

I Survived the Galveston Hurricane, 1900

by Robert Kraus

In 1900, Galveston was Texas’s richest and most important city. Just a few years before, a weather forecaster had said the idea of a hurricane striking Galveston was absurd. So when a storm started brewing on September 8, 1900, people gathered on the beach to cheer on the wild waves. But what started as entertainment soon turned into a nightmare as those waves crashed into the city. Readers will keep turning pages to discover what happens when a boy named Charlie battles the treacherous waters to make sure his neighbors are safe.

Create Successful Reading Habits

Research from What Works Clearinghouse suggests that students need to learn to identify and use a text’s organizational structure, or plot, to understand complex text.* Focusing on a story’s structural elements helps students to extract and construct meaning from a story. Plot development shapes a story, and when students can identify different story elements, they can then practice analyzing and interpreting the information for its deeper meaning. WWC recommends that teachers use comprehension strategies and a variety of graphic organizers as tools for helping students to think critically about what they read.

* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, What Works Clearinghouse. (n.d.). Practice Guides. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>

SCIENCE OF READING – CONNECTING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Reading is a Complex Task

Research has shown that fluent reading involves a set of skills and processes so complex that it is awe-inspiring. Fluent reading comprises numerous subskills and requires the brain to perform multiple tasks simultaneously and automatically. These subskills and tasks must be automatic and applied with a high degree of accuracy for a reader to gain meaning from the text.

Think about the hierarchy of skills that develops when students are learning to read:

- First, it is important for students to develop phonemic awareness, which is the conscious awareness of the individual sounds in language. The students then need to know the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds.
- After developing phonemic awareness and basic letter knowledge, they can use this knowledge to begin to decode. This is called the alphabetic principle, which is the understanding that letters make sounds, and sounds go together to make words.
- Through explicit and systematic instruction paired with repeated practice, students’ decoding becomes more automatic.
- Once students can decode words without much cognitive load, this leads to fluent reading.
- With sufficient practice, reading (decoding) becomes automatic.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT FLORIDA’S B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

The Florida B.E.S.T. standards emphasize the importance of providing explicit instruction to help students read and understand grade-level academic vocabulary words. One important aspect of providing vocabulary instruction is determining which words require direct instruction and which words students can determine for themselves using context clues or morphology. (p. 198)

Look for standards alignment in each section of this guide.

WORD WORK – WORD ANALYSIS

Help students practice word-analysis skills by breaking down words encountered in the text. Guide students in identifying word parts to help them decode the word, and then add those parts to read the whole word smoothly.

ELA.5.F.1.3: Use knowledge of grade-appropriate phonics and word-analysis skills to decode words.

When students are trying to decode longer words, they can use morphology to help them break apart the word. Guide students in identifying **base words**, **prefixes**, and **suffixes**.

- **Base words** are single words that cannot be broken into smaller word parts and still have meaning, like the word *friendly*.
- A **prefix** is a word part that is added to the beginning of a base word, like *un* in the word *unfriendly*. Prefixes have meaning and will change the meaning of the base word when added.
- A **suffix** is a word part that is added to the end of a base word, like *ly* in the word *friendly*. Suffixes have meaning and will change the meaning of the base word when added.

Practice identifying **base words**, **prefixes**, and **suffixes** using the following words from the book.

shouted (p. 32)

unusual (p. 36)

disappearing (p. 5)

Model:

- Display the word *shouted*.
- Say the word and ask students to repeat it.
- Cover the *ed* in *shouted* and say, "The base word in *shouted* is *shout*."
- Then cover the word *shout* and say, "The suffix in *shouted* is *ed*."
- Say, "Now I am going to blend the word parts together to read the word *shouted*." (Run your finger under the word as you read it.)

Guided Practice:

- Display the word *unusual*.
- Say the word and ask students to repeat it.
- Cover the *un* and say, "What is the base word in *unusual*?" (*usual*)
- Then say, "If *usual* is the base word, what is the prefix in *unusual*?" (*un*)
- Say, "Now blend the word parts to read the whole word."
- Repeat the steps for *disappearing*.
 - The base word in *disappearing* is *appear*, the prefix is *dis*, and the suffix is *ing*.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

When teaching word parts, students must understand how all the parts work together to change and alter words. Explicitly teach the terms prefix, suffix, and root word to students. Then create opportunities for them to apply this knowledge. Consider using a pocket chart or whiteboards to guide students in manipulating word parts to change and make new words. Another option would be to write different word parts on index cards and have students work together to make real words.

TALK ABOUT NEW AND INTERESTING WORDS

To increase students' vocabulary knowledge, provide them with explicit instruction around Tier Two vocabulary words. One piece of explicit vocabulary instruction includes providing student-friendly definitions to commonly encountered academic-level words that can help them in making meaning of the text.

ELA.5.V.1.1: Recognize and appropriately use grade-level academic vocabulary in speaking and writing.

raging (p. 1): When you describe something as **raging**, you are generally describing something that is bad and very intense. The flood waters are not gentle, and they **rage** around Charlie.

monstrous (p. 3): If something is described as **monstrous**, that means that it is extremely large and unpleasant. The **monstrous** waves are destroying the city of Galveston.

overflow (p. 17): **Overflow** means to flow over something, spill, or flood. Charlie and Sarah enjoy swimming in the **overflow** that comes from the ocean after a storm.

mirage (p. 49): A **mirage** is an illusion that makes an image of something look like it is really there, but it's not. The waves that Charlie sees are so big they seem like a **mirage**.

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Talk with students about Tier One synonyms for the Tier Two words you have chosen to teach explicitly. Also, encourage ELL students to think of a word or phrase in their native language that corresponds to the meaning of the word in English.

Example: Overflow – Tier One synonyms (spill, flood)

READ FOR MEANING – ANALYZING CONFLICT

Students need to develop their reading comprehension skills so they can understand, analyze, and interpret the information being read. Students can develop their reading comprehension skills by learning how to analyze the development of a character, describe their perspectives, and explain the lessons they learn from their experiences. Good readers can then make connections between the characters in the story and the world they live in.

- **ELA.5.R.1.1: Analyze how setting, events, conflict, and characterization contribute to the plot in a literary text.**
- **ELA.5.R.1.2: Explain the development of states or implied theme(s) throughout a literary text.**
- **ELA.5.R.1.3: Describe how an author develops a character’s perspective in a literary text.**

Before:

Explain to students that characters can encounter internal and external conflicts throughout a story.

- Internal conflict takes place inside the mind of a character and causes them to struggle with things, like their feelings or making a tough decision. Internal conflict is known as person vs. self.
- External conflict refers to a struggle between the character and an outside force, such as another person or nature. These types of conflicts are known as person vs. person and person vs. nature.

While reading, students will practice identifying and analyzing each type of conflict to learn more about Charlie’s character, perspective, and lessons learned through his experiences with the Galveston hurricane.

During: Analyzing Conflict

To help students analyze the different conflicts presented in the text, the chapters have been intentionally chunked. Chunking text is a reading comprehension skill that helps readers to focus on a chunk of text to derive meaning. Students will fill out the following chart for each chunk of chapters. Use the questions below to help guide your discussion when reading.

- What conflict does Charlie face in these chapters? What evidence from the text supports your thinking?
- How does Charlie respond to the conflict he encounters? What words, actions, thoughts, and/or feelings does Charlie have about the conflict?
- What type of conflict does this represent? Internal (person vs. self) or external (person vs. person or person vs. nature)?

Chapters	What is the conflict in this chapter(s)?	How does Charlie respond to the conflict?	What type of conflict is this?
Ch. 2 - 3			
Ch. 6 - 9			
Ch. 10 - 13			
Ch. 1 & Ch. 15 - 17			
Ch. 19			

READ FOR MEANING – ANALYZING CONFLICT

Teacher Key:

Ch. 2 – 3: Charlie struggles to learn magic, person vs. self (internal)

Ch. 6 – 9: Charlie’s conflict with Gordon Potts, person vs. person (external)

Ch. 10 – 13: Charlie struggles to believe if the storm is a hurricane, person vs. self (internal)

Ch. 15 – 17: Charlie’s encounter with the hurricane, person vs. nature (external)

Ch. 19: Charlie is affected by the storm, person vs. self (internal)

After: Perspective and Theme

- **Perspective:**

- How does Charlie’s perspective of hurricanes change from the beginning of the story to the end? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- How does Charlie’s perspective of Gordon Potts change from the beginning to the end of the story? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- How does Charlie’s perspective of himself change from the beginning of the story to the end? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

- **Development of Theme:**

- What are some of the lessons that Charlie learns throughout the story?
- What do you think the author wants you to learn from this story?
- Connecting with the theme is when we can take the lessons that the character learns and apply the lesson to our own lives. How can you apply the lessons from the story to your life? What is something that you learned from Charlie?
- How do Charlie’s actions, thoughts, and feelings help you to determine the different themes in the story?

ELL and SWD suggestion:

Students can receive a graphic organizer with pre-filled-out information. The organizer could include the conflict column already filled out, which would allow them to focus on how Charlie responds to the conflict. Students should practice making connections to the conflict by relating it to their own lives. When have they had a conflict with themselves, another person, and/or nature? Allow students to explore these concepts through their own personal connections.