

For students reading at **Literacy Level F/10**, including:

- English-language learners
- Students reading below grade level
- First grade readers

Objectives at a Glance

COMPREHENSION

Students will:

- Identify characters and setting
- Distinguish real from make-believe
- Monitor their reading by visualizing
- Utilize text and graphic features
- Summarize the story
- Answer text-dependent questions
- Respond to the book

GENRE STUDY

Students will:

- Recognize the characteristics of a tall tale
- Determine the story's message

VOCABULARY

Students will:

- Recognize high-frequency words
- Develop academic content (Tier Three) vocabulary
- Develop robust (Tier Two) oral vocabulary

WORD STUDY

Students will:

- Use plurals

LANGUAGE

Students will:

- Recognize the sentence structures _____ *took away* _____ and *The* _____ *had* _____
- Identify irregular past tense verbs

PHONICS

Students will:

- Problem solve by searching all the way through words
- Recognize words with CVCe long "i"

FLUENCY

Students will:

- Read exclamation points

WRITING

Students will:

- Write to a picture prompt
- Write to a text prompt

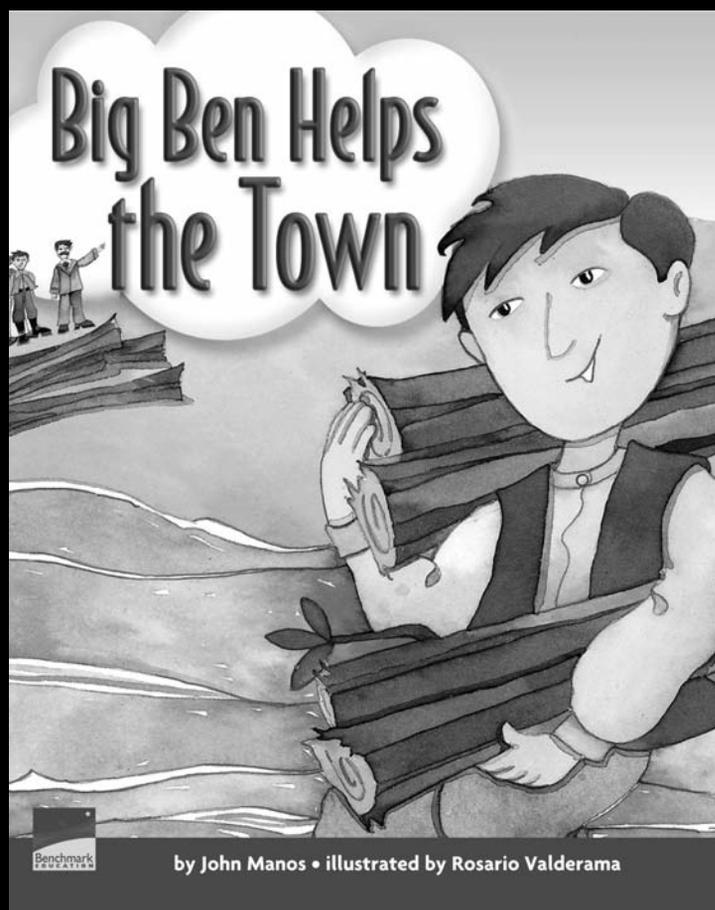
Big Ben Helps the Town

THEME: Subtraction

- The Mail Comes to Main Street (Level F/10)
- **Big Ben Helps the Town (Level F/10)**
- How Many Muffins? (Level H/14)
- The Farm Stand Mystery (Level H/14)

GENRE/SUMMARY:

In this tall tale, a very big boy named Ben helps the town by taking away logs jamming the river.



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Related Resources

The following Benchmark Education Company resources support the skills and strategies taught in this lesson.

Early Explorers Partner

- *The Mail Comes to Main Street* (Nonfiction, Level F/10)

Text-Dependent Comprehension Resources

- *Big Ben Helps the Town* Comprehension Question Card
- Power Tool Flip Chart for Teachers
- Student Bookmark

Assessment

- *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook*
- *Grade 1 Comprehension Strategy Assessment Book*

Make Connections and Build Background

- **Use Drama** **Say:** *We will read a book called Big Ben Helps the Town. The boy in the story is taller than a tree. The boy likes to help people. I will pretend that I am taller than a tree. I will help some children. The children's ball landed on the roof of their house. I will get the ball for them. Pretend to do so. Then invite students to tell ways they would help people if they were taller than a tree. Encourage them to act out their ideas as well.*
- **Use a Graphic Organizer** Draw a three-column prediction chart on the board. Write the headings **I think . . .** and **I find out . . .** above the second and third columns. In the first column write the entries **baby** and **boy**. **Ask:** *What might happen when a baby is as big as his parents? What might happen when the baby grows into a boy? Write students' ideas in the I think . . . column of the prediction chart. Then read each idea, prefacing it with the phrase I think the (baby/boy) will . . . and ask students to echo-read.*

	I think . . .	I find out . . .
baby	is so big his parents cannot carry him	
boy	helps his parents	

Introduce the Book

- **Preview Cover and Title Page** Give each student a copy of the book. Point to the front. **Say:** *This story is about a very big boy who helps people. Read the title and author, and ask students to echo-read. Invite them to tell what they see in the illustration. Repeat the process with the title page. Say: The cover and title page get us ready to read the book. Using the think-aloud strategy, model how to make predictions about the book based on the cover and title page information: The title says "Big Ben helps the town." I see a big boy and a town in the illustration. I think a boy named Ben will use his size to help the people in his town. Allow time for students to share their own predictions about the story.*
- **Introduce Characters and Setting** **Say:** *The people in the story are called characters. Ask students to turn to pages 2 and 3, and point to each character as you read the matching name. Repeat the process, inviting students to echo-read. Then say: The setting is where the story takes place. What is the setting of this story? Help students use the illustrations to determine that the story takes place outdoors and in a small town.*
- **Preview Illustrations and Vocabulary** Revisit the illustrations on the cover and title page. **Say:** *The pictures in fiction books are called illustrations. Illustrations help us understand the words in the book. Take students on a picture walk, emphasizing the words **crib, deer, plants, pond, river, wagon, took away, count, baby, bags, garden, trees,** and **logs** as you talk about the illustrations and what is happening in the story. Make sure students can pronounce each vocabulary word.*

- Preview Sentence Structures** For students who need additional support, write _____ *took away* _____ on the board. Read the sentence structure aloud and ask students to repeat it several times. **Say:** *The words **took away** are in the book. Page 5 has a sentence with the words **took away**.* Model how to frame the sentence between two fingers. Then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. Invite them to turn to page 7. **Ask:** *Can you frame a sentence with the words **took away**?* Assist as needed, and then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. If students need additional practice, allow them to locate and read the sentence structure on pages 9, 11, 14, and 15. Finally, repeat the process with *The _____ had _____* on pages 5, 13, and 16.
- Use Graphophonic Cues** **Say:** *Another word in this book is **side**. Say the word **side**. What letters do you expect to see after the **l**?* Allow time for students to respond, assisting as needed. Then ask them to find the word **side** on page 5. Repeat the process with the word **fit** on page 7. **Say:** *Search all the way through a word to help you when you read.*
- Scaffold Spanish-Language Speakers** Say the word **in**. **Ask:** *Does **in** sound like a word you know in Spanish?* (Allow time for students to respond.) *The English word **in** sounds like the Spanish word **en**. **In** and **en** mean the same thing. The words look similar, too.* Write the word **in** on the board and ask students to locate it on pages 6, 7, 8, and 15 in the book. Then point out that the word **too** on page 5 and the word **to** on page 8 sound like the Spanish word **tu** but do not mean the same thing. Finally, invite students with other first languages to share their cognates.

Set a Purpose for Reading

- Direct students' attention to the prediction chart. **Say:** *Now it's time to whisper-read the book. Read to find out what happens when a big baby grows into a big boy.*

Observe and Prompt Reading Strategies

- After the supportive introduction, students should be able to read all or most of the book on their own. Observe students as they read. Take note of the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues they use to make sense of the text and self-correct. Prompt individual students who have difficulty problem solving independently, but be careful not to prompt English-language learners too quickly. They may need more time to process the text as they rely on their first language for comprehension.

Strategic Reading Prompts			
Cue Source	Prompt	Example	Page
Graphophonic	Search all the way through the word. Are you blending the right sounds?	log jam	13
Syntactic	You read, "Dad fix the crib." Let's read this sentence together and make it sound right.	Dad fixed the crib.	5
Semantic	What do you see in the picture that would make sense in this sentence?	seven	11

Use the Graphic Organizer to Summarize

- Ask students to think about their reading. **Ask:** *What happened when Ben’s parents had a baby as big as them? What happened when the baby grew into a boy?* Record students’ responses in the third column of the prediction chart. Then choral-read each entry, prefacing it with the phrase *The (baby/boy) . . .* Ask students to use the graphic organizer to tell the story to a partner.

	I think . . .	I find out . . .
baby	is so big his parents cannot carry him	is too big for his crib
boy	helps his parents	takes deer out of garden, makes a pond with footprints, carries trees, and carries logs

Genre Study

- **Say:** *This story is a tall tale. Many tall tales take place when the United States was first being settled. A tall tale usually has a character who is a hero or heroine. The character may look different than other people. The character may be able to do things other people cannot do. Some of the events are so unusual they might make us laugh. Then ask: What makes Big Ben Helps the Town a tall tale?* Guide students to mention that some of the story events and pictures are funny. Big Ben is much larger than a real person. He can easily pick up several deer, trees, and logs. He can make a pond with his footprints. He is a hero.
- **Say:** *Tall tales have themes. A theme is like a message from the author. I notice in Big Ben Helps the Town that Ben is not like other people. Ben does not mind being different, though. He uses his difference to help others. How does Ben help others? (saves his mother’s plants; makes a pond and removes trees; removes logs jamming a river)* **Say:** *The theme for Big Ben Helps the Town could be “Use your differences to help others.” The author uses the characters to send readers a message. The author is telling us to use our differences to help others, too.*

Reading Strategy Mini-Lesson: Visualize

- **Reflect** Ask students to think about the parts of the book that were hard for them to understand. **Ask:** *What did you do to help yourself understand what you read?*
 - **Model Say:** *I want to make sure I understand what I read. One way is to visualize what I’m reading. To visualize means to make a picture in my mind. I will turn back to pages 6 and 7. I will shut my eyes. I will imagine being with Ben and his parents. The road is rough. The wagon is crowded. Ben’s feet are sticking out of the wagon. The trip is hard, but the family is happy to be together. Can you think of other things I might see, hear, or feel?* Allow time for students to share their ideas. **Say:** *Visualizing the pages helped me. Now I better understand how the family feels about their son.*
 - **Guide** Ask students to turn to page 8. Read the page aloud together. **Ask:** *What do you see? Can you imagine planting a garden in a new place? Can you imagine the deer coming to eat the plants? How do you feel?* Allow time for students to share their visualizations. Then invite them to tell how visualizing the scene helped them better understand page 8.
 - **Apply** Ask students to read their favorite page to a partner and then visualize it out loud. Observe students as they share their visualizations, providing assistance if needed. See the *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook* for an observation chart you can use to assess students’ understanding of the **visualize** monitor-reading strategy. Then **say:** *You can visualize any time you read. Remember to visualize to help you understand.*
- ## Answer Text-Dependent Questions
- **Explain** Remind students that they can answer questions about books they have read. **Say:** *We answer different kinds of questions in different ways. I will help you learn how to answer each kind.* Tell students today they will practice answering *Prove It!* questions. **Say:** *The answer to a Prove It! question is not stated in the book. You have to look for clues and evidence to prove the answer.*

- **Model** Use the second *Prove It!* question on the Comprehension Question Card. **Say:** *I will show you how I answer a Prove It! question. I will read the question to figure out what to do. The question says, "What clues show that the log jam was a problem?" This question asks me to make an inference. I know because the question asks something that is not explained in the story. I already know an inference has only one or two clues. Now I need to look for other important information in the question. What information do you think will help me? (Allow student responses.) Yes, I need to find out why the log jam was a problem. On page 12, I read that the water came into town. On pages 14 and 15, I read that the water went down when Ben took away the logs. I think the log jam was a problem because it made the water come into town. I have located the clues I need to answer the question. The clues support my answer. The answer makes sense.*

- **Guide** Ask students to answer the other questions on the Comprehension Question Card. Use the Power Tool Flip Chart and Student Bookmark to provide additional modeling as needed. Remind students to ask themselves: *What is the question asking? How can I find the answer? Does my answer make sense? How do I know?*

Build Comprehension: Distinguish Real from Make-Believe

- **Explain** Create an overhead transparency of the "Big Ben Helps the Town" graphic organizer on page 8, or draw it on the chalkboard. **Say:** *A tall tale is a kind of fantasy. Certain things in a tall tale could really happen. Other things in a tall tale are make-believe. Good readers distinguish what is real from what is make-believe. Both the real and make-believe parts add to the story. Both parts help us enjoy the story more and understand it better.*

- **Model Say:** *Let's figure out some real and make-believe parts of Big Ben Helps the Town. On page 5, I read that Dad fixed Ben's crib. Fixing a crib could really happen. I will write about fixing the crib in the first column of the graphic organizer. On page 6, Dad puts six bags in the wagon. Then he and Mom get into the wagon. These events could also happen. I will add these events to the first column as well.*

- **Guide Say:** *Now let's find a make-believe part. Look on page 5. What happens in the picture that could not happen in real life? (Allow time for students to respond, assisting if needed.) Yes, baby Ben is bigger than his parents. A baby being bigger than his parents is make-believe. Let's write about Ben's size in the second column on the graphic organizer.*

- **Apply** Ask students to work with a partner to identify other real and make-believe parts of the story. After each partnership shares, agree on how to word the entries on the graphic organizer. Finally, read the completed graphic organizer aloud and invite students to echo-read.

NAME _____ DATE _____	
Big Ben Helps the Town	
Distinguish Real from Make-Believe	
Real	Make-Believe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dad fixes Ben's crib. • Dad puts bags in the wagon. • Dad and Mom get into the wagon. • Deer eat plants in the garden. • Dad wants a pond. • Water goes into the town. • The river has a log jam. • The town has a party for Ben. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby Ben is bigger than his parents. • Ben is bigger than the wagon. • Ben carries five deer. • Ben makes a pond with his footprints. • Ben takes away three trees. • Ben moves eight big logs.

BIG BEN HELPS THE TOWN © 2007 Benchmark Education Company, LLC

Teacher Tip Use Benchmark Education Company's *Comprehension Strategy Assessment* books to assess students' ability to distinguish real from make-believe in other brief, grade-level texts.

Home Connection

- Give students the take-home version of *Big Ben Helps the Town* to read to family members. Encourage students to work with a friend or family member to draw a picture of something amazing Ben could do because of his size. Invite students to bring their pictures to share with the group.

Reader Response

Invite students to respond to the book in a way that is meaningful to them. Model and use think-alouds as needed to scaffold students before they try the activities on their own.

- Think about the theme of the story. Tell about a time you helped someone.
- Tell about another tall tale you have read or heard.
- Tell what you wondered as you read this story.
- Draw a picture of yourself helping someone. Then write about it.
- Write about a connection you made to the story.
- Write a question you would like to ask Ben.

Write to a Picture Prompt

- **Retell** Tell students they will tell a small part of the story in their own words. Then they will write down their words. **Say:** *I like the pictures in this book. I like to choose one and retell that part of the story in my own words. Look at page 5. I can tell about this picture: Ben is a big baby! Ben's dad takes off the end of the crib. Now Ben's feet hang out. What do you notice about the picture? How would you retell this part of the story?* Allow time for students to respond. **Ask:** *Which picture do you like best? How would you retell that part of the story?* Allow time for students to respond, prompting further if needed. **Say:** *You have retold part of the story based on the picture you chose. Now write about what happened. After you are finished, read your retelling to a partner.*

Write to a Text Prompt

- **Describe a Setting** **Say:** *Think about your favorite setting in the story. Then describe the setting in your own words. When you are finished, read your description to a partner.*

Phonics: CVCe long "i"

- Ask students to locate the word **life** on page 4. Write **life** on the board. Explain that often a vowel followed by a consonant and final "e" is long. Cross out the "e" and underline the "i" as you **say:** *The letter "e" at the end of the word is silent. The "e" doesn't make a sound. It signals a long vowel in the middle of the word, though. It makes the "i" say its own name.* Slowly draw your finger under the word as you blend the sounds. Then ask students to do the same in their books. Repeat the process with **side** on page 5 and **five** on page 8.
- Ask students to brainstorm words that have the long "i" sound. Acknowledge all correct responses, and record the words that have the CVCe pattern on index cards. Then spread the cards out in a pocket chart or on a table. Read each word, inviting students to echo-read.
- **Say:** *I will say a riddle. Find the word that answers the riddle. Then you may pick up the matching card. Model the process using one of the words, such as: I have two wheels. People ride on me. What am I? (bike)* Then invite each student to make up a riddle about one of the words.

Vocabulary

- **Academic Content Vocabulary** Review the story with students and record words that describe objects in the story, such as **crib, deer, plants, pond, river, wagon, baby, bags, garden, trees,** and **logs.** Ask students to draw a picture that includes at least three of the objects and label each one.
- **Robust Oral Vocabulary** **Say:** *In the story, people **depend** on Ben for help. We trust someone we **depend** on. We know the person will do the right thing. Say the word with me: **depend.** Here are some ways people **depend** on others: Parents trust teachers to help their children. Teachers know their students will do their homework. Now, tell about a way you **depend** on someone. Try to use the word **depend** when you tell about it. You could start by saying, "I **depend** on ____ to ____." (Allow time for each student to respond, assisting if needed.) *What is the word we've been talking about? Yes—**depend.** Let's try to use the word **depend** many times today.**

Word Study: Plurals

- **Model Say:** Authors sometimes use plurals when they write. **Plural** means “more than one.” I see a plural word on page 5: “The crib had four sides.” The word **sides** is plural. I can tell because **sides** has the letter “s” at the end of the word **side**. Write the words **side** and **sides** on the board. Draw a line under each word as you use it in a sentence: *Open the box on this **side**. The box has six **sides**.*
- **Guide** Invite students to read page 6 with you. **Ask:** Which word is plural? (**bags**) What letter is added to the word **bag** to make the plural word **bags**? (“s”) Write the words **bag** and **bags** on the board. Draw a line under each word as students say it with you. Then invite a volunteer to circle the letter “s” on **bags**.
- **Apply** Ask students to find plurals on pages 8 (**plants**), 11 (**trees**), and 13 (**logs**). If more support is needed, utilize all or part of the “Guide” process.

Language Development: Irregular Past Tense Verbs

- **Model Say:** Authors often write about events that have already happened. Sometimes we use special words to show that something happened in the past. Ask students to find the word **took** on page 5. **Say:** *Someone can take the sides off a crib right now. In the story, Dad **took** one side off the crib. Taking the side off already happened. **Took** is the past tense of **take**. I can use the words **take** and **took**, too.* Use pantomime and the classroom clock to support the concepts of past and present as you model sentences such as: *At 8:00 this morning I **took** off my jacket. Now I **take** off my watch.*
*At 9:00 I **took** a book from my desk. Now I **take** a pencil from my desk.*
*At 10:00 I **took** a note to the office. Now I **take** some letter to the office.*

- **Guide** Invite students to read page 6 with you. **Say:** *The author uses the word **grew**. Ben got bigger in the past. Babies are getting bigger right now, too. We say that babies _____. (**grow**)*
- **Apply** Ask students to locate and read the sentence with **came** on page 12. Then invite them to use the word and its present tense partner **come** in oral sentences. If more support is needed, utilize all or part of the “Guide” process.

Fluency: Read Exclamation Points

- **Say:** *Sometimes surprising or exciting things happen in stories. The author might show that something is surprising or exciting by using an exclamation point. Our voices sound different when we are surprised or excited. We talk a bit faster and our voices move to a higher pitch. Good readers say exclamations faster and higher, too. Saying exclamations faster and higher helps the reader show that something unusual is happening. It helps the listener understand that something unusual is happening, too.*
- Ask students to turn to page 5. First, read the page in a flat voice. Discuss how this makes listener feel. Then read the page again, saying the exclamation more quickly and in a higher pitch. Ask students to echo-read.
- Ask students to turn to page 9. Choral-read the page with them, using a faster and higher voice for the exclamation.
- Invite students to take turns rereading *Big Ben Helps the Town* with a partner. Remind them to talk faster and use a higher pitch when they read a sentence ending in an exclamation point.

NAME _____

DATE _____

Big Ben Helps the Town

Distinguish Real from Make-Believe

Real	Make-Believe