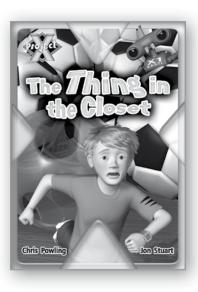# The Thing in the Closet

BY CHRIS POWLING

About this book

Jet shrinks and goes into the gym storage room. He finds a Thing (an X-bot) but he doesn't know what it is. This two-part story is continued in *Message in an X-Bot*.

Reading Level: M (Fiction) *introduction of chapter format

Word Count: 700+

High-Frequency Words	Reading Skills and Techniques	Related Comprehension Strategies
was, want, all, where, like, called, they	• demonstrating control of a large bank of high-frequency words • rereading to confirm, check accuracy, and solve words • using illustrations, context, and prior experience to make meaning and solve new words • demonstrating phrased and expressive reading • applying understanding of punctuation to reading • reading silently	• making connections • retelling • inferring • asking and answering questions

Before reading

- Display the book cover and discuss what students observe about Jet. What do they know about Jet from previous Project X books that could explain why he might be in trouble?
- Have students generate questions about the cover. What do they wonder?
- Have the students look through the first few pages. Is this book fiction or non-fiction? What clues do they see? Then turn to the contents page. Discuss the set-up of the page and look at the chapter titles. Can they read fiction sections the same way they can read non-fiction sections? Why do the chapters need to be read in order?

Assessment Note

Do the students:

- make connections to previously read texts?
- demonstrate understanding of the differences between how we read fiction and non-fiction?

During reading

- Read Chapters 1 and 2 aloud. Demonstrate using your voice in response to punctuation cues and to build suspense at key points.
- Ask if anyone is afraid of spiders. What other things are people afraid of? Remind students to use their own background knowledge and the text clues to infer how Jet must be feeling.
- Tell the students they will be reading the rest of the book independently. Review what they can do if they come to unfamiliar words. Model how to reread to confirm, check accuracy, and solve words by cross-checking illustrations, context, and prior experience.
- Direct the students to read the book silently. Have one student at a time read quietly to you and assess their control of the reading process in this book.

Assessment Note

How do the students solve difficult text?

Do the students:

- demonstrate control of high-frequency words?
- read at an appropriate rate?
- read expressively?

After reading

- Assign one chapter to each student. Give them a minute to review what happened in their chapter, then ask them to share a short retell. **(retelling)**
- Return to Chapter 3. How has the author used language and punctuation to build suspense? **(author's craft, adopting a critical stance)**
- Ask students to discuss the Thing. Where has it come from? Will it be in future stories? Why does Jet's watch have an X-bot warning system? **(inferring, deducing, drawing conclusions)**
- Have the students read page 24. Do they want to read the next book? **(personal response)**
- Show the students a sealed box and tell them to imagine it has a Thing in it. What questions could they ask the Thing to learn more about it? Record their questions and suggest they may find the answers in future stories. **(asking questions)**

Assessment Note

Do the students:

- include the pertinent details in their retells?
- identify techniques used to build suspense?
- infer using prior knowledge and text clues?
- generate relevant questions?

Additional activities

- **Word Study:** Read the simile on page 5: "His face was as white as the lines on a soccer field." Explain to students that when we compare two things using the words *like* or *as*, it is called a *simile*. Model examples, then work together to create some similes about people in the class (e.g., *Her hair is as black as the blackboard. He bounced into the school like a pogo stick.*).
- Have the students:
  - write a description of the X-bot.
  - write about a time when they were scared of something.
  - try creative ways to send urgent messages (e.g., walkie-talkies, cups or cans on a string, emails).
  - research spiders and webs, and plan a way to present the information.
  - create a picture or collage of something that scares people.

Assessment Note

Do the students:

- create similes?
- write a text that is organized and uses descriptive vocabulary?
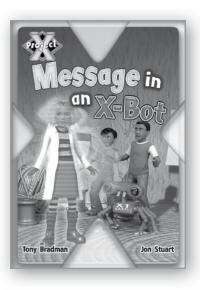- use a range of strategies to write unfamiliar words?

Message in an X-Bot

BY TONY BRADMAN

About this book

This book follows the story begun in *The Thing in the Closet.* The four friends manage to fix the Thing (an X-bot) and receive a mysterious message about Dr. X.

Reading Level: M (Fiction) * introduction of chapter format

Word Count: 700+

High-Frequency Words	Reading Skills and Techniques	Related Comprehension Strategies
what, was, that, wanted, where, from	• demonstrating control of a large bank of high-frequency words • rereading to confirm, check accuracy, and solve words • using illustrations, context, and prior experience to make meaning and solve new words • demonstrating phrased and expressive reading • reading silently	• making connections • retelling • inferring • asking and answering questions

Before reading

- Draw the group's attention to the title of the book. What is an X-bot? What do they think the message might be?
- Turn to pages 2 and 3. Have students briefly retell the previous story using the pictures to help. Do they have some ideas about what the Thing might be?
- Point out that Max is taking the broken X-bot. Which of the four characters is most likely going to be able to help Max fix it? What evidence do they have?

Assessment Note

Do the students:
- respond with relevant ideas and observations?
- make connections to previous texts?

During reading

- Using the contents page, look at the chapter headings for the first four chapters. Review the importance of reading fiction sequentially.

- Review ways to solve new words, including: using illustrations, context, and prior knowledge; reading through words (beyond the first letter); and, attempting unknown word using word chunks. Tell the students they will see some technical vocabulary (e.g., *upload*, *text message*, and *email*). They need to think about what they know about these things.
- Read Chapter 1 aloud and talk about the problem at the end of the chapter. Do they predict that Max will be able to fix the X-bot alone? Was it fair of Leo to ask for the X-bot?
- Read page 8 to the students, then have them read page 9. Do they understand that they need to read the text message? Do they know how to read the abbreviated language?
- Ask the students to read the rest of the book silently. Have one student at a time read quietly to you and assess their control of the reading process in this book.

After reading

- Have the students retell the story using the pictures. **(retelling)**
- Ask the students to think about what the X-bot is and who Dr. X might be. Do they think the X-bot is a friend or a foe? **(inferring)**
- Pretend to be the hologram. Have the students generate questions for you to answer. **(asking questions)**
- Ask the students:
  - Why did Max decide to send pictures to Leo? **(inferring)**
  - Why does Max decide Leo should keep the X-bot? **(inferring)**

Additional activities

- **Word Study:** On separate word cards, write the following words: *did, can, let, us, what, it, do, I, will*. Add 3 copies of *not* and two copies of *is*. Spread out the word cards and ask the students to look through the book to find contractions that match the word cards. When all the contractions have been found, have the students read the sentences as printed in the book, then read the corresponding word cards. Can the students make any other contractions using words in the book? Finally, draw attention to the word *robot's* (page 15). Why isn't it a contraction?
- Have the students reread Chapter 4 and work together to prepare a dramatic representation of this scene. Remind them to think carefully about facial expression, sound effects, etc.
- Have the students:
  - compose text messages or emails to friends and discuss the abbreviations commonly used.
  - bring robotic and remote-controlled toys to school and describe how they move and work.

Assessment Note

How do the students solve difficult text?

Do the students:
- make reasonable predictions based on evidence?
- demonstrate control of high-frequency words?
- read expressively?
- read at an appropriate rate?

Assessment Note

Do the students:
- include all elements of an effective retell?
- identify the main ideas in the story?
- infer using prior knowledge and text information?

Assessment Note

Do the students:
- identify contractions and the base words?
- demonstrate effective dramatic expression?
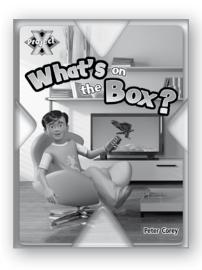- understand how text messages work?

What's on the Box?

BY PETER COREY

About this book

This non-fiction text describes the history, workings, and uses of TV and TV programs.

Reading Level: M (Non-Fiction)

Word Count: 1500+ (includes headings, labels, captions, diagrams, and speech bubbles)

High-Frequency Words	Reading Skills and Techniques	Related Comprehension Strategies
there, were, has, when, because, could	• demonstrating phrased and expressive reading • using illustrations, context, and prior experience to make meaning and solve new words • reading silently • attempting unknown word using word chunks • using table of contents, index, labels, and other non-fiction features	• making connections • retelling • asking and answering questions • determining important information • using text form and pattern to help make meaning

Before reading

- Have the students talk about their favourite TV programs. Introduce the word *preference*. What are their TV program preferences (e.g., cartoons, nature programs)?
- Have the students look through the book and decide if it is fiction or non-fiction. What non-fiction features do they find?
- Draw attention to the contents page. Remind students that the contents page helps non-fiction readers decide whether they are going to read part, or all, of the text.
- Have the students find the glossary. Read the words together and discuss the definitions.

Assessment Note

Do the students:

- provide reasons for their preferences?
- understand the uses of a table of contents and glossary?

During reading

- Read pages 2 and 3 aloud to the students. How many TVs do they have in their homes?

- Ask the students to read the next two sections ("How a TV Works" and "Early TV"). What do they notice about the ways these sections are presented? Why did the author use very different formats (i.e., numbered diagrams vs. narrative)?
- Have the students reread the table of contents and think about what might be in each section.
- Divide the book between group members, ensuring each student has about the same amount to read. Direct them to read their assigned sections carefully and prepare to be the expert in the group. Have them take note of words they need to solve, and one or two interesting facts to share later.
- Listen to individual students read.

After reading

- Have each student share the important information from their section(s). **(determining important information, literal recall)**
- Have the students ask questions of each expert. **(asking and answering questions)**
- Have students look through the book and identify organizational features of the text, including: alphabetical order (glossary), heads and sub-heads, charts, diagrams, labels, captions, bullet points, etc. Why did the author use these features? **(understanding text forms and features, author's craft)**
- Look back at "TV Now" (page 9) and review the list of devices. Have the students used any of these devices for TV viewing or other purposes? **(making connections)**
- Ask how interesting the students found this book. Did it successfully share information? **(personal response, adopting a critical stance, evaluating)**

Additional activities

- **Word Study:** Write unfamiliar vocabulary and content words on word cards. Include words from the glossary, types of TV shows, specialized verbs, jobs in TV, etc. Have the students sort the words and explain their sorting rules. Encourage content-based rules as well rules based on letters and syllables.
- Show examples of Georges Seurat's pointillism and Métis dot art. Have students create dot pictures like pixels on a TV screen.
- Ask the students to:
  - write questions about past TV viewing that they can ask of parents or grandparents. Have them compare their relatives' answers with other students.
  - design and carry out a survey about favourite TV shows or time spent watching TV, then present the data.
  - write a review of a favourite TV show, then present an oral commercial to convince others to watch it.

Assessment Note

How do the students solve new words?

Do the students:
- show understanding of how to read this type of non-fiction?
- read the text at an appropriate rate?
- read high-frequency words with ease?

Assessment Note

Do the students:
- identify important information?
- generate relevant questions?
- answer questions by finding information in the book?
- identify various non-fiction text features and their uses?

Assessment Note

Do the students:
- use a variety of sorting rules?
- write effective interview questions?
- analyze and explain survey data?
- use effective oral presentation skills?

Communication – Guided/Group Reading Notes

What's on the Box?

Level M (Non-Fiction)
Running Words: 143

Name: _____

Date: _____

Page		Errors	S.C.	Errors MSV	S.C. MSV
3	There are nearly two billion television sets in the world. There are hundreds of different **channels** to choose from. No wonder we sometimes watch too much television. How many TVs do you have in your house? Have you ever wondered how the pictures get onto your TV? Or how TV programs are made? We are going to look at how television works.				
4	**How a TV Works** **From the TV Station to Your Home** A television set picks up **video** and **audio** signals sent from a television station. The television turns these signals into the pictures we see and the sounds we hear. 1. The people who make TV programs record pictures and sounds. These are turned into **digital signals**. 2. The signals are sent to a TV channel at a TV **station**. 3. The TV station **transmits** the signals to a **satellite** high up in space.				

Percent Accuracy: _____   S.C. Ratio: 1: ____ | **Total** | | | | |

Errors	0	1	2		3		4	5	6		7	8	9		10		11	12	13	14	15		16		17
Percentage	100		99		98		97		96		95		94		93		92		91		90		89		88