Teacher's guide

the big rusty nail

words from Daddy's mouth

The Big Rusty Nail

By Lily Burgess

Illustrated by Kate Hawthorne

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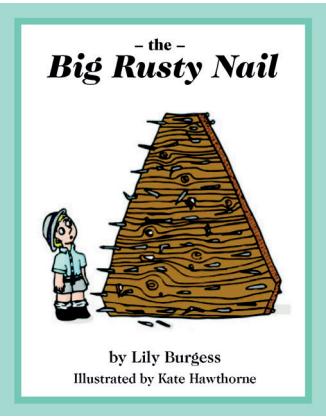

Teachers' Notes

Prepared and written by a teacher with experience in both whole class and special education

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The Big Rusty Nail

1 Synopsis

The Big Rusty Nail is a tale about a young boy who accidentally stabbed his arm on a rusty nail, while attempting to retrieve a misplaced ball in the school sports room. Although the wound is serious, the other students try to convince him not to tell the teachers.

2 Background

This story (although somewhat embellished) is based on an actual event. It took place in the 1980's, in the Australian Capital Territory. It is one in a series of stories. Luckily, this story has a happy ending, and the wound healed without medical intervention. However, the consequences of not seeking medical help could have been dire.

3 Themes

Reminiscing about childhood experiences:

- Student responsibilities;
- Standing up to peer pressure;
- Making decisions about appropriate and inappropriate behaviours; and
- The need to tell adults when a mishap occurs.

4 Writing style

This story is written in the conversational style of a father recounting a childhood event to his daughters, as told through the voice his daughter, Lily.

As the text involves some narration and considerable dialogue, the tenses vary accordingly.

Direct speech is marked by quotation marks (inverted commas). Where there is extended direct speech, continuing over more than one paragraph, the text follows the convention of beginning each paragraph with quotation marks, but only using closing quotation marks at the conclusion of a section of dialogue.

The story also includes a series of digressions, as the father explains concepts and interacts with his daughters.

5 Study notes

To introduce the story:

a Ask the students if their parents/ grandparents have ever told stories about their childhood.

- Explain that this is a story a father tells to his daughters.
- Read the introductory notes on Page 4.
- Show students the front cover, read the title, ask them to predict what a story about rusty nail might entail, and what the pictured brown triangular object might be.

- Ask students what they know about rusty nails (What would make a nail go rusty? What would happen if they cut themselves on a rusty nail?…)
- Read the story for enjoyment.

Following the reading of the story:

b Discuss the two layers to the story (Dad telling a story to his daughters, and the story about the rusty nail). Discuss this with reference to the illustration on Page 14.

- Identify the main characters in each layer (Dad, his daughters Stephanie, Jaz and Mum in the first layer, and Dad as a young boy, his school friends and teachers in the second layer).
- Ask the students to draw two pictures – one depicting the family listening to Dad telling the story, and the other, showing Dad as a young boy, injuring himself on a rusty nail.
- Create a story line for the rusty nail story.
- Identify the digressions (early computers, responsibilities in the final year of Primary school, sports and games, the rusty car floor…).
- Discuss how the digressions help to provide context and background to the main story.

6 Activities

- Ask students to record or video a parent or grandparent re-telling a story from their childhood.

- Invite a parent or grandparent to the school to retell a childhood experience (Grandparent Day activity).
- Discuss whether or not the students were responsible in deciding not to tell the teacher about the wound.
- Discuss whether the alternative the students chose (reporting a dangerous piece of equipment) was a responsible decision.

7 Drama

Roll-play alternative endings, using hypotheticals such as:

a The students tell the teachers about the injured arm, and they arrange appropriate medical attention.

- TThe wound becomes infected, and the student has to go to hospital.

8 Mathematics

a Measurement – various sizes, heights and lengths are mentioned (the size of the sports room [p. 11], the height of the triangular piece of wood [p. 18], and the size of the wooden spikes [p. 18]). Measure/pace these out in the playground.

b Do a stock-take of the school sports room equipment.

- Graph the number of balls, skipping ropes, hoops etc.
- Consider what new pieces of equipment the school might need.

9 Writing

Make a wish list of new items for the school sports room.

- Write a persuasive argument for these items; and
- Make diary entries describing the events that took place in the story

10 Health

- Discuss wound care, the consequences of a wound becoming infected, and the need for anti-tetanus injections.

11 Science

- Rust (or oxidation) occurs when iron comes into contact with moisture and air. Carry out experiments to investigate how and why an iron nail becomes rusty.
- For some suggested experiments see:

http://www.msm.cam.ac.uk/SeeK/rustynails.htm
http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/practical-chemistry/causes-rusting
http://www.terrificscience.org/lessonpdfs/nailingrust.pdf

12 About the author

About how this all began (and why Lily Burgess is the author on the cover of the books)

By Matthew Burgess

Being a full time lawyer, Matthew needed a creative outlet, and in 2010, he began writing business books for other professional service providers.

However there was still something missing. His wife said she married him because he made her laugh with the crazy stories he told her when they first met and that he should write a book.

Many years later they began to raise 1, then 2, then 3 and finally 4, precious girls and Matthew started to share stories of his childhood with his children.

It soon became one of the family's favourite pastimes. Often embellished and seldom kept on track the girls would be absorbed. What was fact became blurred in the magic of the stories told.

A strong undertone in the stories are various life lessons, while also ensuring a healthy dose of humour and role playing.

When his third daughter, Lily, was about four years old, she said "Daddy, please tell me another story from your mouth".

From that day on, the stories became known as "Words from Daddy's mouth". Over time, the stories became known as "Lily's stories". It was therefore a natural progression that Lily Burgess would became the pseudonym for the authoring of the children books to help distinguish them from his other publications.

With so many stories, a list was created to remember them all (at last count the list was nearing 500). So over time a game developed where the girls would choose a number from the list. Whatever story related to the number chosen would be the story that would be told.

13 About the illustrator

Kate Hawthorne has two Bachelors degrees, one in Fine Arts and one in Arts & Sciences. She illustrates primarily for theatre and graphic novels, though in the past she has illustrated for her college newspaper, posters, and many other contests.

Below are her steps for illustrating The Big Rusty Nail and all of the books in this series. The steps below are very common in the industry for illustrators and graphic novelists to employ. However different illustrators may make different choices at each step based on the story and style they are trying to achieve for their unique work.

1. First, the entire story is read to see what is to be drawn and what the overall story and progression of the pictures should be.
2. Then the story is divided into chunks of text that go together and that allows a good unique picture for.
3. Next Kate sketches the pages in pencil so that they can easily fixed or changed if necessary. This step tends to be the most daunting as it's creating something from scratch and getting all the proportions correct.
4. After that she slowly and precisely inks the pages with a micron pen, as ink cannot be erased, then there will be a clean copy of the lines that will be kept from the illustration. This also provides the best image to scan as scanners do not pick

up pencil very well. It's also harder to convert a pencil drawing into something that can color as they are very messy.

5. This next step has a lot of mini steps that include scanning the pages, several steps that convert them into a smooth digital copy, several more that clean up the lines and pages, and then the last part of this step is to color.

6. Next everything is shaded by hand from the smallest details to the largest objects so that the exact shading is created.

7. The final step is to add line shading, black lines/tic marks along where the shading goes. This adds extra character and design and makes the drawings seem more complete. Detailed work on this step such as putting the entire cross hatching on the school kids hats or filling in lines that got erased or covered during all the previous steps.

14 Worksheets available

- Word Search
- Word Study
- Crossword
- Comprehension

Name: _____

The Big Rusty Nail

Comprehension Sheet

Who is listening to Dad's story telling?

_____

_____

What were Dad's four responsibilities when he was in his last year of Primary School?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

List ten items in the school sports room.

_____

_____

_____

Describe what happened when the big rusty nail stabbed Dad's arm?

What would you do if a big rusty nail stabbed your arm?

What might have happened if Dad's wound had become infected?

What would you do if another student told you not to tell the teacher when you were injured?

What sort of game might 'British bulldogs 1, 2, 3' be?

Invent a set of rules for this game, and draw a picture of students playing it.

Name: _____

The Big Rusty Nail.

Word study. Write down meanings for these words.

responsible _____

speechless _____

demonstrate _____

explain _____

remember _____

giggle _____

bouncy _____

'Monitor' has several meanings. Draw a picture for each meaning.

Computer monitor	School monitor	Monitor lizard

Look at this word

nail

Break it into two sounds

n – ail

Now complete this table

Read words	Sound	Re - write word	Draw a picture
nail	n – ail		
sail	s – ail		
pail	p – ail		
tail	t – ail		
hail	h – ail		
jail	j – ail		
mail	m – ail		
quail	qu – ail		
rail	r – ail		

This story mentions several colours. Sometimes colours are used to describe a face - and tell us how that person feels.

Read words	Explain feelings	Draw pictures
red face		
white face		
green face		
blue face		

Word building - read and write these words

rust	rusts	rusty	rusted	rusting

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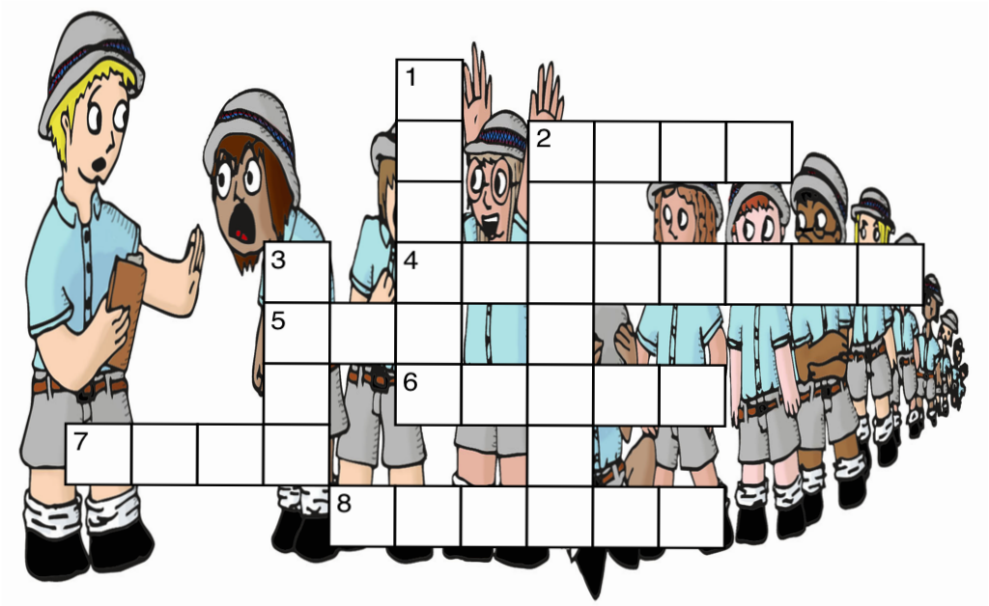

Across

2 Dad has a _____ on his arm.

4 'Lemonade Stand' was a _____ game.

5 How many computers were at Dad's school?

6 Dad scratched his arm on a _____ nail.

7 The bouncy balls were red and _____.

8 How many kids did it take to move the mattress?

Down

1 What was Dad's favourite sport?

2 What was the name of Dad's sports team?

3 The nail hit the _____ in Dad's arm.

The Big Rusty Nail

z	p	f	u	l	s	h	v	e	h	e	e	c	e	b
e	v	s	x	r	w	b	n	n	u	q	x	h	h	a
s	s	t	s	n	n	j	e	h	l	u	e	l	y	l
i	o	u	o	e	o	j	r	f	a	i	r	u	v	l
y	c	m	f	t	o	t	o	t	h	p	c	m	m	m
b	c	p	t	b	j	g	p	d	o	m	i	z	u	a
e	e	s	b	a	v	u	e	b	o	e	s	h	e	t
i	r	l	a	l	y	d	h	z	p	n	e	f	v	t
i	o	u	l	l	x	n	y	l	s	t	d	d	x	r
w	t	d	l	p	a	r	a	c	h	u	t	e	q	e
c	r	i	c	k	e	t	n	t	k	l	v	q	u	s
c	r	o	s	s	c	o	u	n	t	r	y	i	o	s
d	o	x	h	a	n	d	b	a	l	l	u	q	i	k
s	k	i	p	p	i	n	g	x	n	x	j	z	t	r
b	a	t	s	p	o	r	t	s	d	e	l	h	l	b

ball
crosscountry
handball
netball
rope
softball

bat
equipment
hulahoops
parachute
skipping
sports

cricket
exercise
mattress
quoit
soccer
stumps

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