A Gift Fit for a King

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Bradley. He lived in the kingdom of Happyland, which was ruled by the wise and wonderful King Kevin. One morning, Bradley awoke and was particularly excited because it was the most special day of the year—King Kevin's birthday! There was only one little problem: Bradley couldn't think of a fitting present to give the king. Then he got an idea: He'd pay a visit to the royal fortune teller, Madame Minerva, to get advice. Quick as a wink, he raced over to her cottage and knocked on the door.

"Who's there?" she asked.

"It's me, Bradley. I thought you could help me think of a birthday gift fit for the king," he blurted.

"Ahhhhhh," said Madame Minerva, raising her left eyebrow. "Come inside. I will consult my crystal ball."

Bradley took a seat at Madame Minerva's scarf-draped table.

"Ooooooh," said the fortune teller, staring into the milky glass of the crystal ball, "I see something sweet. I see something priceless. I see someone smiling…and it's King Kevin!"

"What else do you see? Do you see a present?" asked Bradley excitedly.

"No," replied Madame Minerva, "But heed the crystal ball's two wise words: *sweet, priceless*. They will guide you to the perfect gift."

Bradley scratched his head and thanked Madame Minerva. Then off he went to the Royal Department Store to shop. Bradley saw a scrumptious box of chocolates. Chocolates were sweet! There was only one little problem: The box cost $12.00, which wasn't even close to priceless. Next, he spied a glittering ruby crown. Good news: The tag said *priceless*. There was only one little problem: The crown wasn't sweet. Bradley wandered every aisle of the store. But, try as he might, he could not find a gift that was both sweet and priceless.

"Dear me," said Bradley, "The only gift I can give the king is to sing Happy Birthday." As he spoke, the sun burst through the clouds and a big bunch of colorful butterflies began to flutter about joyfully.

At the castle, Bradley got in line behind all the other gift-givers. A man gave the king a golden robe. A lady gave the king a diamond baseball. Such spectacular presents would be hard to top, thought Bradley forlornly. When it was finally Bradley's turn, he sputtered, "I'm sorry King, the only gift I can give you is a simple song."

"Very well," said King Kevin.

"Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you…" sang Kevin softly.

As Bradley sang, the simple song transported the King back in time. Suddenly, King Kevin was a child again—a child sitting in the royal nursery with his mother and father and dear brother, Rex. His trusty dog Duke jumped up to lick his face. His beloved nanny, Marla, brought out a yellow frosted cake festooned with purple flowers and ten glowing candles. As little Prince Kevin gathered his breath to blow out the candles, his family burst into song: *Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you…*

The warm memory made the King smile from ear to ear. Then he snapped back to reality.

"Bradley, your sweet song is a priceless gift!" announced the King. "For a moment, it returned me to my wonderful childhood. Thank you. I could not have asked for a more perfect present!"

FORESHADOWING: When the text provides hints about what will happen later on in the story. The hints can be verbal, such as when a fairy godmother says, "Whatever you do, don't pick the red roses" to inform readers that a big problem will occur if a character *does* pick the red roses. Hints can also be visual, such as when a dark cloud appears in the sky to inform readers that something bad is about to happen.

FLASHBACK: When the sequence of a story is interrupted allowing the reader to travel back in time to relive a key event in a character's life. Flashbacks help readers more deeply understand a character's current situation by learning about his or her past. Authors use a variety of techniques to create flashbacks including memories, dreams, historical references, and even time machines.

Underline the examples of foreshadowing.
Circle the examples of flashback.

A "Mark my words, if you enter that old house, you will be very sorry!" shrieked the wicked witch...

B Jenna listened to the howling wind. It transported her back to 2005 and the horrible day of the hurricane...

C As Rita raced toward the garden gate, a flock of beautiful birds began to tweet...

D When the girl found a bag of magic coins, she shivered. Would the gleaming coins bring good luck or bad?...

E Eric touched the shell. In an instant, he was back on the sandy beach with his little sister...

F Carlos slipped into a dream. Suddenly, he was running through golden fields on his grandpa's farm...

Key Questions

1. This story contains two examples of foreshadowing. Can you find the first one? Hint: It is verbal. Underline it. What does it suggest will happen later in the story?

2. Can you find the second example of foreshadowing? Hint: It is visual. Underline it. What does it suggest will happen later in the story?

3. This story contains one example of flashback. Can you find it? Underline it. What triggered the flashback? What key words tell you it is a flashback?

4. How did these examples of foreshadowing and flashback help you enjoy and understand the story? Share your thoughts.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question: What other stories have you read that contain foreshadowing and flashback? Search favorite books to find examples of each. Discuss them.

The Write Stuff

Flashback on your own life! Turn on your memory, travel back in time, and describe in writing an event that happened in your past.

Answer Key

FORESHADOWING & FLASHBACK:
A Gift Fit for a King

Examples of Foreshadowing: A, C, D;
Examples of Flashback: B, E, F.

Key Questions: 1. Example of verbal foreshadowing: *"I see something sweet. I see something priceless. I see someone smiling… and it is King Kevin!"* This text suggests that King Kevin will receive something sweet and priceless from Bradley, which will make the King smile. **2.** Example of visual foreshadowing: *As he spoke, the sun burst through the clouds and a big bunch of colorful butterflies began to flutter about joyfully.* This text suggests that if Bradley sings something happy will happen. **3.** Example of flashback: *As Bradley sang, the simple song transported the King back in time…. Happy Birthday to you, Happy birthday to you…* The flashback was triggered by Bradley's song. Key words: *The song transported the King back in time.*
4. Answers will vary, but should approximate: They made the story more exciting; they provide key information; they kept the reader interested.

S-t-r-e-t-c-h Question: Answers will vary.

TIP: No two readers interpret a story—including its characters, plot, setting, tone, or imagery—exactly the same way. For that reason, it's wise to invite differing opinions and healthy debate in the context of your literacy lessons.

Common Core State Standards Correlation

This lesson and activity will help you meet many of the reading and language arts standards recommended in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Listed below are the specific CCSS Reading Standards for Literature (RL) addressed in this lesson at each grade level. For more information about the CCSS, visit www.corestandards.org.

Literary Element

FORESHADOWING FLASHBACK

RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RL.5.5: Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

RL.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.5: Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of a theme, setting, or plot.