



Hey Jack! The Worry Monsters

By Sally Rippin, illustrated by Stephanie Spartels

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Experiment with speech bubbles.
- Investigate new ways of learning.

About the Story:

Jack is good at math. Jack is good at art. But Jack is terrible at spelling. So when Jack receives his new spelling words for the week, he knows he has to work really hard to learn them. But an afternoon playing with Scraps in the sun is a much nicer way to spend his time. In fact as the week wears on, Jack finds something every day to distract him from having to learn his spelling words – playing soccer, playing with Scraps, building a pirate ship ... anything is better than thinking about his spelling test. But on the night before his test, Jack remembers his words and he begins to worry. He worries so much that worry monsters visit him in his bed. He worries so much that he feels sick and snaps at his friend Billie on the way to school. Jack worries so much that his teacher sends him home for the day. Jack finally tells his dad what is worrying him. That afternoon Jack learns his spelling words in a new and fun way that gives Jack the confidence to send away the worry monsters and gives him his best spelling grade yet!

Before You Read the Story:

Read the title of the story aloud. Invite students to discuss what they think “Worry Monsters” are. Ask them if the front cover holds any clues about what Jack is worried about. Now turn to the back cover and read the blurb aloud. Confirm that the source of Jack’s worry is his upcoming spelling test. Note that Jack’s dislike of spelling means that he avoids practicing for his test. Ask students if they have an idea for Jack that may make learning something he doesn’t like a bit more appealing?

Questions and Activities:

Chapter One

- What is Jack worried about?
- What happens when Jack thinks about the spelling test at dinner time?
- How does Jack describe the worry he feels about the test?
- Jack chooses to do something else every time he thinks about practicing his spelling words. Have you ever put off something you knew you had to do but didn’t want to?

Activity: Ask students if they can identify with Jack when his worry monsters appear. Draw your own worry monsters and give them speech bubbles - what would they say to you?



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Chapter Two

- Jack remembers his spelling words the night before the test, but he chooses not to practice them. Why?
- Why doesn't Jack tell his mom about the spelling test before he goes to school?
- Who does Jack finally tell about his spelling test? What is this person's advice?

Activity: Note that worrying about the spelling test has made Jack's tummy really hurt and his face turn pale. Also highlight that being worried has meant that Jack is very quiet and gets angry with his friend very quickly. Ask student if they have ever worried this much about something? If so, invite students to share what they were worried about.

Chapter Three

- Jack hangs his head before telling his dad about the spelling test. What does this tell us about how Jack is feeling?
- Why does Jack's dad lift his eyebrows and smile when Jack says that he forgot to practice his spelling words?
- Jack needs to practice his words before the spelling test tomorrow. So why is he in the kitchen eating cookies, pasta and fruit?
- How does Jack deal with the worry monsters when they visit him that night?

Activity: Look at page 36 and ask students to comment on the idea of learning words with food. Inform parents of this method of learning and encourage students to practice their spelling words using a different food type each evening. Invite parents to take pictures of students practicing their spelling words. At the conclusion of the week, ask students to write about the experience.

Teacher Tips adapted from Hardie Grant Egmont.