

Putrescent Petra Finds Friends

**Caught'ya! Grammar with a Giggle
for Second Grade**



Jane Bell Kiester

Putrescent Petra Finds Friends
Caught'ya! Grammar with a Giggle for Second Grade

By Jane Bell Kiester
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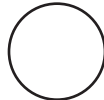
TABLE OF CONTENTS

IN THE BOOK

What You Will Find in This Book	1
Caught'yas in a Nutshell	3
"Putrescent Petra Finds Friends," the entire, uninterrupted Caught'ya story	8
120 Student Caught'yas with Teacher's Key	16
Bibliography	72

ON THE CD

An Introduction by Jane Bell Kiester
Nine Steps to Implement Caught'yas in Your
Classroom Explained
"Putrescent Petra Finds Friends," the entire,
uninterrupted Caught'ya story
Student Caught'yas (formatted one per page)



Student Assessment Chart
Two Second-Grade Caught'ya Examples
Ten Writing Suggestions and Activities
*Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics Guide
(Everything You Never Wanted to Know about
Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics,
but I'm Going to Tell You Anyway)*

TEXT TO BE READ ALOUD BY THE TEACHER

At the beginning of the year, read the following introduction to the class to provide background to the story. Vocabulary beyond a second-grade level has been bolded the first time each word is used. Since this part of the story is intended for oral reading by an adult, these words are pointed out only to highlight their level of difficulty. Words with a heart (♥) after them will be included frequently in the students' sentences.

“PUTRESCENT PETRA FINDS FRIENDS”

Putrescent♥ Petra **waddled♥** through the grass of a big **field♥**. It was night, her favorite time to hunt for food. Petra stopped briefly to eat a yummy grasshopper. Her little brown nose at the end of her pointy head twitched as she sniffed an apple core a few feet away. After she ate the grasshopper, Petra **ambled** over to the apple core and ate that as well. She was not a fussy eater.

Petra's long, thick, hairy coat was black and white. A white patch went down her pointed **snout**, right between her eyes. There was another white patch on top of her head. Two white stripes **extended** down on either side of her back to the place where her big, **plume-like♥** tail began. From that spot, one **double-wide** white stripe continued down the middle of her big, long, bushy tail. Petra's tail was almost as long as her body! All four of her short legs ended in little white feet with long claws at the end. She was the size of a big house cat. What was Petra? Petra was a **striped skunk♥**.

Now, the scientific name for a striped skunk is *Mephitis mephitis*. *Mephitis* means “really stinky” or “evil smelling.” So, to repeat the word “*mephitis*” in the scientific name for a striped skunk makes it mean “double stinky.” The Algonquin Indians called the skunk **segonku**. Some Americans call skunks “polecats,” but skunks are *not* polecats. Polecats are related to skunks, but they are *not* the same **species** of animal. They are not skunks. Some people call skunks “woodpussies” because they are the size of a house cat, and they often live in the woods. But, wild skunks live everywhere in **North America**. They live in the woods, on farms, in small towns, and even in big cities!

Some **domesticated** skunks (that have had their **scent♥ glands** taken away) live in houses with boys and girls like you. Skunks do not make as good a pet as a dog or a cat because they are wild and always want to be free. They sometimes bite their owners, and they are very **stubborn**. Do you know someone who is very stubborn?

There are only three types of skunks—striped skunks, spotted skunks (which do a hand-stand when they squirt their stink), and hog-nosed skunks. Maybe your teacher will take you to the library to find out more about Putrescent Petra and other skunks. But, back to Petra's story.

Petra was a striped skunk, and she was still hungry, even after the yummy grasshopper and apple core. As Petra nosed through the grass for more goodies to eat, a big brown dog ran onto the field. It could smell Petra. Petra did not run. She was not afraid. She did what all skunks do. Petra turned around and put her behind toward the dog. She turned her head around to watch the dog and stamped her front feet in **warning♥**. The dog came closer. Petra **chattered♥** her teeth and **hissed♥** and **growled♥** to warn the dog again. The dog came even closer and growled at Petra.

The dog showed his teeth. Petra still did not move. She was not afraid. Petra had a secret **weapon**.

Petra then raised her tail. It went straight up in the air with the tip still hanging limp. She began to **arch** her back. The big dog suddenly ran away. He ran before Petra could poke the tip of her tail up straight and spray her **musk** to protect herself. That dog learned slowly, but he was smart enough to pay attention to Petra's warnings before it was too late.

Petra was glad that she did not have to use her secret weapon. She only used it in an emergency when all her warnings had failed. Petra continued across the field in search of food. She found a candy wrapper and licked the insides. There was still a **morsel** of chocolate clinging to the paper. Yummy! Petra was an **omnivore**. She ate everything.

Petra ate and ate. This field was filled with yummy **insects** and other goodies. In the darkness of the night, Petra could see the shadow of a big building. What was it? As she waddled her chubby body towards it, the building **loomed** larger and larger.

Petra crossed some hard concrete. She could smell no food there, so she hurried across to where the grass grew. She ambled and waddled closer and closer to the big building. Petra smelled more food near the building. A trash can! This was a perfect place to set up skunk **housekeeping**.

The sun's first rays peeked over the trees and began to light up the sky. Petra knew it was time to find a **burrow** for the day. You see, skunks are **nocturnal** animals like cats. And, like cats, they hunt for food during the night and sleep most of the day.

Petra looked up and up, way up to the top of the building. Then she looked down at the base. She spotted a small hole to her left, a little hole right under the building. She waddled towards it. The hole became a small **tunnel** that went two feet under the big building. She went in. Petra was happy. This was perfect!

Petra's long claws dug out a place that was just big enough for a skunk to sleep in along the side of the little tunnel. Then she curled around into a black and white ball, **buried** her pointed snout in her tail, and went to sleep. Her belly was full, and Petra was content. No **predators** could find her there in her little hole under the building. Petra was full and safe.

Suddenly, Petra the Putrescent woke with a start. She heard the sound of many animals making a lot of noise. She heard animals running. She heard animals walking. She heard animals making strange sounds. Not growls and hisses. Not barks. Not hoots like her enemy, the owl. What was it? The noises did not sound threatening, but they were loud.

Then, an even louder sound rang out. It rang until the building above Petra seemed to shake. Petra leapt to her feet. This was scary. She sniffed the air. She smelled food, lots of good food, lots of different kinds of food. She did not want to leave this place, but the loud ringing noise scared her for a minute. Just as she was about to **investigate** the sound, it stopped. The animal noises stopped, too. Petra curled up again and went back to sleep, dreaming of big, juicy roaches and her favorite food, eggs.

Stop reading out loud here.

120 CAUGHT'YAS FOR SECOND GRADE

B = Sentence for the board C = Corrected version of the Caught'ya

1. putrescent, burrow

PARAGRAPH – beginning of story

CAPITALIZATION – always begin sentences and quotes with a capital letter; always capitalize proper nouns and “I”

PUNCTUATION – sentences always have end punctuation

COMMAS – subordinate clause at beginning of sentence; between city and state

VERB TENSE – “sat” is past tense of irregular verb “to sit”

SPELLING RULE – compound word

OTHER SKILLS – write school name; strong verb use

B – as **putrescent** petra slept, a class of children at _____ elementary school in (*put your city, state here*) sat in a classroom right above her **burrow**

C – As **Putrescent** Petra slept, a class of children at _____ Elementary School in (*put your city, state here*) sat in a classroom right above her **burrow**.

2. editing, journals, response, snack, gazed

NO PARAGRAPH – same topic

CAPITALIZATION – always begin sentences and quotes with a capital letter

PUNCTUATION – sentences always have end punctuation

VERB TENSE – add “ed” to end of regular verbs to put in past tense; “ate” is past tense of irregular verb “to eat”

SPELLING RULES – compound word; add “s” to most nouns to make plural

OTHER SKILLS – possessive of singular noun; strong verb practice

B – some students worked in their **editing journals** or their **response journals**. others ate the popcorn from that morning's **snack** and **gazed** out the window

C – Some students worked in their **editing journals** or their **response journals**. Others ate the popcorn from that morning's **snack** and **gazed** out the window.

3. idea, snoozed

NO PARAGRAPH – same topic, same speaker (narrator)

CAPITALIZATION – always begin sentences and quotes with a capital letter

PUNCTUATION – sentences always have end punctuation

COMMAS – extra information

VERB TENSE – add “ed” to end of regular verbs to put in past tense; “had” is past tense of irregular verb “to have”

SPELLING RULES – “no one” is 2 words; plural of “foot” is “feet”

OTHER SKILL – “no one” is singular, thus the possessive pronoun and the verb must be singular.

B – no one, not even the teacher, had any **idea** what **snoozed** right beneath his or her feet

C – No one, not even the teacher, had any **idea** what **snoozed** right beneath his or her feet.

NOTE: Possession is a new skill for second-graders. They are not ready, this early in the year, to learn how to use an apostrophe to indicate ownership. Possession is, however, used in many Caught'yas. This is for modeling purposes only. When you feel that your students are ready for a simple explanation of why and when an apostrophe is used to show possession, go for it. If you think that your students are not ready, continue modeling and hope that it will sink in eventually. Middle-school students still have trouble with this concept.

4. recess, alarmed, noise

PARAGRAPH – time change and action change

CAPITALIZATION – always begin sentences and quotes with a capital letter; always capitalize proper nouns and “I”

PUNCTUATION – sentences always have end punctuation; hyphens needed when many words act as one word

COMMAS – participial phrase (used to tell more about Petra); 2 adjectives where the 2nd is not color, age, or linked to the noun

VERB TENSE – add “ed” to end of regular verbs to put in past tense; “rang” is past tense of irregular verb “to ring”

OTHER SKILL – strong verb practice

LITERARY DEVICE – simile

B – the bell rang for **recess**. **Petra** jumped up like a black and white jack-in-the-box, **alarmed** again by the loud, ringing **noise**

C – The bell rang for **recess**. **Petra** jumped up like a black and white jack-in-the-box, **alarmed** again by the loud, ringing **noise**.