

Interpret a Phrase in Two Ways

Ontario · Grade 3 · Skill lesson

WINNER	C1.5
STRAND Language Grade 3 - Knowledge about Texts / Elements of Style	

STANDARD

identify some elements of style in texts, including voice, word choice, word patterns, and sentence structure, and explain how they help communicate meaning

WHY THIS LESSON EARNS THE CODE

Students examine the word choice “boy soup,” explain its two possible meanings, and show how that ambiguity drives the story.

PLACEMENT

TEACHES - the student task directly practices the cited expectation. The canonical lesson follows unchanged.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2023.

Verified 2026-09-08 · strict winner-only audit

TUMBLETA · SKILL LESSON

Interpret a Phrase in Two Ways

Boy Soup · Grade 3 · Book 4163

Full lesson

TIME

35 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Work out the two things the words boy soup can mean, and which one Kate chooses.

STUDENT PRODUCT

Boxes for each meaning of the phrase, with a box underneath for who believes which

FOCUS

Two words that can be joined together two ways

Essential question

How can the same two words save the boys instead of cooking them?

Materials

- The book
- The prescription page and Kate's page copied

Text to mark before teaching

- Passage 2 — the giant's face sideways on the pillow, a page held up beside it
- Passage 7 — the giant leaning over the table, tiny figures on the open book
- Passage 10 — the lower half of the same letter, Kate leaning on it

Lesson sequence

1 What the book prescribes · 7 min

Focus:	A phrase read one way without being examined
Teacher model:	Read the pages up to the prescription and stop there. Ask what the class thinks the giant is going to do.
Prepared text:	Passage 2 2 Kate's reading · 11 min
Teacher direction:	Read what Kate says the book means. Write both meanings of the phrase in the two boxes.
Expected answer:	Soup made out of boys, and soup made by boys. Kate says the second, and it is a fair reading of the same two words.
Prepared text:	Passage 7 3 Which one is in the words · 10 min
Teacher direction:	Look at just the two words on their own and say which meaning they force. Give your reason.
Expected answer:	Neither. Boy soup does not say who is cooking or what is in it, so both readings fit and the reader has been supplying the rest.

Prepared text:	Passage 2, Passage 7
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4 What the giant thought · 7 min

Focus:	A misreading admitted afterwards
Teacher direction:	Read the giant's letter and ask which meaning he had assumed all along, and what he says he will do now.
Prepared text:	Passage 10

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: The phrase is printed once as the guide's prescription and once inside Kate's own explanation of it, and the giant then says which of the two he had assumed - so both readings are stated in the text.

Expected answer:	Boy soup can mean soup made out of boys, which is what the giant assumes, or soup made by boys, which is what Kate says the book means. Nothing in the two words decides it. The giant is confused because he had only ever thought of the first one, and by the end of his letter he says no boy soup for him at all.
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Model: Boy soup. I read that as soup with boys in it, and so did the giant. But nothing in those two words actually says that - it is just the way I put them together.

Support and extension

Above: Explain why Kate had to erase the page before she could give her meaning, even though hers is a fair reading.

Below: Say the two things boy soup could mean.

Assessment

Look for: Gives both meanings. Says the words themselves do not decide between them. Names which character believes which.

Short version

TIME

18 minutes

OBJECTIVE

Work out the two things the words boy soup can mean, and which one Kate chooses.

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Boxes for each meaning of the phrase, with a box underneath for who believes which

FOCUS

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Lesson sequence

1 What the book prescribes · 5 min

Focus:	A phrase read one way without being examined
Teacher model:	Read up to the prescription and ask what the giant will do.
Prepared text:	Passage 2 2 Kate's reading · 9 min
Teacher direction:	Write both meanings of the phrase.
Expected answer:	Soup made out of boys, and soup made by boys. Kate says the second.
Prepared text:	Passage 7 3 What the giant thought · 4 min
Focus:	A misreading admitted afterwards

Teacher direction:	Ask which meaning the giant had assumed, from his letter.
Prepared text:	Passage 10

Teacher guidance

Why this text works: The phrase is printed once as the guide's prescription and once inside Kate's own explanation of it, and the giant then says which of the two he had assumed - so both readings are stated in the text.

Expected answer:	Boy soup can mean soup made out of boys, which is what the giant assumes, or soup made by boys, which is what Kate says the book means. Nothing in the two words decides it. The giant is confused because he had only ever thought of the first one, and by the end of his letter he says no boy soup for him at all.
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Look for: Gives both meanings. Says the words themselves do not decide between them. Names which character believes which.