LESSON 15 TEACHER’S GUIDE

Trouble with Triplets
by Alexandra Behr

Fountas-Pinnell Level M
Humorous Fiction

Selection Summary
Carlo likes to help his big sister Dora baby-sit, except when it is for the Tipton triplets. As expected, trouble ensues when the triplets mix up the pieces of a quilt their Mom is making. But Carlo comes up with a creative solution that enables Mom to win the contest after all—just not with the design she originally planned.

Characteristics of the Text

| Genre | • Humorous Fiction |
| Text Structure | • Third-person narrative |
| | • Plot with one detailed episode |
| | • Events presented chronologically |
| Content | • The challenges of baby-sitting |
| Themes and Ideas | • Sibling relationships |
| | • Taking care of children |
| | • Creative problem-solving |
| Language and Literary Features | • Conversational language includes sentence fragments: Or climb on the Wongs’ tree fort. |
| | • Descriptive language sets the scene: …Dora and Carlo stepped over flatted balls and battered trucks to get to the Tiptons’ front porch. |
| Sentence Complexity | • Much of the story is told through dialogue. |
| | • Dashes used throughout: But the triplets were nowhere to be seen—or heard; hyphens: “Come-With-Me Carlo”; and ellipses: “Uh…I’m busy” |
| Vocabulary | • Metaphors such as: if you can imagine wild pigs hosting a party |
| | • Idioms such as: tag along |
| | • Terms related to quilt-making, such as: fabric, cotton, flannel |
| Words | • Contractions used for natural language |
| Illustrations | • One half- or full-page illustration per spread |
| Book and Print Features | • Thirteen pages of text, some without illustrations |
| | • First page includes decorative initial capital and an introductory paragraph set apart by skipping extra lines. |

Trouble with Triplets by Alexandra Behr

Build Background
Help students use their knowledge about caring for younger children to understand the story. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: Have you ever had to help watch a three-year-old child? What if you had to watch three of them at once? Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Ask students to point out details on the cover that suggest this story is humorous fiction.

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

Pages 2–3: Explain that this is a story about two children who baby-sit for triplets. Make sure that children understand that triplets are three siblings born at the same time.
Suggested language: Turn to page 3. This story is about Dora and her younger brother Carlo. Carlo likes to help Dora baby-sit—except when it is for the Tipton triplets! Why might Carlo not want to help baby-sit for these children?

Pages 4–5: Read the last sentence on page 4: The other two were dumping the ingredients for waffles all over the floor. What ingredients do you see in the picture that tell you what waffles are made with?

Pages 8–9: The triplet's mother is making a quilt to enter into a contest. Before sewing, she puts the pieces of fabric on a board in the garage to see how the design looks. Why might this become a problem if the triplets get into the garage?

Pages 10–11: Point out the look on Dora’s face as she looks at the twins in the garage. How do you think she feels?

Page 12: Turn to page 12. Carlo recommended a way to fix the situation. What might Carlo suggest to solve the problem?

Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out how the problem in the garage is solved.

Target Vocabulary
anxiously – with worry, fear, or impatience, p. 8
cross – in a bad mood, or grouchy, p. 10
degrees – units used to measure temperature, p. 10
festive – joyous, p. 8
ingredients – the things included in a recipe, p. 4
recommended – suggested, p. 12
remarked – spoke about something, p. 6
tense – nervous or anxious, p. 8
Read
Have students read *Trouble with Triplets* 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 use clues to figure out more about the story.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

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

*Suggested language:* Do you think Carlo helped Dora with her baby-sitting job? 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>Carlo agrees to help his big sister Dora baby-sit triplets.</td>
<td>Sibling relationships</td>
<td>Natural language helps the characters come alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The triplets mess up a quilt that their mother was making.</td>
<td>Taking care of children</td>
<td>Descriptive language paints a vivid picture of the scenes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlo has the triplets make a new design for the quilt.</td>
<td>Creative problem-solving</td>
<td>Cartoon-like illustrations help students see the humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Tipton wins the quilt contest.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The author's attitude is that baby-sitting can be quite a challenge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Choices for Further Support**

- **Fluency** Invite students to choose a passage from the text to act out. Remind them to read the dialogue the way the characters might really sound, paying special attention to the punctuation in split dialogue.

- **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 forming plurals, using examples from the text. Remind students that most plurals are formed by adding –s or –es. For example, the plural of *triplet* is *triplets* (page 2). Review with them that some words have irregular plurals. For example, the plural of *person* is *people* (page 5). Have students find two more examples of regular and irregular plurals in the text.
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 15.8.

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

Understanding Characters
Remind students that understanding why characters act as they do can help us better understand the story. Model the skill, using this Think Aloud:

Think Aloud

Carlo is a careful babysitter. On page 8, he takes a deep breath when he sees Ricky dart out the back door. So he knows that little kids must be watched every minute! He runs right out after Ricky, to make sure that Ricky doesn’t get hurt or get into trouble. That makes Carlo a careful babysitter.

Practice the Skill
Encourage students to tell other examples from this story that show what a careful babysitter Carlo is.

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 their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts
• Tell one word that best describes the triplets.
• Find the sentence on page 8 that tells how the quilt looked after the triplets got to it.
• Complete this sentence in your own words: The opening paragraphs on page 2 are mainly about ________________________________________________.
English Language Development

Reading Support Make sure the text matches the student’s reading level. Language and content should be accessible with regular teaching support.

Vocabulary The story includes descriptions that might be difficult for students. Explain that phrases such as …wild pigs hosting a party and The bulldozer’s name was Ricky (page 8) are examples of figurative language.

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>Beginning/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Early Advanced/ Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Who is Carlo?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Why does Carlo like to tag along when Dora baby-sits?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What is the problem in the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> Carlo’s little brother</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> He gets to do things that he likes, such as watching TV.</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> The triplets mess up the design for their mother’s quilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> Who do Dora and Carlo baby-sit for?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> How do the triplets get into trouble?</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> How is the problem solved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> The Tipton triplets</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> They get into the garage and mess up their mother’s quilt design.</td>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> Dora and Carlo help the boys make a new design for the quilt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 1:</strong> What do the triplets mess up?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker 2:</strong> Mrs. Tipton’s quilt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responding

Understanding

Characters: Carlo is a good baby-sitter. But you need to use story details as clues to figure that out. Copy the chart below. Then fill in story details that tell you what Carlo is like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlo</td>
<td>Carlo is a good baby-sitter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text to Self: Carlo, his sister, and the triplets put together a quilt design. What is a job or hobby you can do? Write a set of instructions that tell someone else how to do this.

Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text:** How does Dora get Carlo to go with her to baby-sit the triplets? (Use evidence from the text to support your answer.)

2. **Think within the text:** Why is Carlo left to look after the triplets? (Use evidence from the text to support your answer.)

3. **Think beyond the text:** Have you had any experience with a baby-sitter, or have you ever helped look after a younger child? Tell what happened.

4. **Think about the text:** How do you think Dora and Carlo felt before Mrs. Tipton got home? Did their feelings change after she arrived?

Making Connections: In Trouble with Triplets, Dora and Carlo have a problem that they can solve. What is another story you have read in which the characters solve a problem? Which story did you enjoy more? Why?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.

Grade 3
© Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company

Lesson 15: Trouble with Triplets
Trouble with Triplets

Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write a paragraph answering the following questions.

This story has a big problem that Carlo and Dora must solve. Do you think they did a good job solving the problem? Why or why not? Use details from the story to support your opinion.
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. **Think within the text**  How does Dora get Carlo to go with her to baby-sit the triplets?

2. **Think within the text**  Why is Carlo left to look after the triplets?

3. **Think beyond the text**  Have you had an experience with a baby-sitter, or have you ever helped look after a smaller child? Tell what happened.

4. **Think about the text**  How do you think Dora and Carlo felt before Mrs. Tipton got home? Did their feelings change after she arrived?

**Making Connections**  In *Trouble with Triplets*, Dora and Carlo have a problem that they are able to solve. What is another story you have read in which the characters solve a problem? Which story did you enjoy more? Why?

**Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.**
Trouble with Triplets • LEVEL M

Carlo felt tense. He anxiously tiptoed inside the garage. That’s where Mrs. Tipton made her quilts.

The garage looked festive, if you can imagine wild pigs hosting a party. Mrs. Tipton had placed cut-up pieces of fabric on a board on the garage wall. It was how she planned her quilts.

The quilt that was up there was the one Mrs. Tipton was making for the contest! Before she left, it had looked like a nice picture of mountains and beaches. Carlo could tell because there was a photo of it on the wall next to the board.

Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read word correctly</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated word, sentence, or phrase</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accuracy Rate (Words read correctly/99 × 100)

Total Self-Corrections

Lesson 15: Trouble with Triplets