



The winning edge

Samantha Montgomerie

Focus phonics

j written as g as in stage, gently, legends, urgently, ginger
or written as oor as in door, floor, doorway

Tricky words

hour, their, there, two, where, who

Book summary

Three friends enter a talent quest with their band, the 3 Jays. Their main competition is a band called the Swan Queens. One Swan Queens band member wants to win so badly that she tries to sabotage the 3 Jays' performance, but her other band members come to the rescue. In the end, all is forgiven. This story features the same characters as Rock it! in Reading Road 1 but stands alone as an independent story.

Learning intention

Phonics: To decode words with the phonemes /j/ spelt g; and /or/ spelt oor, that feature in the text and extend to other known words with the same grapheme-phoneme correspondences, e.g. danger, gem; outdoor, trapdoor, poor.

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

Before reading

Story discussion: Look at and discuss the front cover and read the title together. Ask: What could the title mean? What does the illustration show? (a bass player in a rock band (the 3 Jays)) If students have read Rock it! (in Reading Road 1) discuss what happened in that book. Read and discuss the blurb on the back cover. Look at the picture on the title page. What does the sign say

and what does it mean? ('Talent Quest' – it's a competition for performers) Who is the author? (Samantha Montgomerie) Share knowledge and views of any other books written by Samantha. (in the Reading Road series, Samantha has written Rock it!, Tip that hat, Tap dog Ted, Kick. Fly. Draw. Drum., What's that pong?: Incredible plants) Invite students to share any prior knowledge of music and bands, and make predictions about what might happen in the story. Keep a note of predictions and return to them later. Flick through the book to get an idea of the story. 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 /j/ written as g and /or/ written as oor. Flip through the text to locate and read words with these same focus phonemes. Discuss the meaning of these words. There are various ways of spelling the phoneme /j/, two ways are: g and ge. Sort words into the way the /j/ phoneme is written, e.g. bulge, cage, large, germ, strange, digit. Then read the words.

Vocabulary check:

riff p 21 repeated chord progression or refrain in music

quiver p 24 tremble or shake

Morphology: forgiveness p 28 – the suffix -ness means state, condition or quality. *Forgiveness* means being in a state of forgiving, letting go of anger.

Etymology: blare p 15 late 14th century, bleren "to wail", possibly from an unrecorded Old English blæren, or from Middle Dutch bleren "to bleat, cry, bawl, shout".

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

two – the tricky part is wo which says /oo/ as in moon.

there – the tricky part is eir 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 Chapter 3, p 17 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: Why are some words in a speech bubble? (they are the words Jin is singing) Can you sing them? On p 3, ask: Who wrote the song? (Jin) What does *chorus* mean? (the repeated part in a song) On p 4, ask: Why does Jess think the Swan Queens are the ones to beat? (they have won the talent quest for the past two years) Students continue reading.
- Students read silently at their own pace; listen to each student in turn as they read a brief passage.
- Divide the book up between pairs or groups of students; they read a section or chapter 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 /j/ written as g and /or/ written as oor.

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 9, ask: What does *scowling* mean? (frown in an angry way) Why do you think Clare is scowling? (she thinks the 3 Jays might beat her band, the Swan Queens) On p 10, ask: Why is Jet looking shocked in the illustration? (his bass guitar is missing) On p 15, ask: Where did they find the bass guitar and what condition was it in? (wedged behind a bookcase in the Swan Queens' room, and broken) Why would someone do this? (perhaps to stop Jet being able to play in the talent quest)

After reading

Apply learning: Discuss the text. Ask: What have you learned about talent quests and people who play on bands? How did the Swan Queens help out the 3 Jays? (Mitch loaned Jet his bass guitar) On p 21, what made the audience cheer loudly? (Jet starting his riff) On p 22, were the 3 Jays popular winners and how do you know? (yes, because the audience clapped wildly when they were announced as winners) How was Jet feeling on p 24 and how do you know? (annoyed with Clare – he glared at her; in the illustration he is looking annoyed) What did Samantha (the author) need to know before writing this text?

Comprehension: Review the predictions made earlier. Were they correct? Were there any surprises? Ask: What made the 3 Jays have the winning edge? (their willingness to forgive Clare and not hold a grudge) What advice would you give to Clare? (be fair and honest in the future) How did the book end? (the band members were friends) What can you learn from this book about making good choices? Read and discuss the questions on the inside back cover. Ask students to choose a chapter or a page and retell part of it. Together they retell the story in order, chapter by chapter. Do you think this story could be based on a true story? Could it have really happened?

On p 5, what does the phrase *nerves jangle* mean? (feeling nervous, nerves on edge before an important event) On p 6, what is a tight-lipped smile? (not a genuinely happy smile) Can you do one? How are you feeling when you do one of these? (maybe feeling angry but trying not to show it) What does *blare* on p 15 mean? (loud sound) Find words that rhyme with *blare* and read them, e.g. Clare, glare. Ask students to find words with one, two and three syllables in the text. List these, say and count the syllables, e.g. quest, leg/ends, un/der/stand. On p 22, what is the word *Congrats* short for? (congratulations) Do you know any other abbreviations? (e.g. Mr, Mrs)

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. 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)

The day of the talent quest arrives. At Beach Edge School, the girls find a room to get ready in, while Jet fetches some water.

"We will have to beat the Swan Queens to win," Jess says to Jin. "They have won the talent quest for the past two years."

"They are legends. Their singer Amara is really good," says Jin.

"So are you, Jin! And with your great new song, the 3 Jays will have the winning edge!" says Jess.

(page 5)

Jin glances at her watch. There is just an hour to go before the talent quest starts. Her nerves jangle. Jet bursts into the room. "The Swan Queens are in the room next to the stage!" he says.

"Let's go and say hello," says Jess.

(page 6)

The Swan Queens are working on their song when the 3 Jays appear in the doorway.

"Can we come in? We are the 3 Jays," says Jess.

Amara looks up. "Hello!" she says with a smile. "I'm Amara, and this is Mitch and Clare."

"We saw you play at the town fair, last year. You were good!" says Mitch. Clare just looks at them, with a tight-lipped smile.

"Great strings," says Jet to Mitch.

"Thanks. You can have a go if you like," says Mitch.

Follow-up activities

Students complete the follow-up activities:

Worksheet 1: Phonics

Sound /j/ spelt g. /or/ spelt oor.

Write words.

Sort words according to spelling.

Worksheet 2: Comprehension

Fill in a graphic organiser, and use it to retell the story.

Write definitions.

Write a book analysis.

Worksheet 3: Word Work

Homonyms.

Play a 'What am I?' game.

Worksheet 4: Health and Wellbeing

Write about feelings.