

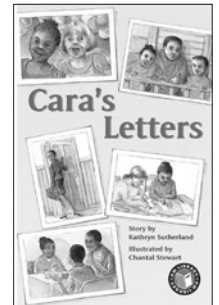
# Cara's Letters

PM Level 29

Sapphire

**Text Type** Recount

**Running Words** 2043



## Preparing for Guided Reading

### Orientation to the text

- Cara writes a letter to her best friend Megan telling her that she has just had the worst Christmas of her life. Her parents had a huge fight in the middle of Christmas dinner and split up! Cara is very sad, then things go from bad to worse when Cara's mother decides the best thing for them is to move back to the city. Cara feels lost and out of place in the city. Her room at her grandmother's house is not her style at all and her school is so big that she feels as though she will never make any friends. But fortunately she has Megan to confide in.

### Prior knowledge

- Observe the cover illustration and title. Ask students if there is anyone who they write to on a regular basis.
- Explain that this series of letters spans a one-year period. Ask students what sorts of significant events usually occur over the course of a year (e.g. change class, holidays).

## Building the Balanced Reader

### Grammatical conventions

- Highlight that this text is written in first person, because the author is writing about events that have taken place in her personal life.
- Discuss the use of capital letters to emphasise words within the text, e.g. *WE HAVE TO GO WITH HER!*
- Discuss various question types – open, closed and rhetorical.
- Discuss the prevalence of exclamation marks in the text, and why these have been used by the author.
- Draw students' attention to the use of irony and sarcasm in the text. Locate and discuss examples.

### Vocabulary

#### Key vocabulary

compost, congenial, conversation, embarrassed, eventually, expensive, farewell, gorgeous, gross, introduce, neglected, president, raved, restaurants, sophisticated, statistic, vacation

### Spelling

- Identify adverbs in the text that end in -ly, e.g. *finally, totally, especially, nearly, surely.*

### Visual Literacy

- Discuss how Cara's facial expressions change as the text progresses.
- Calculate how long Cara has been corresponding with Megan by referring to the dates on her letters.

### Focusing on the story – guided reading

- Read the first page out loud to students. Emphasise the capitalised text. Discuss the author's use of this text feature.
- Ask students to silently read to the end of Chapter 3, then ask, *Which significant events have recently occurred in Cara's life?*  
*Cara, her mother, her grandmother and James have all coped with their situation in different ways. What are they?*
- Encourage students to take on the role of Cara and write a letter to her father.
- Ask students to predict whether Cara's situation will be resolved.
- Ask students to silently read to the end of Chapter 5, then ask, *How do things improve for Cara? Cara writes to Megan about her friendship with Sarah. How do you think Cara feels about doing this? Why?*

### Comprehension

- How did Cara describe her bedroom at Grandma's house? (*Literal*)
- What is meant by a 'broken home'? (*Inferential*)
- Do you think Cara and Megan will continue to be good friends? Why? (*Applied Knowledge*)

### Follow-up activities

- Ask each student to select one of the letters written by Cara and respond on behalf of Megan. Piece these letters together to make a complete story of the communication between the two girls.
- In pairs, write a list of things that changed for Cara when her parents separated. Rank these in order of significance for Cara, starting with the most important event and finishing with the one that had the least impact.

## Learning Intentions

- We are learning to understand a range of concepts that occur in the text.
- We are learning to understand more complex vocabulary as it relates to specific events in the text.

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## Success Criteria

- I can identify and discuss concepts that occur in the text.
- I can understand and use more complex vocabulary when I discuss events that occurred in the text.

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## Guided Reading Notes

Student's name	Reading focus	Observations/notes	For follow-up