

# Birthday Bob

written by Geoffrey McSkimming | illustrated by Douglas Holgate

## Outcomes

[EN 2-8B](#) (ACELY1690)

[EN 2-11D](#)

[EN 2-10C](#)

[EN 2-4A](#) (ACELT1604)

[EN 2-8B](#) (ACELT1600)

## Learning activities

### 1. Literary value–text connection

Before reading the story, have students look at ‘Meet the Countdown Crew’ on the previous page. Discuss the visual similarities/differences between the characters. Brainstorm briefly what may have brought these three unlikely characters together.

Discuss the idea of a ‘back story’ with the class; this can be linked to the idea of an ‘origin story’ in superhero comics and movies (like the recent Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse, which has a back story for each of the seven Spider-characters). Read Bob’s ‘back story’ from p 9.

As a whole class or group activity, come up with a ‘back story’ for how Ahab and Shasta came to be part of the same crew before discovering Bob together.

Support:

For students having difficulty getting started in comparing and contrasting the characters, you could scaffold the activity by providing categories they can compare and contrast—for example: type of animal, physical characteristics (size, colour, shape), gender, interests and personality traits.

### 2. Relationships/friendships/quest journey

This story would fit nicely when exploring a theme of friendship or exploration or in a genre study of adventure fiction or journey stories. Some suggestions for related texts can be found in the ‘Further reading’ section.

### 3. Dialogue

After reading the story, discuss how the author used differences in how the characters spoke to give us information about the characters. Draw attention to the descriptions of Ahab speaking in a ‘deep voice’, ‘bellowing’ and ‘booming’; Shasta talking to herself about different ideas as she prepares for her cooking on pages 7 and 8; and Bob using homely and invented words like ‘indeedy’ and ‘otter-acious’ and leaving off the final sound of some words.

Ask for volunteers to dramatise reading some of the dialogue from the text, representing each character with multiple readers. Then ask students to form small groups and write a dialogue among the three characters that the students think might happen as the characters are setting off to explore the island. Encourage students to use the individual speech characteristics noted in their analysis section. Have each group perform their dialogue for the rest of the class.

#### 4. Cliffhangers: analyse, then write your own

The first part of this serial story ends with a cliffhanger—some hungry lizards who have a taste for one of the main characters are spotted in the foliage. Have students identify the cliffhanger situation. Discuss what purpose it serves and whether they think it is effective. Brainstorm other cliffhangers the class has encountered in their reading and viewing. The episodes of both comic serials in this issue also have cliffhanger endings—students can compare and contrast these, providing arguments for which they think is more effective and why.

Demonstrate how a story could be turned into a serial with a cliffhanger ending by editing 'Lots of Latkes' to end the first instalment when the family has finished the latkes and the doorbell rings with the guests arriving. Have students, individually or in groups, create a two-part story with a cliffhanger from the story 'Stripe'.

#### 5. Onomatopoeia

Use the Onomatopoeia song video to introduce or review the definition of onomatopoeia. Have students brainstorm categories of types of sounds for which onomatopoeia can be created, using the song as a starting point. Another good source text is *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*.

Have students go on a word hunt in the story to find examples of onomatopoeia and record (manually or digitally) the words or phrases they find together with the category of sound. Some great examples include 'BOB-OTTER, BOB-OTTER, BOB-OTTER' and 'chugged' to describe the engine noise, 'clacked' to represent the sound of Shasta's beak opening and shutting and 'squawked' to portray the sound of Shasta speaking to herself.

Ask students to consider what effect the use of onomatopoeia has on the intended audience and how it serves the purpose of each text, including the comparison between the onomatopoeia and the actual sound that it represents.

#### Extension:

Assemble some clips or live-action demonstrations of sound effects related to the story. For instance, otters and boats make splashing sounds as in the 'Water Splashing Sound Effects' clip, or 'Brolga trumpeting' from the Auckland Zoo. Ask students to come up with their own onomatopoeic words and phrases to describe the sounds they hear. Compare results and discuss how different people (and different cultures) represent the same sounds in different ways.

## Resources

Auckland Zoo. (2015, August 9). *Brolga Trumpeting* [Video file]. Retrieved from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHlreMW82tQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHlreMW82tQ)

Cronin, D. & Lewin, B. (2003). *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Bauer, Mindy. (2012, March 26). *Onomatopoeia* [Video file]. Retrieved from

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1b5kCvVBo8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1b5kCvVBo8)

Sound Effects. (2014, December 18). ***Water Splashing Sound Effects*** [Video file]. Retrieved from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtQK38eyqKU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtQK38eyqKU)

## Further reading

Barrows, A. & Blackall, S. (2007) *Ivy and Bean*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

White, E. B. (2012, 1952). *Charlotte's Web*. New York: HarperCollins.

# A Pile of Pancakes

written by Karen Jameyson | illustrated by Andrew Joyner | photos by Dreamstime

## Outcomes

[EN 2-11D](#) (ACELT196)

[EN 2-8B](#) (ACELA1483)

[EN 2-4A](#) (ACELY1680)

[EN 2-6B](#)

[EN 2-8B](#) (ACELT1600)

## Learning Activities

### 1. Connect to text

Before reading, have students look at the various photos and discuss their personal connection to pancakes. Has everyone eaten some kind of pancake before? Make a class list of different pancake types class members have eaten.

After reading, update the list and discuss any new types of pancakes students learned about through reading the article.

### Extension:

Using 'Shasta's Sensational Pancakes' as an example, have students create recipes for other types of pancakes they personally have eaten. Gather recipes into a class recipe book.

### 2. Visual modality of illustrations

Discuss the illustrations that accompany the article. Have students consider the contrast between the high modality (degree of realism) of the photos compared with the lower modality of the pancake flipping cartoon. What sections do the different types of illustrations relate to? How does the modality of the image influence viewer reactions? Do students agree or disagree with the illustration choices made for this article?

Ask students to come up with a proposal for an additional image to include with the article to illustrate the section 'How old?' Students need to describe, source or create the image they recommend using and provide an argument for why they chose the level of modality they proposed.

### 3. Connections to other texts

Discuss connections between this text and other pancake-related texts in the magazine, 'Lots of Latkes' and 'Shasta's Sensational Pancakes'. Creating a Venn diagram would be a great way to record similarities and differences between these texts.

View a video about Pancake Day, also known as Shrove Tuesday, or about pancakes from around the world with the class and discuss similarities and differences between the relevant article section and the video text.

### **Support:**

For students experiencing difficulty with Venn diagrams, colour code the areas. For instance blue for unique items in one text, yellow for the other and green for similarities.

### **4. Using questions to engage interest**

One technique used to engage interest in nonfiction writing is asking (and answering) questions. Ask students to locate instances of this technique in this text. Discuss whether they find it an effective technique and if any instances are more effective than others. Are all the questions answered? How close to the question is the answer found? Are they more interested in reading sections with question headers or statement headers?

Students could look at the other nonfiction article 'Captain Ahab's Weird Wide World: Lunar Calendars and Celebrations' and try adding a question to engage interest in that text. This could be done by expanding the article by adding a paragraph on another lunar calendar holiday in which students incorporate the questioning technique.

### **5. Alliteration**

Investigate the use of alliteration in this text. Discuss other places students have seen or used alliteration (poetry, advertisements) and how it influences a reader's or viewer's engagement with or interest in the text.

Challenge students (or groups) to come up with alliterative phrases, both in title or heading format, like 'Piles of Pancakes' or within a sentence, as in 'You don't have to do any fancy flips.'

## **Resources**

Anchor Creative Education. (2017, August 18). *The Alliteration Song* [Video file]. Retrieved from [youtube.com/watch?v=zVQQID\\_Hnl](https://youtube.com/watch?v=zVQQID_Hnl)

Bon Appetit. (2018, June 19). *Kids try 10 kinds of pancakes from around the world* [Video file]. Retrieved from [youtube.com/watch?v=MrWAc3zvMRI](https://youtube.com/watch?v=MrWAc3zvMRI)

Learn English with EnglishClass101.com. (2014, September 25). *British holidays: Pancake Day and Shrove Tuesday* [Video file]. Retrieved from [youtube.com/watch?v=2sIHCsdWKGI](https://youtube.com/watch?v=2sIHCsdWKGI)

## **Further reading**

Carle, E. (1992). *Pancakes, Pancakes!* New York: Simon and Schuster.