LESSON 2 TEACHER'S GUIDE
The Case of the Missing Grass
by Jane Bingley

Fountas-Pinnell Level O
Fantasy

Selection Summary
Police officer Rich Oster, an ostrich, uses footprint clues to arrest the supposed culprit who has caused grass to disappear throughout town: Hattie Hipster, the hippo. Although her lawyer's defense is Hattie's honest face, Hattie tearfully admits her guilt. Instead of sending Hattie to jail, the judge agrees to limit her grass-eating to the riverbank.

Characteristics of the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Third person narrative, Organized chronologically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Detective and clues, Courtroom trial, Confession of guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>Light humor adds to the courtroom drama, Challenging assumptions can be difficult to do, Appearances can be deceiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>Proper names reflect type of animal: Hattie Hipster is a hippo; Kanga Kraft is a kangaroo; Rich Oster is an ostrich, Unexpected plot outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>Simple, compound, and complex sentences, Dialogue with two or three speakers, each assigned, Commas of address in dialogue: “Don’t worry, Hattie,” Chaz said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Terms often found in detective fiction: investigate, mysterious, identity, culprit, “under arrest,” innocent, courthouse, “a very strong case,” charges, argument, “take the stand,” criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Many multisyllable words with varied syllable patterns, such as investigate, fascinating, stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Drawings convey lively, humorous tone of story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>Thirteen pages with art on every page</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Case of the Missing Grass by Jane Bingley

Build Background
Have students tell what they expect to find in a story about a crime, a detective, and a trial. Build interest by asking a question such as the following: What happens at a trial? Read the title and author, and talk about the cover illustration. Remind students that animals that talk and act like people are in the kind of story called a fantasy.

Introduce the Text
Guide students through the text, noting important ideas and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so that they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

- **Pages 2–3**: Tell students that this story shows what happens when a police officer uses clues to make an arrest.
  
  **Suggested language**: Turn to pages 2 and 3 of this book. The pictures show a crime scene. Listen to what Kanga the kangaroo says when she calls the police: “You won’t believe it! Every blade of grass has been stolen!” What is the crime? What is Officer Rich Oster, the detective, examining?

- **Page 5**: Draw attention to the title of the book Officer Rich is reading in the illustration. The title is Animal Footprints. How do you think the book will help the officer figure out the criminal? In the last sentence on the page, Officer Rich says that he knows the identity of the culprit. What does he mean?

- **Page 7**: Explain that Hattie the hippo is being arrested although Chaz the chipmunk thinks she will be proven innocent. Why might the chipmunk think his friend is innocent of the crime?

- **Pages 8–9**: Draw attention to the pictures on pages 8 and 9. The trial has begun! Ziggy the zebra is Hattie’s lawyer, and the giraffe is Judge Longneck. Listen to how Ziggy defends Hattie against the serious charges: “I mean, just look at her. She has such an honest face!” Do you think Hattie will be found innocent of the charges against her? Why or why not?

  Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out how the case of the missing grass is solved.

Expand Your Vocabulary
- **admitted** – made known, p. 12
- **charges** – n. claims of wrongdoing, p. 9
- **compromise** – n. a settlement of an argument, p. 13
- **criminal** – n. a person who has committed a crime, p. 12
- **culprit** – one accused of a crime, p. 5
- **innocent** – free from guilt or blame, p. 7
- **investigate** – to study by close examination, p. 2
Read
Have students read *The Case of the Missing Grass* silently while you listen to individual students read. Support their problem solving and fluency as needed.

Remind students to use the Infer/Predict strategy and figure out more about the story as they read.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response
Invite students to share their personal responses to the story.

*Suggested language:* Did this story turn out the way you thought it would? Why or why not?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Police Officer Rich Oster matches footprints at the missing-grass crime scenes to the feet of Hattie Hipster and arrests her for eating all the grass.</td>
<td>• Even someone who is honest might break the law.</td>
<td>• Humorous dialogue keeps the story light and lively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hattie’s honest face makes her seem innocent, but she admits her guilt at her trial.</td>
<td>• If you admit your mistake, your punishment may be less harsh.</td>
<td>• Descriptions of Hattie help readers picture how ashamed she feels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hattie’s lawyer and the judge reach a compromise—Hattie promises to eat grass only along the river near her home.</td>
<td>• A story does not always follow an expected pattern.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Choices for Further Support

• **Fluency** Invite students to choose a passage from the text to read aloud. Remind them to read dialogue in a way that reflects aspects of the characters’ personalities or feelings.

• **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.

• **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Use the word *charges* on page 9 to help students understand that words can have multiple meanings. Have students write sentences to show at least three different meanings of *charges*. 

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Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 2.9.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Conclusions
Tell students that they can put together details in the story to figure out ideas that the author doesn’t tell them directly. Model the skill, using this Think Aloud:

Think Aloud

On page 2, Officer Rich Oster stares closely at holes in the dirt. On page 4, he uses a ruler to measure deep dents in the dirt. On page 5, he flips through a book called Animal Footprints. I can use these details to figure this out: Officer Rich Oster has found the footprints of an animal who was at every crime scene.

Practice the Skill
Have students write two sentences with details that support the conclusion that Hattie didn’t mean to commit a crime.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about what the characters do and why they act as they do.

Assessment Prompts
• In paragraph 1 on page 8, find the word that means the same as “not guilty.”
• What can the reader tell about Officer Rich from what he says on page 12?
• What is the promise that Hattie makes? Do you think she will keep it? Why or why not?
English Language Development

**Reading Support** Check regularly on students’ oral reading to determine accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

**Idioms** Explain the meaning of these idioms, and encourage students to use them in oral sentences: *stopped in their tracks* (page 5), *quite a crowd* (page 6), *couldn’t help myself* (page 11), *face lit up* (page 13), *broke into applause* (page 13), *from that day on* (page 14).

**Oral Language Development**

Check student comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches your students’ English proficiency level. **Speaker 1** is the teacher, **Speaker 2** is the student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Beginning/Early Intermediate</strong></th>
<th><strong>Intermediate</strong></th>
<th><strong>Early Advanced/Advanced</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What is the crime in the story?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Why does Officer Rich think Hattie stole the grass?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Why doesn’t Hattie go to jail?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> eating grass</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> The footprints in the dirt match Hattie’s feet.</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> Officer Rich says that it wouldn’t be fair to send her to jail, where she would never have her favorite food. The judge agrees and says that Hattie should be free, but she should eat grass only by the river.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What did Hattie Hipster the hippo do?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Why doesn’t anyone else think that Hattie is guilty?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> She has an honest face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> She ate the grass.</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> She has an honest face.</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> She has an honest face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What clues did Hattie leave behind?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What does Hattie admit?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> She ate the grass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> footprints</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> footprints</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> footprints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responding**

**Text to Text** Were you surprised by the ending of this story? Think of another story you know with a surprise ending. Did the authors of each story do a good job of surprising you? Write two paragraphs giving your opinion about this.

**Critical Thinking**

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses shown.

1. **Think within the text** What caused the holes in the ground that Officer Rich discovers?
   - Hattie Hipster’s footprints caused the holes.

2. **Think within the text** Why do the citizens of the town have difficulty believing that Hattie could be guilty?
   - Hattie has an honest face.

3. **Think beyond the text** Do you think Hattie should have gone to jail for stealing the grass? Why or why not?
   - Responses will vary.

4. **Think about the text** Why did Officer Rich conclude that Hattie must be guilty of stealing the grass?
   - Officer Rich found hippo footprints at each crime scene. He knew they were the same size as Hattie’s feet.

**Making Connections** In *The Case of the Missing Grass*, Hattie honestly keeps her town going by feeding the animals. Think of an experience you have had where honesty was rewarded. Describe the situation.

With your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.

**Name** __________________________  **Date** ___________

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**Lesson 2: The Case of the Missing Grass**

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The Case of the Missing Grass

Thinking Beyond the Text
Read the paragraph. Then write the news report below.

Imagine you are a television news reporter at the trial of Hattie Hipster. Write a news report about the trial. Tell what happened. Use details from the story in your news report.
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. Think within the text  What caused the holes in the ground that Officer Rich discovers?

2. Think within the text  Why do the citizens of the town have difficulty believing that Hattie could be guilty?

3. Think beyond the text  Do you think Hattie should have gone to jail for stealing the grass? Why or why not?

4. Think about the text  Why did Officer Rich conclude that Hattie must be guilty of stealing the grass?

Making Connections  In *The Case of the Missing Grass*, Hattie’s honesty keeps her from going to jail. Think of an experience you have had when honesty was rewarded. Describe the situation.

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
# The Case of the Missing Grass

## LEVEL O

### Running Record Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>page</th>
<th>Selection Text</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Self-Corrections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 12   | “Well, Officer Rich,” Judge Longneck said, “you were right all along. Thanks to your good police work, this criminal will go straight to jail!”  

But Officer Rich had another idea. “Hmm,” he said. “Well, Your Honor, I don’t know.”  

“What do you mean, you don’t know?” demanded Judge Longneck. “The hippo has admitted her guilt!”  

“Well, yes, Your Honor,” Officer Rich said. “But the truth is, we can’t really blame her. Grass is a hippo’s favorite food. It doesn’t seem right to send her to jail, where there is no grass. We should be grateful she was so honest about her mistake.” | | |

**Comments:**

**Accuracy Rate**

\[
\text{Accuracy Rate} = \left( \frac{\text{# words read correctly}}{102} \times 100 \right)\% 
\]

**Total Self-Corrections**

8

### Behavior, Code, and Error Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read word correctly</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="check" /> cat</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated word, sentence, or phrase</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-corrects</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word told</td>
<td><img src="#" alt="cat" /></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>