

Historical  
Fiction

# Ron's Radio

by Feana Tu'akoi  
illustrated by Eric Scott Fisher



Mc  
Graw  
Hill

PAIRED  
READ

Roosevelt's Fireside Chats

## STRATEGIES & SKILLS

### Comprehension

**Strategy:** Make Predictions

**Skill:** Point of View

### Vocabulary Strategy

Synonyms

### Vocabulary

decade, directing, engineering,  
gleaming, scouted, squirmed,  
technology, tinkering

### Content Standards

Science

Technology

Word count: 1,251\*\*

\*\*The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



**Genre**

**Historical Fiction**



**Essential Question**

**How do inventions and technology affect your life?**



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# Radio Dreaming



“Guess what?” said Ron as Jimmy climbed into the treehouse. “My family’s getting a radio!”

His friend grinned and flopped down on the floor. “Are you getting one because of your famous Uncle Joe?” he asked.

“No, although he *has* been fooling around with homemade radios for more than a decade,” said Ron. “Ever since he got back from the war. He’ll be able to help Dad set it up.”



Jimmy smiled. Ron was always talking about his uncle. Jimmy recited, “Your Uncle Joe builds his own radios. Once, he let you listen through the headphones and you heard a violin playing. Another time, you heard a message from a ship. Uncle Joe says that people have even sent messages across the Atlantic Ocean!”

“At least you’ve been paying attention to what I’ve told you,” Ron said with a laugh.

Ron continued excitedly, “But I’m not talking about a homemade radio. This radio is the real thing—a floor model with its own cabinet. It’s the latest technology. We’ll be able to listen to whatever we like, whenever we like.”



“Think again, boys!” said Ron’s father, poking his head into the treehouse. “You won’t be allowed to touch the radio. I still remember what you did to my clock!”

The boys squirmed with embarrassment. They had pulled apart the clock to figure out how it worked, but then they had not been able to put it back together.

“The new radio is not a toy,” Ron’s dad added. “It’s a wonder of modern engineering, and I’d like you two to leave it alone.”

**STOP AND CHECK**

Why does Ron’s dad tell the boys they are not allowed to touch the new radio?



# The Brand-New Radio

When the radio finally arrived, Ron couldn't take his eyes off it. It was tall and stood on the floor. It had a gleaming wooden cabinet and a speaker so that everyone could listen at the same time. Ron thought it was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.



Ron watched his father and Uncle Joe set up the radio against the wall in the living room. Uncle Joe turned the dials and showed Ron's dad how to tune in to different stations.

Ron's dad nodded. "It looks easy," he said.

Ron thought so, too.

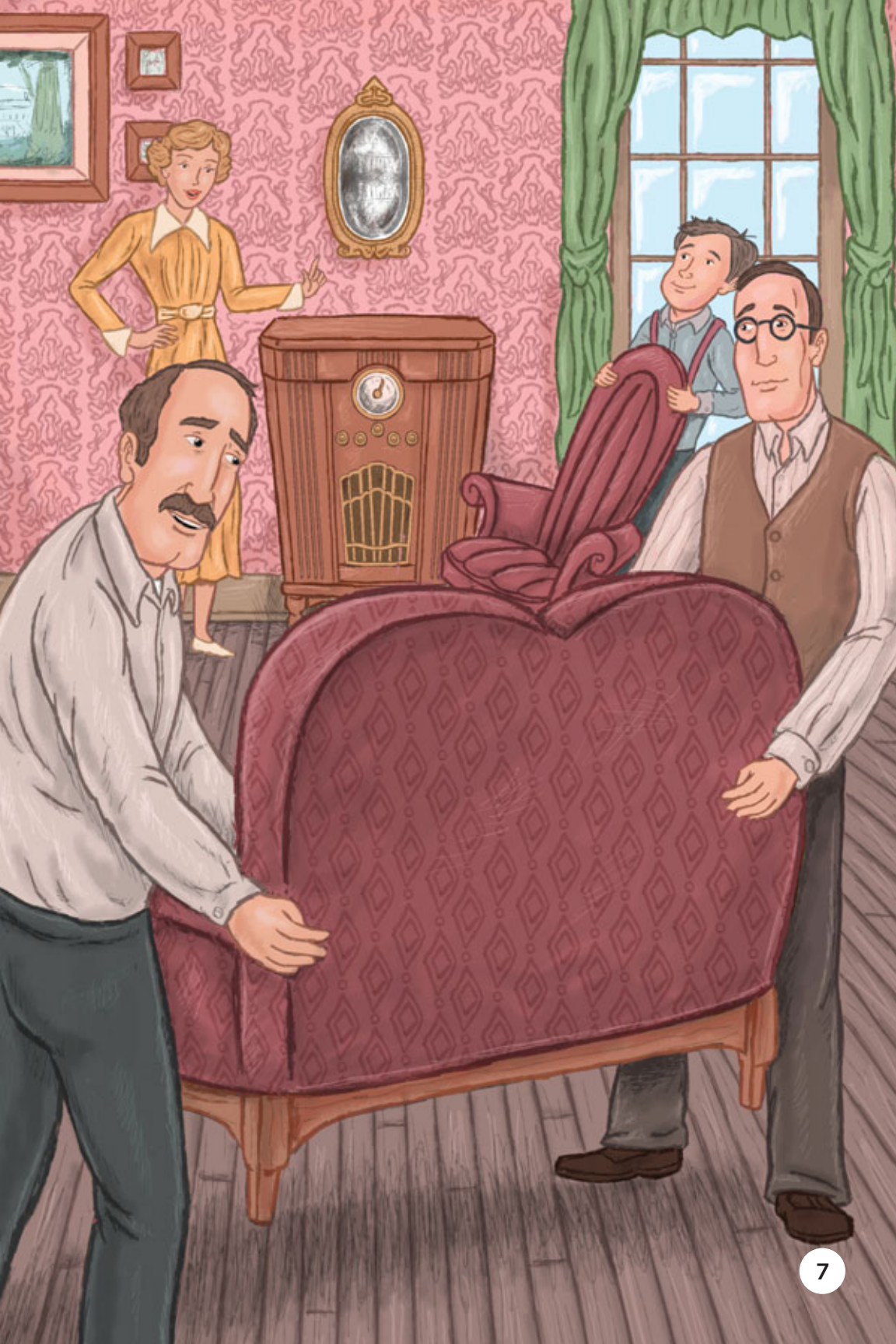
First, there was a sh-sh-shh of static, followed by a clear blast of music.

Next, there was a weather report, but it was for another part of the country.

"Let's find some local news and weather," his dad said with a grin.

Uncle Joe found a station. Then they all helped move the furniture, with Ron's mom directing. Everyone would be able to sit around the radio and listen together.





Uncle Joe gave the radio a final check and then turned it off. “All you have to do is turn the radio on and use this dial to find a station. Then just sit back and enjoy!” he said.

“This is so great!” cried Ron, hopping from one foot to another. “I can’t wait to hear all the new programs!”

“You’ll have to,” said Ron’s dad. He gave Ron a serious look. “I don’t want you anywhere near the radio except for when we all listen together.”

**STOP AND CHECK**

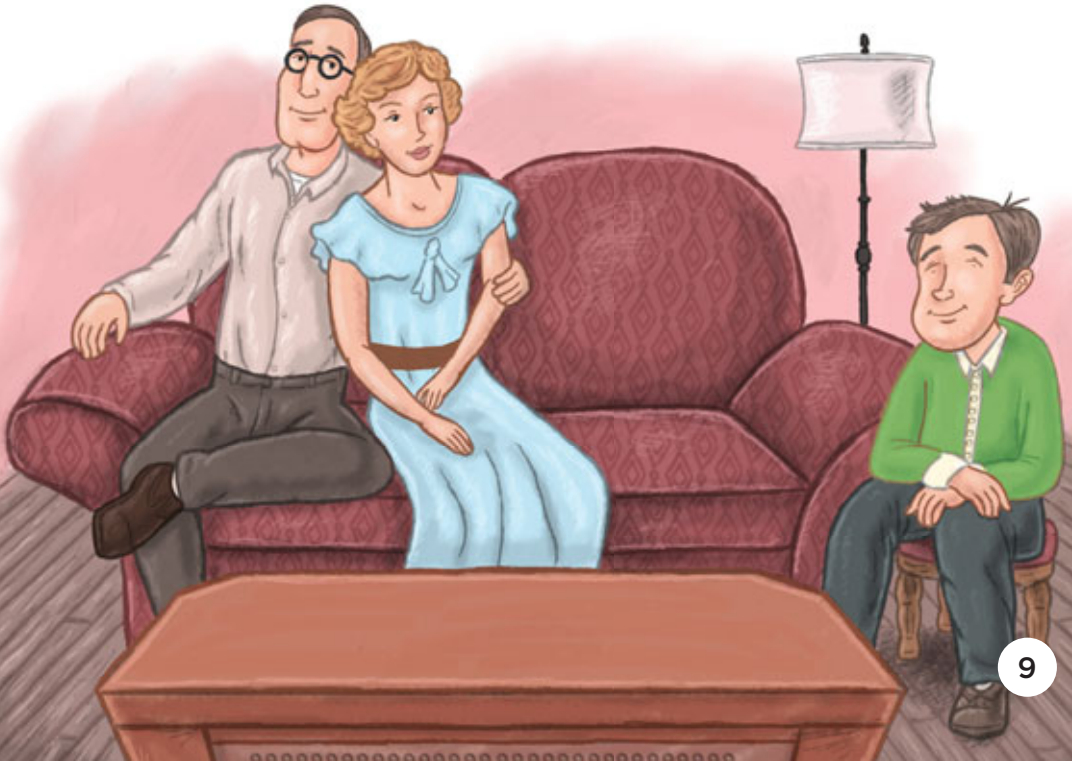
Why does Ron’s family move the furniture?

# The Accident

Every evening after supper, Ron and his parents gathered around the radio to listen. Ron had to sit quietly so that his mom and dad could hear every word, but he didn't mind.

Ron's parents enjoyed listening to the news. They liked hearing about events in faraway places almost as soon as they happened. The radio news was current and up-to-date.

"I have to say that I've never felt so well informed," said Ron's mom.



Ron thought the news was boring, but he liked some of the educational programs, especially the ones about science and new technology. Most of all, he enjoyed listening to stories.



One day when his parents were out, Ron told Jimmy about the stories. Jimmy was fascinated. “Please let me see the radio!” he begged.

The boys scouted around to make sure nobody was around. Then they snuck into the living room. At first they just stared at the radio.

“It’s beautiful!” breathed Jimmy.

“It sounds beautiful, too,” said Ron. “Listen!”

Ron turned the radio on carefully and moved the dial until he found a station.







The boys settled down to listen. Then they heard the front gate open.

They both jumped up in a panic. Jimmy peeked out the window.

“Your parents are home!” cried Jimmy. “We’re going to be in big trouble now!”



“We’ll just turn it back to the original station,” said Ron. “They’ll never know.”

“Quick!” cried Jimmy. “They’re coming!”

He nudged Ron to hurry him up. Ron slipped and banged into the cabinet.

Suddenly everything went quiet. No story, no static—nothing.

Ron felt sick. “Go home,” he told Jimmy. “It’s my fault. I’ll figure out what to do.”

#### STOP AND CHECK

What programs do Ron and his parents like to listen to on the radio?

## Uncle Joe to the Rescue

As soon as his parents came into the house, Ron told them what had happened. He expected them to be furious, but they weren't. They were sad and very quiet.



Ron felt terrible. He was desperate to make things right.

“Maybe Uncle Joe can fix it,” he suggested.

When Uncle Joe arrived, the room was silent. Everyone watched as he carefully took the back off the radio and started tinkering.

“Ron,” he said eventually, “go and get my tool box, please.”

Ron got the toolbox and handed it to his uncle. Uncle Joe found the tool he was looking for and used it to reattach a wire.

When Uncle Joe went around to the front of the cabinet, Ron held his breath and squeezed his eyes shut.

Suddenly a voice sang out from the radio. Ron almost cried with relief.

“Thank you so much, Uncle Joe!” he said, almost knocking him over with a bear hug. “I promise I’ll never touch the radio again!”

His father leaned over and whispered something to Uncle Joe, who nodded and grinned.



“That’s right. You can never touch the radio again,” said Ron’s dad. “Instead, you can have your own radio.” He caught the eye of Ron’s mom. She nodded.

“It might take some time,” his dad continued, “but if you earn the money for the parts, Uncle Joe will help you build it.”

Ron was stunned. “Really?” he asked.

“Really!” said his dad.

His mom grinned. “And get Jimmy to help you, too,” she said. “That should keep you both out of trouble for a while!”

**STOP AND CHECK**

Why does Ron’s father decide that Ron should build a radio of his own?

# Respond to Reading

## Summarize

Summarize how the radio affects the family's life in *Ron's Radio*. Use your graphic organizer to help.

Details

↓

Point of View

## Text Evidence

1. What features of *Ron's Radio* tell you it's historical fiction? **GENRE**
2. Reread Chapter 1. What does Ron think about the new radio? **POINT OF VIEW**
3. Find a synonym for *current* on page 9.  
**SYNONYMS**
4. Write about how this story would be different if it were told from the point of view of Ron's dad. **WRITE ABOUT READING**





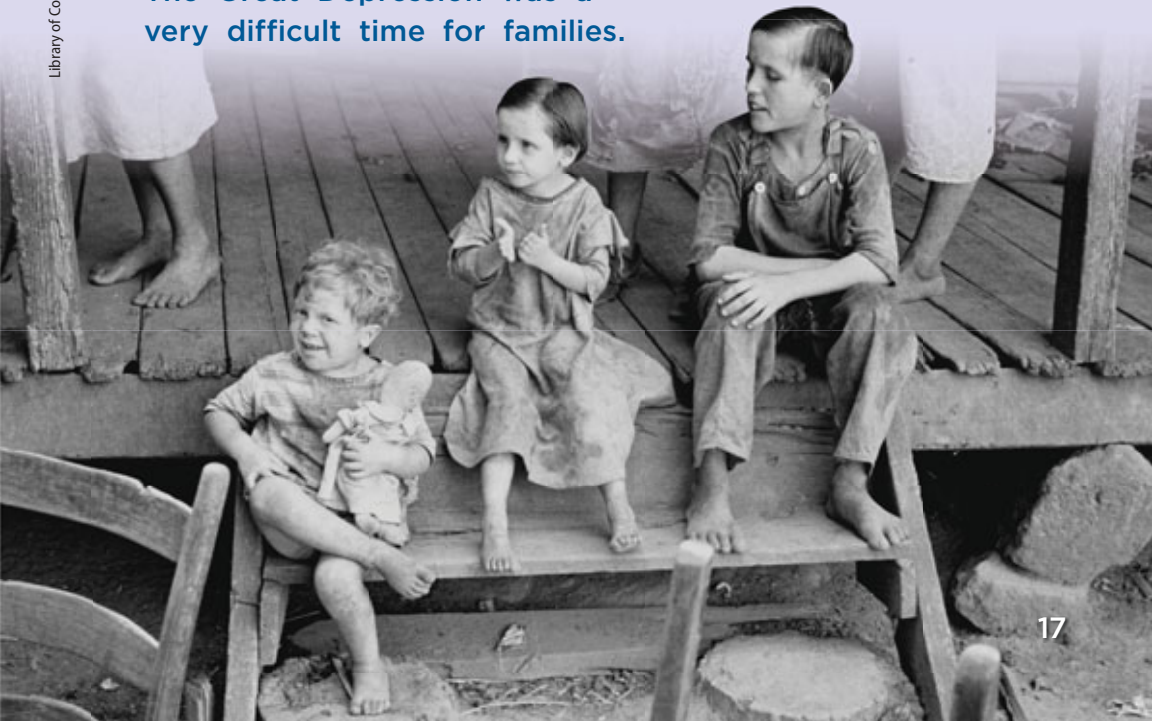
## Compare Texts

Read about how President Roosevelt used radio to talk to the American people during the 1930s.

# Roosevelt's Fireside Chats

Franklin D. Roosevelt became the President of the United States in 1933, during the Great Depression. This was a difficult time. Many banks, factories, and stores closed. Millions of people lost their jobs and their homes. President Roosevelt wanted to be able to talk to the American people directly.

**The Great Depression was a very difficult time for families.**



## A New Use for Radio

President Roosevelt gave talks on the radio called “fireside chats.” People could listen to him in their living rooms. He often began his talks with “My friends” or “My fellow Americans.”

President Roosevelt was calm and positive. He explained what the government was doing to help people. He also told the listeners what they could do to help.

Bettmann/CORBIS

## The Golden Age of Radio

In the 1930s, families gathered to listen to the radio in the same way that people gather to watch TV today. They listened to music, sports, comedy shows, stories, and the latest news. For the first time in history, ordinary people could hear news from around the world as it happened.



# Reassuring a Nation

Between 1933 and 1944, President Roosevelt broadcast around 30 fireside chats. He asked listeners to have faith in the banks and support his recovery plan. When the United States entered World War II in 1941, he asked listeners to support the war effort.

The talks were very popular. They helped reassure people during a difficult time in history.

**President Roosevelt spoke to listeners as if he were a friend.**



Bettmann/CORBIS



## Make Connections

How did the radio make it possible for people to hear the latest news? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Why was radio a good way for President Roosevelt to talk to people like Ron's parents? **TEXT TO TEXT**

# Focus on Genre

**Historical Fiction** Historical fiction tells a story that is set in the past. It gives information about a real event or is based on real facts. Historical fiction gives the reader an understanding of life in the past.

**Read and Find** A story that is set in the past usually includes dates, events, clothing, and other objects that help show the reader when the story is set. Find details from the story that tell you *Ron's Radio* is set in the past, such as the new radio.

## Your Turn

Work on your own or with a partner. Talk about how you would use your own radio if you lived in 1933. Where would you listen to it? What would you listen to?

Draw a “photograph” for your family photo album. Use details from the story to help you show a particular point of view and to show what you and your house might have looked like in 1933. Write a caption for the photograph.

## Literature Circles

### Fiction

# Thinkmark

### Characters

Who are the main characters in *Ron's Radio*?

### Setting

Where did *Ron's Radio* take place?

When did it take place?

### Sequence of Events

List the events in *Ron's Radio* in the order they happened.

### Conclusions

What conclusions can you draw about the difference radios made to the life of a family?

### Make Connections

What connections can you make between this story and the way inventions we have now change our lives?