

Realistic
Fiction

A Speech to Remember



by
Catriona Browne

illustrated by
Theo Bain

**Mc
Graw
Hill**

**PAIRED
READ**

Poetry

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Reread

Skill: Theme

Vocabulary

adventurous, courageous,
extremely, weird

Vocabulary Strategy

Metaphors

Word count: 1,037



Education

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Essential Question

How can others inspire us?

A Speech to Remember

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Chapter 1

Speech Day 2

Chapter 2

Della's Solo..... 6

Chapter 3

The Speech 10

Chapter 4

An Unexpected Ending 13

Respond to Reading..... 16



Let the Lion Roar 17

Focus on Literary Elements..... 20

Chapter 1 Speech Day

I am giving a speech at school today. I've written the speech, and I practiced it at home. Now I am standing at the side of the stage, waiting. My legs feel heavy. My head feels light. My stomach is in knots, and I want to run away.



It is crowded at the side of the stage. The One Voice singers are on first. Four of the singers are huddled together. They are extremely excited. Then there's the fifth member, Della. She is standing by herself. She looks calm as she waits to go on.

I wonder how she stays so calm. I don't know her very well, but I want to ask her. I notice that she is taking slow, deep breaths.





“Are you scared?” I ask.

“Not as scared as I used to be,” says Della. “When I tried out for One Voice, I opened my mouth and... this weird squeak came out.”

“Oh no!”

“I tried to swallow, but I had cotton mouth.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s when your mouth is so dry it feels like it’s stuffed with cotton balls.”

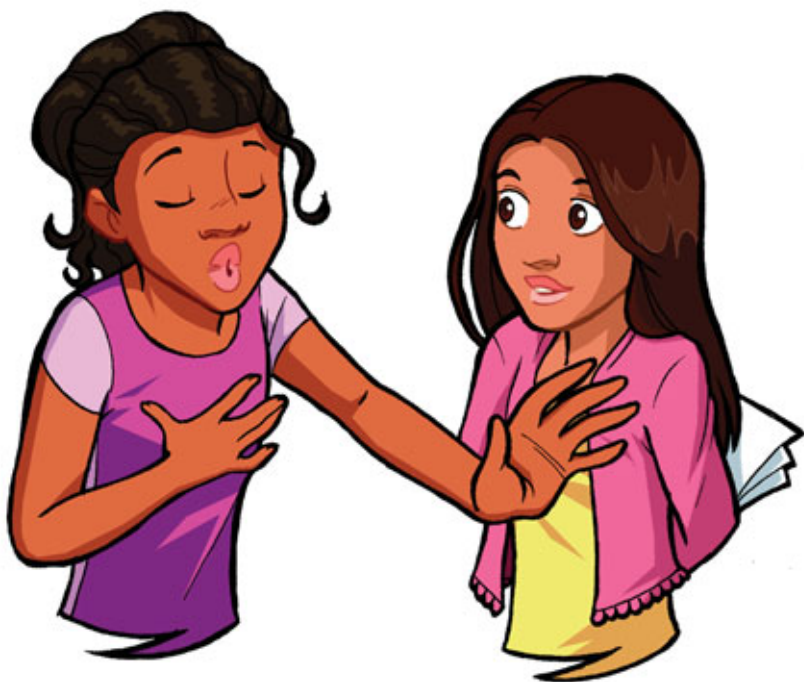
“What did you do?”

“I took a sip of water. My mouth wasn’t so dry, but I was still scared. I wanted to run. But I really wanted to sing, too. I took some deep breaths. Each time I breathed out, I got rid of some fear.

“Did it work?” I ask.

“Yes, I won a place in the group. Now, before I go on stage I breathe my fears out.”

“I will try that,” I say.



STOP AND CHECK

How does Della stay calm?

Chapter 2 Della's Solo



It's time for One Voice to go on stage. I forget to be nervous as I watch Della. She steps up for her solo. She opens her mouth... but instead of words, she just sings the notes. At first I think it's okay, but I see the others in the group look at each other with wide eyes. Della has forgotten the words!

The song is called “We Try Our Best.”
Della starts to sing:

“We try our best...”

She pauses, then carries on.

*“We try our best to remember the words,
But sometimes the words come out wrong
We try our best to get it just right,
But sometimes we mess up the song!
Don’t stop, just breathe, and keep singing.”*

The group picks up the cue, joining in
and singing Della’s new words.





As Della comes off stage, I give her a high five.

“Was that terrible?” she asks. “I forgot the words and had to make something up.”

“It was great. Everyone liked it,” I say.

“I was on a roller coaster. I couldn’t get off, so I thought I might as well enjoy the ride,” says Della.

Then I hear my name, Marnie Riley, being called. It’s my turn.

“Break a leg,” says Della. I know that’s what you say instead of good luck, but it almost comes true. As I head toward the stage, I trip over a cable. The pages of my speech fly everywhere. Flustered, I gather them up and hurry on to the stage. I hope I got all of the pages.



STOP AND CHECK

What did Della do when she forgot the words?

Chapter 3 The Speech

I'm standing at the microphone. There is a sea of faces in front of me. I can feel all of those eyes looking at me. My face is hot. My mouth is dry. The page in front of me seems out of focus.

I look to the side of the stage and see Della. She is waving something in her hand. It looks like it's a page of my speech.



I take a deep breath, then let the air out slowly. As I breathe out, I look at the pages in front of me. The words come back into focus. In a loud, confident voice, I start my speech, remembering to look at the audience as I speak.

The speech goes well. It's like Della's comment about the roller coaster. We are on a ride, the audience and me.



My speech builds up to the big finish. It's like the steepest climb of the roller coaster. Then, just when we reach the top of the ride, I come to a stop. The last page of my speech is missing.



STOP AND CHECK

What happened to the last page of Marnie's speech?

Chapter 4 An Unexpected Ending



I don't feel afraid. I know the car will stay on the track. I know how the speech should end. But at the last minute, I decide to do something different. I'm not sure if I will be able to find the right words, but I feel adventurous. I feel courageous. I feel inspired. I decide to talk about fear.

“This speech is about things that inspire me. Did you know that the word ‘inspire’ means to breathe in. Today I was afraid to give this speech. Someone helped me. She taught me the trick of slowly breathing in and out. Then she showed me how to be afraid, but keep going. She inspired me.”

I look over at Della, who is still standing at the side of the stage. I begin to recite:

*“We try our best to remember the words,
But sometimes the words come
out wrong...”*





As I speak, I see Della and her group walking onto the stage. They start singing along with the words.

*“We try our best to get it just right,
But sometimes we mess up the song!
Don’t stop, just breathe, and keep singing.
Don’t stop, just breathe, and keep singing.”*

I join in. The audience laughs and claps. And that is the end of my speech to remember.

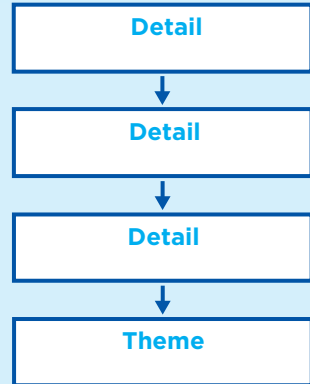
STOP AND CHECK

Why does Marnie start reciting Della’s song?

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Use details from the story to summarize *A Speech to Remember*.



Text Evidence

1. What is one feature that tells you this is realistic fiction? [Genre](#)
2. How does Della inspire Marnie? Look at page 14 for clues. [Theme](#)
3. What does the phrase *sea of faces* on page 10 mean? Use clues in the text to find out. [Metaphor](#)
4. Write about the details the author uses to describe how Marnie feels during the story. [Write about Reading](#)

Compare Texts

Read about an inspiring singer-songwriter.

Let the Lion Roar

Leo played folk tunes.
Leo sang songs.
When Leo went to Africa,
He heard a lion roar.

A scientist told Leo,
“Though you hear the lion’s roar,
If people keep taking over its land
The lion will roar no more.”

He said, “People chase the lion
From its home on the warm savannah.
The fields become farms and factories.
Soon the lion will roar no more.”

Leo wrote a folk tune,
Leo sang a song,
A song to save the lions
Titled *Let the Lion Roar*.



Leo toured the country.
Leo topped the charts.
Leo and his folk tune,
“Let the Lion Roar.”

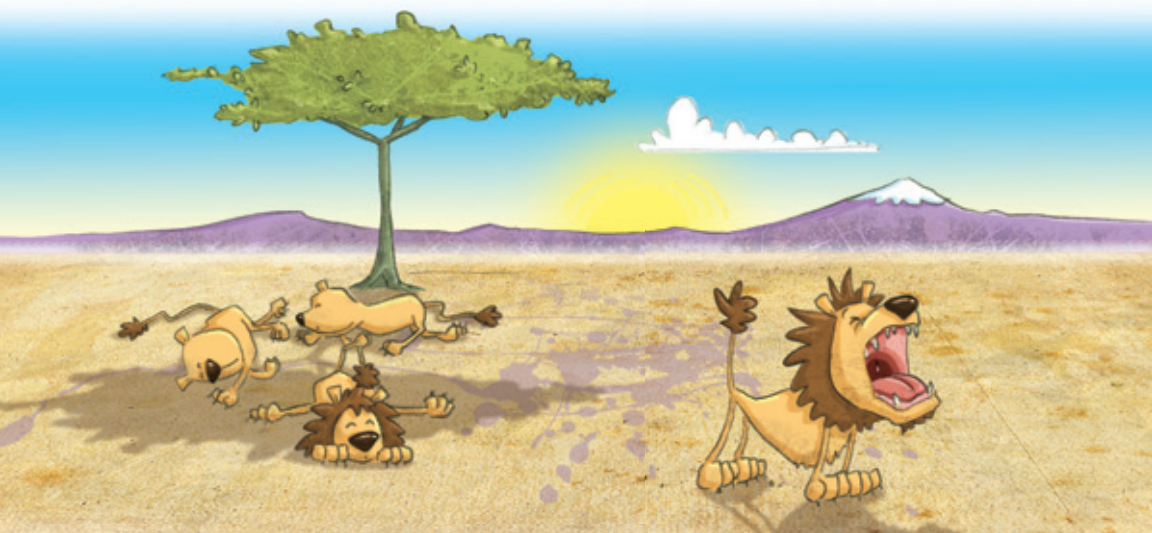
People heard the message;
They began to change their ways.
They organized a movement
Called “Let the Lion Roar.”

They said, ‘Don’t tear up the planet,
Do not harm the land.
This world’s not just for humans;
Please, let the lion roar.’



People gave money.
People changed laws.
People sang with one voice,
“Let the Lion Roar.”

Today the planet holds its breath—
Did the changes come too late?
Meanwhile in Africa, for now,
You still hear the lions roar.



Make Connections

Can you think of a song that has inspired you the way Leo’s song inspired people in “Let the Lion Roar”? **Essential Question**

In what way is Della in *A Speech to Remember* like Leo in “Let the Lion Roar”? **Text to Text**

Focus on Literary Elements

Repetition Poetry is language that is arranged into rhythms and patterns. The patterns are made by repeating sounds and rhymes. When rhymes and rhythms repeat it is called repetition.

Read and Find The poem “Let the Lion Roar” has a rhythm that repeats. Repetition of the words helps to give a strong rhythm. Read the poem aloud to hear the rhythm clearly.

Your Turn

Write a narrative poem about something that inspires you. Write it in free verse, but give it a strong rhythm. You can repeat some words to help give it a strong rhythm.

Thinkmark

Characters

How did Marnie change in *A Speech to Remember* from the beginning to the end of the story?

Setting

Where is the story *A Speech to Remember* set?

Plot

What was Marnie's problem in the story? How did she solve it?

Conclusions

What can you say about Marnie and Della?

Inspiration

GR M • Benchmark 28 • Lexile 480

Grade 3 • Unit 4 Week 5

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