

Noni's Newspaper

A Reading A-Z Level U Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,445



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Correlation

LEVEL U

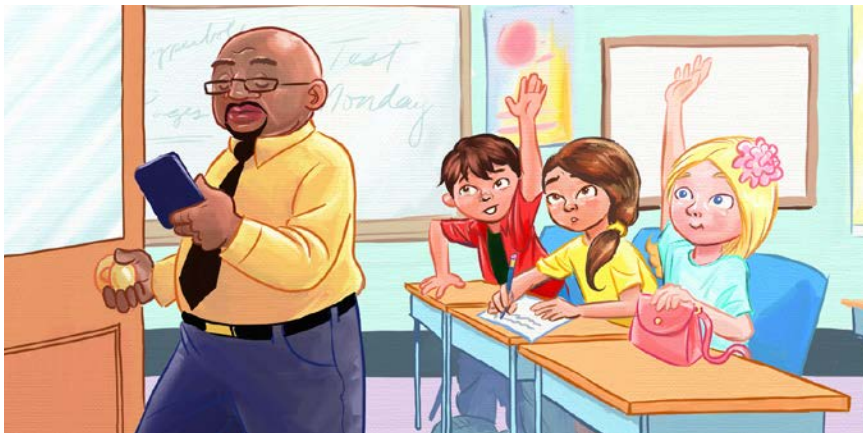
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Reading Recovery	40
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Monday, 10:00 AM

"Who wants to be **editor** of the *Whitmore Weekly*?" Mr. Mann asked.

On either side of me, Miguel and Ashley shot their hands up. Not me—I didn't know the first thing about being an editor.

"Okay," Mr. Mann said. "You guys can work it out. You can set up your office after school in the multipurpose room, and Principal Sikes will give you the key. We'll print on Thursday afternoon."



Without any further explanation, he turned and walked out of the room.

"What should we write about?" I asked.

Neither Miguel nor Ashley answered me—they were too busy making nameplates that read "Editor 'n' Chief" and "Head Editor."

Monday, 2:30 PM

"The newspaper has to be written by Thursday, and we have no **copy**!" I told my friend Jimmy. "Can you be our sports **reporter**?"

"But I'm the least athletic kid at Whitmore," Jimmy said. "I get winded walking up the stairs."

I winked at Jimmy. "You don't have to be sporty to write about sports. You can write about tonight's basketball game against Deerfield."

I left Jimmy to ponder that and went to meet Ashley and Miguel in front of Perry's cage, next to the principal's office. Perry's this big, old red parrot, also our school mascot. He looked at me, cackled, and said, "Bye-bye."

While Miguel and Ashley argued over who should be editor, I went and got the room key from the principal.

"Fine," Miguel said at last. "For the sake of the paper, let's be comanagers."

"Co-co, co-co," Perry squawked. "Yum!"

"Fine," Ashley said, "but I get the bigger desk."



In the multipurpose room, Ashley hunched over a huge desk and worked on a **column** called “Whitmore Fashion Tips.”

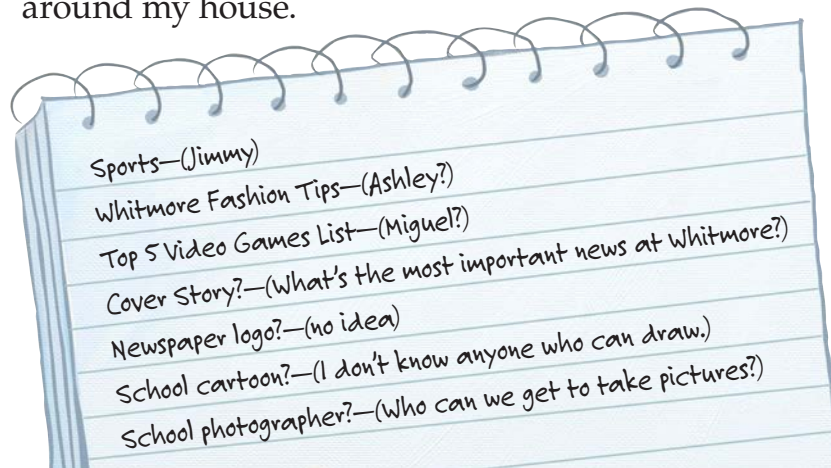
Miguel grabbed a piece of paper and plopped down at the only other desk in the room. “I’m writing a top five video games list,” he said.

“We need to write about things kids care about,” I said.

“Trust me, Noni.” Miguel said. “I know what people want to read. That’s why I should be listed as the first comanager in the paper.”

“I should be listed first—alphabetically,” Ashley said, “since A comes before M.”

While they bickered, I made a list of all the sections of our paper. I tried to remember everything I’ve seen in the newspapers lying around my house.



Tuesday, 7:45 AM

Jimmy handed me his **article** about last night's basketball game, and it was fantastic.

Jimmy's Sports Corner:

Whitmore Beats Deerfield in Overtime

We were down two points with ten seconds to go when Ryder grabbed a rebound and dribbled all the way down the court and laid the ball in the hoop as the final buzzer sounded, forcing the game into overtime.

With ten seconds left in overtime, Ryder hit a three pointer, bringing the Parrots up 53 to 52 . . .

“It was fun to write,” Jimmy said. “How’s the rest of the paper coming?”

“Not so great,” I said. “Ashley and Miguel seem more interested in fighting with each other than working on the paper, and I still need a lead story.”

We walked into school together just as someone screamed.

“Perry is missing!”

Everyone stood around the bird's empty cage. Miguel and Ashley were there with this kid named Chris.



"It breaks my heart to see Perry's empty cage," Ashley cried. "Show Noni the picture, Chris."

Chris is a grade lower than us, but I've noticed him before because he's always snapping pictures around school.

"Yesterday I took this photo of Number 11 on Deerfield's basketball team," Chris said, handing me the photo. "The bird is missing, and there's a large shape under the guy's jacket—about the size of a parrot."

"He stole Perry to get back at us for winning the game!" Miguel shouted.

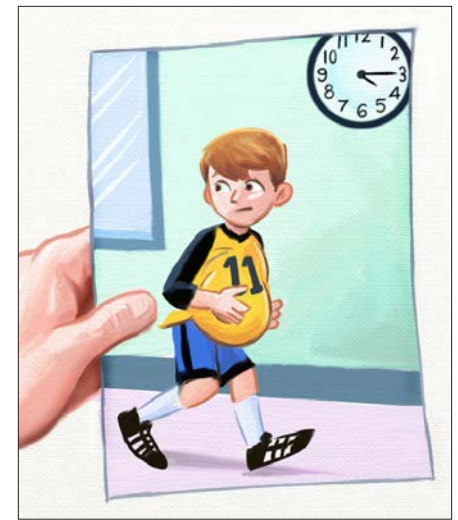
"We're going to run this photo on the front page!" Ashley said. "Number 11 will pay for what he did." She pointed at me. "Staff, we need an article—ASAP."

"I'll write the story, and Chris can be the newspaper **photographer**," I said, "but we can't assume this guy's the culprit without evidence."

"This is our big story!" Miguel protested. "'Deerfield Steals Perry' is our **headline**."

After he and Ashley stormed off, I studied the photo and noticed the clock in the right-hand corner. It said 4:15, but the game didn't start until 4:30. Why would Number 11 steal Perry before we won the game?

I ran to find Eddie, the custodian who takes care of Perry, but Eddie was nowhere to be found. I couldn't avoid the sinking feeling that we were going to falsely accuse Number 11!



Wednesday, 7:30 AM

Before school, I called Deerfield Elementary to interview Number 11. Their school secretary wouldn't take a message for him, even though I told her I was a reporter for the *Whitmore Weekly*.

I needed to talk to Eddie and find out when he last saw the parrot, so my mom dropped me off early at school. I yanked on the front door—locked—then turned and looked at a group of kids by the juice box machine. They were always huddled there with notebooks and some complicated board game. People called them the “juice box kids.”

“Why isn't the school open?” I asked.

“They'll open the door in five minutes,” one of the girls said.

I'd never spoken to her or any of her friends before. I inched closer and peeked over her shoulder. Her notebook had a cute drawing of a dragon on it and her name—Xia—written across the bottom.

“Would you like to draw a cartoon for the school paper?” I asked.



Just then, Eddie unlocked the front door, and I bolted inside. “Eddie!” I cried. “People think a Deerfield basketball player stole Perry. I need to know the truth.”

“Follow me,” Eddie said. He led me to Perry's cage. Perched in the middle was a plastic parrot.

“Perry's turned to plastic?”



“Perry has retired,” Eddie said. “I took him to the vet yesterday after school, and he said the bird's ready for some quieter days. We decided we won't have any more living mascots at Whitmore.”

“I'll let everyone know,” I said, “in the school paper.”

Eddie scratched his head. “There's a school paper?”

Wednesday, 3:00 PM

"How's our front-page story coming?" Ashley asked. She held up Chris's picture. Number 11 was circled in red with the word *GUILTY* scrawled over his head.

"Number 11 is not guilty. Perry retired," I said.

"Perry getting stolen is a better story," Miguel said.

"We have the proof right here in the picture," Ashley said.

"It's not proof if what it proves isn't true," I said. "You don't want to **libel** this kid, do you?"

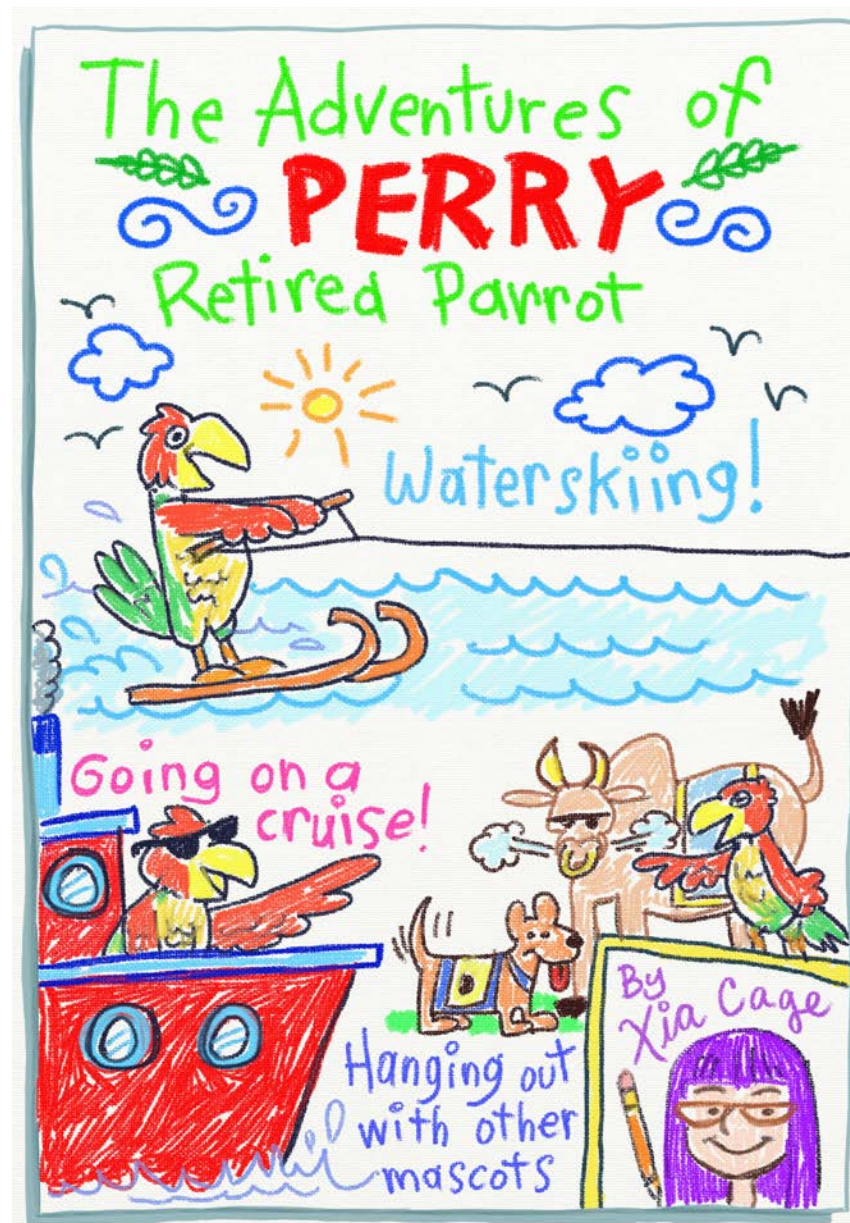
Miguel and Ashley stared at me until I felt my face turning red.

"I don't know," Miguel said at last. "Is it fun?"



Thursday, 11:30 AM

At lunch, Xia handed me her cartoon.



Miguel turned in his top five video games list, but he couldn't decide what the top five games were, so he listed them as a tie.



Ashley's column, "Whitmore Fashion Tips," was mostly about matching the color of your shirt with the color of your socks. I spent the last twenty minutes of lunch editing her article.

Thursday, 3:00 PM

After school, I read over my article one more time:

Bye-Bye, Perry
by Noni Lopez

We've all heard that familiar "bye-bye" echoing down the halls that seems to say, "Please don't stick your fingers in my cage." Well, after five years as our school mascot, Perry has said his last "bye-bye." From now on, he'll be residing with Eddie, the custodian.

"I'm going to make sure Perry gets a restful retirement," Eddie said . . .

The article went on to include quotes and fond memories from a half-dozen students and teachers. When I'd finished proofing it, I braced myself and handed it over to Ashley and Miguel. To my amazement, they didn't complain about the photo not being on the cover. I think they just wanted to be done with the paper so they could go back to fixing up their desks.

I put the paper together and gave it to Mr. Mann to print. Of course, I wasn't listed as editor (or even comanager) on the **masthead**, but I didn't care. I just wanted to put together a good, **factual** paper, and in the end, that's what it was.

Friday 3:00 PM

This morning we handed out the paper, and people seemed to really like it. Some kids even got inspired and wrote their own stories and cartoons to hang on Perry's old cage. Ashley and Miguel celebrated by taking off the rest of the day, but I'm rounding up the newspaper **contributors**. We have to plan next week's **issue**!



Glossary

article (<i>n.</i>)	a complete piece of writing that is part of a newspaper, magazine, or other media (p. 6)
column (<i>n.</i>)	a portion of a magazine or newspaper devoted to a particular subject or the opinions of a particular writer (p. 5)
contributors (<i>n.</i>)	donors or suppliers of something (p. 15)
copy (<i>n.</i>)	text intended for publication in a book, newspaper, or magazine (p. 4)
editor (<i>n.</i>)	a person who directs the publication of a newspaper or magazine (p. 3)
factual (<i>adj.</i>)	limited to or based on something that is true and can be proved (p. 14)
headline (<i>n.</i>)	a brief heading or summary printed at the top of an article in a newspaper, usually in large, bold letters (p. 8)
issue (<i>n.</i>)	a version of a newspaper or magazine printed for a particular day, week, or month (p. 15)
libel (<i>v.</i>)	to publish a false statement about someone that hurts his or her reputation (p. 11)
masthead (<i>n.</i>)	information about the staff, operation, and circulation of a newspaper or magazine (p. 14)
photographer (<i>n.</i>)	a person who creates photographs, or pictures, with a camera (p. 8)
reporter (<i>n.</i>)	a person who writes or tells news stories (p. 4)