

Tall Tale

Orange, Level 15, 350L

Summary: On Contest Day, Catfish Carlos wins every contest. Then he loses the sitting contest and stomps off.

Themes: humour, competition, bragging

Text Features: title, paragraphs, repetition, illustrations

Phonics/Spelling:

- alliteration: Catfish Carlos, contest
- 'ow' digraph: show-off; rowed; frowned; crowd; townspeople; town's

Vocabulary/Grammar/Punctuation:

- superlative adverbs: fastest, furthest, highest, longest
- compound words: catfish, goodbye, show-off, townspeople
- past tense verbs: caught, frowned, jumped, laughed, liked, ran, rested, rowed, said, sat, shouted, swam, squirmed, stomped, turned, tried, twisted, was, waved
- quotation marks

High-Frequency Words:

away, because, boy, didn't, even, first, laughed, liked, man, more, next, night, only, other, ran, red, say, shouted, small, stop, swimming, was, went, who, why

Catfish Carlos and the Sitting Contest



Focus Question: What happens when someone who usually wins doesn't?

PREPARE & READ

- Read the title. Explain that this story is a tall tale. A tall tale has elements that are surprising, hard to believe or impressive.
- Invite students to look at the pictures. Ask what Catfish Carlos looks like.
- Ask students to read the card.

READ CLOSELY

Retell

How does Catfish Carlos get his name? (*he likes to eat catfish*) 1

Author's Craft

What can Carlos do that people couldn't do in real life? 1

... Carlos is so strong he can row a boat with one hand and catch a fish with the other.

Compare and Contrast

On the day after Contest Day, how do the townspeople feel? (*tired*) What do they do? (*sit and rest*) What does Carlos want to do? (*have more contests*) 4

Vocabulary: Adverbs

What words compare what Carlos does with what the other contestants do when they swim, jump and run? (*swam fastest, jumped highest, ran furthest*) What would he have to do to win the sitting contest? (*sit longest*) 3 5

Make Inferences

Are the townspeople really having a sitting contest? (*no, they are just resting*) How can you tell? (*boy smiles, townspeople laugh—shows they are joking*) 6 7

Key Events and Details

Which contest does Catfish Carlos lose? (*sitting contest*) Why can't he win it? (*can't sit for long*) 6

Draw Conclusions

The boy invites Carlos at the end of the story to compete in the sitting contest next year. Why did the boy tell him that this contest would happen again next year? Why did Carlos become so angry when he only lost one of the contests?

... The boy wanted Carlos to know that there would be at least one contest that he might not win next year. Carlos probably became so angry because he was not used to losing at all. He liked to think he was the best at everything.

Catfish Carlos and the Sitting Contest



1

Catfish Carlos was a big man. He was a strong man. He rowed a boat on the river.

People called him 'Catfish'. Why? Because he liked eating catfish.

With one hand, Catfish Carlos rowed his boat. With the other hand, he caught catfish. He was a show-off.

2

One day, he saw a crowd on the shore. It was the town's Contest Day.

First, there was a swimming contest. Catfish Carlos swam the fastest.

Next, there was a jumping contest. Catfish Carlos jumped the highest.

Then, there was a running contest. Catfish Carlos ran the furthest.

3



1

Adapted from a story by Chris Kachmar

SCHOLASTIC

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Catfish Carlos ran all night. He didn't stop until morning.

4

The next day, the townspeople were tired. They sat in their chairs and rested.

'Are there any more contests?' asked Catfish Carlos.

A small boy smiled. 'Only the sitting contest,' he said.

5

Catfish Carlos frowned. 'What is that?'

'The person who sits longest wins!' said the boy.

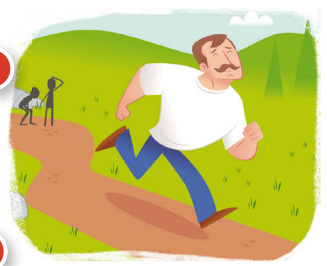
Catfish Carlos sat. He squirmed. He twisted. He turned. He tried so hard that his face went red.

6

At last, he jumped to his feet. 'This is silly!' he shouted. He stomped away, back to his boat.

The townspeople laughed and waved goodbye. 'See you at the next sitting contest,' they called.

Catfish Carlos didn't even say goodbye.



2



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DISCUSS

These questions can be used for paired discussion. Ask students to use the text to support their reasoning. Then, ask them to share their conclusions with the group.

- Is Catfish Carlos a likeable character? Why/Why not? (*not really; show-off—likes winning above everything, angry when loses, can't laugh at joke*)
- Do you think the townspeople might have a real sitting contest sometime? (*maybe*) Why/Why not? (*so can rest; is funny; to see if Carlos will try again*)
- Why is it good for people to lose contests sometimes? (*need to learn how to lose with grace; helps keep you humble; can make you more determined to win*)

WRITE

Have students choose either one of the following options for writing, or do both.

- Draw Catfish Carlos sitting on a chair. Write a caption to say what he is doing. (*Catfish Carlos _____*)
(Information/Explanation)
- Do you think the boy's trick was funny? Why/Why not? Complete the following sentence. *I think the boy's trick (was/was not) funny because _____.* **(Opinion)**