

A Few Minutes *By Jeannie McLean*

Introduction

Tyson heads home from school worried about his dad's reaction to the letter in his pocket. The situation at home, however, makes those worries seem insignificant as Tyson has to deal with a much more serious situation: saving his father's life!

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students to:

- explore the topics of dealing with an emergency and changing family situations
- learn what to do when faced with a serious situation or accident
- explore how the author builds character and creates atmosphere and tension.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Students explore the cover and determine what they think the story is about.
- Students share (in pairs or small groups) about a time when they went home from school worried sick about having to tell their parents about something that had happened at school. What was it? How did they feel?
- Students share their experiences of a time when they had deal with an emergency. Maybe they had to call emergency services, or had to help someone who was seriously hurt. What did they do? How did they feel? How did they cope?
- Brainstorm ideas about different types of emergencies. What can happen? How would the students react? What should be done?
- Introduce vocabulary that the students may need to access the text. Refer to the vocabulary worksheets (3, 4a and 4b) for words that are unfamiliar.

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images. The meanings of words in bold text are in the glossary at the back of the book.

- End of page 2 – “Why is Tyson ‘dawdling’ home from school?”
- End of page 5 – “How does Tyson feel about his dad’s enthusiasm for restoring cars?”
- End of page 7 – “Tyson isn’t bothered that his dog Jasper hasn’t rushed to greet him as he usually does. Why not?”
- End of page 9 – “What finally makes Tyson realise that things aren’t right at home?”
- End of page 13 – “What do you think has happened to the dog?”
- End of page 15 – “The big man is upset that his mate has shot at Tyson’s dad. Why?”
- End of page 16 – “Why does the operator tell Tyson to stay on the phone and not go anywhere?”
- End of page 19 – “Tyson ignores the operator and runs to help his dad. Was that a good idea or should he have stayed where he was?”
- End of page 23 – “What does the operator tell Tyson to do to help his dad? Why?”

- End of page 26 – “By putting his dad into the recovery position, Tyson has saved his dad’s life. How come?”
- End of page 31 – “Why does Tyson still feel frightened? How is he going to get to the hospital?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- Ask for your students’ opinions of this story. How do they feel about it and why? Do they think it is realistic? In what ways do they identify with Tyson? What do they think of Tyson’s reactions to the situation? Would they react in the same way? Encourage the students to make connections between the story and their own experiences.
- After the students complete the three-level thinking guide (Worksheet 1), they discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- Students discuss in pairs or small groups: “A time when I had to deal with an emergency: what happened, what I did and what the outcome was”.

Exploring character

- Discuss: Does Tyson’s character change during the story? Think about how he is feeling at the beginning of the story, then at the end. Does his attitude towards his father change during the story? How does he feel about the letter from school at the end of the story?
- Discuss: Who are the other characters in this story? How would you describe Tyson’s dad, and the two guys wanting to steal his car?
- Discuss: Think about how Tyson is feeling about his father at the beginning of the story, and his view of why his mum has left them. In what way have Tyson’s feelings changed by end of the story?
- Working in pairs, students decide who will be Tyson and who will be Tyson’s dad, and they develop the conversation that these two characters might have when Tyson sees his father in hospital.

Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 to sequence correctly.

or

- Students take a statement each from Worksheet 2 and arrange themselves into the correct story sequence. Then, taking turns based on this sequence, they retell their part of the story.

or

- Students create a visual sequence of the events from the story.

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and mix them up. Hand them out to students, who then find their correct “partner”.

- As an alternative to the above activity, divide the class into two groups: one group fills in the second column of Worksheet 4a and the other fills in the second column of Worksheet 4b. This activity involves the students in creating definitions, which they then use to test the other group.
- Students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Reading

- Read *Smash-up!*, the magazine from the GO for IT series that complements this book.

Writing

- Set this writing task: “Imagine you are Tyson. Write a letter to the school principal explaining how the window at school came to be broken. Explain what you plan to do to pay for the window and how you plan to change your behaviour.”
- Students write a continuation of the story. What happens when Tyson gets to the hospital? Do the police manage to find the two men and the car that belongs to Tyson’s dad – and, if so, how? What has happened to Tyson’s dog, Jasper? How does Tyson deal with what has happened to his dog?

Debating

- Hold a class debate on a topic related to the story, such as: “Guns should be banned.”

Research

Students do research on:

- first aid – how to deal with an injured person
- emergencies – what to be aware of (eg what to tell emergency services).

Art and design

- Students prepare a static image. Design a first aid poster or design a “wanted” poster for the two car thieves.
- Students design a book cover that sells the book about Tyson’s story.

WORKSHEET 1

A Few Minutes – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas and information)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
Tyson walks slowly home from school with his hands in his pockets.	
The window breaks when Brad pushes Tyson against it.	
Tyson has to pay for the damage to the window.	
Tyson has never seen the sports car that is parked in the driveway before.	
The car has chrome mag wheels and real leather seats.	
Tyson’s mum has been gone for three months.	
Tyson can hear Jasper barking as he arrives home.	
As he passes his bedroom, Tyson throws his backpack onto his bed.	
Tyson drinks some juice from the fridge and watches out for his father.	
Tyson hears his dad shouting angrily and knows something is wrong.	
Two men are threatening Tyson’s dad and one has a gun.	
The men shoot Tyson’s dad then both take off in his dad’s car.	
Tyson grabs his cell phone and runs to help his dad.	
The police are the first to arrive, then the ambulance comes.	
LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
Tyson is keen to get home to download a new game onto his phone.	
Tyson’s dad is still angry about Tyson’s torn school uniform.	
Hopefully the visitors are going to buy the car that belongs to Tyson’s dad.	
Tyson’s mum will come home if his dad sells the car.	
Tyson is worried when Jasper doesn’t rush to greet him.	
Tyson wants to give his dad the letter and get the lecture over with.	

The sound of his father arguing makes Tyson even more worried.	
Tyson is afraid the men will see him and shoot him too, so he hides.	
The big man is really angry when the other man shoots Tyson's dad.	
The hooded man is the leader of the two.	
The telephone operator is angry with Tyson for not listening to her.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
It is lucky that Tyson knew what to do to save his dad.	
When Tyson's dad gets shot, it is his own fault.	
Tyson always behaves in a mature and responsible way.	
People should always think about their own safety first.	
If you know first aid, you can save people's lives.	

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Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

A Few Minutes – Restore the order

Cut out the statements and mix them up. Ask students to place them in the correct order.

Tyson walks slowly home from school.
Tyson has a letter from the school saying he has to pay for the broken window.
When he reaches home, Tyson sees an unfamiliar car parked in the driveway.
Tyson's dog, Jasper, doesn't run to meet him as he usually does.
Tyson decides he needs something to eat and drink before he faces his dad.
Tyson drops his school bag and kicks it into his bedroom.
Tyson takes the juice out of the fridge and drinks it straight from the bottle.
Tyson hears his dad shouting angrily at someone.
After shutting the fridge door quietly, Tyson creeps along to see what is happening.
Two man stand facing Tyson's dad, who is standing in front of the garage.
The smaller man is holding something in his pocket.
Tyson's dad takes a step forward and the man shoots him.
Tyson grabs his cell phone out of his backpack and dials 111.

Suddenly Tyson hears the operator's calm voice asking him for details.

Tyson hears two cars speeding away.

The operator tells Tyson that the police are coming and to stay where he is.

Ignoring the operator's instructions, Tyson dashes out to help his dad.

Tyson tells the operator his dad is badly hurt and she tells him to turn his dad onto his side.

Tyson rips off his shirt and presses it into the wound on his dad's shoulder.

The ambulance arrives first, followed by two police cars.

The ambulance officer says the bullet has shattered Tyson's dad's shoulder.

The ambulance officer says that, by putting his dad into the recovery position and stopping blood loss, Tyson has saved his dad's life.

Tyson watches the stretcher being hoisted into the ambulance.

The police officer says Tyson is very brave and that he will take Tyson to the hospital.

Tyson hopes that, after reading the letter from school, his dad won't be so disappointed in him.

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WORKSHEET 3

A Few Minutes – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and their definitions, mix them up, and ask your students to match the pairs.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Definition</i>
chassis	the frame on which a car is built
conversation	talking between people
crotch	the body area between the hips
dawdle	walk slowly
delay	stop something happening for a while
deliberate	acting with purpose, because you mean it to happen
details	small elements of information that help to build up the big picture
download	transfer something from the internet to another computer
enraged	very angry
gulping	swallowing hard
high-strung	tense, nervous
hoisted	lifted

Word	Definition
hot wire	method of starting a car without using the ignition
hunched	crouched
ignored	paid no attention to
inevitable	certain to happen
intention	a plan or purpose
lecture	a talking to
mag wheels	special flash wheels
medic	person trained in first aid
metallic paint	shiny, sparkly paint
muzzle	an animal's nose, mouth and jaws
nervous	worried, concerned
not made of money	not having much money
patrol car	police car
peer	look with some difficulty

Word	Definition
property	land that is owned
receding	going away from
restore	return to its original state
reversing	going backwards
threatening	menacing
tilted	slanted, angled
unfamiliar	not known

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Note that some words above may have different meanings in other contexts.

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WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

A Few Minutes – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups, and give one group Worksheet 4a and the other group Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column of its own worksheet, each group writes a definition for each of the words listed in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, the group may need to check the page of the book that is listed.
- Each group then folds the first column out of sight and swaps worksheets with the other group.
- Each group guesses the original words, based on the definitions given in the other group's worksheet, and writes them in the third column of that worksheet. A group can go to the page in the book that is listed if it needs help. For an extra challenge, the groups can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
chassis (p 4)	(p 24)	
crotch (p 6)	(p 6)	
delay (p 2)	(p 2)	
details (p 16)	(p 16)	
enraged (p 19)	(p 19)	
frantically (p 16)	(p 16)	
gulping (p 9)	(p 9)	
hoisted (p 28)	(p 28)	
hunched (p 11)	(p 11)	
inevitable (p 2)	(p 2)	

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
lecture (p 2)	(p 2)	
medic (p 25)	(p 25)	
muzzle (p 6)	(p 6)	
not made of money (p 2)	(p 2)	
peer (p 11)	(p 11)	
receding (p 31)	(p 31)	
reversing (p 16)	(p 16)	
tilted (p 23)	(p 23)	

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WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

A Few Minutes – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups, and give one group Worksheet 4a and the other group Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column of its own worksheet, each group writes a definition for each of the words listed in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, the group may need to check the page of the book that is listed.
- Each group then folds the first column out of sight and swaps worksheets with the other group.
- Each group guesses the original words, based on the definitions given in the other group's worksheet, and writes them in the third column of that worksheet. A group can go to the page in the book that is listed if it needs help. For an extra challenge, groups can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group A)
conversation (p 12)	(p 12)	
dawdle (p 2)	(p 2)	
deliberately (p 2)	(p 2)	
downloaded (p 2)	(p 2)	
enthusiast (p 4)	(p 4)	
furious (p 9)	(p 9)	
high strung (p 16)	(p 16)	
hot wire (p 16)	(p 16)	
ignored (p 16)	(p 16)	

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group A)
intention (p 9)	(p 9)	
mag wheels (p 4)	(p 4)	
metallic paint (p 4)	(p 4)	
nervous (p 12)	(p 12)	
patrol car (p 16)	(p 16)	
property (p 9)	(p 9)	
restore (p 5)	(p 5)	
threatening (p 9)	(p 9)	
unfamiliar (p 4)	(p 4)	

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WORKSHEET 5

A Few Minutes – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

“Describe his injuries,” the asked.

“He’s been shot. Near shoulder I think, but it’s to tell.

There’s blood everywhere on his There’s around his mouth.” Tyson didn’t why but he knew that serious.

The operator, “Do you know the safety? Turn him on his, gently. Keep his open. Have you got clean to put over the wound? You need to down on the wound to the blood flow.”

Tyson his eyes and pushed at the heavy until his was lying on his side. He his father’s head as the operator instructed. He ripped his school shirt and pressed ithis father’s shoulder and over his chest. As he touched his dad, Tyson What he hurt him more? “I promise, Dad. I I’ll work and earn the money to for the window. I’ll try to be I won’t get any more trouble. Just don’t die.”