



Inquire to Learn!

There are many ways in which *Marcela and the King's Tricks/Island Hopping* can be used as a base for Inquiry Learning. This is just one suggestion.

Session 1

Using the Big Book, share-read *Marcela and the King's Tricks*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of tricks/riddles, social rank, plants, and creative thinking.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion

Tricks/Riddles: *Is the ability to solve a trick or a riddle a sign of quick thinking? Why/why not?* Discuss the nature of tricks, riddles, and brainteasers and whether or not the ability to solve problems of this nature shows quick thinking and intelligence? Remind the students that there are many different kinds of intelligence, and problem-solving is just one of them.

Social Rank: *How would you feel if a king or other important person set you a challenge? Would you feel happy or nervous about beating that person? Why?* Discuss that differences in social rank can sometimes affect how a person chooses to behave.

Plants: *What happens to a young plant over time?* Discuss that young plants, just like young animals and people, grow over time. Introduce the concept that, under the right conditions, a plant can grow to fit the shape of the container it is in.

Creative Thinking: *Is there an answer to every problem? Why/why not?* Discuss the quote: *You can't solve a problem with the same mind that created it.* – Albert Einstein. Discuss the importance of creative thinking when it comes to problem solving.

Text and Illustration Based Inquiry Questions

Cover and title page: Look at the cover of *Marcela and the King's Tricks*. Ask, *What is Marcela doing?* If the students are unfamiliar with the vegetable, tell them it is a squash. Look at the title page and ask, *How do you think the squash got into the jar?*

P. 2: Revisit the text and note the word *advisor*. Define an advisor as a person who gives advice in a professional capacity. Brainstorm synonyms for advisor e.g. counsellor, helper, mentor, guide, aide, teacher, tutor. Note the final sentence: *So the king decided to test Marcela*. Ask, *How do you think the king will test Marcela to see if she is a quick thinker?*

P. 3: Note the illustration of the king. Ask, *How does this king look different to how kings are usually shown in stories? Why do you think this king looks different?* (The kings we often see are in stories that come from Europe, whereas this folk tale comes from the Philippines. Also, the illustrator has decided to use creative thinking and draw a different kind of king.)

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Teacher's Notes continued

P. 4: Reread the first paragraph. Ask, *Is it possible to cook a mosquito as a meal for twelve people?* Read on to discover how Marcela turns the challenge around and makes it the king's problem to solve. Ask, *Was Marcela brave in sending a challenge back to the king? Why/why not?*

PP. 6–7: Review the sentence: *Marcela was smarter than he had realized.* and identify the root word *smart*. Brainstorm synonyms for smart e.g. intelligent, clever, quick-witted, brainy, bright, able, capable, sharp. Direct the students' attention to the following sentence: *She had won this round.* and point out that by using *this round* the author has indicated that there are more tests to follow and that the tests are like a game. Direct the students to read the rest of the page and then ask them to predict what Marcela will do with this test. Ask, *How can Marcela sell the sheep but still return it and the money to the king?* Direct the students' attention to the illustration. Ask, *How has the illustrator added humour to the story?* (Both the sheep and the servant are sweating, indicating that getting the sheep to Marcela has not been an easy task and it is the servant who is paying the price for the king's little games.)

PP. 8–9: Direct the students' attention to the word *confused*. Ask, *How does the illustrator show that Marcela is confused?* Note that the illustrator has included the servant, who is peeking around the corner, curious to see how Marcela will deal with the challenge. Ask, *Why has the illustrator included ants in this illustration?* (Ants represent hard work, so perhaps the ants show that Marcela will have to work hard to solve this problem. Or perhaps it is because the Philippines is a tropical country with a hot, wet climate where ants thrive. Share with the students that there are around 1,000 different kinds of ants in the Philippines, as compared to 40 different kinds of ants in New Zealand – of which only 11 are native.)

P. 10: Read the text and ask, *Did anyone predict that this is what Marcela would do?* Note the word *cunning* and discuss that cunningness is a kind of smartness. If cunning was not included in the earlier brainstorming session on synonyms for smart, include it now and see if the students can add any more synonyms e.g. crafty, wily, tricky, foxy. Ask, *What is a word for cutting the wool off a sheep?* (shearing)

P. 11: Note the phrase: *pleased with herself* and brainstorm other words the author could have used e.g. proud, satisfied, glad, happy, contented, delighted, fulfilled, gratified.

PP. 12–13: Reread the text. Ask, *Did the king think Marcela would be able to solve this challenge? Why/why not? Why did he want to trick her?* Ask, *Why is a squash a funnier vegetable to have used in this story than a pumpkin?* (Because of the double-play on the word squash – the only way to get the large vegetable into the small jar would be to squash it in.)

P. 14: Review the challenge with the students and ensure they understand that Marcela has set herself the task of doing what the king thinks is impossible.

P. 15: Ask, *What do you think will happen to the squash inside the jar? How has Marcela solved the challenge?* (It will grow. She has used creative thinking.)

PP. 18–19: Ask, *Why do the townspeople follow Marcela to the palace?* (They all want to see how the king will react to being outwitted by Marcela.)

PP. 20–21: Reread the text and note that on P. 20 the king laughs at the thought that he has beaten Marcela, but Marcela ends up giggling at the king who lands on the floor in surprise when he sees the squash in the jar. Explore the concept of “getting the last laugh”, particularly as it applies to **Marcela and the King's Tricks**.

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Teacher's Notes continued

P. 22: Reread the text and direct the children's attention to the word *wise*. Refer back to the earlier brainstorming session on synonyms for smart and add it to the list if it wasn't included originally.

P. 24: Reread the text and discuss it in light of the Einstein quote from the Starter Questions: *You can't solve a problem with the same mind that created it*. Remind the students that difficult problems can often be solved through creative thinking, and that sometimes we need to change our mind-set to see a challenge in a new light.

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Challenge the students to come up with as many creative uses for a brick, or other object, as they can think of e.g. as a doorstop, a paperweight, a bookend, a pot stand, a toddler-step.

Experiment with growing square (or other shaped) watermelons, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, or pumpkins. Grow your plants outdoors under normal conditions. Then, when the watermelon or other fruit starts to grow on the vine, place it gently into a sturdy square container. The container needs to be slightly smaller than the fruit normally grows. Continue to look after the plant and be patient – eventually you will have a square watermelon. Send photos of your square fruit to info@cleanslatepress.com with the gardener's name, age, and school. The best photos will be posted on the Clean Slate Press Facebook page and the gardener will receive a prize.

Use a large ball of string and create a complex room-sized web by winding the string around furniture. Alternatively, create the web outside using string and the playground equipment, but be sure to remove all of the string at the end of the activity. Challenge the children, either in groups or individually, to move through the web without touching the string.

Set riddles for the students to solve in pairs e.g.

Q: What has a single eye but cannot see? A: A needle;

Q: I'm light as a feather yet the strongest person cannot hold me for more than five minutes. What am I? A: Breath;

Q: In time, Marcela has two children. If the older child is a boy, what are the odds that the other child is a girl? A: 50 percent;

Q: What building has the most stories? A: A library

Q: Railroad crossing without any cars. Can you spell that without any R's? A: T-H-A-T

Encourage the children to create their own tricks, riddles, and brainteasers. Before beginning, emphasize that all tricks must be friendly. If necessary, check the children's work before suggesting they present their tricks, riddles, and brainteasers to a partner.

Share other folk tales from the Philippines e.g.

The Tree with the Agate Beads, *How the Tinguian Learned to Plant*, *Abadeha – A Philippine Cinderella Story*.

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Teacher's Notes continued

Session 2

Using the Big Book, share-read *Island Hopping*, stopping at natural points for discussion. Draw on the students' prior knowledge of the Philippines and other island nations, volcanoes and the Ring of Fire, postcards, underground rivers and rock formations, terraces, coconuts, and festivals.

Possible Starter Questions for Discussion and Inquiry

Filipino Greeting: *People in the Philippines speak Filipino. Does anyone know how to greet a friend in Filipino? It is kumusta ka? or kumusta po? if speaking to an older person. It means how are you?*

Cover: Look at the cover and read the title *Island Hopping*. Ask, *What kind of country do you think the Philippines might be?* (A country made up of many islands.)

Location of the Philippines/Geography: Look at the map on P. 1 of *Island Hopping* and note the location of the Philippines in Southeast Asia, and in relation to Australia and New Zealand. Revisit the first paragraph and note that the Philippines is made up of many, many islands. If appropriate, tell the students that a group of islands such as this is called an archipelago. Ask, *How do you think people move around from island to island?* Share with the students that people use boats and planes to move between the islands of the Philippines. Revisit the second paragraph and note that the Philippine flag can be flown in two different ways. If any of the students come from the Philippines or have visited it, invite them to share their experiences.

Volcanoes and the Ring of Fire: Look at the Ring of Fire map on P. 2 of *Island Hopping* and note the position of both the Philippines and New Zealand within this zone. Introduce the word *antonym*, or opposite, and discuss that the antonym of an active volcano is an extinct volcano. Define an extinct

volcano is a volcano that hasn't erupted for tens of thousands of years and isn't expected to erupt again. Introduce the word *dormant* and explain that a dormant volcano is an active volcano that is not erupting, but is expected to erupt again. Ask, *How many volcanoes does New Zealand have? Are they active, dormant, or extinct?* Discuss that as part of the Ring of Fire, New Zealand has over 60 extinct, dormant, and active volcanoes with around 50 volcanoes in Auckland alone. Note that Auckland's volcanoes are considered to be extinct, but the volcanic field to which they belong is active. Three of New Zealand's volcanoes are active, or have been active in the last 50 years: Ruapehu, White Island, and Ngauruaohoe. Explain that New Zealand's position in the ring of fire is also the cause of earthquakes.

Postcards: *Who has sent or received a postcard? At what times are they usually sent?* (When someone is on holiday or visiting a new location.) *What are the benefits of sending a postcard?* (The person you have sent the postcard to gets to see where you are.) *What are the negatives of sending a postcard?* (It is not a private form of communication. There is only space for a short message.)

Underground Rivers and Rock Formations: *Are there underground rivers in New Zealand?* (e.g. Waitomo River; Nile River, Charleston) *Has anyone been on an underground river? What was it like? Did you see rock formations? What else did you see?*

Terraces: *Does New Zealand have terraces cut into hillsides? What were they used for?* Explain to the students that while there are no rice terraces in New Zealand, Māori cut many terraces into hillsides to protect their Pā. Many of these terraces can still be seen today.

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Teacher's Notes continued

Coconuts: Discuss that the Philippines is dependent on coconut production and introduce the words *export* and *import*. Ask, *What threats to coconut production might the Philippines face?* Discuss the threats posed by natural disasters such as typhoons and use the example of Typhoon Haiyan, which killed more than 6,000 people and destroyed around 44 million coconut trees. Point out that the diagram on P. 7 of **Island Hopping** is a flow diagram and discuss the features of flow diagrams. Raise the fact that although the world market for coconuts and coconut products is increasing, 60 percent of coconut farmers in the Philippines live in poverty. Ask, *Where do you think the profits from coconut production are going?* (Middlemen and freight companies.)

Festivals: Compare and contrast the Ati-atihan festival on P. 8 of **Island Hopping** with festivals the children celebrate or are familiar with. Encourage the children to share festivals from their own cultures. *How are they the same? How are they different?*

Further Discussion and Inquiry Extension

Using P. 1 of **Island Hopping** as a springboard, challenge the students to research and find out how many islands there are in New Zealand. Is New Zealand an archipelago?

Challenge the students to work in groups to answer the following research questions: What is the population of the Philippines? How did the Philippines get its name? Which countries have ruled over the Philippines? When did the Philippines become independent? What is the capital city of the Philippines? What is the climate of the Philippines?

Research to learn about the different forms of transportation in the Philippines. What is a banca? What is a jeepney? What is a tricycle? What is the Supercat?

Learn more about the Ring of Fire and invite the students to present their findings as posters or PowerPoint presentations.

Invite the students to research volcanoes of New Zealand and learn more about the three different kinds of volcano (cone, shield, caldera). How many of New Zealand's volcanoes can they mark and label on a map?

Using PP. 4–5 of **Island Hopping** as a model, invite the students to make their own postcards and write messages to a friend or relative. They could print digital images of their town or their school. Talk about the role and history of stamps as payment and, if possible, have the students post their postcards. Alternatively, encourage the students to design their own stamps and display the postcards in class.

Challenge the students to learn more about Māori Pā sites and the terracing on them. It may be possible to visit a terraced Pa site, such as Maungawhau/Mt Eden, in your local community.

Learn more about the Philippines' or New Zealand's underground rivers and rock formations. What are stalactites and stalagmites?

Learn about other festivals celebrated in the Philippines e.g. Sinulog Festival, Dinagyang Festival, Pahiyas Festival.