



## **Teacher Guide: Building Adjective Scales with *How I Became a Pirate***

### **Focus:**

Using adjectives (feeling words) to describe intensity of emotions and track how a character's feelings change across a story

### **Time:**

~15–20 minutes

### **Text Connection (Mentor Text):**

*How I Became a Pirate* by Melinda Long

### **Curriculum Link:**

3Rg.08 – Identify nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives in texts.

3Wv.02 – Explore and use synonyms for high frequency words, e.g. big, little, good.

3Ri.12 – Make inferences from texts, including about the feelings, thoughts and motives of story characters.

### **Learning Intention (WALT)**

Students will describe how a character's feelings change across a story using stronger and weaker feeling words.

### **Success Criteria (WILF)**

- I can retell what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- I can name feeling words to describe how the boy felt.
- I can choose stronger and weaker feeling words.
- I can place feeling words in order on a feelings line and explain my thinking.

### **Materials & Prep**

- Project the slideshow
- Chart paper or board space for class brainstorm
- Student paper or notebooks for building feelings lines
- Mentor text: *How I Became a Pirate* (book or read-aloud video)



### **Teacher Tip!**

Pre-select 2–3 moments in the story (beginning, middle, end) where the boy’s feelings clearly change. This supports students in linking adjectives to specific story events rather than listing random feelings.

### **BEN the Spelling Bee**

Introduce Ben as the helper who notices feeling words and how strong they are.

#### **Teacher talk:**

“Ben wants us to think about how we’re feeling today. The words we use for feelings can be small or big. Writers choose different words to show how strong a feeling is.”

You might ask:

“What kind of word is a feeling word?”

“Is your feeling word small or big?”

### **Minds On – Small Feeling, Big Feeling**

Students think of a time they felt a little happy and a time they felt very happy.

#### **How to run it:**

Ask students to turn and talk:

“Think of a time when you felt a little happy. Now think of a time you felt very happy.”

Invite them to share words to describe each feeling using the sentence frames.

#### **Look-fors (Assessment for Learning):**

- Students can name two different feeling words.
- Students notice that some feelings are stronger than others.

#### **Quick scaffold:**

Offer examples if needed (e.g., happy vs excited) and ask which one feels stronger.

### **Feelings Can Change! (Whole-Class Discussion)**

Students learn that characters do not feel the same the whole time and that writers choose different words to show intensity.

**How to run it:**

Briefly explain the idea of a feelings line (small → big feelings).  
Brainstorm examples of small and big feelings as a class.

**Look-fors:**

- Students can sort feeling words into smaller vs stronger.
- Students begin to see feelings as a continuum, not just single labels.

**Let's Think Back – How Did He Feel?**

Students recall how the boy felt at the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

**How to run it:**

As a class or in pairs, brainstorm feeling words for each part of the story.  
Invite students to “upgrade” one adjective to a stronger word.

**Look-fors:**

- Students connect feelings to specific parts of the story.
- Students attempt to choose stronger words (e.g., nervous → terrified, happy → thrilled).

**Create a Feelings Line (Independent or Small-Group Task)**

Students take all brainstormed feeling words and place them on a feelings line from most negative to most positive.

**How to run it:**

Students order the words and prepare to explain their choices.

Prompt:

“Why did you place the words in that order?”

**Look-fors:**

- Words are placed in a logical order of intensity.
- Students can explain why one feeling is stronger or weaker than another.

**Teacher Tip!**

There is no single “correct” order. Focus on the reasoning students use to justify placement.

**Compare Your Lines – Sharing & Discussion**



Students share one of their feelings lines (beginning, middle, or end).

**How to run it:**

Invite students to share and compare:

“Did anyone place the words in a different order? Why?”

Use sentence frames:

At first, he felt \_\_\_\_.

Later, he felt \_\_\_\_.

At the end of the story, he felt \_\_\_\_.

**UDL & Differentiation**

-  Support: Provide a short list of feeling words students can choose from.
-  Challenge: Invite students to create two different adjective scales.
-  Alternative option: Students can draw faces showing small vs big feelings and label with one word.

**What to Look For (Assessment)**

- Can the student retell what happened at the beginning, middle, and end?
- Are they using feeling words to describe the character?
- Can they order adjectives by intensity?
- Can they explain why one word is stronger or weaker than another?