

Realistic  
Fiction

# The Long Walk

by Katharine Philipson • illustrated by Carl Pearce



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Graw  
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PAIRED  
READ

Poetry

## STRATEGIES & SKILLS

### Comprehension

**Strategy:** Reread

**Skill:** Point of View

### Vocabulary

bounced, imagine,

inventor, observer

### Vocabulary Strategy

Similes

Word count: 1,107



**Education**

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**Essential Question****How do people figure things out?**

# *The Long Walk*

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## CHAPTER 1

# Jed's Problem



Jed kicked at the stones as he followed his brother and sisters along the road. The school bus stop was a mile from home. It was a long walk to make twice each day. The school was almost opposite their house. But the railroad ran between their farm and the school, and the nearest crossing was five miles down the road.

Dad said that when he was a kid there was talk of building a footbridge over the railroad, but nothing ever happened.





Jed hoped the bus wouldn't be late. He wanted a chance to talk to his best friend, Leo, before class. Jed couldn't wait to tell Leo that he had been chosen for the school's junior track team.



The first meeting of the track team was held during recess. The coach announced that practice would be every Tuesday after school.

“Oh no!” Jed thought. His mother worked late on Tuesdays. She wouldn’t be able to pick him up after practice.

“Hey, Coach,” he said hesitantly. “Could practice be another day?”

“Sorry, Jed,” Mr Hansen replied. “That’s the only day the seniors don’t need the track.”

Jed was shocked. There was no way he could be on the team. His heart felt as heavy as a rock.





At dinner that night, Jed told the family what had happened. Mom and Dad couldn't think of a solution to the problem.

"What about that footbridge they used to talk about?" asked Jed. "Could we convince them to build it? Then I could walk home after practice."

"I don't think it's very likely," said Dad.

Mom looked at Jed's sad face. "Tell you what, Jed. When I'm in town tomorrow, I'll go into the county office and talk to them."

"That'd be great, Mom," Jed said.

## CHAPTER 2

# A Challenge



Jed ran all the way home from the school bus the next day. “How did it go?” he asked his mother, as he rushed in the door.

“Not good,” she said. “They said there’s not enough demand for a footbridge.”

As Jed’s face dropped, she added, “You say you want to be an inventor. Inventors solve problems. Maybe you could solve this one.”

Jed couldn’t imagine what he could do that would make a difference. He went outside to shoot hoops, and, as he bounced the ball, he had a thought. He ran inside.

“What if we can prove there is a demand for a bridge?” he asked his mother. “After all, we’re not the only kids who would use the bridge.”

Jed’s mother grinned. “I knew you’d come up with an idea,” she said.



At school the next day, Jed asked students whether they would use a footbridge. The following weekend, Jed and his father took a petition around the neighborhood. Lots of people signed it.

Jed wrote to the county office, enclosing his petition. A few weeks later, he received a letter stating that the footbridge would be discussed at the next council meeting. Jed was invited to come to the meeting as an observer.



The whole family went to the meeting. Some members of the town council spoke in favor of the bridge. However, most of them seemed to be against it. They thought it would cost too much money. Finally, the chairperson stood up.

“Before we vote,” she said, “I’d like you to listen to one more speaker. Jed, can you come up, please?”

Jed felt nervous about speaking in front of all these people. Then he thought of how much he wanted that bridge.

Jed told the meeting about the track team. He argued that if there was a footbridge, more kids would be able to walk to school. If all the kids who lived near him walked to school, then the school bus wouldn’t need to come down their road. The bus route would be shorter, which would save gas. When Jed finished, everyone clapped.



Then it was time for the vote. The first person said no. So did the second. The next said yes. As the vote continued, Jed's heart sank farther and farther. But, in the end, half the members of the town council voted in favor of a bridge and half voted against it. The chairperson had the deciding vote.

“Before I vote,” she announced, “I want to congratulate Jed on his campaign. He has shown us that the community would benefit from having a bridge. Therefore, I vote in favor of the bridge.”





## CHAPTER 3

# Jed's Victory

Over the next few months, Jed and his friends watched progress on the bridge. Construction workers swarmed around the site like bees. Big trucks roared as they worked. Jed thought he might not be an inventor after all. Being a construction worker looked pretty cool.





When the bridge was finished, there was a ceremony to open it. Everyone made the first trip over the bridge.

“Look at this,” Leo said, pointing to a plaque that read *Jed Scrivener Bridge*. “Wow, Jed, you’ve got a bridge named after you!”





The next day, Jed and his brother and sisters crossed the bridge to school. In class, the teacher congratulated Jed. Then she added, “Our next project is problem solving. The first example we will study is a local one—a very local one. The class will look at how Jed figured out a solution to his problem.”





Jed was excited about all the attention—the plaque was great, and the project would be interesting—but no one had mentioned the thing that was really awesome: next year, he would be able to join the track team!



# Respond to Reading

## Summarize

Summarize *The Long Walk*.  
Use the Point of View Chart  
to help you.

Details

↓

Point of View

## Text Evidence

1. *The Long Walk* is realistic fiction. In this kind of fiction, the story is made up but the characters are realistic. Do you think the characters in this story seem real? Why? **GENRE**
2. How do you know that the story is told through Jed's eyes? Give two examples.  
**POINT OF VIEW**
3. What did the author mean when she said that Jed's heart felt "as heavy as a rock"? Find another simile on page 11. **SIMILES**
4. Imagine that you were Leo in *The Long Walk*. Write about watching the bridge being built from Leo's point of view. **WRITE ABOUT READING**



## Compare Texts

Read two limericks about characters who figure out the solution to a problem.

# The Forgetful Girl

There was a young girl from Oaks Fall,  
Who had left her coat in the hall.  
She said, “What a pain—  
It’s starting to rain.  
I had better run into the mall.”



# The Friendly Frog



Ferdie was a friendly frog,  
Who saw a squirrel on a log.  
He said, "Hi there,  
Can I please share?  
I'm as hot as a furry dog."

"I'm Sally," said the squirrel,  
"And I fear I am in peril.  
I dropped my seeds  
Among those weeds.  
Now all I've got's a kernel."

"I do not swim and I do not dive.  
My kits need food to stay alive.  
Winter is near.  
I'm full of fear.  
I know not how we'll all survive."

“I’m the one you want,” said the friendly frog.  
“I do not mind jumping in a bog.”  
Onto the weeds Ferdie hopped,  
Down into the mud he dropped,  
Till he landed on a rotting log.

Ferdie surfaced with a splash  
And handed Sal her precious cache.  
“Oh,” said Sal, “I didn’t know  
A frog so very fast could go.  
My friend, you did it in a flash.”



## Make Connections

What was Sally’s problem? What did Ferdie do to solve it? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Can you think of any way in which Jed and Ferdie are alike? **TEXT TO TEXT**

# Focus on Literary Elements

**Rhyme and Alliteration** Poems often use literary elements such as *rhyme* and *alliteration*. Rhyme is the repetition of a similar sound at the end of two or more words. An example of rhyme is, *We'll meet you, at the zoo*. Alliteration is the repetition of the consonant at the beginning of two or more words that are close to one another. An example of alliteration is, *a wet, windy, and wild day.*

**Read and Find** Read the first limerick. Find the words that rhyme. Read the second limerick. Can you find an example of alliteration?

## Your Turn

Choose a problem. Write a poem about how to solve the problem. Try to include alliteration and rhyme in your poem.

# Thinkmark

## Characters

Who are the main characters in this story?

Who are the other characters?

## Setting

Where did the story take place?

## Plot

What was Jed's problem?

How did he solve it?

## Conclusions

What was the most important thing you learned in *The Long Walk*?



# Figure It Out

GR N • Benchmark 30 • Lexile [t/k]

Grade 3 • Unit 2 Week 5

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