

# Carrying Lucille

Students work independent of the teacher, discussing with their peers what they read.



Stories are innovative and engaging to generate active discussion.

Written by **Paul Mason**  
Illustrated by **Warren Mahy**

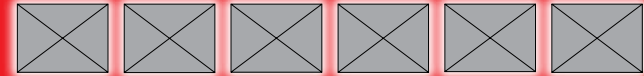
# What to do

Coloured icons identify who leads the discussion for each spread.

## YOU MIGHT NEED:

- a dictionary.

## NOW:



- choose a face
- when you see your face, you are the leader
- when you are the leader, follow these steps:

Students participate in a structured discussion, based on the approach of reciprocal teaching.

Students are provided with prompts to use when they lead the discussion.

## 1. Predict

Say to your group:

*"I think this page is going to be about ..."*

You can use the illustration to help you predict.

Tell your group to read the page silently.

## 2. Clarify

When your group has finished reading, ask them if there is anything they don't understand.

Say:

*"Is there anything anyone doesn't understand?"*

It could be:

- a word
- something someone has read.

## 3. Ask questions

Ask your group if anyone would like to ask a question about what they have read.

Say:

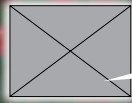
*"Does anyone have a question they would like to ask?"*

## 4. Summarise

Now, you can tell your group what the main ideas are on this page.

Say:

*"I think this page has been about ..."*



I predict this is going to be about ...

Mum's cousin Pete moved in with us last week. I say moved in, but really what I mean is that he moved his caravan onto the bottom of our back field. Mum said Pete had been asked to leave his last caravan site because he irritated people by playing his guitar all hours of the night.

Pete had nowhere else to go, but I was glad. It was fun having him living near us — cousin Pete is a bit different.

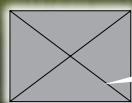
For one thing, when he's not working, Pete likes to wear a smart suit with a waistcoat and tie, made out of some shiny material, just like his hero, BB King. (BB King is this blues guitar legend.) If he's not fixing cars, Pete's on his guitar, amp turned up high.

Pete has lived in his caravan for almost his entire life. It's a cool, retro caravan with these red racing stripes down the sides like streaks of fire that match the stripes on his huge, American car. You can hear Pete coming a mile off — by the sound of the rumble, and the twang of a guitar solo blaring from the stereo.

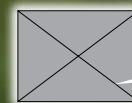
"Pete plays by his own set of rules," says Dad.

This coloured icon indicates who will be the leader on this spread.

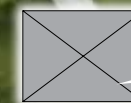
On every spread, prompts for the leader are in speech bubbles.



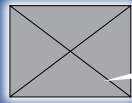
Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...



I predict this is going to be about ...

**A new leader for this spread is identified.**

If you get Pete you also get Lucille, his dog. They come as a package, like bacon and eggs.

Lucille is an old black and white Border collie — at least thirteen years old, Pete guesses. That makes her ninety-one in human years. He named her after BB King’s famous guitar.

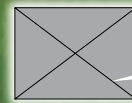
I don’t think Pete ever washes Lucille other than getting her to chase balls into the ocean, so there’s a certain whiff that tends to follow her around like a haze. She usually drags around twigs and bits of grass in her fur — not that she seems to mind. Lucille spends most of her time sleeping in the shade, in dust bowls that she digs out of the field. It drives Dad mad seeing all the holes.

Dad says dogs become like their owners and Lucille has her own strange ways too. She and Pete once worked at a small airport chasing birds away from the runway. Lucille was a bird-scaring dog, and the way Pete tells it, she was pretty good at her job too. But over the years, something must have happened because now, Lucille is absolutely terrified of birds. The smallest sparrow comes hopping over, and Lucille bolts. It’s quite funny to see.

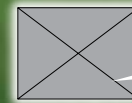
**Comprehension strategies are on each spread: predicting, clarifying vocabulary, asking questions, and summarising.**



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...

One day, I said to Pete, "That dog is past it!" "Don't you believe it," Pete answered. "She's got more energy than you."

"No way," I said.

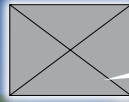
Pete went inside and brought out a ball. At the sight of it, Lucille's tail started going like a windscreen wiper. "Throw the ball for her, and I bet you, your arm gets tired before she does."

I started throwing — as far down the slope as possible. I figured if Lucille had to run back uphill, it would tire her out quicker. I was wrong. I must have thrown that ball thirty times, and still she kept bringing it back, her panting getting louder and louder like a steam engine at full stretch. The ball was covered in this awful slime, which didn't make me feel like picking it up any more, but I had to win.

"How's that arm of yours?" said Pete, grinning from the steps of the caravan.

"Fine," I lied. In truth, it was beginning to get sore. I heaved the ball as hard as I could to show him. "You were throwing it twice as far at the beginning," Pete chuckled.

Lucille kept on going. I had to hand it to the old girl: she looked as tired as my arm felt, but she just kept on coming. In the end, I gave up.

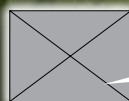


I predict this is going to be about ...

**A new leader takes control of the group.**



The text is supported by strong visual images.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...

Some weekends, Pete packed his guitar up in its battered case and he and Lucille would go off to his friends' house for a jamming session. Mum and Dad never let me go with him. "I can't even imagine what his friends are like, can you?" said Mum. But from the stories Pete reeled off, the band sounded like fun.

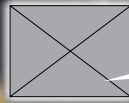
But this one weekend, Pete was out late and wasn't going to drive home, so he called Lucille a taxi and sent her back, Dad told me. Dad saw the cab pull up, and the driver came round and let Lucille out of the back, opening the door for her like she was the Queen. Lucille made her way to her basket and went straight to sleep, as if taking a taxi was the most normal thing in the world for a dog.

"You didn't really call her a taxi?" I asked Pete when I saw him again.

Pete looked a little embarrassed. "Our music was really loud, and I could see the old girl was a bit unsettled. Didn't seem fair to keep her up, so I got her a ride home."

"You're nuts," I laughed.

"Cost me a fortune, didn't you?" laughed Pete, ruffling Lucille's fur.

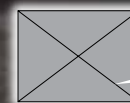


I predict this is going to be about ...

Now another student becomes the leader for this spread.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...

Although Pete was completely mad about Lucille, that didn't stop him grumbling about her. In the mornings on my way out to school, I'd look over and see that Lucille had been moved out of the caravan in the night, and was sleeping peacefully in her basket at the bottom of the caravan steps. She didn't seem to mind.

I asked cousin Pete about it.

"That mangy beast just doesn't stop scratching," Pete moaned. "All night long, scratch, scratch, scratch. The whole caravan shakes from side to side."

"It's probably not her fault; you ought to give her a bath once in a while," I pointed out.

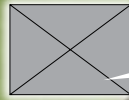
"And another thing," Pete grumbled, ignoring me, "she's got selective hearing." (She's not the only one, I thought.)

"Times when I ask her to heel or shift outside and she plays deaf," said Pete. "But rattle her food bowl and she hears that all right."

"I don't think she's got selective hearing; I think she's just old," I said.

Pete straightened his tie. "Like another ball-throwing competition?"

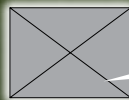
I could tell the idea of Lucille getting old didn't sit well with him. They'd been together for ages; Lucille was part of who Pete was.



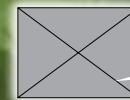
I predict this is going to be about ...

The next leader has a turn in this role.

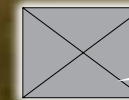
Challenging vocabulary is embedded in the text.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...

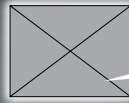
Most days, Lucille and Pete stopped off at the beach on the way back from the garage. Sometimes Pete would swing by to pick me up — which was great. I got to ride through town in his big car, with the roof down if the weather was good — Pete in his suit, Lucille hanging her tongue on the wind.

Pete had one of those ball-throwing sticks with a scoop at the end, a bit like a catapult, which meant you could launch the ball way further than if you were just using your arm. It was his way of evening things up with Lucille, so his arm didn't get tired. I noticed Pete was using the throwing stick less and less, until he stopped bringing it down to the beach altogether. Lucille was running out of puff.

The beach was also bath time for Lucille, and she loved the water, as long as it wasn't too surfy.

But one afternoon, as Lucille was coming out of the sea with the ball in her mouth, her back legs went out from under her; probably from the weight of the water in her fur. Pete had to roll up his trousers and go in to help her out.

We didn't talk about it on the ride home.

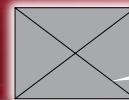


I predict this is going to be about ...

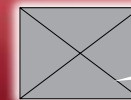
Next leader takes over.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?

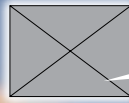


Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...





I predict this is going to be about ...

Each student can lead a group discussion twice in every book.

Soon after that, Pete left Lucille at home while he went to the garage. He asked me to keep an eye on her for a while.

“But it’s the weekend,” I said. “Why are you going to work?”

Pete winked. “I’ve got a plan up my sleeve, and I need some tools. I won’t be long.”

I sat in the sunshine with Lucille and scratched her chest for her. Pete told me it was her favourite thing. Lucille gives off little groans when you do that, and rests a front paw on your arm. If you stop, she paws at you, a puzzled look in her eye. “Why have you stopped?” she’s saying.

Pete came back soon after, and unloaded a whole lot of tools from the back of his car and what looked like part of an old trolley — the kind that golfers use.

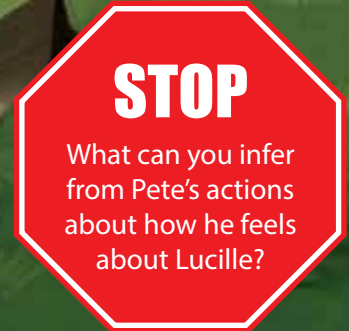
“What’s all that for?” I asked.

“Time Lucille had her own set of wheels,” Pete smiled. He did a quick measurement of Lucille. “That’ll do,” he said, changing out of his suit and getting to work.

Hacksaw, electric drill, monkey wrench ... with me handing him the tools, it only took Pete an hour or so.



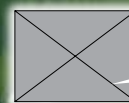
Additional comprehension strategies appear in STOP signs. Students here are encouraged to make an inference.



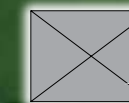
What can you infer from Pete’s actions about how he feels about Lucille?



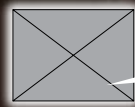
Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...



I predict this is going to be about ...

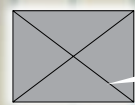
When we were done, Pete put the new trolley on the grass and lifted Lucille's back legs onto it. He ran the straps round her middle and harnessed her in at the front, so that her body was secure — it looked a bit like a wheelchair. Lucille glanced up at us wondering what on earth was going on. She wagged her tail weakly.

“Come on, girl,” said Pete, standing back and slapping his thighs. “Come on.”

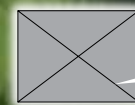
Lucille pushed herself up on her front paws and took a few shaky steps, the wheels of the trolley rolling behind her. She turned and looked at her back legs; she could see she was still strapped in. Again, she gave us a puzzled look. Then she took a few more steps, and a few more, Pete walking away each time, calling her forward. Lucille seemed to like how the trolley was giving her back legs a rest.

“The wheels are working,” I said.

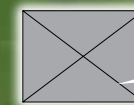
“Now for the real test,” said Pete, and he pulled out Lucille's favourite ball from behind his back. That set her tail going. Pete threw it along the grass — not too far — to see if she would go for it.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...

Off Lucille went, her front legs strong, her wheels squeaking behind her. She gathered the ball up in her mouth and brought it back to Pete. “I need to get some oil on those wheels,” he laughed.

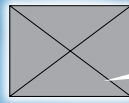
I threw the ball to Lucille for a while, and though she gave in before my arm got tired this time, the dog wheels were a real success. I thought I saw Lucille grin again.

If the tide was out, and the sand was firm, Lucille’s wheelchair worked on the beach too, and though she wasn’t as fast as before, she still trotted along the water’s edge barking happily. If there was a flock of seagulls down by the water, I noticed Lucille would still circle around so as not to go near them.

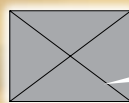
“Can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” said Pete.

We got a few looks out on our beach walks — Pete with his suit, and his dog with her wheels. Loads of people wanted to stop and ask him about her. Lucille got lots of pats, and quite a few treats from the other dog owners.

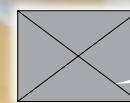
Pete took to calling her ‘Rollerdog’ as if she were a superhero, which I guess in a way she was.



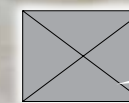
I predict this is going to be about ...



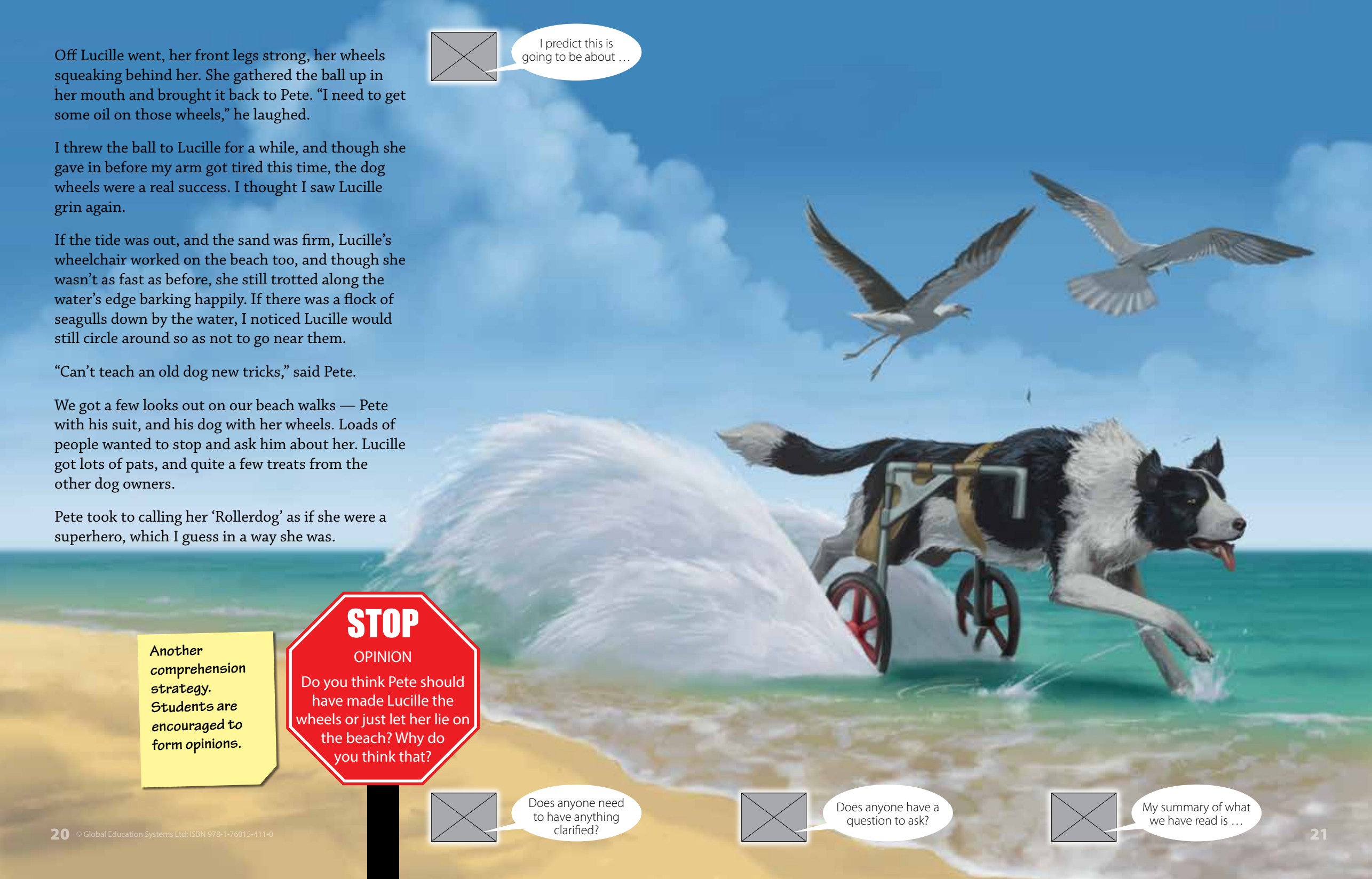
Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...



**STOP**  
OPINION  
Do you think Pete should have made Lucille the wheels or just let her lie on the beach? Why do you think that?

Another comprehension strategy. Students are encouraged to form opinions.

But a few months later, there came a time when even the wheels didn't help. Lucille's legs were just too stiff and weary. The vet gave her a shot to stop her joints from hurting so much, but Lucille took to lying in her dust bowls in the field and spent most of the day just sleeping in the shade.

There were a few times when I'd come home from school and thought she'd already gone, she was lying so still. But then she'd lift up her head and the windscreen wiper would start up again.

Mum and Dad were worried about how Pete would cope without his friend. "She's had quite an innings," said Mum one day at dinner time.

"If only we all get to ninety-one, we'll be lucky," added Dad.

I could see they were trying to keep things light-hearted, trying to make Pete feel better, but Pete wasn't having any of it.

"There's life in the old girl yet. Any of you feel like taking her on with a ball?" he said, straightening his tie.

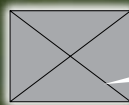
"No, thanks," I said quickly, rubbing my shoulder as if it hurt just thinking about it.

"Didn't think so," said Pete, satisfied.

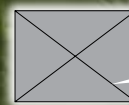


I predict this is going to be about ...

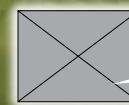
All stories have strong themes and messages.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?

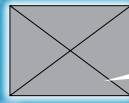


My summary of what we have read is ...

The next week, Pete drove Lucille down to the beach after work, and she got to hang her tongue out on the ride down and smell the breeze like old times. Then when we got down there, Pete picked her up and carried her in his arms like a child. We walked the whole length of the bay and back like that, with Lucille in his arms. Just so Lucille could smell the salty air, just so she could look out at the sea. Lucille really liked that walk; we could tell by the flicker in her eyes. And when there was a flock of gulls up ahead, Pete gave them a wide berth and walked up to the dunes, just like Lucille would have done.

“See what you have me doing?” Pete grumbled as we walked. “Turned me into a slave, haven’t you, girl? Time we got you back on your wheels.”

Then when Pete’s arms got tired we stopped for a breather and lay Lucille down on the sand. Pete pulled out a cardboard tube he had in his jacket pocket, and I scratched her chest while she chewed at the tube. It was a pretty nice afternoon.



I predict this is going to be about ...



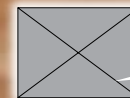
Another comprehension strategy. Students are encouraged to visualise.

**STOP**

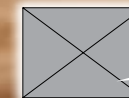
What picture did you get in your head when you read 'like a child'?



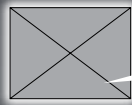
Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...



I predict this is going to be about ...

That weekend, Mum and Dad decided to have a barbecue. Pete moved Lucille’s basket close to the house. She rested her head on her front paws, happy to lie down and watch.

“We’re off down the beach again tomorrow. You keen?” Pete asked me.

“Sure,” I said. “I’ll come.” I wondered how many more times we’d get the chance, the three of us.

Then Pete got his guitar out and played the blues, just like BB King. Lucille’s tail wagged softly in time to the music — like she knew the song.

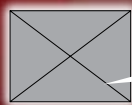
Soon after that, I could see Lucille had drifted off to sleep.

She never woke up.

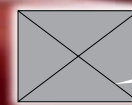
In the end, Pete decided to have Lucille cremated so he could scatter her ashes on the beach. “It’s what she would have liked,” he told me with a brave smile.

He picked me up after school later that week, and we headed off, Lucille’s urn on the back seat.

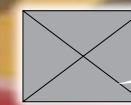
And when we got to the beach we went right to the end and back — joking and chatting like we always did, making sure we steered clear of any birds. Me and cousin Pete in his best suit and tie, with Lucille in his arms.



Does anyone need to have anything clarified?



Does anyone have a question to ask?



My summary of what we have read is ...

Another comprehension strategy. Students are encouraged to make text-to-self connections.

**STOP**  
What connections can you make with losing something or someone you care a lot about?

# Something to think about

**TALK** with your group or a partner about the ending in the story *Carrying Lucille*. How did you feel at the end? What did the author do to make you feel like this?

Students are encouraged to focus on aspects of the writing and how the author constructed the text.



**TIP:** *The ending needs to be satisfying for the reader.*

**WRITE** another ending to the story. Try drafting a few endings that don't have much detail. Decide which one fits in best with the story. Now add detail to this one.

*Making a writing connection: students are given an opportunity to work independently with activities that encourage them to think about their own writing and applying the strategies.*

<b>Story title:</b>	
How it ends:	
Characters:	How they think and feel:
	Some of their dialogue:
New ending:	

*Graphic organisers in every book help students to clarify their thinking.*



