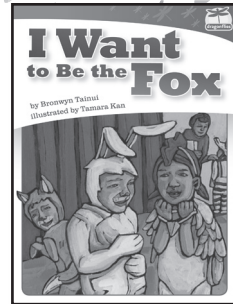


# I Want to Be the Fox

by Bronwyn Tainui

illustrated by Tamara Kan



## Overview

In this narrative, Josh is disappointed when he is given the part of the rabbit in the school play, but no one seems to understand his problem. Finally, Josh comes up with a way to make the best of the situation.

## Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of understanding the author's purpose; summarising the main ideas; and interpreting and analysing characters' feelings, relationships, and actions. It's a good model of a narrative with a satisfying and positive conclusion. The lively dialogue encourages expressive reading.

## Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the themes of co-operation and determination, of overcoming challenges, and of self-discovery
- the relationships between the characters and the different points of view
- the way Josh resolves the situation
- the high proportion of dialogue
- the strong narrative structure and the satisfying ending
- the indicators of time – *the next day, that evening, when, on the night, soon, later*
- the change in pace from page 8 once Josh has made his decision
- the large number of lively verbs – *talked, hopped, bobbed, flapped, tricked, laughed, cheered, clapped*
- the imperative verbs – *hop, make, try*
- the variety of word endings – *ed, ing, er*
- the comparative adjectives – *higher, faster, later*
- the irregular past-tense verbs – *had, said, chose, put*
- the contractions – *couldn't, didn't, don't, that's, I'd, I'll, you'll, you're*
- the singular and plural forms on page 4 – *that* and *those*, and *this* and *these*
- the initial consonant blends – *cl, fl, pl, sch, sm, st, tr*
- the digraphs -ch – *chose, children, cheered*; -gh – *laugh, laughed, laughs*
- the doubled consonants – *hopped, bobbed, flapped, clapped*
- the possessive apostrophe – *Josh's*
- the "y" with an "ee" sound – *funny, everyone, silly*; with a long "i" sound – *try, why*
- the "ight" rime – *right, night*

## Setting the scene

Tell the students that they're going to read a story about a boy who solves the problem of having to do something he doesn't want to. *Think about a time when you had to do something that you didn't want to. Remember how you felt ...* You may need to give a personal example to stimulate the discussion.

Discuss the cover. Read the title and establish that the students are putting on a play. *Who do you think is telling the story?* Prompt the students to use the illustration to clarify that it isn't the fox. Ask the students to predict the problem. *Let's read and check.*

## The first reading

Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

**Back cover** – Read aloud the preview question. Help the students to make connections with the preview question and their own experiences.

Listen as the students read the text independently, offering support as necessary. Allow plenty of opportunities for discussion.

**Page 3** – If necessary, reassure the students about the end sound in “laugh”. Have the students review their predictions about the problem. *Why would he want to be the fox?* Refer to “tricky fox” stories like *The Gingerbread Man* and *Brer Fox*. *What does Emma think?* Ask the students to discuss with a partner what might happen next.

**Page 4** – Ask the students to read this page silently. Talk about how they worked out the teacher’s name. Remind them of the strategy of looking for the biggest familiar chunk in an unknown word. *What is Mrs Maxwell trying to do? How would she say this?* If necessary, model her tone.

**Page 5** – *How might Mrs Maxwell say this?* If necessary, read the dialogue expressively together.

**Page 6** – *What time is it now? How do you know?* Help the students draw on their knowledge of spoken English to work out or cross-check “chose”. *Do you agree with Dad?*

**Page 7** – Ask the students to read this page silently. *What’s happening here?* If necessary, chunk “fan-tas-tic” on the board. *I wonder if Josh’s idea will work?*

**Page 8** – *How is Josh feeling? Is his idea working?*

**Page 9** – Check that the students understand that time has passed and that they know the meaning of “stage”. *What do you notice about what Josh is saying?* If necessary, prompt the students to refer back to his comments on page 3. *Is Emma right?*

**Page 10 to 12** – You may need to clarify that “on stage”, not “on the stage”, is correct. *What did everyone think? How did you infer that? I wonder if Josh would still like to be the fox.*

Support the students to think critically and explore the themes in this text. *Why do you think the author wrote this story?* You could touch on the author’s messages about solving problems and overcoming challenges and about co-operation and determination. You could discuss how everyone but Josh seems to recognise his talent and the implication (from page 8) that Josh has realised this, too. *So perhaps the author is suggesting that other people can help you to do things you didn’t know you could do.*

## Ideas for revisiting the text (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Listen to the students reread the text, observing their fluency and expressiveness, especially as they read the dialogue. If the students are managing well and show a good understanding of the text, they are probably ready to move on to the Orange level.
- Focus on the characters and their relationships. *What kind of person is Josh? Emma? Mrs Maxwell? Why do you think that?* Record and discuss the students’ ideas.
- Identify the indicators of time. Talk about how they help the reader and record them on a classroom chart as models for the students’ writing.

- In pairs, have the students retell the story. Invite them to share their retellings so that you can record the main events on a chart. Use the chart to identify the turning point: *When do you think things changed? Was Josh's idea a good one?*
- Reread pages 7 and 8 to the students and discuss the contrast in pace. Explore how the author creates a feeling of speed and action once Josh has made his decision, for example, the use of repetition, the series of short, snappy sentences, and the lively verbs on page 8.
- If you have students for whom English is a second language, you could collect together some small objects and practise the use of the terms (determiners) "that", "those", "this", and "these". Explain and model the correct use, for example, "This car is red" for a single object and "These cars are red" for a group of objects. Have the students select objects and practise creating oral sentences, then use "that" and "those" to refer to objects that are farther away. Finish by rereading page 4 together and discussing the characters' use of these terms.
- Focus on the initial consonant blends or digraphs that the students may be unsure of. List others that start the same way. You could talk about the "f" sound for "gh" in "laugh" and mention some other examples, such as "enough" or "tough".
- On the board, list the verbs in the text that end in "ed". Help the students identify the root words. Circle those verbs that double the consonant when "ed" is added. Start a list so that the pattern of doubling the consonant after a short vowel, is apparent.
- Focus on the irregular past-tense verbs. Explain that some verbs can't have "ed" added to them and that the students need to use their knowledge of spoken English to help them. *Does "putted" sound right? Do we say "choose-ed"?* For the students whom English is a second language, who are less likely to be able to draw on their knowledge of English, try to use these verbs often in subsequent conversations and reading and writing sessions.
- Talk about the contractions. Review the idea that they make speech sound more natural.
- Write "faster", "higher", and "later" on the board. *What's the same about these words?* Identify the root words and make up oral sentences together to draw out the idea of comparisons – "I can run fast, but Sam can run faster."
- Write "every", "funny", and "silly" on the board. *What do you notice about the sounds at the end of these words?* Make a list of other words that end with "y" as an "ee" sound. You could compare these words with "try" and "why", where "y" has a long "i" sound.
- Ask the students to spell "night" or "right" from memory. Locate "night" and "right" in the text to verify their attempt, and isolate the "ight" rime. *If you can spell "night", can you work out how to spell "tight"? What about "flight"?* Encourage them to learn the "ight" rime off by heart.

### **Suggestions for further activities**

- Read and discuss other stories about a tricky fox, for example, the traditional story of *The Gingerbread Man*.
- Practise readers' theatre with groups of five students (a narrator, Josh, Emma, Mrs Maxwell, and Dad). Have the students take turns in each role.
- Have the students illustrate a key part of the story and write or dictate a caption saying why that part is important.

- Together, create a timeline of the events in the story and add descriptions of Josh's feelings to show how they changed.
- BLM word activity: generate other words using their knowledge of a rime

The students can identify the rime "ight" in the story (right, night). They can write all the words they know that have the "ight" rime. They can then write four words in sentences.

- BLM comprehension activity: relate the story to own experiences

The students can discuss a time when they have been in a similar situation to Josh. Encourage them to talk about how they felt and behaved and the outcome. They can record their experiences through illustrations and brief descriptions on the storyboard provided.