

Sarah's Story

PM Level 29

Sapphire

Text Type Narrative (Imaginative)

Running Words 7848



Preparing for Guided Reading

Prior knowledge

- Have students share knowledge about early settlers to Australia. Explain that not all European settlers were convicts, but that many young people like Sarah came of their own free will to start a new life, often escaping from great poverty.

Orientation to the text

- Sarah, an orphan in Ireland, is offered the opportunity to sail to the colony of New South Wales to start a new life as a free immigrant. Although the journey is harsh, Sarah learns to read, write and sew along the way – skills that help her find work when she arrives at the new colony. Before she goes off to her first job, she loses a sewing kit that she was awarded on the ship. It is found many years later by a pair of young volunteers, assisting an archaeological excavation.

Building the Balanced Reader

Grammatical conventions

- Have students look for similes in the text, and explain how they add beauty and meaning to the text, e.g. *like a little wallet*; *like the ghosts of mountains sliding silently by*.

Vocabulary

Key vocabulary

albatross, apprenticeship, archaeological, dormitory, dressmaking, emigration, excavation, floorboards, gangplank, immigrants, immigration, matron, needle, ramshackle, sewing, workhouse

Spelling

- Discuss the unusual adverbs used in this story, and the extra information they provide, e.g. *Peggy exclaimed rebelliously*; *Peggy eyed Rose's brother speculatively*.

Visual literacy

- Have students look at the range of objects on pp. 6–7. Are they surprised that these kinds of objects have survived so long underground?

Focusing on the book – guided reading

- Discuss why girls in workhouses in Ireland during the 1800s never had the opportunity to learn to read.
- As they read, have students identify the many joys and fears Sarah experiences on the ship. Establish how these incidents will assist her later in life.
- After reading p. 21, ask students to identify precisely why Maggie and Sarah have not got off to a good start with each other. How might Maggie interpret what Sarah has just said to the matron?
- Ask students why they think Sarah decides not to make friends with the animals on board, after hearing that some of them have ended up in the food she has been eating.
- Ask students why the sighting of Van Diemen's Land alerted the sailors to the fact that they were now close to New South Wales. How long does it take the ship to reach Sydney after this sighting?
- Have students share thoughts about why it is an effective technique for the author to begin and end the story in the year 2015.

Comprehension

- Where did Sam and Casey find the needle case? (*Literal*)
- What dangers might Sarah face on her long journey? (*Inferential*)
- What sort of a future does Sarah appear to have in New South Wales? (*Applied Knowledge*)

Follow-up activities

- Have students design a map that shows the voyage of Sarah's ship from Cork, Ireland, to Sydney, Australia. Have them insert a timeline on the map.
- Have students imagine what became of Sarah and Maggie during the ten-year period after they became apprentices to Miss Pettigrew. Have them write a few paragraphs about whether the girls became friends, and what happened to them later in life.

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Learning Intentions

- We are learning to apply a range of skills and strategies to gain maximum understanding of both written and visual information in a text.
- We are learning about a range of language effects that add variety and clarity to a text.
- _____

Success Criteria

- I can read written and visual information to better understand information in a text.
- I can read and understand a range of language effects used by the author.
- _____

Guided Reading Notes

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