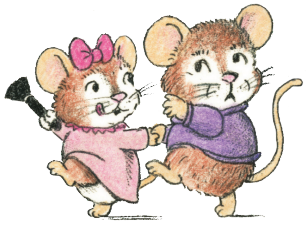

EASY TO READ COMICS
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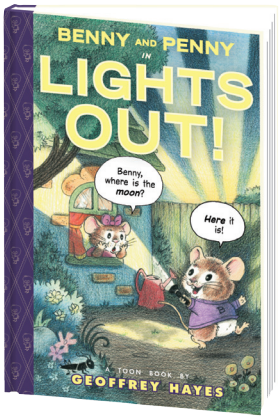

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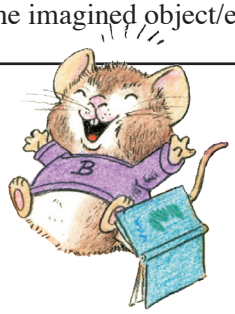
Benny and Penny in Lights Out!
by Geoffrey Hayes
TOON Books, an imprint of Candlewick Press
Hardcover: 978-1-935179-20-7

SUBMITTED BY J.D. HO
AUTHOR AND CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEWER

Lexile Level = GN 170
Guided Reading Level = H

Guided Reading Lesson Plan

Before Reading	1. Ask students: what makes a comic book different from a picture book? Is it the presence of panels? Is it the speech bubbles? 2. Use pages 9 and 10 to preview the book. Talk about how comics often use panels to show things step-by-step. Starting with the middle panels, we get what is almost a tiny story: Benny is thirsty. He drinks, then burps. As we turn the page, the burp story continues. Notice how the size of the word "BURP" gets bigger and bigger. What does that indicate?
During Reading	1. Even though comic books give us a lot of pictures to go along with the text, we still have to use our imaginations. Look at page 5. Describe what you see in the picture. Now describe what you think Benny is looking at beyond the left border of the picture. What do you think is in the house? Who is speaking? We usually think of pictures as helping us imagine what the words are describing, but in this book, the words do a lot to help us "read" the pictures. On this page, the speech bubble helps us imagine things that are not in the picture. 2. Use page 7 of the book to discuss the different ways a comic has of presenting information. A lot of times, comics have panels with borders around them, but sometimes they don't. At the top of the page, how do we know there aren't magically two Bennys? Discuss how the thought bubbles help us to interpret the picture. 3. Benny and Penny imagine a lot of things in this story. Look at page 12 and 13. How do we know that the princess and dragon aren't actually in the room? What visual cues indicate that the princess and dragon are in Benny and Penny's imaginations? What verbal cues help us? If we didn't have the speech bubbles, would we still be able to make a guess about what is going on? Can you think of other ways to show that something is in a character's imagination, not actually in the room? On page 24, the dinosaur looks like it is in a bubble. Sometimes a character's imagination is shown in a thought bubble.
After Reading	Make a comic showing your character imagining something. Use one of the methods from this book (a thought bubble or a difference in the way the imagined object/event is drawn).



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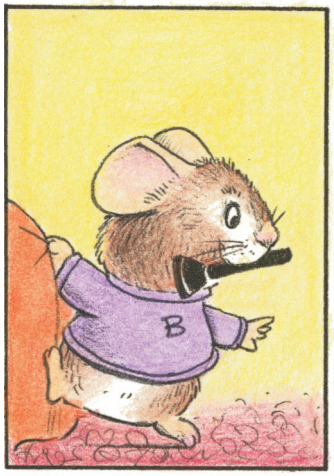
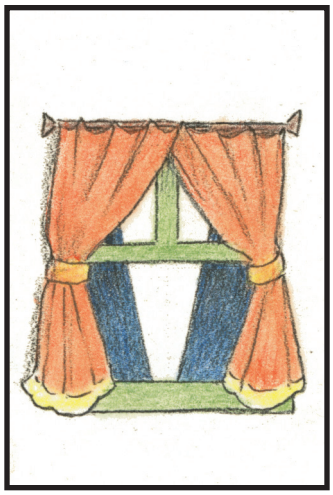
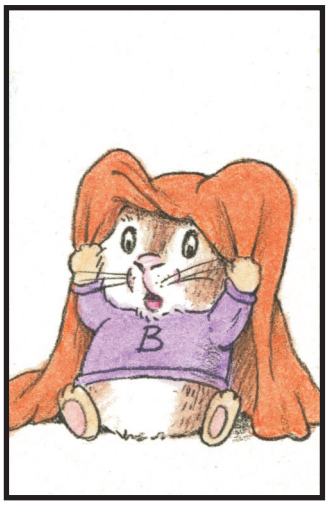
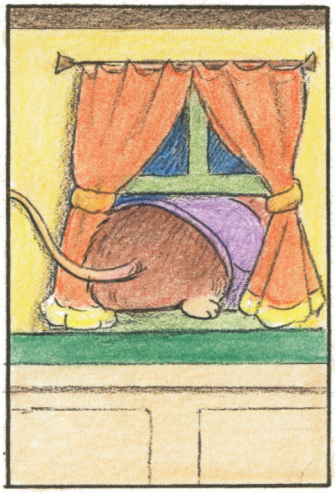
BENNY AND PENNY IN LIGHTS OUT! ACTIVITY SHEET

Cut out these panels and put them in the right order. Was this hard to do without the words to help you? What kinds of details helped you to know the order even without the characters talking?









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