Fantasy

Ruby, Level 27, 710L

Origin of Text: UK

Summary: Bug Muldoon, a beetle detective, has to get past a toad to reach the House. Bug knows the still, quiet toad is more dangerous than it looks...

Themes: humour, courage, observing, predator, prey

Text Features: introduction, title, paragraphs

Literature Focus:

simile, personification, anthropomorphism

Spelling:

- 'ea' digraph (short 'e'): death, deadly, ready, threads, weapon
- using 'c' in place of 's': practice (noun); practise (verb)

Vocabulary/Grammar/ Punctuation:

- '-ive' suffix: active, digestive (adjectives, meaning 'having the nature of')
- capitalised nouns: Death, Garden (used like proper nouns)
- em dash used to mark break in a sentence, or long pause

Advanced Grammar:

informal structures: Yeah, right; Nice, huh?

Bug Muldoon and the Killer in the Rain



Focus Question: What makes a good detective?

PREPARE & READ

- Read the title and introduction. Besides being a fantasy, what genre (style of story) do you think this one is based on? (detective story crime fiction)
- Invite students to describe the creatures that are illustrated and imagine how they might see the world.
- Point out that the ellipsis shows text is left out. Ask students to read the card.

READ CLOSELY

Literature Focus: Personification

How is Death like a person or character at the start of the story? How would you describe the character of Death? 3

... The word Death starts with a capital letter, as if it is a character's name. Death also has qualities that could describe a person, like not being fussy and having no pride. Death could be described as a scary shape-shifter that strikes you all of a sudden.

Point of View

Who narrates the story? (main character, Bug Muldoon; refers to himself as '1' and to reader as 'you') What does the toad look like from Bug's point of view? (sitting still with only nostrils moving, waiting to attack) 4-3

Key Ideas and Details

How does Bug's past experience with toads help him escape? ₫-₮ ₫-₺

. . . Bug knows that toads stay very still to catch their prey. So, he is alert and is able to duck and roll out of the way when the toad tries to catch him.

Vocabulary: Idioms

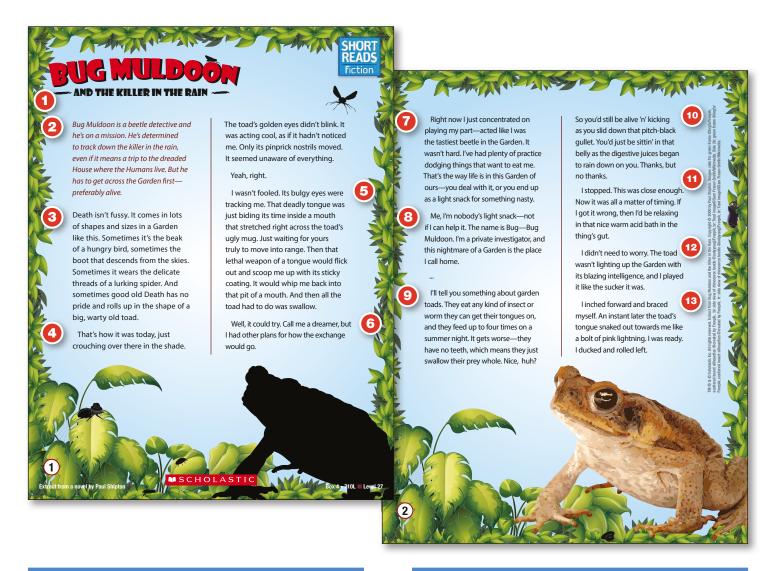
Read the last paragraph again. What might the phrase 'played it like the sucker it was' mean when you read it with the beginning of the sentence? (treated the toad as silly, gullible) What do you think 'inched forward' might mean? (crept slowly forward) What might 'braced myself' mean? ('brace yourself' means prepare or get ready for something that is going to happen) ¹² ¹⁵

Make Inferences

Do you think this part of the story is from the beginning/middle/end of the original work? (beginning) Why? (Bug mentions his name, job and where he lives) Why do you think the story begins with a description of death? (unusual start; hooks reader even before they can figure out who is telling the story) 3 3

Make Predictions

Bug tackles danger successfully in the Garden. Would he be similarly successful inside the House? Why/Why not? (yes: smart, brave/no: might not be familiar with dangers inside the House) 3–6



DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then, ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- Which parts of the story did you find funny? (idea of a beetle detective; way Bug talks about scary things; images: bolt of pink lightning, Death is a toad) Why might an author use humour in a scary story? (make it less scary; make it interesting; attract wider variety of readers—those who like mystery and those who like humour)
- Why is suspense (excitement/uncertainty about what comes next) important in a detective story? (arouses desire to keep reading; work out clues or think of solutions; fires imagination)
- What might a toad be scared of in a garden? (humans; birds; lizards; snakes) How could a toad escape/fight a predator? (hopping under a rock or into water; releasing poison; using camouflage)

WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- Rewrite the final part of the story from the point of view of the toad. What would he think of Bug? (things to consider: use 'I' for the toad, 'he' for Bug; build suspense; describe Bug; describe looking forward to eating Bug; remember that the toad is not very clever) (Information/Explanation)
- Do you think the idea of a beetle detective is funny? Why/Why not? Give examples from the text to back up your reasons.
 (Opinion)