



Teacher Guide: Making Connections with *How I Became a Pirate*

Focus:

Making text-to-self connections to support reading comprehension

Time:

~15–20 minutes

Text Connection (Mentor Text):

How I Became a Pirate by Melinda Long

Curriculum Link:

3Rs.01 – Explore and describe how events or ideas in a text relate to earlier or later events or ideas.

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

3Ra.03 – Share a review of a text, summarising what it is about and expressing opinions about it.

Learning Intention (WALT)

Students will make text-to-self connections to better understand the character in the story.

Success Criteria (WILF)

- I can share a personal connection to the story.
- I can describe a time I tried something new.
- I can explain how my experience helps me understand how the boy felt.
- I can speak in a complete sentence.

Materials & Prep

- Project the slideshow
- Paper or drawing books + pencils/crayons
- Mentor text: *How I Became a Pirate* (book or read-aloud video)



Teacher Tip!

Choose one clear moment from the story where the boy tries something new (e.g., joining the pirates, feeling unsure at first). This helps students anchor their connections to a specific part of the text.

BEN the Spelling Bee

Introduce Ben as the helper who reminds students to think about connections.

Teacher talk:

“Ben is here to remind us that good readers think about what’s happening in the story and what has happened in our own lives. When we connect the two, we understand the story better.”

You might pause and ask:

“What is something new the boy tried in the story?”

Act It Out – How Did the Boy Feel? (Minds On)

Students think about how the boy felt when he tried being a pirate and act out a feeling with a partner.

How to run it:

Ask:

“How do you think the boy felt when he tried being a pirate for the first time?”

Have students choose a feeling and act it out while their partner guesses.

Look-fors (Assessment for Learning):

- Students can name a feeling linked to the story.
- Students use facial expressions/body language to show emotion.

Make a Connection! (Partner Talk)

Students think about a time they tried something new and share with a partner.

How to run it:

Prompt students with:



“Think about a time you tried something new. What did you try? How did you feel? What happened?”

Encourage use of the sentence starters:

- One time I tried something new was when ____.
- I remember when I tried ____.
- I felt ____ when I tried something new.

Look-fors:

- Students can name a personal experience.
- Students link their feeling to the boy’s feelings in the story.

Draw & Write Your Connection (Independent Task)

Part 1: Draw

Students draw a quick picture showing:

- What they tried
- How they felt
- What was happening

Part 2: Write

Students write a few sentences about their drawing.

Optional sentence starters:

- This reminds me of when I tried ____.
- I felt ____ when I tried something new.
- This helps me understand the boy because ____.

Look-fors:

- Drawing includes a clear event and feeling.
- Writing shows a simple text-to-self connection.

Teacher Tip!

Encourage students to say their sentence out loud before writing. Oral rehearsal helps with clarity and confidence.

UDL & Differentiation



-  Support: Students can dictate their connection to a partner or the teacher before writing.
-  Challenge: Invite students to add a second sentence explaining how their feelings changed (e.g., nervous → proud).
-  Alternative option: Students can draw only and orally explain their connection if writing is a barrier.

Author's Chair & Feedback

Invite 2–3 students to share their drawing or one sentence.

2 Stars & 1 Wish (oral feedback):

- ★ “I liked how you shared what you tried.”
- ★ “I could understand how you felt.”
- ✨ “One way to make it even clearer might be...”

Connection Spotter Challenge:

Ask listeners to quietly show a thumbs up when they hear a strong connection between the story and real life.

What to Look For (Assessment)

- Can the student name a personal experience linked to the story?
- Does the student explain how their experience helps them understand the character?
- Is the connection relevant and clear?