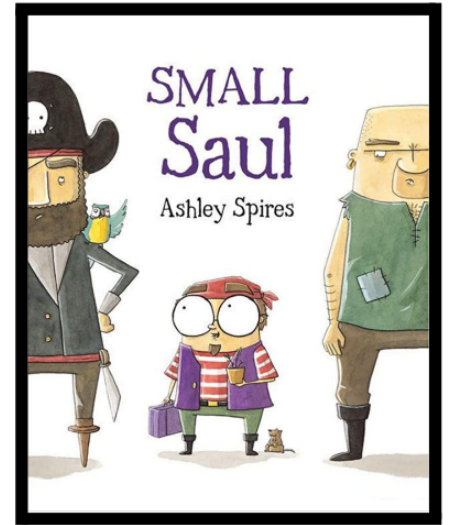


# Small Saul

Written and illustrated by Ashley Spires

*Small Saul* is a story about a boy who always dreamed about a life at sea. When he's turned down by the Navy, he decides to try his hand at becoming a pirate. However, Saul is not a typical pirate by nature. Although he learns in Pirate College that pirates care only about treasure, being tough, and their ship, Saul is quite different. He is sweet, sensitive, and tidy, and enjoys baking, decorating, and singing sea shanties. When he finally joins a pirate crew aboard the *Rusty Squid*, his crewmates notice how much he stands out. Will Saul make it as part of his new pirate crew, or will he have to compromise who he really is to fit in?



## Possible Strategies for Instruction

### Comprehension

- **Recognize literary elements (genre, plot, character, setting, theme problem/resolution).**

Make a chart together outlining the literary elements of the book. For the theme of the book, students may arrive at slightly different answers. Have the students who share a theme tell why they came up with that particular idea. Poll the class to ask them which theme they think best fits the book.

- **Summarize text; include important details.**

Readers give the gist of what they have read or heard in the story in a condensed version. Ask students to help you (or to work in small groups or individually) to write or retell a summary of the book after reading it. You could tell them it is a shorter summary — something that might appear on the back of the book or in an advertisement. Remind them that they can include a few supporting details without totally rewriting the story.

### Accuracy

- **Chunk letters and sounds together.**

Chunking letter sounds together is an effective way to decode many words. While you are reading, choose a word or two that would lend itself well to modeling this strategy. Write the word on the whiteboard and show students how you would break that word into chunks, underlining the each chunk in a different color. For a second word, have students help you identify the chunks they recognize. Some words might be *demonstrating*, *interpretation*, *shipmates*, and *determined*.

## Fluency

- **Use punctuation to enhance phrasing and prosody.**

Think aloud while reading, and ask students to notice the ups and downs of your voice as you read. Explain why your tone changes when reading a sentence with an exclamation mark versus a period. This strategy can be discussed in conjunction with the strategy of reading the text as the author would say it. As you explain to the students the importance of paying close attention to punctuation and phrasing, model how one or more of the following sentences would sound with proper prosody versus without paying attention to punctuation.

- p. 2: "Small Saul loved the sea. He loved its calmness, its vastness, its blueness."
- p. 6: "He did well in Navigation, but he lacked focus in Looting: The Basics."
- p. 11: ". . . until a voice hollered from the only remaining ship at port: 'Ahoy there! Climb aboard!' At last, Small Saul would be a real pirate!"

## Expand Vocabulary

- **Tune in to interesting words.**

Select two or three words from the text to focus on. Introduce them to the students. When coming across the words again while reading, have students practice saying, using, and writing the selected words. Provide multiple exposures to the words and add them to the vocabulary wall. Some interesting word choices from the book are *vastness* (p. 2), *interpretation* (p. 5), *navigation* (p. 6), *looting* (p. 6), *mulled* (p. 20), *stewed* (p. 20), *engrossed* (p. 21), and *bland* (p. 23).

- **Use prior knowledge and context clues.**

Before reading the book, ask students what they know about pirates or what they have read or watched about pirates, and have them share some of their background knowledge. While reading sentences with possible unknown words, point out to students that the context of the sentence can help us figure out the meaning of a new word. Below are some examples from the book:

- p. 6: "He was born to sing sea shanties, not to hold a sword."
- p. 7: "Small Saul earned his Pirate Diploma." (The context is that he's going to pirate college.)
- p. 18: "Unfortunately, the result didn't seem to intimidate anyone." (The context is that Saul got a tattoo to try to appear tough.)

**This text can be used with nearly any strategy on the CAFE Menu. The above strategies are a highlighted collection to use as a springboard for further instruction.**