



Teacher's Notes

Written by Sarina Dickson

Story Summary

Yo ho ho! All across the city, the pirates are getting restless and long for a party. So when a retired pirate comes to babysit for the Terrapin family, they are in for quite a surprise... From the rumbustious author and artist team of Margaret Mahy, winner of the Carnegie medal, and Quentin Blake, the first Children's Laureate, and best known for his partnership with Roald Dahl, this is a dazzling story which will delight pirate-loving children everywhere.

The story is broken into 13 short illustrated chapters, giving it the feel of a much longer book. There is some challenging vocabulary that some students may require support with, however the detailed and frequent illustrations may be sufficient.



About the Author

Margaret Mahy (1936–2012) is one of New Zealand's most celebrated children's writers. She is the author of more than 150 titles, which have been translated into many different languages and sold around the world. Appointed to the Order of New Zealand in 1993, Mahy also won many global prizes for children's writers, including the Carnegie Medal and the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award.

'It is in the nature of books, that they have the capacity to make you feel powerful about what you can alter and achieve in your life' - Margaret Mahy

About the Illustrator

Quentin Blake was the first ever Children's Laureate and is recognised, according to *The Guardian*, as 'a national institution'. He is best known for his collaboration with Roald Dahl, but has also illustrated many other children's books, and has created much-loved characters of his own, including Mister Magnolia and Mrs Armitage.

Suggested Shared Reading Questions

- † Share the title. What's unusual about the words? Are they real, or made-up? How could the students find out if they're real?
- † Dedication: The author describes 13 chapters as being lucky. Does everyone think 13 is a lucky number? Where have the students heard about lucky or unlucky numbers before?
- † Chapter 1 pages 7-9: What do the students already know about pirates? Why were these pirates restless? Ask the students to predict why the party must be stolen and what a stolen party might look like.
- † Chapter 2 pages 10-14: Who are the Terrapins? Why are they restless? What do we know about the family from Chapter 2? Do you ever feel restless? What do you do when you feel restless?
- † Chapter 3 pages 15-20: Do you think the boy's behavior is 'adventurous'? What are some other adjectives that could describe their behaviour? Why doesn't Mr. Terrapin mind what they've done?
- † Chapter 4 pages 21-23: What is a 'naval gentleman'? What is rum? Does giving rum to a babysitter sound like a good idea? Is the rum a clue to Mr. Clinker's real identity?
- † Chapter 5 pages 24-28: What is a 'landlubber'? Mr. Clinker doesn't look like an ordinary babysitter. Describe what you think a babysitter should look like. Does Mr. Clinker use any words or phrases you haven't heard before? What do you think the boys and Mr. Clinker recognise in each other that makes them so pleased to meet each other?
- † Chapter 6 pages 29-30: What are the two reasons that Mr. Terrapin is happy to accept Mr. Clinker as the boys' babysitter?

- † Chapter 7 pages 31-38: 'Are you really a pirate, Mr. Clinker?' asked Alpha courteously. What is the opposite of 'courteously'? How might Alpha have asked the question in a discourteous way?
- † How will the pirates find the party? Do you think the boys might regret going along with Mr. Clinker's plan?
- † Chapter 8 pages 39-42: Why is Mr. Terrapin unhappy at the dinner? Why is there so much salt at his house? Why does he think the party can't be near his house?
- † Chapter 9 pages 43-48: 'Like ragged butterflies, like autumn leaves blown out of hiding...' Here the author uses metaphors to describe what the pirates looked like as they arrived at the Terrapin house. A metaphor says that something is like something else. Can you think of another metaphor to describe this?
- † Chapter 10 pages 49-52: Terrible Crabmeat has a 'skull and crossbones' on the back of his wheelchair. What does a 'skull and crossbones' look like? Have you seen one before? Where? What is it a symbol of?
- † How does Terrible Crabmeat disguise himself so no-one knows he is a pirate?
- † Chapter 11 pages 53-64: Why was the man Mr. Terrapin went to the party to meet not there? Where is he instead?
- † Do the neighbours mind about the party? Why not?
- † 'A peppery, parrot party, a pirate party.' Here the author uses 'alliteration'. Alliteration is when several words close together begin with the same consonant sound. Can you make a sentence about the pirate party that uses alliteration?
- † Chapter 12 pages 65-72: Mr Clinker bangs on the empty pot and shouts, 'He that calls for the tune, why he's the one that pays the piper'. This is an old-fashioned saying. Can you work out as a group what it means?
- † Is the party going to be a happy ending for the Terrapin boys? For their father? Are you surprised by the ending?
- † Chapter 13 pages 73-74: Why are the Terrapin boys happy to feel the pirates getting restless again? Would you like a pirate party at your house?

Suggested Activities

Literacy (Glossary)

A glossary is usually found at the end of a book to show the meaning of unusual words, or words that describe or explain a particular group, situation or subject. The words are listed in alphabetical order. Write a glossary of pirate words from the book for the next child to use when they read it. The words are listed in alphabetical order for you below.

You might need to use your imagination for some of them!

- † Bearings (p.38)
- † Cut of your jib (p.28)
- † Festive flare (p.36)
- † Ill-gotten riches (p.7)
- † Landlubber (p.25)
- † Me hearties (p.33)
- † Naval gentleman (p.21)
- † Pirate Rum (p.25)
- † Pirate Stew (p.8)
- † Rumbustification (p.9)

Art (Drawing)

Look back at the illustrations by Quentin Blake. Blake's style is unique and very recognisable, you will find many more examples in a Google search or your own school library. Reread pages 15-18. Draw the scene Mr Terrapin walked into. Add in all the details you can. Use Blake's illustration as a reference but draw in your own style.

Art and Design

Design a flag for your own pirate ship. Use images of naval flags for inspiration. Consider the colours you'll use. Keep your design simple so that it can be seen from far away. Can you design a flag that is unique?

Story Starter

Alpha, Oliver and Omega love adventure. In their previous home there wasn't much room for adventure, but I don't think that would have stopped them getting up to mischief! Write a story of an adventure they have had in the past, or one set in the future now that they're friends with pirates. Perhaps you would like to be their neighbour, or in their class in your story...

Extension

Put these words into alphabetical order and using a dictionary, your own knowledge and the sentence they are in in the story. Write a definition for each word or use them in a sentence to show that you understand the meaning. (If the first letter is the same as another word, use the second letter to decide which comes first in your list.)

† Delicacy (p.8)

† Ominously (p.8)

† Churning (p.9)

† Expand (p. 12)

† Discontent (p.14)

† Nimbly (p.16)

† Idle (p.19)