with a plane? (it can land and take off on a small gap) On p 4, ask: What are the advantages of using a helicopter as an air ambulance? (it is faster than a ground ambulance and can get access into tricky areas) On p 6, ask: How does the air ambulance pilot know where to land at the hospital? (the pilot can look for the large H on the roof)
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each student in turn as they read a brief passage.
- Divide the book up between individuals or pairs of students; they read a section each and then summarise the main ideas to report back on.

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 words with the focus phonemes of /or/ written as au and /oo/ (as in moon) written as ou.

Comprehension support: Pause occasionally to talk about the story and encourage students to find and retrieve key details from the text, e.g. on p 8, ask: What can air support helicopters do? (find people who have committed a crime, track people at night time) On p 9, ask: What is special about the way air support helicopters are coloured and why? (light on top to be seen from above and dark on the bottom to be seen from below) On p 10, ask: What can a fire department helicopter carry? (large bucket of water)

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What new information have you learned about helicopters? Which new fact is your favourite? Why do you say that? What did you think of the photography insets? Did they help you understand things? What did Julie (the author) need to know before writing this text?

Comprehension: Review the predictions made earlier. Were they correct? Were there any surprises? Ask: What does hover mean? (stay in one place in the air) Look at the word *quickest* on p 14. Explain that this is a superlative adjective comparing the helicopter to all other forms of transport. What is the base word and the comparative? (quick, quicker) On p 17, what is a rip current? (a strong dangerous pull in the sea) On p 28, what is the meaning of shocking pink? (very bright pink) Read and discuss the questions on the inside back cover. Retelling the text. Ask students to choose a heading and retell that part of the text. Ask: What compound words can you make from the root word *air*? (airport, airplane, airbase) Discuss the meaning of these. Say the word *communicates* and count the syllables (comm/un/i/cates (4)) Find other words in the text with multiple syllables to count and say, e.g. accidents, hospital, helicopters. Discuss the meaning of *unwell* on p 4 and *unlike* on p 2. Ask: What does the prefix *un* mean? (not) What is the opposite of *unwell* and *unlike*? (well, like)

Fluency: Choose a passage from the book and model how to read it fluently with appropriate emphasis and intonation to support the meaning of the text. Students read the same passage, copying your reading. (echo-reading) Students choose another brief passage and read it fluently/with expression to their partner then swap over. Read parts of the text together (choral-read) to build fluency and self-confidence. Students practise speed-reading the focus words from the inside front cover to encourage automatic recall (words that can be recalled automatically have been orthographically mapped to students' long-term memory).

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 4)

Helicopters can be used as ambulances. They are fast and they can go where ground ambulances can't go. The crew members have medical training so that people who are unwell can be treated while the helicopter is flying. Air ambulances fly to incidents such as road traffic accidents. They can fly up and over the top of the cars on the road. This is helpful if the road is blocked by crashed cars or a traffic jam. They can quickly transport injured people to hospital.

(page 5)

Air ambulances can also quickly transport sick people from one hospital to another. An air ambulance pilot tries to fly fast and smoothly. Sometimes, helicopters land on hospital rooftops. The landing spot has the letter H painted on it. Doctors and nurses wait there to take the sick or hurt person into the hospital. This means that they get care as fast as possible.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

Sound /or/ spelt au. /oo/ (as in moon) spelt ou.

Write words.

Write definitions.

Complete sentences.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Answer questions about the text.

Colour helicopters appropriately and describe what helicopters do.

Worksheet 3: Engineering

Make a hand crank winch.

Worksheet 4: Word Work – Vocabulary

Do activities for vocabulary words.