

Interactive Read Aloud Planning Template

Text: Twenty-One Elephants and Still Standing **Author:** April Jones Prince

Type: Historical Fiction

Learning Goals: Language Arts or Content Area

- The students will understand the significance of the Brooklyn Bridge.
- The students will understand the role PT Barnum played during this time period.

Before reading:

Build background knowledge: This story is historical fiction and is based on a true event in history although some of the details found in the text are fictional.

Introduce story vocabulary: magnificent; sauntered, sound (multiple meaning word)

Set purpose: As I read this story I want you understand the importance of the Brooklyn Bridge. We're also going to read about a man, Mr. PT Barnum. I want you to listen for the important role he played during this time period.

During reading:

Teaching Points/Questions:

Page #4- How can we tell that the Brooklyn Bridge was a unique structure for that time period? How does the author help the reader picture or realize the magnitude of the structure? (took 14 years to complete; the people were always oohing and ahing over it; looked like stairways straight to the stars; New York and Brooklyn were dwarfed by its arches)

Page #6- How did the citizens of New York and Brooklyn feel about the completion of the bridge? How do you know? (they were excited- they waved flags; bands played; had fireworks; partied until the sun rose)

Page #11- Although the bridge was magnificent, some had concern. What were the two opinions presented in the text? (some felt it was safe and some were not too sure about how safe it was)

Examine the illustration and note that on this page, the illustrator has depicted or shown the bridge at night and on the previous pages it is always during the daytime. Do you think this is shown this way for a particular reason? How does the illustration support some of the citizens' view about the bridge? (dark can symbolize something that may be scary or a mystery or even fear- some felt that way about the bridge)

Page #14- Based on the text, how can we tell PT Barnum is confident in his ideas? (he said his event will calm every fear, erase every worry about that remarkable bridge or else my name isn't Barnum!)

Page #15- The text said his circus traveled by water except for his most massive, most gallant attraction. What do you think Barnum's most massive attraction is? What are they referring to? Why do you think that? (the elephants- because they are massive)

Page #26What was Barnum trying to prove? (he was trying to prove how sturdy the bridge was and that he believed in it)

Based on this page, was his experiment a success? How do you know? (yes, because all 21 elephants made it over the bridge and it said the bridge was still aloft)

What other word could the author have used instead of *sound*? (safe, sturdy)

Page #27- Did this ease the minds of some of the doubt-ridden citizens? How do you know? (yes, it says in the following days, some doubters strolled the greatest bridge on earth- if they did that, they must have believed it was safe)

Page #30- The text said on the previous page that they strolled the greatest bridge on earth. Why did the author choose to describe the Brooklyn Bridge in this way? How does it relate to their destination? (they were crossing the bridge to attend the circus which is sometimes called the "greatest show on earth" - the author's play on words)

After reading:

Comprehension focus: Why is the title, *Twenty-One Elephants and Still Standing*, an appropriate title for this selection?

What was significant about the Brooklyn Bridge? Why was it important?

What role did PT Barnum play in the establishment of this famous landmark?

Vocabulary review: Review the 3 words mentioned earlier by having the students share a sentence with their partner using the word in the correct context-how it was used in the story.

Written Response: Modeled _____ Shared X Independent _____

Sample: Explain the two viewpoints the citizens of Brooklyn and New York shared about the bridge. Use details from the text to support each one.

-OR-

What made the Brooklyn Bridge such a significant landmark for this time period? Use details from the text to support.