



Title: **Two Bad Ants**

Author/Illustrator: Chris Van Allsburg

Themes: Point of view

Hear the book read aloud here: [Two Bad Ants](#)

★ 3rd Grade Common Core Reading Standard ★

Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

I. INTRODUCTION (PREP QUESTIONS)

- Ask students to decide if the book will be fiction or nonfiction, and why. Have them suggest ways that two ants could be *bad*.
- Explain to students that this story is being told from the **point of view** of the ants. Tell students that **point of view (POV)** is the way the author allows you to “see” and “hear” what’s going on. Skillful authors can fix their readers’ attention on exactly the detail, opinion, or emotion the author wants to emphasize by changing the **point of view** of the story.
- Have students think about how they observe the furniture, people, and objects in their classroom. Then have students imagine how viewing the things in their classroom would be different if they were ants on the floor. Have students share their comparisons as to how the observations and dimensions would change.
- Tell them that Chris Van Allsburg has written many favorite children’s books including *The Polar Express*, *Jumanji*, and *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* and encourage students to discover other books in the library.

II. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

During Reading

- Pp. 4-5: Read; ask students as a reader begins this story, what is unknown to the reader (what kind of crystal). Have students share how the illustrations seem unusual (ants are so tiny but the illustrations show them to be so big). Since the story is being told from the ants’ **POV**, ask students why the ants do not appear little in the illustrations.
- Pp. 6-7: Read; direct students’ attention to the illustrations. Have students visualize themselves the size of ants (**POV**) and discuss the size exaggeration in the illustration, noting the lack of tree trunks that we would observe in a forest if the story were being told from a human **POV**. Have students suggest what could compare to trees with the same size ratio to ants that is shown in the picture. (blades of grass)

- Pp. 8-9: Read; point out the **simile** on p. 8 and ask students what two things are being compared using the words **like** or **as** (*call of crickets like distant thunder*). Have students share their impressions of the sounds of crickets at night and connect the simile's exaggerated wording of *thunder* to the ants' **POV**.
- Discuss dew with students and have them identify the exaggerated wording of *huge* to the ants' **POV**.
- Although students will not be familiar with fireflies, they can apply their understanding of an insect's size to the exaggerated wording of *blinding flash* to the ants' **POV**.
- Pp. 10-11: Read; have students determine more exaggerated wording for the ants' **POV** (*forest, mountain, peak, heavens, etc.*). Point out how the illustrations help us *feel* like we're the ants viewing the world from the ants' **POV**.
- Pp. 12-13: Read; ask students what is still a mystery for the reader? (the identity of the *sea of crystals* or *sparkling treasure*)
- Pp. 14-15: Read; ask students what clue the reader finally sees in the illustration to identify the crystals (GAR). Have students discuss what we learn on p. 15 (who the two bad ants are) and why they stayed behind.
- Pp. 16-17: Read; have students determine more exaggerated wording for the ants' **POV** (*giant scoop; shoveled; high into the air; frightening height; tumbled through space; shower of crystals; boiling brown lake*). Have students infer the *spoon* and the *coffee*.
- Pp. 18-19: Read; same as above. (*violently; crushing waves; paddled hard*)
- Pp. 20-21: Read; same as above. (*lake; cave; shore; steep side; walls that held back the lake; huge round disk*)
- Pp. 22-23: Read; discuss what is actually happening and what the disks might have been. (*English muffins*)
- Pp. 24-25: Read; same as before. (*fountain, waterfall pouring*)
- Pp. 26-27: Read; ask students to infer where the ants are now. (*garbage disposal*)
- Pp. 28-29: Read; point out the **simile** on p. 29 and have students determine the two things being compared (the *ants* were blown out...**like** *bullets*); discuss exaggerated **POV** imagery.
- Pp. 30-31: Read; have students identify the **Cause** → **Effect** (**Effect**: ants learned their lesson; **Cause**: their adventure scared them to death).

III. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

Post Reading

- Have students share their observations as to how the illustrations supported the ants' **POV**. Would we have understood what was happening with only the exaggerated descriptions? Why or why not?
- What purpose did the author likely have for writing this story (pure entertainment).
- How would the story change if the exaggeration were removed? Would it change the students' opinions of the story? Why or why not?
- Ask students to think about what might have motivated the author to write this story (he actually awoke one morning to find his kitchen swarming with ants). Ask students to brainstorm and share some simple daily occurrences that could be transformed into entertaining stories with the help of exaggeration.