

Wonderful Wheels Day

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Synopsis

Henry's teacher Miss Grace wants to reward room 4 for their excellent work and behaviour. If all the students keep trying hard they will get a Wonderful Wheels Day at the end of the term. On Wheels Day you get to bring inline skates or skateboards or bikes to school and ride them around the playground while everyone else is in class. Everyone in room 4 is excited – except Henry. Henry is dreading Wheels Day. He can't ride a bike or use rollerblades. The trouble is he has no balance. Henry is worried that he will make a fool of himself in front of all his friends and plans to come up with a way of getting out of Wheels Day.

Henry puts several plans into action. Plan one entails Henry behaving badly in class so that Miss Grace cancels Wheels Day. This plan fails because Miss Grace refuses to punish the whole class for something only one student is doing. Plan two entails Henry having a bad accident and being unable to move on Wheels Day because he has a broken leg. The pain factor makes this plan unappealing however. Plan 3 entails Henry organising Wonderful Wheels Day rather than participating in it. This plan seems to have potential...

Meanwhile Henry's mum has enrolled him in rollerblading classes. Henry is actually improving and the class isn't anywhere near as bad as he thought it was going to be – that is until his father joins in. Initially Henry is embarrassed by his father's uncoordinated antics. But as they both gradually improve their rollerblading skills, Henry begins to understand that you are never too old to learn something new. Maybe rollerblading is something that he and his father can do together. And now that Henry can rollerblade, Wonderful Wheels Day no longer fills him with dread. In fact, he is even looking forward to it.

Text Type

Wonderful Wheels Day is a light-hearted story that will appeal to both boys and girls. The book is visually appealing, as it contains humorous illustrations that help reinforce the storyline. Readers will be able to relate to Henry's predicament as many of them will have been in a position where they are not good at something and are worried about embarrassing themselves in front of their friends.

The story teaches students that all they need to do to improve at something is practise. Learning how to rollerblade increases Henry's confidence and

enables him to participate in the day with all of his friends. The book also teaches readers that people of all ages can learn new skills.

Henry's relationship with his father is strengthened because he learns to rollerblade too – it is an activity that the pair can enjoy together. Henry's experience shows him that learning something new takes effort and perseverance, but it is worth it in the end.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (pp. 3-9), Chapters 2-4 (pp. 10-29) and Chapters 5-7 (pp. 30-40).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the story. Have them make inferences and predictions about what is going to happen next. Encourage students to relate Henry's experiences to their own lives and broader knowledge. Have them identify the message that the story sets out to teach them and why this idea is important. Most importantly, students should enjoy the story, look at the illustrations and discuss their thoughts and ideas with their friends.

Introducing the Novel

Study the front cover of the book and read the blurb.

- Have you ever made a fool of yourself in front of your friends? What happened? How did embarrassing yourself make you feel?
- Have you ever tried to get out of participating in an activity because you feel like you aren't very good at it? What aren't you good at? How do you think you can get better at doing something?
- Why is this book called *Wonderful Wheels Day*? Based on the title of the text make a list of 5 words that you predict will be in the story. Tick your words off as they appear.
- Why isn't the main character looking forward to this day?
- Come up with 3 ways that the main character could get out of participating in *Wonderful Wheels Day*.

Teacher read Chapter 1 (pp. 3-9) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapter 1 (pp. 3-9)

- What does Miss Grace offer the class as a reward for their good behaviour? When will this reward take place? How does the class react to this proposal?
- What happens on *Wheels Day*?

- What is the name of the boy telling the story? Why isn't he looking forward to Wheels Day?
- Why is Henry's mum late picking him up? Why does everyone arrive home in a bad mood?
- What does Henry moan to his mum about? What does his mother do to try and solve the problem? How does Henry feel about this?
- When does the "Skating for beginners" programme start? How long does it run for?

Discussion

- If you could have a reward from a teacher for good behaviour what would you enjoy the most and why?
- Why doesn't Henry want to admit to Simon that he can't use his rollerblades? Have you ever been in the position where you have kept something from a friend because you were too embarrassed to admit you can't do something? Explain the situation.
- Can you understand Henry's feelings towards Wheels Day? Why/why not?
- Why do you think Henry dreads "Skating for beginners" class even more than he dreads Wheels Day? Was it fair of his mother to enrol him without checking with him first? Why/why not?
- What are some positive things that Henry might get out of skating classes?
- What do you think is going to happen in the story next?

Students read Chapters 2-4 (pp. 10-29) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2-4 (pp. 10-29)

- What does Henry notice about the other students when he arrives at school? Why are all of room 4's students behaving so strangely?
- Describe Henry's Anti-Wheels plan. In what ways does Henry try and disrupt the class and annoy the teacher? How does Miss Grace react to his behaviour? How do the other students feel about how he is acting?
- Why is Henry's plan unsuccessful?
- Why does Henry initially hope that his mum doesn't stay at the sports centre? What makes him change his mind?
- Who is Henry's coach? What is she like?
- Describe Henry's first rollerblading lesson. How does he feel after it?
- Why doesn't Henry want his dad watching him?
- What does Natalie plan to teach the group next week?
- Describe Henry's second plan for getting out of Wheels Day. What makes him change his mind about this idea?
- What happens at Henry's second skating class that embarrasses him? Why doesn't he want anyone to know that the new member of the class

is his father? What does he do to ensure that they don't see them together?

Discussion

- Is it fair of Henry to try and ruin Wonderful Wheels Day for everyone? Why/why not? Make a list of as many alternative solutions to his problem as you can. Which alternative do you think is the best? Why?
- Why isn't skating class as bad as Henry thought it was going to be? Why does it make him feel better when he realises that other people sometimes have difficulty doing things too?
- Describe Henry's father's attitude towards "Skating for beginners". Why do you think he is so excited about it? How does he try and encourage Henry?
- In what ways has Henry improved since his first skating lesson?
- Why do you think Henry's dad decides to join the skating class?
- What do you think is going to happen in the story next?

Students read Chapters 5-7 (pp. 30-40) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 5-7 (pp. 30-40)

- Why does Henry's father look hurt when Henry says he is only taking skating lessons because his mum organised them? Why doesn't Henry find the idea of skating with his dad appealing?
- Describe Anti-Wheels Plan number 3. How does Miss Grace react to his suggestion?
- How does Henry feel when he knows that he no longer has to participate in Wheels Day? What does he decide to worry about instead?
- Who is the only person in skating class who isn't improving? How do the other students show their support for him?
- What makes Henry change his mind about participating in Wonderful Wheels Day?
- What happens during the third skating class that leaves Henry feeling mortified? Why doesn't he want to go back? What advice does his father give him? What makes Henry think about Zac?
- What does Henry's dad reveal to him about his real reason for learning to skate?
- What does Natalie hand out during the last skating class? How do the other students feel about the mystery beginner-skater being Henry's dad?
- How does Henry feel when Wonderful Wheels Day arrives? What does he notice about the other kids that surprises him?

Discussion

- Why do you think Henry's attitude towards skating class gradually changes? What are the positive aspects of the class for Henry? What do you think Henry has learnt from the whole Wonderful Wheels Day experience?
- Describe Henry's dad. What kind of person is he? What motivates him to learn to skate? Is he a good dad? Why/why not?
- What message do you think the authors of this story are trying to teach us?

Activities

Book Report – Complete a book report on *Wonderful Wheels Day* following the format set out below:

<p>Character Study</p> <p>Name of Character Describe Character's personality</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 80px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	<p>Title:</p> <p>Author:</p> <p>What type of story is it? (circle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Newspaper article ✓ Autobiography ✓ Non-fiction ✓ Essay ✓ Poetry ✓ Comic ✓ Adventure ✓ Fiction ✓ Humorous ✓ Play ✓ Mystery ✓ Science Fiction
<p>New or Interesting Words</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Word: Meaning: 2. Word: Meaning: 3. Word: Meaning: 4. Word: Meaning: 5. Word: Meaning: 	<p>Plot</p> <p>The story begins when...</p> <p>The problem is...</p> <p>The next thing that happens is...</p> <p>The problem is solved when...</p>
<p>Setting</p> <p>Draw the main place (s) where the story takes place.</p>	<p>Theme</p> <p>The author(s) of this story are trying to teach us that....</p> <p>Review</p> <p>I would/would not recommend <i>Wonderful Wheels Day</i> to others because...</p>

Character Web – Complete a character web for Henry. Draw 6 boxes in a circle on your page. On the inside of the boxes draw four circles. In the boxes write things that Henry does, then think about words that describe Henry's actions. Write one word in each circle. For example: exciting. Draw a line to join up each box with its matching circle.

Static Image – Design an alternative front cover for *Wonderful Wheels Day*. The front cover needs the book's title, and the name of the author(s) and illustrator. Include an exciting illustration about the book. Write the name of the book long ways on the spine. The back cover needs a new blurb of the story to encourage the reader.

Advice for a character – Many characters in books need advice on how to deal with a problem. Write a letter to Henry. In the letter give him advice on how to deal with his Wonderful Wheels Day problem.

Poster – Design a poster advertising the book *Wonderful Wheels Day*. Include a brief summary about the book and illustrations that show the settings and events in the story.

Diary Entry – Imagine that you are Henry. Write a diary entry for a day in his life. Remember to include his thoughts and feelings about what is going on.

Character – Explain how you are similar or different to Henry.