READING ALOUD TO CHILDREN: SEVEN STEPS

1. **SELECT** a book that the children will enjoy.
2. **DISCUSS** the cover and title of the book.
3. **ASK** children what they think the book is about. Ask children to make predictions, providing them with a purpose for reading.
4. **READ** the book, making sure children can see the pages as they read.
5. **REREAD** the book. Encourage children to reread their favorite stories, which helps them develop word recognition skills as well as oral fluency.
6. **DISCUSS** the events that took place in the book. Engage children in a discussion about the events in the story to help them understand its parts, such as characters, setting, plot, and outcome.
7. **ENCOURAGE** children to retell the story in their own words or draw a picture depicting their favorite part of the story. Retelling stories through speaking, writing, and drawing fosters cognitive development as well as personal response.

REMEMBER:
The more you read, the better you get at it, the more you like it; and the more you like it, the more you do it. And the more you read, the more you know; and the more you know, the smarter you grow!

Reading aloud to children is one of the most effective and inexpensive activities parents and educators can do to promote literacy. Help your children develop that lifelong love of reading!

Literacy, the ability to read and write, plays a major role in school and life success.

Early literacy and the foundation for beginning to read begins at birth and is a developmental process that occurs throughout life... Children’s early literacy and beginning to read successfully is a collaborative process and shared responsibility that includes teachers, parents, and communities.

As early childhood educators, we have a responsibility to ensure that young children have access to quality and age-appropriate books. Reading to children is one of the best ways to promote positive attitudes toward reading and to give children the sounds and words of literacy and reading. Beginning at birth, all children should be read to with regularity and enthusiasm. SECA recommends that at each grade level, beginning in the preschool and continuing into kindergarten and first grade, all children should be familiar with many books. These books should include all genres—fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and expository.


We understand that the use of quality children’s literature in early childhood classrooms has enormous impact on the development of vocabulary and skills necessary for future educational success. We’ve created *What’s New In Children’s Books* to assist you in finding the children’s books that are new in the market. Publishers send us copies of their new books, and we send them out to a group of dedicated volunteer reviewers. Every review that we receive does not get published. At times our reviewers may find a book to be inappropriate for young children. We value their professional opinion and would like to thank them for their service. We could not complete this publication without their recommendations. We ask the reviewers to answer these questions:

- Is this a quality book that's appropriate for young children?
- What age groups would respond to this book?
- What are the major themes and concepts?
- How would you use it in your classroom or program?

Bring some fresh air to your daily curriculum and introduce your children to the many wonderful new books that come out each year. We know you’ll enjoy it as much as your children do!

-The Board of Directors of SECA

Special thanks to our unpublished reviewers!

Cindy Bandy O’Brien, Morgantown, WV
Megan Blackburn, Atlanta, GA
Jennifer W. Hardy, Norfolk, VA
Darbi Haynes-Lawrence, Bowling Green, KY
Caitlin Heiderscheidt, North Chicago, IL
Anita McLeod, Clinton, SC
Renee Mirowitz, Tallahassee, FL
A Catfish Tale .......................................................... 1
By Julia Donaldson
Reviewed by Julie Miller

A Home for Mr. Emmerson ........................................... 3
By Kathryn Madeline Allen
Reviewed by Mary Jo Smith

A Pet for Fly Guy .......................................................... 4
By Tedd Arnold
Reviewed by Lori Holzman Becker

All is Different Now .................................................. 5
By Angela Johnson
Reviewed by Sabrina A. Brinson

Ancient Egypt .............................................................. 7
By Penelope Arlon
Reviewed by Stephanie O’Neal

Camila’s Lemonade Stand ........................................... 9
By Lizzy Duncan
Reviewed by Beverly Reed

Cheers for a Dozen Ears ............................................... 11
By Felicia Sanzari Chernesky
Reviewed by Amelia Hewitt

Cinderelephant .......................................................... 12
By Emma Dodd
Reviewed by Dianne H. Thomas

Cinderella in the City ................................................ 14
By Cari Meister
Reviewed by Donna Gower

Clara and Davie: The True Story of Young Clara Barton, Founder of the American Red Cross .... 15
By Patricia Polacco
Reviewed by Kathleen A. Martin

Days of the Knights .................................................... 17
By Robert Neubecker
Reviewed by Sandy Show

Dinosaur Christmas .................................................... 18
By Jerry Pallotta
Reviewed by Alayne Zimmerly

Discover More: Birds ................................................. 19
By Penelope Arlon and Tory Gordon-Harris
Reviewed by Mary Howard

Discover More: Fantastic Frogs .................................... 20
By Penelope Arlon
Reviewed by Patti Pelletier

Discover More: Weather ............................................. 22
By Penelope Arlon and Tory Gordon Harris
Reviewed by John Sutterby

Freda Says Please ..................................................... 23
By Stuart J. Murphy
Reviewed by Heidi Fletcher

Get the Giggles: A First Joke Book .............................. 24
Reviewed by Stephanie White
Grandma’s Jewelry Box ................................................................. 25
By Cindy Bandy O’Brien
Reviewed by Joselina Reis

Great Choice, Camille! ............................................................... 26
By Stuart J. Murphy
Reviewed by Lisa Dolensky

Hi, Koo! A Year of Seasons ....................................................... 28
By Jon J. Muth
Reviewed by Nancy Mitchem

Hiding Phil .................................................................................. 29
By Eric Barclay
Reviewed by Heidi Maier

Hot Rod Hamster: Monster Truck Mania ..................................... 30
By Cynthia Lord
Reviewed by Jeanetta G. Riley

Insects: Photo Fact Collection .................................................. 31
By Jennifer Gresham
Reviewed by Cecilia Pittman

Jacob’s New Dress .................................................................... 32
By Sara and Ian Hoffman
Reviewed by Beverly Clayton Oglesby

King of the Zoo ........................................................................ 33
By Erica S. Perl
Reviewed by Cheryl D. Coffman

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone ....................................... 34
By Katheryn Russell-Brown
Reviewed by Sabrina A. Brinson

Mighty Dads ............................................................................. 36
By Joan Holub
Reviewed by Julie Bloss

Nesreddine ............................................................................. 37
By Odile Weulersse
Reviewed by John Sutterby

Naughty Kitty! ......................................................................... 38
By Adam Stower
Reviewed by Jeonghee Choi

Patti Cake and Her New Doll ................................................... 39
By Patricia Reilly Giff
Reviewed by Darshan Kaur Narang

Petting Zoo ............................................................................... 40
By Gail Tuchman
Reviewed by Stacey Katz

Planets ....................................................................................... 41
By Gail Tuchman
Reviewed by Vera Meyerholtz

Polar Animals ........................................................................... 42
By Susan Hayes
Reviewed by Karen Hopkins

Princess Cupcake Jones and the Missing Tutu ......................... 43
By Ylleya Fields
Reviewed by Jorja Davis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>By</th>
<th>Reviewed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reptiles</strong></td>
<td>Penelope Arlon</td>
<td>Cynthia Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rules of Summer</strong></td>
<td>Shau Tan</td>
<td>Billi L. Bromer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sam and Coodles: The Room at the End of the Hall</strong></td>
<td>Adrienne Durkin</td>
<td>Susan Barnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search and Find: Dinosaur Fun</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Betty Ann Watson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shark Attack!</strong></td>
<td>Gail Tuchman</td>
<td>Deidre Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Show Time with Sophia Grace and Rosie</strong></td>
<td>Sophia Grace Brownlee &amp; Rosie McClelland</td>
<td>Bethanie Stiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spooky Friends</strong></td>
<td>Jane Feder</td>
<td>Laura Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Birthday Queen</strong></td>
<td>Audrey Wood</td>
<td>Carrie Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Dandelion Seed’s Big Dream</strong></td>
<td>Joseph Anthony</td>
<td>Chu Chu Wu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Garden Monster</strong></td>
<td>Patricia Reilly Giff</td>
<td>Penny Hitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Good-Pie Party</strong></td>
<td>Liz Garton Scanton</td>
<td>Dale Suzanne Ioannides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Tree House That Jack Built</strong></td>
<td>Bonnie Verburg</td>
<td>Melissa Bialowas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Very Cranky Bear</strong></td>
<td>Nick Bland</td>
<td>Lindsay Giroux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Things that Go!</strong></td>
<td>James Buckley Jr.</td>
<td>Sonya Knee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tony Baloney: School Rules</strong></td>
<td>Pam Munoz Ryan</td>
<td>Denise Donica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Train</strong></td>
<td>Elisha Cooper</td>
<td>Michele Lucia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trouper</strong></td>
<td>Meg Kearney</td>
<td>Tricia Kruse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Twin Magic: School Bully, Beware!** ................................................................. 67
By Kate Ledger
Reviewed by Jean Foster Paulsel

**Under the Same Sun** ......................................................................................... 68
By Sharon Robinson
Reviewed by Valentina Kloosterman

**Volcanoes: Run for Your Life!** ................................................................. 69
By Laaren Brown
Reviewed by Nicole Brown

**Whales & Dolphins: Photo Fact Collection** ........................................... 70
Reviewed by Scheery Lu Renken-Goekler

**What If You Had Animal Hair?** ................................................................. 72
By Sandra Markle
Reviewed by Mia Mercurio

**What’s New? The Zoo!** ..................................................................................... 73
By Kathleen Krull
Reviewed by C. Miki Henderson

**Zoe’s Jungle** .................................................................................................... 74
By Bethanie Deeney Murguia
Reviewed by Robbie B. Roberts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>I/T</th>
<th>Pre-K</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Catfish Tale</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Home for Mr. Emerson</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pet for Fly Guy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All is Different Now</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Egypt</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camila’s Lemonade Stand</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheers for a Dozen Ears</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderelephant</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderella in the City</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara and Davie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of the Knights</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinosaur Christmas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover More: Birds</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover: Fantastic Frogs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover: More Weather</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freda Says Please</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get the Giggles: A First Joke Book</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandma’s Jewelry Box</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Choice, Camille!</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi, Koo!</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding Phil</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Rod Hamster: Monster Truck Mania</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insects: Photo Fact Collection</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob’s New Dress</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King of the Zoo</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Melba and Her Big Trombone</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mighty Dads</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasreddine</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naughty Kitty!</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patti Cake and her New Doll</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petting Zoo</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planets</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Animals</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Cupcake Jones and the Missing Tutu</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of Summer</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam and Coodles: The Room at the End of the Hall</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search and Find: Dinosaur Fun</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shark Attack!</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Time with Sophia Grace and Rosie</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Appropriate Age/Grade Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spooky Friends</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Birthday Queen</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dandelion Seed’s Big Dream</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Garden Monster</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Good-Pie Party</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tree House That Jack Built</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Very Cranky Bear</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things that Go!</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Baloney: School Rules</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouper</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Magic: School Bully, Beware!</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under the Same Sun</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volcanoes: Run for Your Life!</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whales &amp; Dolphins: Photo Fact Collection</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What If You Had Animal Hair?</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s New? The Zoo!</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe’s Jungle</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Story

The story is a retelling of the "Fisherman and His Wife", an old tale about what happens when someone wants more than they really need. In *A Catfish Tale*, Jacques and his wife, Jolie, live in shack on a bayou. Jacques goes fishing one day and catches a huge catfish that talks to him. Jacques tosses the fish back, and Jacques’ wife can’t believe it! She demands that Jacques go back and ask the fish for a nicer house. Jolie asks for more and more, hoping that, ultimately, she can be the Queen of the Bayou. Catastrophe ensues, and the man and his wife end up back where they began, in a shack on the bayou.

Concepts in the Book

- Greed
- Being content
- Finding value and pleasure.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The story is well-written and beautifully illustrated, and has some colorful characters in it, making it attractive to its young listeners and readers.

About the Reviewer

Julie Miller teaches a class of four-year-old children at West End Methodist Preschool and lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas.

This story introduces children to a few concepts related to Louisiana’s culture, such as its topography, traditional celebrations, and food. It might be fun to fix up a pot of jambalaya or etouffee with the children.

Using a written recipe that lists ingredients and how much of each is needed, a math lesson could be incorporated into the activity.

The topography of a bayou can be fascinating for young children, in light of all of its vegetation and wildlife. A study of the environment could include finding out what kinds of animals live in a bayou, which ones are dangerous, which ones are used for food, etc. The children could make a graphic comparison of the appearance and the size of each insect and animal, using pictures of each affixed to a large poster board.

A fishing game, using laminated pictures of the various creatures found in a bayou or of the characters/elements found in the story, allows the children to have fun and focus on hand eye coordination and fine motor skills. Also, if you had a duplicate of each picture, the laminated pictures could be glued onto cards and used as a memory matching game.

This book can be most effectively used...

- For its story value and its major moral theme of wanting more than we need.
- In the second and third grades, the story could be used to introduce other concepts related to Louisiana’s culture, New Orleans, Mardi Gras, and music.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies for *A Catfish Tale*

For a literacy activity, introduce the children to the new words found in the story: for example, shack, skiff, gumbo, catfish, bayou, river boat, hurricane, pelican, etc. Write the words on note cards and have a matching picture for each. If you put the loop end of Velcro dots on the back, the pictures will affix to a felt panel or flannel board. The children could match each word to its corresponding picture, and the words also could be arranged in alphabetical order by the children. Using the same words and pictures, young children could dictate and illustrate a story of their own, and older children could write down their own narratives.

The story mentions two kinds of watercraft: a skiff and a river boat. Children could compare the two types of craft and what propels each of them. They could participate in a sink/float activity at the water table or build their own sailing vessels and try to power them in water. What other kinds of sailing vessels exist? Have the children experiment with shallow containers that float. Using various things, such as stones, corks, marbles, etc., you can add weight and ask the children which items make the boat sink. A good story to read along with this activity is "Who Sank the Boat?" by Pamela Allen. It's also a great story to act out. You can build a "boat" from a large cardboard box, allowing the children to add things to it by using their newfound understanding of what a boat usually needs. Let a few children act out the story together. Have fun with this story! It's a great twist on a classic tale.

Since a hurricane is part of the story, the children might feel excited about finding out the science behind how a hurricane develops and what its powerful winds can do. An investigation might include leaning about how meteorologists (also a new word for many children!) predict hurricanes and how they can help people prepare for them. Since Jolie is a singer, music from New Orleans (we're talking scat singing and jazz) could be introduced and investigated. CDs with examples of jazz could be available in the listening center or during a music class. Bring in someone who can play the sax, clarinet, or trumpet, someone who can sing, or maybe a full band, and give the children the opportunity to help "play" the instruments as the musicians blow into them. Children could try some jazz or scat singing for themselves, and the class could even compose its own song about living on a bayou or traveling on a river boat.
The Story

*A Home for Mr. Emerson* describes Ralph Waldo Emerson’s childhood and life growing up. It continues to describe his life with his wife, children, and friends. The plot is focused around the many happenings in Emerson’s life, and also addresses how his feelings behind these events affected his writing. Although he visited many places and met a diverse group of people, returning home to his family and friends brought him the most pleasure.

About the Reviewer

A mother of three children, Mary Jo Smith serves as a Child Care Quality Start Specialist with the Louisiana Department of Education.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

*A Home for Mr. Emerson* introduces young children to the world of literature and the lives and feelings of the people behind the writing.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas.

**Pre-K and Kindergarten Activities**

**Circle Time:** Use talking points about vocabulary, and also about the author, the illustrator, family, and friends. Furthermore, you could find places that Emerson visited on a map or globe as an age appropriate method of introducing young children to geography.

**Story Time and Art:** Read *A Home for Mr. Emerson* and, as a follow up art activity, teach the children how to make their own books. Have the children bring pictures of family, friends, and special occasions or memorable events to school. Put the pictures on paper and place the pages in plastic sheet protectors. Bind the plastic-covered pages in rings. Keep the children’s finished books in the library center for children to share and discuss with each other.

**Primary: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grade Activities**

**Story Time:** Read *A Home for Mr. Emerson* and place in the library area. Talking points appropriate for primary school age children include other books written by Emerson, authors, and the concept of a journal.

**Language Arts and Writing:** Have each of the children bring a notebook to school and use it as a journal. Children can write down any feelings or ideas that they have on a given day. After a certain period of time, have children compile their notes into books about their lives. Using crayons, pencils, construction paper, notebook paper, and magazine pictures, etc., the children can make their own books with pictures and text.
The Story

This story is about Buzz and Fly Guy. Fly Guy is Buzz's pet and can talk. They play different games and have fun going on various adventures together. Fly Guy decides that he wants a pet because everyone else he sees has one. Buzz tries a puppy, a kitten, a worm, a spider, a cricket, and a frog. Fly Guy decides that Buzz is the best pet of all because he likes to play, can do tricks, and is a good friend.

Concepts in the Book

- Helpful tips for children's friendships

About the Reviewer

Ms. Lori Holzman Becker has more than fifteen years of experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. She has been an Early Childhood Professor at Kaplan University for the past eight years, and also a Curriculum Specialist for an Early Childhood Program.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This book shares a great story about friendship, and it is important to foster children's friendships at a young age.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

This Fly Guy book can be used at Circle Time as a preview to a unit on friendship. The teacher could create a web graphic organizer focusing on how you can be a good friend.

Such a lesson plan allows children to share verbally how they can be helpful to others, and I feel that it could be a great lesson for children from preschool, kindergarten, and the younger years of primary school.
Seemingly it was just another hot June day full of routine labor. The sun rose as we got dressed, ate, and headed to the fields on the plantation. Hour after hour after hour, young, old, and in-between worked hard and steady under the glare of the hot Texas sun. Bending, rising, plopping; bending, rising, plopping; bending, rising, plopping, in sync with the usual routine while picking cotton. Suddenly, an electrifying buzz of whispers, shrieks, single words, and shouts of glee spread from the port to town, through the countryside, and into the fields, zigzagging the lines in jubilant defiance of the routine. Read from a balcony by a Union general on a seemingly ordinary day, the most extraordinary message: All would be different now. F-R-E-E-D-O-M.

As my aunts, uncles, and cousins, and my brothers and sisters, Papa, Mama, and I gathered, more folks joined us, to celebrate, as free people. F-R-E-E-D-O-M.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

I recommend All is Different Now (Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom) because it is an informative story of historical fiction that is enriched with spirited illustrations. Likewise, it illuminates a crucial period in American history, using a child-friendly perspective, and it can easily be integrated into the curriculum. It is well written, includes accurate information, and portrays characters and settings in a realistic manner.

This book can be most effectively used...

- In simple social studies activities to inform students about the end of American slavery in an amiable manner.
- To illustrate and stimulate curiosity through a non-threatening picture book.
- To answer their previously-generated questions while actively engaging them in the learning process.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas.

This book can be integrated into social studies in order to help students transition theory into practice.

For example, All is Different Now (Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom) introduces students to historical characters who have different perspectives, and it illuminates examples of how people deal differently with their problems. Plus, it informs students about the interpretive nature of history, and it also demonstrates how authors and illustrators can deal with an issue in different ways.

Teachers can also incorporate this book into their curriculum via multifaceted, student-oriented strategies. For example, provide students with ample opportunities to process the key terms featured in the lexicon (e.g., abolish, amendment, and Civil War). Likewise, apprise students of the interactive, online sources (e.g., juneteenth.com) noted in the book. Foremost, these resources can greatly increase their understanding about freedom.

Also, a sound understanding of key terms and related events can aid readers’ transformation into the historical period and enhance their mastery of learning. Furthermore, establish a safe, nurturing environment and facilitate ongoing opportunities for students to engage in courageous conversations that might include posing uncomfortable questions. Once answered in a candid manner, they can move forward with their own analyses and resolutions about the issues addressed.
More Classroom Strategies for *All is Different Now*

Provide students on-going opportunities to investigate the timeline of important dates and events (e.g., Emancipation Proclamation), helping them gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of issues related to freedom. Equally important, a comprehensive description of Juneteenth can be outlined through both historical and contemporary practices, providing students insight into the progress made over the years, along with the importance of maintaining the celebration of freedom in today’s society.

As a result, students may be inspired to work cooperatively in groups and develop home, school, and community celebrations about Juneteenth (June 19, 1865) that are meaningful to them, thereby connecting social studies lessons to additional aspects of their lives via proactive demonstrations. However, in addition to one time celebrations, stay committed to providing students with on-going opportunities to engage in a variety of culturally responsive practices designed to benefit everyone equally via anti-bias applications, such as promoting multiple perspectives by allowing students to share their own perspectives, while respecting the viewpoints of others.
The Story

This is a non-fiction book that utilizes real pictures of objects and buildings used by Egyptians. It guides young children through everyday life in Ancient Egypt and explores the journey to the afterlife.

About the Reviewer

Stephanie O'Neal is the Director Mentor for Workforce Solutions Child Care Services. She holds a degree in Child Development, is a NAC validator, and also a registered trainer and PDS for the Council for Professional Recognition.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This non-fiction selection uses real images and focuses on concepts that children can relate to and understand. It also includes a glossary, which teachers can use to expand young children’s vocabulary, and a link for a fun digital book edition.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Art:
Pg 27: Children use an assortment of art supplies to make a boat that could be used to float down the Nile River.

Writing:
Pg 45: Children use the pages of the hieroglyphic alphabet to write their own names and spell words and sentences.

Group time:
Pg 14: "What treasure would I put in a tomb?" Children could list things that they would like to place in a tomb.
Pg 46: Compare children’s homes to homes in ancient Egypt. Do our houses look like their houses? Were they built using the same materials?
Pg 56: Children list their favorite foods and compare their favorites to the dishes that were favored by ancient Egyptians. Show examples of structures, buildings, inventions, and concepts that originated in Egypt and are still around today.

Vocabulary:
Amulet, banquet, drought, dynasty, Egyptologist, hieroglyphics, malachite, nemes, pharaoh, scribe, archaeologist, senet.

This book can be most effectively used...

- By using components of it as aids to your lesson planning, instead of using it for a read aloud.
- To focus on particular areas or sections, allowing those aspects to affect planning for a few of the children’s centers and formal lessons.
More Classroom Strategies for Ancient Egypt

**Home Living Center:**
Provide paper and pencil for the children to role play a scribe’s duties. Explain that not everyone could write and read, and so scribes were important to their society.

**Science:**
Use a papermaking activity to teach the children that paper was not available and needed to be made.

**Sensory Area:**
Prepare sand, shovels, and an assortment of small objects for the children to find hidden under the sand. The children can pretend to be archeologists and focus on studying the items found.

**Small group:**
Pg 48: Make a game of senet for the children. The teacher can help the children play the game of pharaohs.

**Home Living Center:**
Pg 52: Provide materials for the children to role play a beauty salon, such as a mirror, age appropriate pictures from beauty magazines and clothing catalogs, and a drawer full of “primping” supplies. Teach children that ancient Egyptians thought beauty was very important and talk about the things that our society and theirs consider pretty.

**Blocks**, how to build a pyramid.
Pg 67: The teacher posts pictures from the book to give children examples.
Camila’s Lemonade Stand

The Story

Camila is at the fair and wants to ride the Ferris wheel. When she sees that it costs money to ride the Ferris wheel, she does not despair; rather, she determines a way to make the money that she needs. Through a variety of obstacles and events, Camila continues to problem solve, building her business from a simple lemonade stand to three businesses in one.

This story about entrepreneurship is one of the few books on the topic suitable for preschool and primary age children. There are many useful lessons that can be discussed with children, from problem solving and overcoming obstacles to being resourceful and valuing teamwork. Included at the back of this book are several great discussion prompts for use with young children.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This is a great story about entrepreneurship, and it is presented in a way that very young children can understand. It begins with a common problem of wanting something (in this case, a ride on a Ferris wheel) that is not immediately available. Children will be able to identify with the problems presented, as well as the solutions shared, as this delightful group of multicultural children work together. The text is very simple, as are the pictures, which allows the reader/listener to focus on the problems in the story.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

There are many layers to this story. On the surface, it may appear very simple, due to the clean illustrations and few words on each page. However, there are many wonderful ways to explore this story across preschool and primary content areas. Multiple readings will allow children to delve further into the story.

Literacy: Look for opportunities every few pages for children to notice possible problems and predict what could happen. Confirm the children’s predictions or discuss the resolutions presented in the story. Encourage children to discuss why Camila’s solutions worked and what other solutions also could have been possible. Draw children’s attention to Itsy, Camila’s guide, and how it helps her find answers to her problems.

Art: Have children paint with liquid watercolor paint, overlapping colors so that they blend together. Allow the paint to dry. Use a small brush or eyedropper to apply small dots of lemon juice on the painting. Allow it to sit for a few minutes, and then dab with a tissue. The citric acid will lighten, or bleach out, the color underneath it. Be sure to supervise younger children carefully so that they do not get any lemon juice on their clothes or in their eyes.
More Classroom Strategies for *Camila’s Lemonade Stand*

**Social and Emotional:** There are many different social and emotional concepts in this story, including perseverance, resourcefulness, and being part of a team. Guide the children in a discussion of how each of these is demonstrated in the story, and then ask children how they could apply these same concepts in their everyday lives.

**Dramatic Play:** Turn the dramatic play center into a lemonade or Kool Aide stand. Encourage children to determine how to decorate the stand, who could help, any other items that could be sold, and the price for each thing. Children can then take on the different roles presented in the story.
Cheers for a Dozen Ears

Author: Felicia Sanzari Chernesky
Illustrator: Susan Swan
Publisher: Albert Whitman & Co.
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9780807511305
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade
Reviewer: Amelia Hewitt, Ed.D.

The Story
The story is about two children who visit a Farmer's Market. The children help their mother count the vegetables and fruits that they are planning to buy.

About the Reviewer
Amelia Hewitt, Ed.D., is an Associate Professor of Teacher Education at the University of Houston-Downtown in Houston, Texas. She holds an Ed.D. in early childhood Curriculum and Instruction. Her primary area of interest is addressing the needs of the whole child.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
The illustrations are very colorful and represent real vegetables! There is minimal print on each page, and the words fit well with the illustrations.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Teachers could create a rhyming game, using the rhymes found in the book. Each time that a rhyme is heard, the student can hold up a vegetable from the garden (real vegetable or paper veggies/vegetable pictures can be used).

The story could easily be used to have children practice counting vegetables. Teachers could bring in real vegetables, and, much like the children in the book, the students could count the vegetables.

For older students, the teacher could have the children create their own vegetable garden, using recyclables to form the veggies. The students can write a describing paragraph or some sentences about the vegetables found in their garden.

Concepts in the Book
- Rhyme
- Vocabulary: patterns, art lines (color, texture)
- Groups/sets and number concepts
- Counting
- Vegetables and fruits

This book can be most effectively used...
- As a read-aloud! It has a rhyming pattern that creates rhythm as the story is read.
- For focusing children’s attention on particular concepts and skills. The vocabulary and the illustrations are rich and can be used easily to prompt discussion.
**Cinderelephant**

**Author:** Emma Dodd  
**Illustrator:** Emma Dodd  
**Publisher:** Arthur A. Levine Books  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Pages:** 32  
**Ages:** Kindergarten-2nd grade  
**Reviewer:** Dianne H. Thomas

**The Story**

Cinderelephant lives with her cousins, the Warty Sisters, who, true to their name, are mean to her and force her to do all of the cleaning and housework. Plus, they have rude, ugly manners! Of course, when an invitation to the ball at the palace comes in the mail, they tell her that she can’t attend and that no one would want to dance with her anyway! After they leave for the ball, a Fairy Godmouse appears and, with a flick of his magic tail, he puts her in a fancy pink dress and pretty stilettos. Off she goes in her limo to the ball. True to the original fairy tale, she must be home by midnight and, when she dashes out of the palace, she loses a shoe. Prince Trunky searches the kingdom, looking for the person who lost the shoe that is too big for anybody else who tries it on.

**Concepts in the Book**
- Everyone counts  
- Size and shape do not matter  
- Each person is beautiful  
- All children are special

**Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book**

Cinderelephant is a retelling of the fairy tale Cinderella, and it has an unusual twist. The main characters are elephants! The storyline is basically the same, but the cousins (instead of stepsisters) are wart hogs, the fairy godmother is a mouse, and Cinderella and the prince are both elephants. I recommend this book for use with young children because it allows the children to compare various forms of the same fairy tale.

**About the Reviewer**

Dianne is the Literacy Coordinator for Clarksdale Municipal Schools. She has been a professor at Delta State University and taught school children for nineteen years.

**Classroom Strategies and Ideas**

**Art**  
**Ages:** Kindergarten and First Grade: Students create a magic wand as a prompt for reader’s theater, or for role playing Cinderelephant or another version of the fairy tale. The teacher provides a variety of craft materials for students to use. Magic wands might have pompons, tulle puffs, stars (plastic, shaped stickers, or craft foam, glow in the dark, sheriff’s badges, or another type of specialty star), and magical tips.

**English/Language Arts**  
**Ages:** Kindergarten- 2nd Grade: Children should read or listen to various fairy tale story books that use the Cinderella story, including Cinderelephant. Some examples that have unique twists are the following: Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China by Ai-Ling Louie and Adelita by Tomie dePaola, Bubba, The Cowboy Prince by Helen Ketterman, and Cindy Ellen: A Wild Western Cinderella by Susan Lowell. After reading each, use a two or three circle Venn diagram to compare and contrast the similarities and differences found in the fairy tales.

Next, students can write and/or draw their comparisons to form a written piece or, for younger children, an illustration to which the children’s own dictations can be added at the bottom. This writing assignment may be undertaken independently or as a shared writing/drawing activity.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies for *Cinderelephant*

**Talking Points:** Why would authors change the characters from the original version? How are the characters from the different books alike? How are they different? Which Cinderella or prince character would you prefer to be? What would cause some people to treat others unkindly?

**Ages:** First and Second Grades: Create reader’s theater from using a few versions of Cinderella (see examples above) and allow the children to choose the characters that they want to play. Encourage the children to speak (read the text) the way they think that particular character would. For example, how would the Warty sisters sound as compared to the characters from Cindy Ellen? Add another level of excitement to this by including the use of puppets.

**Talking Points:** How does coming from different regions affect the way people speak, and why is this so? Have students interview someone at home and ask about different ways people in their families say the same thing.

**Science**

**Ages:** Kindergarten- 2nd Grade: Have young children ‘invent’ a new mode of transportation for Cinderelephant to use. Students can draw the vehicle with its special characteristics or create a model/prototype from found materials that the teacher provides or that they have at home. This also offers a connection to art.

**Talking Points:** What would the children’s new vehicles look like? What special features and options would your vehicle have that make it unique? What type of fuel could it use? Would a vehicle for Cinderelephant look the same as or different from a vehicle for Cindy Ellen? Why? You also could create a science experiment around cinders. Begin by talking about what cinders are. As a visual aid, you could show a YouTube video of a campfire and the resulting cinders, and you could bring in cold cinders from a fire pit and allow the children to look at these under microscopes. Take children outside and watch what happens when the wind blows over cold, dry cinders. Have the children develop a hypothesis about what will happen if the cinders are mixed with various liquids, such as water. Once you complete the scientific process, have the children write about what happened.

**Talking Points:** Was our hypothesis proven or disproven? Why might Cinderelephant have a hard time staying clean if she had to clean up a fireplace with cinders in it? Research a few of the animals found in Cinderelephant, finding out the continent from which each comes. Create a diorama that depicts the animal in its natural habitat.

**Talking Points:** Is the book Cinderelephant realistic? How do you know that? Base your response on your research.

**Social Studies**

**Ages:** Kindergarten- 2nd Grade: After reading a few versions of Cinderella, locate the countries from which each fairy tale version originates on a world map. If possible, put a push pin or arrow down on each country. Conduct some age appropriate mapping activities, such as determining the distance between the countries, using topographical maps to determine landforms in the country, and discussing modes of transportation that would be appropriate for those landforms.

**Talking Points:** Why would some countries use more train travel and fewer separate vehicles? What are some differences in the landforms of these countries? Are those landforms like any found where we live? What appears the same or different about them? How does the country of origin affect aspects of society and culture, such as dress, language, educational system, and the predominant parenting practices?
The Story

Fairy tales have been told and retold for centuries because the storylines never really fade. Cari Meister’s *Cinderella in the City* is a remix of Cinderella that includes an old fairy tale and modern-day twists, such as cell phones, skateboards, and yoga. This book gives students an opportunity to discuss some of the central concepts of the book, without having to know what a “ball” is or believe that a girl could ride in a pumpkin. It is sometimes silly and delightful, but always wholesome. Cindy, who has a step family, is a likeable girl in a relatable situation. Hoping to enter a dance contest in order to be Edwin’s partner in the Dance Academy, she rides the subway, goes to the coffee shop, and rides a scooter to the contest.

Concepts in the Book
- Determination
- Friendship
- Problem solving

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This modern day adaptation of an old story is fresh, exciting, lighthearted, and humorous. Beginning readers will relate to the chic updates to the Cinderella story and the use of contemporary language. The fairy tale is easy to read, and the illustrations are stylish, original, and appealing.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas.

**Literacy:** For a comprehension/organizing activity, use a beginning, middle, and ending activity to teach sequential order. Have students use the beginning and middle as given in the book, asking the children to craft an alternative ending of their own. They should draw pictures or use pictures from magazines and staple the pages together to create a book.

**Art:** Children can make magic wands, using dowels, paint, glitter, and wooden stars, and then write about a wish on the star. The students also could take turns tapping each other and giving each other a task to perform (word recognition from the story, rhyming with sentences from the story, or counting the characters or stars that appear on a page).

**Creative Movement:** Have students perform the dances mentioned in the book: waltz, two-step, and tango.

**Dramatic play center:** Offer the children Cinderella clothes (ugly and pretty), royal clothes (capes, crowns), and lots of shoes. Have students use pretend cleaning supplies before the fairy godmother appears, and also plan on having an area for holding a "dance contest".

**Science:** For classification and sorting, tell students that your information has confirmed that Cinderella was actually wearing a different kind of shoe. The children can pretend that they are detectives and must sort through the shoe bucket (bucket full of tennis shoes, ballet slippers, sneakers, roller blades, sandals, boots, etc.) and find any without a match. They also could sort the shoes by size and type.

**Math:** Children can practice telling time in order to get Cinderella safely home before midnight. Have them use a clock and discuss what time she is met by her fairy godmother, what time she leaves for the ball, and what time the magic runs out. Allow the children to practice setting the time with the hands on the clock.

**Construction:** In the block area, children can look at pictures of real castles and try to replicate them by forming similar structures from the blocks.

**About the Reviewer**

Donna Gower is an Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

**This book can be most effectively used...**

- For teaching children about following a dream and overcoming any obstacles that could keep you from achieving it.
- As a read aloud for a small group or large group lesson plan, as a selection for a beginner reader, and as a format for helping students relate to each other through pretend play and creative dance.
Clara and Davie: The True Story of Young Clara Barton, Founder of the American Red Cross

Author: Patricia Polacco
Illustrator: Patricia Polacco
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 40
ISBN: 9780545354776
Reviewer: Kathleen A. Martin, Ph.D.

The Story

Clara is the youngest sibling, and her mother is in poor health. Her brother, Davie, becomes her best friend. He encourages her and protects her from children who tease her for her stuttering. Clara becomes adept at nursing sick farm animals back to health. When her brother, Davie, sustains life-threatening injuries as a result of a fall in the barn, Clara's love, commitment, and careful nursing are the factors that allow for his recovery.

Concepts in the Book
- Persistence in the face of significant personal obstacles
- Strength of family ties.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Polacco's latest work is a wonderful example of a picture book biography, and its subject is an important American heroine, Clara Barton. The masterful illustrations support the content and tone of the text. An "Author's Note" appears at the end and explains the family connection between Polacco and Barton.

About the Reviewer
Kathleen A. Martin, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emerita, University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Education, is a former children's and young adult librarian, preschool teacher, kindergarten teacher, and preschool director.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Polacco's latest work is a wonderful example of a picture book biography, and its subject is an important American heroine, Clara Barton. The masterful illustrations support the content and tone of the text. An "Author's Note" appears at the end and explains the family connection between Polacco and Barton.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

This is a wonderful tale of the strength of love and commitment. Primary school age children can enjoy the well-written text and lovely companion illustrations. Following a read aloud just for enjoyment, several curriculum connections are possible.

The first activity may simply be a discussion of the primary themes of the book: overcoming adversity, showing commitment, and the love shared between a brother and a sister. The discussion can begin with a general question such as, "How did this story make you feel?" Further questions can urge students to think about how the characters’ affection for each other helped them overcome their personal challenges.

(Grades 1-3)

This picture book biography makes a good transition between fiction and non-fiction. Although the book is non-fiction, the structure of the text is much like fiction. Therefore, the text can be used effectively to introduce activities that promote comprehension of non-fiction texts, while remaining comprehensible to students who are unfamiliar with the usual features of non-fiction.

Quick Write and Found Poem: This text elicits an emotional response that lends itself well to a quick write and found poem. Following a read aloud, students can be asked to write a quick statement about how the story made them feel. This type of writing is not judged for "correctness," so it may consist of sentences or simply some short phrases that record a feeling. The teacher can ask students who volunteer to share their statements. Then, the teacher asks students to underline the most powerful words and/or phrases in their written response. Those words and phrases are re-written below the original statement.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies for *Clara and Davie*

The resulting "poems" also can be shared with the whole class or with a partner or a few other children. This type of activity makes an excellent introduction to learning how to craft a summary.

*(Grades 2-3)*

**Mentor Text for Biography Genre:** The text demonstrates many of the usual characteristics of a biography: written by someone other than the subject, information about birth, significant contributions of the subject, obstacles the subject needed to overcome, people who influenced the subject, etc.

After a read aloud, students can be asked to list the characteristics as the teacher develops an anchor chart. This chart can remain visible in the classroom for students to reference. The children can identify how Polacco communicated these ideas, including the language she used in order to make the ideas interesting and the examples she selected to make the subjects come alive. These examples also can be charted. Then, the students can be invited to use these characteristics of a biography and any writing strategies that they have identified as they develop their own biographies of a heroine or of a hero.
The Story
As Lilly and Joe begin to do research for a paper on the Middle Ages, they are transformed back in time and can experience the Middle Ages through the eyes of a red dragon. The children see peasants, forests, small and larger villages, and a harbor with traders and Vikings. They come across beautiful churches that are made of stone and full of fine carvings. Their adventure ends at a castle where a knight lives. He has been taking all of the peasants’ money without offering any protection in return. Fortunately, the peasants and the dragon win out against the knight and regain possession of their land!

Concepts in the Book
- The Middle Ages
- Knights, peasants, and the Vikings
- Medieval castles and churches

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
It is a wonderful fantasy story that also offers children a useful history lesson.

About the Reviewer
Sandy Show has taught and worked in the early childhood field for over 25 years, and she is now the Supervisor of School Readiness with Hillsborough County Schools, Tampa, Florida.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Art: The children can draw pictures of a medieval town, complete with castles, churches, and Viking ships. Using construction paper, the children also can design their own knight costumes.

The children can make some castles out of cardboard boxes and use their creations for acting out the story. Also, you can expand the story with a Harbor where children can exchange their wares.

Vocabulary development: Help the children understand and define the less familiar words from the book.
Dinosaur Christmas

Author: Jerry Pallotta
Illustrator: Howard McWilliam
Publisher: Scholastic
Year of Publication: 2013
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9780545433600
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade
Reviewer: Alayne Zimmerly

The Story

Jilly writes a letter to Santa asking a question: “What did you use to pull your sleigh before you had reindeer?” Santa reminisces about the “good old days” before he used reindeer to pull his sleigh. His memories include the pros and cons of the various types of dinosaur that he used. The often hilarious descriptions of each type fill his memory. For example, “Triceratops were steady and ready, but a bit slow.” Evidently, he learned a lot by trial and error. As the book nears its closing, Santa appears in a tack room labeled with various dinosaur names. He says, “Today the dinosaurs are gone. Now the reindeer are my helpers.” On the final page, the illustrator depicts a child’s dream, perhaps, showing Santa and all of the animals used to pull his sleigh over the years. Santa Claus tells us, “Sometimes, I miss the good old days.”

Concepts in the Book
- Christmas
- Dinosaurs

About the Reviewer
Alayne Zimmerly is an Associate Professor at the Monticello School of Education, University of Arkansas.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
Jerry Palotta’s written words combined with the illustrations by McWilliam should be a joy to share with any child. The two themes, Christmas and dinosaurs, are always engaging to young children.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Because this is a book with two distinct themes (Christmas and dinosaurs) and a few other concepts, I feel that it should be used as a read-aloud that allows children to enjoy the language and the illustrations.

Sounds of language are important to any beginning reader, and this book can certainly support language development and listening skills.

The book also could be used to promote imagination and creativity. What if Santa really had dinosaurs pulling his sleigh? How might that work for Santa? What else could he have used? What might happen if Santa used other animals? Robots?

An adventurous teacher could use this book as the foundation for a student-directed learning experience. Allow the children to develop their own ideas of Santa’s problem-solving skills. The lesson also could be expanded and used for solving other creative or real world problems.

This book can be most effectively used...
- As a read-aloud or shared reading.
- When introduced with either a Christmas or a dinosaur thematic unit.
- As a resource in the reading center at any time.
Discover More: Birds

Author: Penelope Arlon and Tory Gordon-Harris
Illustrator: Various photos
Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 80
ISBN: 9780545667739
Ages: Pre-K-3rd grade
Reviewer: Mary Howard

The Story

_Discover More: Birds_ provides a colorful, encyclopedic look at the species. Beginning with what is a bird and examining such features as colors, feathers, beaks, feet, flying, and making a nest, this book provides talking points and encourages further exploration. Topics introduced will engage a young child’s interest and allow opportunity to discover different types of birds and aspects of a bird’s life. With great pictures and the use of simple inquiries such as “Can you tell what each type of feather is used for?”, this book can help lead to more in-depth study, conversations, and projects for the young bird watcher. The book includes a nice glossary to introduce new words, and a simple index can be used to introduce concepts and promote the development of early research type skills. Also, it includes a digital companion for on-line exploration and features opportunities for listening to bird calls and ideas for activities.

Concepts in the Book
- Ecology: birds and their environment
- Diversity: concept of all birds not the same
- Survival of a species: what birds need to live in the world

About the Reviewer
Mary is an associate director with the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky. Her passion is promoting quality in early care and education.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
Nice photography promotes colorful and interesting pages. The book could be used with younger children to look at pictures and begin dialogue about birds. Primary school age children could use it for their first research type projects.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Pre-K: The book could be added to the preschool library, and, as children look at the pages on their own, the teacher can sit down and talk further about birds. "Have you seen a nest in the yard?" and other prompts could be used to foster conversation among the children.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade: Chapters of the book can be shared separately with children in a small group lesson. For instance, focusing on the “birds of prey” section, the teacher could share pictures and talk about what different types of birds eat and how they get their food.

2nd and 3rd grade: The teacher could use this selection to introduce primary school age children to some of the new words found in the glossary. Also, it could be useful to share at the beginning of small research projects. Use as a beginning point for children’s research into nest building, how birds fly, etc. Online support can help lead to further exploration and mini research projects for children to undertake in small groups.

This book can be most effectively used...
- When shared with primary school aged children in a small group environment as support for lesson plans focusing on birds.
- As a read aloud in the library for children from pre-k through third grade.
- In one-on-one reading with the teacher.
Discover More: Fantastic Frogs

Author: Penelope Arlon
Publisher: Scholastic
Pages: 32
Ages: Pre-K-2nd grade

The Story

*Fantastic Frogs* is a non-fiction book designed to teach young children important information about frogs. The author offers readers useful details about frogs, their life cycle, their habitat and eating habits, and also suggests some reasons why frogs are in trouble. Additional information is included that can extend children's learning and assess their understanding.

About the Reviewer

Patti Pelletier, Ed.D., is the Academic Chair of the Educational Studies Department for Kaplan University and has over thirty years of experience in the field of early childhood education.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

I would recommend using this book as the focus of a unit of study for young children. Children can use all of their senses as they study frogs and focus on increasing skills in multiple domains.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

**Literacy Center:** (Language and Phonological Awareness Teaching Strategy)

**You will need:** Card Stock, Markers, Scissors

**Directions:** Write each new word from the glossary on the cardstock and cut each word out. Place each word card on your word wall or pocket chart. Have your students clap out the syllables in each of the new words. For example, the word predator has three claps, and hence three syllables. The clapping gives children a sensory experience through which they can learn the new words, and they also are using a tactile and auditory activity that allows them to become familiar with the parts/units of the word. In short, it reinforces early literacy skills in young children.

**Manipulative/Math Center:** Fine Motor, Early Literacy, Social/Emotional, and Language Development Teaching Strategy

**You will need:** Egg Cartons, Small tongs, Rubber/plastic miniature frogs (You can buy these from early childhood distributors like Discount School Supply, and also from chain stores like Kmart and Walmart).

This book can be most effectively used...

- As an addition to a science center or an early childhood library, fostering good lesson planning and teaching across the curriculum.
- To increase fine motor skills by painting the frogs in the book on canvas, or enhance gross motor abilities and practice turn taking by playing leapfrog on the playground.
More Classroom Strategies for *Fantastic Frogs*

**Directions:** Set up a table with multiple types of rubber/plastic frogs (the more frogs, the better). Allow the children to play with the frogs and describe them. Ask the children as they are playing if they can sort the frogs by their characteristics. The students can enhance their fine motor skills by using the tongs to pick up any frog and place it in the egg carton, and the dozen holes provide a nice nesting spot for each type of frog. From working in groups such as this, the children can build their social/emotional competencies and their language skills. Early literacy skills are acquired through the children’s developing comparison skills.

**Large Group Area and Creative Movement**

**You will need:** A large space to ensure each child’s safety and personal space to move about, CD Player, CD’s with music appropriate for young children (You could use “Under the Sea” from Disney’s Little Mermaid or musical selections from Finding Nemo.)

**Directions:** After reading about metamorphosis, turn on some music and invite the children to move like a tadpole or jump like a frog. Ask the children to think about how they would move in the water with a tail and no legs. Use music that is slow and also fast. You can develop children’s listening skills by providing a few fun rules. For example, when the music is slow, please swim like tadpoles, using just your tail to help you move through the water. If the music is fast, you can jump quickly with your strong legs to hop away from any danger. As an extension of this activity, you can use the words from the word wall and practice the meaning of each by moving creatively. Children can blink, croak, flick, glide, and swallow as they dance.

**Technology Center (Computer Literacy)**

**You will need:** Two computers, Internet connection, and the log in information from Fantastic Frogs

**Directions:** Log on to www.scholastic.com/discovermore/readers and enter the special code from your book. Have two children sit beside each other at each computer and invite the children to utilize their knowledge with the interactive quiz, videos, and frog activities. By using technology and working cooperatively to assess their skills, children also can increase their emotional/social competency.
Discover More: Weather

Author: Penelope Arlon and Tory Gordon Harris
Publisher: Scholastic
Pages: 80
Ages: 3rd grade

Year of Publication: 2013
ISBN: 9780545505161
Reviewer: John Sutterby

The Story
It is a non-fiction science book focusing on the weather. It covers an assortment of weather concepts, such as air movement, extreme weather like hurricanes and droughts, and also some discussion of how we learn about weather through satellites and other forms of technology. Also, it has a link to an online text that has videos and multiple choice questions.

Concepts in the Book
- Weather as a science topic
- Air movement
- Features a lot of weather-related vocabulary

About the Reviewer
John Sutterby is an Associate Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His teaching experience and research reflect an interest in early childhood play experiences and bilingual education.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
The information shared in this non-fiction selection appears to be correct, and the photographs are attractive.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
I would put it in the classroom library. It is attractive enough to be picked up on its own. I am not sure if I would use it as a read aloud, though, as it is more like a reference book.

The online 'text' was an interesting attempt at creating a digital text, but, apart from a chance to view some videos, it did not appear particularly useful.

This book can be most effectively used...
- In a science center.
- If teaching a unit on weather.
- As a reference that could help the children.
Freda Says Please

Author: Stuart J. Murphy
Illustrator: Tim Jones
Publisher: Charlesbridge
Year of Publication: 2013
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9781580894746
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade
Reviewer: Heidi Fletcher

The Story

Mr. Murphy encourages children to say ‘please’ if they are asking for something, to say ‘thank you’ if someone does something nice for you, and to use ‘you're welcome’ if someone thanks you. It is important that young children understand the primacy of polite manners from a young age.

Concepts in the Book
- Social skills
- Manners and politeness
- Sharing

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Mr. Murphy's book is a wonderful addition to a preschool or primary school social skills unit. Teaching children that manners are important from a young age is necessary in the daily curriculum.

About the Reviewer

Heidi Fletcher has taught two-year-old children for fifteen years and is currently a teacher at First Christian Preschool in Clearwater, Florida. Also, she is enrolled in graduate school and plans on finishing her Master's in Early Childhood Education in October 2014.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

At the end of the book, Mr. Murphy has questions that teachers could use to facilitate the learning activity during circle/group time. For example, Mr. Murphy suggests acting out a play scenario so that the children can better understand how to use ‘please’, ‘thank you’, and ‘you're welcome’. A puppet show would be another way to incorporate polite manners and social skills into the curriculum.

This book can be most effectively used...
- At circle time when talking about manners, social skills, and the importance of being polite.
Get the Giggles: A First Joke Book

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.  
Illustrator: Bronwen Davies  
Pages: 10  
Year of Publication: 2014  
Ages: Kindergarten & 1st grade  
ISBN: 9780545540872  
Reviewer: Stephanie White

The Story
This is a very simple and well-humored introduction to jokes for young children.

Concepts in the Book
- Question and answer format
- Punctuation usage
- Grammar and types of sentences

About the Reviewer
Stephanie White teaches Children’s Literature and Language Arts Methods at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
Young children love to tell jokes and create their own jokes to share. Get the Giggles provides a clear model for children's own jokes.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Because of the question and answer format of the text, it is a wonderful resource for showcasing punctuation and how we indicate questions and statements through the forms of punctuation used in sentences. Jokes also provide a compact vehicle for reading and prompt a fun, silly response from others. This might provide just the motivation for a beginning reader!

This book can be most effectively used...
- By showcasing a joke each day during your morning meeting. You could expose children to the question and answer format of the jokes and familiarize youngsters with the forms of punctuation used in an assortment of sentence types.
Grandma’s Jewelry Box

**Author:** Cindy Bandy O’Brien

**Illustrator:** Headline Kids

**Publisher:** Headline Kids Educational Series

**Year of Publication:** 2013

**Pages:** 32

**Ages:** Kindergarten-1st grade

**ISBN:** 9780938467700

**Reviewer:** Joselina Reis

---

**The Story**

*Grandma’s Jewelry Box* brings together the young and old generations in a journey through life, family, and friendship.

---

**About the Reviewer**

A journalist at a community newspaper in Florida, Joselina Reis was formerly a preschool teacher for six years.

---

**Concepts in the Book**

- Rhyme
- Plural forms (grammar and spelling)
- Recycling
- Friendship
- Pride

---

**Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book**

The pictures appear very real, and the story fosters emotion, pleasure, and bonding between the young and old generations.

---

**Classroom Strategies and Ideas**

I would ask the children to interview their grandparents and bring the answers to share during show and tell at school. This can be a *circle time* activity. Children need only ask grandparents some questions and share their answers with their friends in class. Children from kindergarten and the other primary grades can do this, and the teacher can provide a questionnaire as a support for the youngsters. This can help children to learn new words, improve their vocabulary and their writing, appreciate spending time with family, and practice emotional, social, and speaking competencies by presenting their findings to other young children.

---

**This book can be most effectively used...**

- To help young children to understand family connections and appreciate the love shared in a family.
Great Choice, Camille!

Author: Stuart J. Murphy
Illustrator: Tim Jones
Publisher: Charlesbridge
Year of Publication: 2013
ISBN: 9781580894760
Ages: Pre-K & Kindergarten
Reviewer: Lisa Dolensky

The Story

The main preschool animal character, Camille, feels overwhelmed by the project choices given at school. Her teacher, Miss Cathy, helps her learn that she can't do everything and must choose more confidently. The teacher character helps Camille know how to ask questions and determine solutions, including how to form alternate plans. She also helps Camille understand the importance of sometimes having to change your choice, due to time constraints and the feelings or needs of others involved and affected. Camille learns how it sometimes can cost you if you take too long to make your decision. Other characters make their own choices and show good examples of affirming friendship through their manners and sayings like, "Great choice!".

Concepts in the Book
- Emotional decision making skills
- Safety
- Social skills

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This book is developmentally appropriate to use with children from the ages of three to five years, promoting emotional skills and fostering useful social skills among preschool children. For example, it can help you in any attempts to model getting along with others and also making choices. In fact, it's part of an "I See, I Learn" TM series that engages young children as they develop school readiness and daily life interaction skill sets.

About the Reviewer

Lisa Dolensky is a faculty member at The Capitol School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Rather than just sticking to teacher directed project examples, as exemplified by the teacher character known as Miss Cathy, the read aloud also can be used at Circle Time to prompt young children to list potential themes that they would like to study during the school year. Teachers could follow up by having the children vote on the thematic units listed, graphing the results for each in order to determine priority for student focused lesson plans. Friends also could be invited to vote on center choices and visually graph those choices. For younger children, you can try using a visual choice chart. Furthermore, the story can offer children a useful example of how to figure out your favorite things, and of how to form a "Plan B" when your "Plan A" option gets selected by someone else.

The story identifies the colors yellow, green and red. These are also colors used on traffic lights, and that can connect with a personal direction theme, "Which choice am I making, and where might that choice take me? Is there a better choice? Is there more than one way to reach my goal?" The plant pot colors of red, yellow, and green, like traffic lights, can remind children of how to slow down and make a better plan: "Stop to think about what you're doing. Proceed with caution if needed. And, of course, 'Go for the goal!'".

This book can be most effectively used...
- For modeling sharing and taking turns at the beginning of the school year, and also at any period that the class as a whole needs to get on board with this type of atmosphere.
- In connection to your other thematic units, and it could be a good reminder if a friend is having a tough choice day.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies for Great Choice, Camille!

You can have the children share suggestions for how to accomplish a particular goal, also practicing ordinal number skills along with the foundations for future expository writing, as you reinforce following 1-2-3 step directions and how to form a list.

Dig a little deeper to find solutions for how Camille might make a red or green pot that also reflects her favorite color, yellow. Laminate red and green pot cut-outs and offer children a tray full of an assortment of multi-colored embellishments, including yellow pom-poms, lace, yarn, and tangram manipulatives. Allow students to add their favorite colors of trimmings onto the pot cut-outs. Tongs may be used to move the trimmings around and foster better fine motor practice.

Prepare "Either/Or" choice centers to teach opposites: ie. Draw with dry-erase OR erase a mini chalkboard. Drop items in the water and see if they sink OR float, according to children's predictions, etc.

Finally, this would be a great selection for teaching children about directions, positional words, communities, and map making during a transportation unit, as the inner pages look like a detailed map. You also could use the map on the pages as an example of how to make a visual schedule/picture chart of your daily classroom routine.
The Story
The story begins in the fall and takes the reader on a journey through the other three seasons, finishing with summer. A panda bear named Koo is the guide that experiences every magical part of each season.

Concepts in the Book
- Poetry, specifically the Haiku form
- Changing seasons
- Alphabetic order

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
The descriptive text and the beautiful illustrations will draw young children into the story. Children also will be captivated by the main character, the panda bear named Koo.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Preschool teachers can use the book as a part of their curriculum by introducing the story during Circle Time after the children have gone on a nature walk and collected items that relate to the particular season of the year that they are studying.

As a group, you can have the children discuss the changing season outside and the things that they discovered. Once you have finished that, share the story Hi, Koo! with the class. The children could then be invited to visit the Art Center and use the items from their nature walk to create a new experience for Koo to have during that particular season of the year. The children could also be helped to come up with words that describe that experience at the Writing Center.

Another strategy that could be used with preschoolers would be to develop the concept of patterning. This can be done by focusing on the alphabet letters that are presented in order throughout the story.

Another way teachers can incorporate this book into their curriculum for preschool children would be to plan a unit on panda bears for science. The materials that the children would need most likely would consist of books and pictures of panda bears in their natural environment. Real bamboo leaves that panda bears eat could be brought in for the young children to feel and touch.
**Hiding Phil**

**Author:** Eric Barclay  
**Illustrator:** Eric Barclay  
**Publisher:** Scholastic Press  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Pages:** 32  
**Ages:** Pre-K-1st grade  
**ISBN:** 9780545464772  
**Reviewer:** Heidi Maier

---

**The Story**

After three children discover Phil, the elephant, at a bus stop, they try many different ways of hiding Phil from their parents.

**Concepts in the Book**

- Alphabet and print awareness

---

**About the Reviewer**

Heidi Maier, Ed.D., is Associate Professor and Program Manager for Teacher Education at the College of Central Florida.

**Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book**

Emergent and prereaders will engage with the illustrations, and the simplistic text encourages beginning readers. Children in later "K" and first grade can focus on punctuation marks, which are emphasized by the simplistic text.

---

**Classroom Strategies and Ideas**

**Activities for Pre-K Children**

During interactive read alouds, the students will respond with fluency: "PHIL!" "Is that an elephant?"

**Dramatic Play:** Phil and the Children, encouraging creative places to hide.

**Beginning Readers:** A search for letters frequently found in the book can be implemented, and then letters can be hid, like Phil hid. Children will give clues.

---

**This book can be most effectively used...**

- For interactive read alouds with a group of young children, and also for use as an instructional text for beginning readers.
Hot Rod Hamster: Monster Truck Mania

Author: Cynthia Lord
Illustrator: Derek Anderson
Publisher: Scholastic
Year of Publication: 2014
ISBN: 9780545462617
Reviewer: Jeanetta G. Riley
Pages: 40
Ages: Kindergarten-1st grade

The Story

Fair Day brings the fun of the Monster Truck Show. As they are waiting for the show to begin, Hamster and his friends try many rides as they search for the BEST one. Also, there is COTTON CANDY to enjoy. But, when Fearless Franco, a monster truck driver, breaks his glasses, Hamster and friends step in to take Franco’s place and save the day. After the show, they agree that the monster truck was the BEST ride of all. And, with the roll of special tickets as a ‘thank you’, they can buy everyone treats, including COTTON CANDY!

Concepts in the Book
 Rhyming words
 Repetitive words
 Friends cooperating
 Traditional community events

About the Reviewer
Jeanetta G. Riley is an Associate Professor in the Early Childhood and Elementary Education Department at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
This is an engaging book because of its fun storyline, its large, colorful, enticing illustrations of the animal characters at the fair, and the use of a question on several pages that draws children into the story by asking them what they would choose if they were at the fair. Children who have attended fairs, amusement parks, or monster truck rallies will be able to relate story events to their own personal experiences.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
The book will make a great read aloud for preschool through first-grade children. The text and the detailed illustrations lend themselves to discussion of new vocabulary, from the names of the types of boats in the Boat Ride to the adjectives describing the cups in the Teacup Ride.

Help children find the rhyming words that appear throughout the book. Ask them to think of other words that rhyme with those found in the book.

Invite children to answer the question of “What would you choose?” that is included on several pages of the book (For example, children can choose which car they would ride for the Dodge Car Ride, and which boat they would ride for the Boat Ride). Extend the conversation by asking why they would make that particular choice.

The conversation can be further extended by using a graphing activity. For children who have an initial understanding of graphs from using actual objects, the next step is often pictographs. With the children, select a page that asks each youngster to make a choice. Ask the children to draw their choice as a picture, using the drawings to help the children form a pictograph. Some children may be ready to use the data from the pictograph to create a bar graph on large paper.

This book can be most effectively used...
• As a fun read-aloud; in a reading center so that young children can take a closer look at the illustrations, and so that older children can reread the text.
• For lessons in which you are emphasizing rhyming words; to help children identify story elements of character, setting, and plot sequence; and, of course, when the fair is “in town”!

Groups of children may want to create a representation of a fair or other traditional community event. They can work together to decide what they want to include before drawing their ideas as a blueprint. Finally, the children can use craft items, clay, boxes, blocks, and sundry odds and ends to build it.
**Insects: Photo Fact Collection**

**Author:** Jennifer Gresham  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Publisher:** Kidsbooks  
**ISBN:** 9781588657213  
**Pages:** 32  
**Reviewer:** Cecilia Pittman  
**Ages:** Pre-K-3rd grade

**The Story**

Full of detailed photographs, this selection offers children a fact-filled collection of insects in their natural habits and environments. The beautiful illustrations and simple text are used to introduce children to the wonderful world of INSECTS!

**Concepts in the Book**

- Life cycles
- Colors
- Biology
- Science
- Math

**Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book**

While this book might not be read to very young children in its entirety, Insects lends itself to rich “book talking” because of the beautiful illustrations and useful captions. Young children would enjoy seeing the photographs of each insect up close as they are engaged in a rich discussion.

**About the Reviewer**

Cecilia Pittman is a Child Development Instructor at Oklahoma City Community College.

**Classroom Strategies and Ideas**

Insects could be an excellent addition to the science center in any preschool or primary classroom during a study of insects, plants, living environments, etc. Children could have “hands-on” access to this book as a reference tool while studying insects in their classroom and outdoor environment. Using the book as a reference tool in the classroom would enhance children’s ability to see, up close and personal, those insects that they might not normally be able to see in their outdoor environment.

This book also lends itself to fostering a language-rich environment within the classroom, either through teacher modeling or conversations shared between the children. Because of the gorgeous, true-to-life photographs, children will have the opportunity to discuss and explore the incredible world of insects.

The excellent, yet simple glossary and index included in the final section of the book can afford teachers a useful resource for introducing children to these tools in a fun and easy manner.

**This book can be most effectively used...**

- For whole-class instruction as the teacher facilitates discussions about the various insects and related subjects that appear within the book.
Jacob’s New Dress

Author: Sara and Ian Hoffman
Illustrator: Chris Case
Publisher: Albert Whitman & Co.
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9780807563731
Ages: Infants/Toddler-Kindergarten
Reviewer: Beverly Clayton Oglesby

The Story

This story is about a little boy that likes to play in the dress-up center more than any other center. He uses his imagination to pretend to be any character he pleases; however, he really likes to dress up in dresses. He has a friend who picks on him about dressing in dresses, but he continues to wear dresses anyway. One day, he takes it upon himself to make a dress at home and asks his mother if he can wear it to school. Although Mother is hesitant, she allows him to wear it to school. His friend, Emily, likes the dress, but Christopher dislikes it very much. Later on, his mother helps him make a purple dress, which he shows to his father and says that he plans on wearing it to school. His father asks him if he is sure about that plan, and he says “yes”. He wears it for Show and Tell and is yelled at on the playground by Christopher, but continues to play anyway. Jacob feels proud of his dress, and nothing can keep him from wearing it, even another child’s negative comments.

Concepts in the Book
- Self-confidence
- Friendship
- Respect
- Acceptance and love
- Individualism

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This story can teach young children how to be confident with who you are and what you like, and also not to fear what others think of you.

About the Reviewer

A Past Southern Early Childhood Association President and a retired Early Childhood Educator, Beverly Clayton Oglesby taught for thirty-eight years at S. Bryan Jennings Elementary School.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Along with this selection, you can read the story William’s Doll. Have the children share their feelings and opinions about each story.

As a follow-up to sharing Jacob’s New Dress with the children, have a Costume Day. During the beginning of the class at Circle Time, have each of the children share why he or she chose that particular costume to wear; ask the child if there is a costume that he or she would or wouldn’t like to wear and why. Students also can draw a picture of another child’s costume that is their favorite.

This book can be most effectively used...
- To show students how important it is not to allow someone else to change your mind, and it can help the children see that being different is not a bad thing.
- It also teaches that parents’ acceptance of their children is important. It shares the useful lesson that, although not everyone will always like what you do or how you think, you can stand firm on how you feel about yourself.
King of the Zoo

Author: Erica S. Perl
Illustrator: Jackie Urbanovic
Publisher: Orchard Books
Year of Publication: 2013
ISBN: 9780545461825
Reviewer: Cheryl D. Coffman, Ed.D.

The Story

The scene is a zoo named, 'King of the Zoo', and the main character is Carlos, a chameleon. He has two industrious lizard sidekicks that enjoy the unfolding drama that they have created at the zoo. Feeling that he is the true 'King of the Zoo', Carlos finds the new signs identifying the other animals as king upsetting. He screams and yells that, "The King of the Zoo is ME, that's who." The illustrator skillfully portrays Carlos during his rant, using the various colors of the animals, from plain brown to covered with giraffe spots and tiger stripes. Carlos turns green with envy, red with rage, and purple with kingly pride that fades into the blue of despondency, ultimately turning yellow from the fear that maybe he isn't a king anymore. A girl stops to view his cage. She says, 'He's my favorite', and 'Doesn't he rule!' Feeling delighted, Carlos turns into his usual colorful, prideful self.

Concepts in the Book
- Misunderstanding
- Fear
- Sadness
- Pride and envy
- Anger
- Bullying
- Relational skills

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Children typically relate well to good literature. At times when they feel as if their emotions are out of control, or if they don't understand the circumstances that have made them mad or sad, a good story of a character resolving anger can be helpful. A child may relate to one of the animals that is being yelled at by Carlos, and the child may recall having similar emotions of feeling hurt or confused. This selection is one that a teacher can use repeatedly in order to help a child work through the emotions of misunderstanding, fear, and anger. Young preschool children will enjoy the colorful, fanciful animals that the illustrator has skillfully created on the pages. Also, the illustrator has discreetly placed the visiting young girl and her grandmother from the first page throughout the book, and youngsters can be invited to find the lizard sidekicks that are pictured in various locations on each page.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Having a copy of this children's book available in an early childhood classroom, either for use by the teaching staff or on a shelf in the children's library area, would be highly recommended. If there has been a relational misunderstanding between children, sharing this story with the affected children may offer a level of comfort and/or understanding of an out-of-control situation. On many occasions, young children react as Carlos did, from a lack of information and a misunderstanding of the facts. These reactions may be a form of bullying, and others can be hurt and offended by the ranting, the rage, and the words used. This story, as light and comical as it appears from a light reading, has a useful message for children and their parents and educators.
Little Melba and Her Big Trombone

Author: Katheryn Russell-Brown
Illustrator: Frank Morrison
Publisher: Lee and Low Books
Year of Publication: 2014
ISBN: 9781600608988
Pages: 40
Ages: Pre-K-2nd grade
Reviewer: Sabrina A. Brinson

The Story
Little Melba had music in her, and it sprang out in a burst of incredible talent! At just seven years of age, the little girl taught herself to play a great big instrument, and her keen ear and melodic tunes earned Melba a solo on a radio show at eight. When Melba and her family moved from Kansas City to Los Angeles, her teachers got a double surprise. She was musically talented and academically gifted, allowing her to skip from 6th to 8th grade. During her high school years, she excelled as the star of a famous music club, The Melodic Dots. Unfortunately, however, Melba experienced some grief because a few jealous boys called her names. But she found that she could release hurtful feelings through the joyful notes of her beloved trombone, ultimately allowing her to form her own musical compositions and arrangements on world-wide tours in notable bands as a master musician, while being in great demand by prominent musicians eager to play her music. Badabopdotdaaah!

Concepts in the Book
- Talent
- Rhythm
- Music and the names of instruments
- History
- Traveling
- Addressing biases like sexism

About the Reviewer
Sabrina A. Brinson, Ph.D., is a Diversity Fellow and Professor at Missouri State University. She is also the Founder and National Director of Boys Booked on Barbershops and Girls Booked on Beautyshops, which are community-based literacy programs that provide an assortment of high-interest, multicultural books for children to read in barbershops and beauty shops across the United States.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
I recommend Little Melba and Her Big Trombone because it is a fascinating story that is vividly enhanced with highly animated illustrations. As a result, the book is a tremendous asset for musical activities because instruments are featured so notably. The book can also be used to tap into students’ musical talents, strengths, aptitudes, and interests. Moreover, it provides students with amiable examples of the tenacity needed to overcome personal obstacles and accomplish your dreams.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
This book can be integrated into your music curriculum in order to enhance students’ cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

To illustrate, students can experience hands-on learning while exploring a cache of instruments like the trombone, flute, saxophone, violin, and kettle drums. The sensory experience can be enriched further with opportunities for student volunteers to try using their “listening ears” at musical arrangements.

The book can be used to integrate music and other content areas like writing and history. For example, motivational writing exercises can be tailored so as to encourage student-generated musical compositions.

It is important for students to learn about “more than a handful” of individuals from diverse populations who made outstanding contributions to history, and Melba Liston is a little known but enlightening example of a true pioneer because she was one of the first women to become a world-class trombone player, composer, and arranger.

This book can be most effectively used...
- To introduce students to the wonderful world of music, rhythm, and categories of instruments.
- To spark student engagement into the other major categories of instruments like bowed strings (e.g., violins, cellos, violas, and double basses) woodwind (e.g., flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons), percussion (e.g., kettle drums, tambourines, marimbas, and xylophones), keyboard (e.g., piano, celestas, organs, and harpsichords), and guitar (e.g., classical, bass, four-string, and six-string).

(continued on next page)
Incorporating this book into curriculum can yield a variety of developmental benefits because exposure to musical activities at a young age can help develop areas of the brain that are related to language and reasoning; students learn to think creatively and divergently; a study of music provides students with insight into other cultures, along with their own, which fosters cross cultural respect; and, musical explorations celebrate personal self-expressions that nurture self-love, self-worth, and self-confidence among students while sharpening fine motor skills.
Mighty Dads

Author: Joan Holub  
Illustrator: James Dean  
Publisher: Scholastic  
Year of Publication: 2014  
Pages: 40  
ISBN: 978054560985  
Ages: Infant/Toddler–1st grade  
Reviewer: Julie Bloss

The Story

This exciting, colorful story follows construction vehicle fathers through a day’s work on a project. The reader watches each vehicle “dig, crash, bang, and boom” while the sons get to look on and help. The beauty of this book is the relationships between the fathers and their children, the time that they spend together and how the sons model the work ethics of their fathers. The story closes with the fathers bragging about how proud they are of their sons and how they look forward to building something new together tomorrow.

Concepts in the Book
- Father/Son bonding (Children and Parents)
- Fun rhyming
- Examples of transportation vehicles
- Cooperation and working together

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

If you like Pete the Cat, you will immediately recognize that this is from the same illustrator. This colorful, fun story is an eye catcher that grabs the attention of any young reader! And don’t be fooled, little girls will love it just as much as the boys do!

About the Reviewer

Julie Bloss is principal of the Grove Early Childhood Center in Grove, OK. She has been recognized as a Nationally Distinguished Elementary School Principal.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

This is an enjoyable book to share with young children and offers many literacy opportunities.

Compare/Contrast: On each page, the father and son are shown doing the same work project but on a different scale. Have the students compare and contrast the pictures.

Names of Vehicles: Discuss the name of each construction vehicle and what it does. Follow up at your sand table or rug area with small construction vehicles.

Parent and Community Visitors: Invite parents and members of your community to come to your school and share their construction vehicles. Under close supervision, young children can tour them and talk to the drivers about their occupations and how they use the vehicles. Some schools call this “Touch a Truck” or “Careers on Wheels”.

Read and reenact: Read aloud and allow young children to dig, scoop, drive, and dump to get the wiggles out! Great on a rainy recess day!

This book can be most effectively used...
- As an amazing way to kick off a unit about Transportation.
- As a great addition to any classrooms that recognize Father’s Day.
Nasreddine

Author: Odile Weulersse
Illustrator: Rebecca Dautremer
Publisher: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Year of Publication: 2013
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9780802854162
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade
Reviewer: John Sutterby

The Story

The story is a retelling of the Aesop fable,” The Man, The Boy, and the Donkey”. The main character in the story is Nasreddine, who, according to the book, is a common story character in the Middle East. In this retelling, the boy feels embarrassed when people make fun of him and his father. He runs away and does not get to go to the market, and that is something that he usually enjoys. The father ignores the comments of the critics, and, eventually, the boy learns the useful lesson that, if he pays attention to the critics, he will never make anyone happy and will just make himself feel unhappy.

Concepts in the Book

- How your words can be hurtful to other people’s feelings
- Not listening to what others say if the suggestion is not helpful
- Making wise choices

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The story is a timeless one, and the illustrations are simple and attractive.

About the Reviewer

John Sutterby is an Associate Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His teaching experience and research reflect an interest in early childhood play experiences and bilingual education.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

The activity that I would plan for young children is finding several versions of the fable and having the children compare and contrast them (points of view, characters, illustrations, and outcomes).

This book can serve two useful purposes. Firstly, it introduces Middle Eastern culture into the early childhood classroom, and there are few illustrated children’s books that show people of Middle Eastern descent in a respectful way. Also, the story would make a good read aloud, allowing for discussion of why the boy does the things that he does and what advice the children could share to make the critics happy.
Naughty Kitty!

Author: Adam Stower  
Illustrator: Adam Stower  
Publisher: Orchard Books  
Year of Publication: 2014  
Pages: 33  
Ages: Pre-K-Kindergarten  
Reviewer: Jeonghee Choi

Concepts in the Book
- Mistaken identity and blaming the wrong person
- Cause and effect
- Children’s relationships to their cats (or another favorite pet)

The Story
Little Lily, who originally wanted a dog as a pet, instead receives an adorable kitten, which looks seemingly calm and docile. Unfortunately, whenever Lily leaves the kitten alone, a catastrophe ensues, from a messy kitchen and broken furniture to a torn curtain, and the kitten is blamed for being “naughty.” The kitten, in fact, is unfairly accused for all of the messes, and it’s the tiger, which has escaped from the zoo, that has caused all of the commotion. Can Lily eventually see the truth, and can the kitten prove her innocence? Ultimately, the kitten at least gets credit for what the tiger has done, saving Lily from her neighborhood dog, and Lily feels that the kitten isn’t so naughty after all.

About the Reviewer
Jeonghee Choi is an assistant professor of Teacher Education at Arkansas State University.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
This charming and goofy story about a little kitten that is repeatedly accused of being naughty—or is she?—is a perfect read aloud choice. Its lightheartedness can make children smile and giggle, inviting youngsters to talk about some of their personal experiences. The cartoon-like watercolor illustrations tell the story of what’s really happening, which is totally different from what the main character, Lily, sees and how she feels about the kitten. Comparing and contrasting these different versions of the story is another way of enjoying Naughty Kitty! Young children also can’t help noticing the opposite facial expressions shared by the saddened, innocent kitten and the mischievous, guilty tiger!

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
“I am spying the clues!”: On each occasion that the tiger is about to make a mess, or right after the mess has happened, there are clues that appear on each page and show why it couldn’t be caused by a little kitten. Allow children to pretend that they are detectives and must find the visual clues from each page. You also can discuss why Lily cannot see the same thing, and you can have the children explain their answers.

“I didn't do it!”: Children can share any situation in which they feel that some form of “injustice” befell them: in short, they were blamed for something that they didn’t say or do. The class can discuss how any affected children must have felt, illustrate the situation, and learn about comparing things from using their own experiences and what happens to the “naughty” kitten.

“Behind-the-scenes stories”: The front and back covers of the book provide the background information of what really happened: wild animal loose! After reading these cover stories, the class can talk about how such details can help explain how things happen, thus introducing the concept of cause and effect. Also, the children can learn how to modify the story by creating another version of why the giant tiger is roaming the neighborhood.

“Create your own catastrophe”: The final page of the book shows all of the other animals that escaped from the zoo gathering around in Lily’s backyard. Children can further predict another catastrophe that could be caused by an animal of their choice. You can prompt the children’s answers by using questions like the following: “What if it was not the tiger, but the elephant or the alligator that sneaks around the house? What kinds of messes could these creatures make?”

This book can be most effectively used...
- To encourage an interactive reading format. For example, whenever children see Lily blaming the kitten, the children can point to the tiger, which is sneaking around in the pictures, and can respond in unison by saying, “No, Lily, the tiger did it!”
**Patti Cake and Her New Doll**

**Author:** Patricia Reilly Giff  
**Illustrator:** Laura J. Bryant  
**Publisher:** Orchard Books  
**Year of Publication:** 2014  
**Pages:** 32  
**Ages:** Pre-K-2nd grade  
**ISBN:** 9780545244657  
**Reviewer:** Darshan Kaur Narang

### The Story

The baby sitter, Bella, takes Patty Cake shopping for her new room. Patty Cake visits Mr. Herman’s Everything Store and searches for many things. Ultimately, she finds the doll corner and an “on-sale” doll there. The doll has blush on just one cheek and frizzy hair. Bella tells Patty Cake that this doll appears a little smudgy, but Patty Cake loves its name (on-sale) anyway. We can see the young girl’s empathy for the doll. She tells On-sale that there’s ‘no more dark box for you now’. It is amusing to read that, and, as usually young children do, Patty Cake takes her doll to the bathroom and cleans her. Patty Cake puts the doll in the tub under the running tap, and she also puts a belly button on her, using pink nail polish. Feeling that her doll must be afraid, Patty Cake reassures, consoles, and cleans the doll. Bella bakes cake to celebrate her new room, and Patty Cake helps her doll eat the cake. She combs her doll's hair and spreads her dress flat on the bed before putting her doll to sleep.

### Concepts in the Book
- Care taker role play
- Connection between a young child and a doll
- Very clear concept of living and non-living (on-sale) characters
- Celebration of new room (and a new doll!)

### Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Because the illustrations are self-indicating, the children can understand concepts of friendship as exemplified by Patty Cake and her doll, On-sale. Young children can participate in pretend play, using the story of Patty Cake and her doll.

### Classroom Strategies and Ideas

**Storytelling and ‘Do It!’ Signal:** Teachers can read out the story and share the pictures from the book to young children, age three years and above. Furthermore, teachers can use a signal for asking young children to identify the characters, their names, and so on.

**Housekeeping Center Area:** Costumes of the Babysitter, Patty Cake, the Doll, and some safe cosmetics can be kept in the doll area or costume corner, allowing young children to focus their pretend play around Patti Cake and Her New Doll. After the children form an understanding of the story and its characters, teachers can help the youngsters in their pretend play, age three years and above.

**Active Learning and Dramatization** can be used, allowing young children to participate as characters from Patti Cake and Her New Doll and create fun pretend situations, using puppets, props, and masks of Patty Cake, her doll, and her babysitter as real, living beings. Through modeling, teachers can demonstrate the roles of the characters from Patti Cake and Her New Doll, particularly for children ages five and six years. (Younger preschool children can utilize the aforementioned doll and housekeeping area suggestion.)

---

**About the Reviewer**

Darshan Kaur Narang, Associate Professor of Child Development, University of Rajasthan, has contributed 59 publications to the field, and is also a volunteer adviser on behalf of children.

---

**This book can be most effectively used...**
- In the reading/book corner.
- From seeing the illustrations and using their creativity, young children may feel an urge to create a story of their own as a form of personal expression. The teacher can aid children in using this book by introducing the characters halfway and asking primary school children to finish the story with the help of the illustrations.
**Petting Zoo**

**Author:** Gail Tuchman  
**Illustrator:** Photography/Artwork from Stockphoto  
**Publisher:** Scholastic  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Pages:** 32  
**ISBN:** 9780545636315  
**Ages:** Pre-K-1st grade  
**Reviewer:** Stacey Katz

### The Story

This book talks about various animals that can be found in a petting zoo, such as ducks, goats, sheep, bunnies, alpacas, pigs, ponies, and guinea pigs. Some of their primary characteristics, including what they look like, their usual size and typical diet, and where they live, are discussed.

### Concepts in the Book
- Features and characteristics of animals
- Animal names, habitats, and diet

### Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

It teaches young children about various animals, and the supplementary resources feature digital activities and games that can be downloaded for further fun.

### About the Reviewer

Stacey Katz is the Early Childhood Director at Temple Kol Ami Emanuel in Plantation, Florida, and has been employed there for the past sixteen years.

### Classroom Strategies and Ideas

This book can be used in many ways and can be included in some popular preschool and primary school thematic units, such as farm animals. All of your learning centers can be related to the theme.

**During Circle Time,** children can discuss the animals that they have in their homes (if any) and how they take care of them.

Farm themed songs, such as “Old Mac Donald”, can also be sung at Circle Time. Children can compare and contrast some of the animals and form a graph illustrating the differences.

In the **dramatic play area,** children can pretend to be zoo keepers, and props such as play animals, gloves, pails, and plastic shovels can be used. If play animals are available, children can also sort those by size. The plastic farm animals and a barn can be used at a sensory table.

In the **housekeeping area,** a discussion can be started about how foods come from a garden or farm, are packaged and sent to a store, and finally are available for use in the kitchen.

At the **art area,** many art and craft projects can be made, such as using various recyclable materials to make your own animal pictures and sculptures. These educational experiences can be adjusted to fit the needs of children from Pre-K through first grade.

This book can be most effectively used...
- Along with a thematic unit, such as farm animals. Lessons plans can be made that focus on all areas of young children's development, using play based experiences.
The Story

This selection guides beginning readers on a journey of exploration through the solar system, revealing interesting and informative facts. As students race through space, they will enjoy detailed photos and simple text.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Although this informational text is appropriate for growing readers, it also can be used to introduce sophisticated vocabulary words to emerging readers. Remember to choose words that are appropriate for the age group of children that you teach.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Since no one method of vocabulary instruction is sufficient, take a multisensory approach when introducing word meaning to young children from four to six years of age. Remember...Children should have opportunities to See It! Hear It! Do It! and Touch It!

Before the Read Aloud:
- **See It!**-Introduce a picture or object that represents the new word.
- **Hear It!**-Introduce a simple, child friendly definition of the new word.
- **Do It!**-Encourage children to sign (ASL) or act out the motion that represents the new word.
- **Touch It!**-Allow children to hold and feel the picture or object that represents the new word.

During the Read Aloud:
- **See It!**-Assist children as they look for the new word represented in the illustrations or text.
- **Hear It!**-Encourage children to use the new word in a sentence.
- **Do It!**-Allow children to sign or reenact the motion each time the new word is read.
- **Touch It!**-Prompt children to touch the new word represented in the illustrations or text.

After the Read Aloud:
- **See It!**-Encourage children to look for the new word in other texts or pictures.
- **Hear It!**-Encourage children to listen for and use the new word in conversations.
- **Do It!**-Incorporate motions and signs into play.
- **Touch It!**-Allow children to apply the new word by using it in drawing and writing activities.
Polar Animals

Author: Susan Hayes
Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.
Pages: 80
Ages: Pre-K-3rd grade

The Story

This book is a collection of photographs and facts about the animals that inhabit the polar regions of our Earth. It explains where the polar regions are located and what life is like for some of the animals that live there. After a general discussion of polar animals, the book is divided into two separate sections, "The Arctic" and "The Antarctic," in which animals from each region are shown and discussed. It concludes by addressing the dangers polar animals face from environmental threat, includes an interview with an Antarctic scientist, Jaume Forcada, and also comes with a code for downloading the free digital book, "Amazing Polar Explorers."

Concepts in the Book
- Arctic temperatures
- Reflection
- Seasons of the year
- Migration and adaptation
- Animal diet
- Breaching
- Environmental threat

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Although this book is meant for older, primary school age children, it includes beautiful photographs of polar animals and interesting facts about them, and that could draw the interest of younger children also.

About the Reviewer

Karen S. Hopkins is a lead preschool teacher at St. Francis School in Goshen, KY.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Early childhood teachers could use this book, along with a map or a globe, and show children the areas in which the polar regions of the Earth are located. The book's beautiful photographs of various polar animals in their natural habitats could spark an interest in a more detailed study of a few of the animals and their babies. Children might enjoy studying, for example, how these animals stay warm, what they eat, and how they protect themselves from predators. Teachers could assist children in making a class book of drawings about their favorite polar animals. In addition, young children could create their own models of an Arctic habitat, using small boxes and an assortment of art and craft materials, such as white paint, cotton balls, foil, fabric, and miniature plastic animal figures. The photographs found in the book also could be displayed at a classroom art center, inviting young children to paint a polar scene of their own.

Furthermore, this selection lends itself to age-appropriate math instruction. Children could find out how many babies a mother orca has, for example, and compare that to how many babies a mother polar bear usually has. Children might also look at specific photographs and count how many eggs appear in the snowy owl nest, etc.

Finally, there are several words presented in this book that a teacher could use to extend the vocabulary of young children. Terms such as blubber, breach, tundra, and migrate, as well as the names of various polar animals, could be included in a class "word wall" for vocabulary enhancement.

This book can be most effectively used...
- As a fitting addition to a classroom science center, and young children could leisurely peruse the stunning photographs of polar animals.
- As a read aloud at circle time, emphasizing whichever facts and concepts relate to the children’s current unit of study.
**Princess Cupcake Jones and the Missing Tutu**

**Author:** Ylleya Fields  
**Illustrator:** Michael LaDuca  
**Publisher:** Belle Publishing  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Pages:** 32  
**Ages:** Pre-K-1st grade  
**Reviewer:** Jorja Davis  

**The Story**

Modern-day Princess Cupcake Jones learns the value of picking up her toys and keeping her room tidy when her favorite tutu goes missing the day she is to have her portrait painted with the king and queen.

**Concepts in the Book**
- Tidiness and cleaning up
- Girls in traditional and non-traditional roles and styles of dress
- Early literacy and language arts
- Family life

**Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book**

Tidiness is an important concept and skill to be taught at home and in the preschool or primary school classroom. Rhythm and rhyme support memory and literacy, and pictures are often placed so that young children could "read" the text from the illustrations. Furthermore, rhyming words and pictures support anticipation of what comes next.

**About the Reviewer**

Jorja Davis, who has a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education, has taught Child Development at Blinn College, and was Director of A&M UMC Dayschool, College Station, Texas.

**Classroom Strategies and Ideas**

For preschool and young primary school children, you can share the book as a read aloud at Circle Time and have a discussion about the importance of tidiness. Furthermore, you can use it as a pattern for creating a castle in the dramatic play center.

Pre-K and Kindergarten children can create a classroom book, or their own personal miniature books, using students as characters and focusing on the story’s useful lesson about tidiness.

Children from preschool, kindergarten, and first grade can be invited to anticipate the rhymes during a read aloud.

The examples from the story can urge children to cooperate in making labels that will assist the youngsters in putting their things away during your clean up period. Picture labels are useful for the younger preschool and kindergarten children, and primary school children can use words on their labels. You can laminate your labels for continued use throughout the school year.

This book can be most effectively used...

For any of the following lesson plans, situations, or preschool/primary school classroom areas:
- As a circle time, small group, or individual read aloud; for beginning a discussion about the importance of cleaning up and keeping the classroom tidy
- For the art center, the language arts and literacy center, and the dramatic play center.
The Story

The story is about reptiles and how they live in the environment. It is very interactive and urges children to delve deeper into learning about reptiles. The book even takes you back to the age of the dinosaurs and shows you how big they are compared to some of the reptiles found today. Furthermore, there is a supplementary digital book that you can download for hours of educational and interactive fun.

About the Reviewer

For the past six years, Cynthia Jackson has served as the Education Manager of Center Operations for Mobile Community Action Head Start in Mobile, AL.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This book has brilliant colors and real life pictures, the words are easy to read, and the descriptions are appropriate for primary age children’s level of understanding.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Reptile Games and Activities

Measuring Snakes: Measure out different kinds of snakes with yarn. The children will be amazed by how long a boa constrictor really is!

Toad: If you ever find a live toad, you can show the children a neat fact. Feel the toad’s eyes, and you will feel a flat surface. Feel your eyes, and you will feel that they are rounded. A toad's eye can be used to help push his food down his throat.

Reptile Play: Purchase plastic reptiles and add them to your sand and block areas. Be sure to preface, and follow through, with nonfiction picture books from your local library.

The Chameleon Game: After explaining that chameleons blend into their environment, children can be chameleons in reverse, finding colors in the environment that match their clothes. Any children who are wearing the same color as the rug can lay down there, children wearing the same color as the wall can stand against it, and children wearing the color of the couch can sit on it, etc.

Sorting: Group pictures of snakes in one row, and pictures of lizards in another, pointing out what makes them different from each other.

Snakey S: The letter S and a snake are a good pair. You can color a picture of a snake and write the letter. Its sound is phonetically memorable, if you make the sound while you write it. You can add descriptive words to the discussions, such as slithering, slimy, etc. If you have a pretend rubber snake, you can paste it to a piece of paper in the shape of an S.

Frogs of the World: Cut out frog shapes and talk about how poisonous frogs are brightly colored. Invite the children to color their own frogs, using crayons in bright colors. Then make a frog habitat on a poster board with lily pads, a pond, and bugs.

This book can be most effectively used...

- As a great way to get girls excited about reptiles just from the pictures alone. Having the children pick their favorites, writing short stories, making habitats in the classroom, talking about temperatures, and comparing size, texture, and other features also can be a lot of fun for young children.
More Classroom Strategies and Ideas for Reptiles

**Color Turtles:** Cut turtle shapes out of light green construction paper. Give each child a turtle shape and help the child use crayons to draw one dot of red, black, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, white, and orange on the turtle. As you recite the following poem, you can have the children point to each color as you name it.

```
"I can name these colors,
All so very bright,
Red, yellow, blue, purple, green, brown and white.
Don't forget the color orange,
And the color black,
These are the colors of the dots
Upon my turtle's back."
```

**Turtle Races:** Make three to five turtles and allow the children to use them for a race. Cut turtle shapes out of green poster board and put a name or number on each one. Punch a hole just above the center of each turtle, and put a five to eight foot piece of string through it. Get one chair for each turtle, and tie one end of each piece of string to the leg of a chair. Line up the chairs along the finish line. Have the children who are racing their turtles stand in a row at the starting line. Each child should hold the loose end of one of the strings. Begin the race with the turtles near the children's hands. When you say “Go!”, the children who are racing should start jiggling their pieces of string so that the turtles bound toward the finish line. The other children should pick a turtle and cheer for it. Talk about which turtle made it to the finish line first and which ones finished last or in the middle, and then allow the children to race again.
The Story

This book has no actual story; rather, it focuses on a child’s previous summertime experience and what the child has learned. As a result, the child shares many rules for summer, such as “never give keys to a stranger”, because the outcome may be that someone else will watch TV in your house.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The book is a very unique and original evaluation of both the seriousness and the arbitrary aspects of "rules". The concept might be too challenging for very young children to comprehend. However, it can be a delightful way to prompt children from kindergarten through second grade to an understanding of “rules”, as well as a lighthearted and humorous examination of their potential consequences.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

In addition to using the book prior to the creation of classroom rules at the beginning of the school year, Rules of Summer could also be used as a prompt for creative writing for first or second grade students. Illustrations also could certainly be encouraged. Some possible writing prompts could include creating silly rules or creating rules for other settings.

Some examples are:
1. What would be a silly rule to have at school, and what would happen if you did not have that rule?
2. What could be a good rule to have at a zoo, and what might be the outcome if the zoo didn't have that rule?
3. If you could make your own rules at home, what would be your favorite rule and why?

This book can be most effectively used...

- As a prelude to a discussion about classroom rules in a kindergarten through second grade class, especially at the beginning of the school year when summer has just ended.
- It could easily inspire a discussion of the importance of a classroom rule by focusing the children’s attention on its outcome. Rules of Summer is whimsical enough to intrigue children, and yet also serious enough to foster deeper thinking about why it might be important to have stated rules in a classroom.
Sam and Coodles: The Room at the End of the Hall

Author: Adrienne Durkin  
Year of Publication: 2013  
Publisher: Juice Publishing, LLC  
ISBN: 9780985040208  
Reviewer: Susan Barnes

Ages: Pre-K-2nd grade

The Story

Sam is worried that the new baby sister in Mommy’s tummy is going to cause trouble. His best friend, Coodles, a stuffed armadillo, listens to Sam as he shares his concerns about moving from his room next to Mommy and Daddy to a dark and spooky room down the hall, so that the baby can have his room. He resists invitations from his parents to help with decorating the room, and wonders what they are doing in there with all of the tools and the banging and hammering. When he finally sneaks a peek at his new room and finds it to be appealing, he realizes that being a big brother could be pretty fun. At the end of the book, the reader finds fun facts about armadillos and resources that can offer more information and activities featuring Sam and Coodles.

Concepts in the Book
- Change can be good.
- Responsibility
- Non-stereotypical role models
- Parents can love and care for more than one child.
- Armadillos

About the Reviewer
Dr. Barnes, currently an associate professor of Early, Elementary & Reading Education at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, previously taught preschool and kindergarten children.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Most children in the United States and Europe live in a household with at least one sibling. Their interactions with one another often trigger emotions, and, when a new sibling arrives, those emotions can range from fear and resentment to affection, pride, and love.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

These lesson planning suggestions and teaching strategies would be especially meaningful if shared in the context of a unit on families. Given that most children live in a household with at least one sibling, chances are that they have some experiences to share, from either their own household or another that is familiar to them.

Preschool and Kindergarten Dramatic Play/Housekeeping Center:  
Add accessories appropriate for bedrooms for children of different ages. Include some baby dolls, infant toys, pillows, books, and wall décor. Invite the children to prepare a room for themselves or for a child who is younger. Model and listen for language related to the needs of younger children.

Preschool, Kindergarten, First Grade Children’s Fine Motor Skill Area:  
Provide some catalogs featuring children’s room furnishings, in addition to the regular supplies (e.g., scissors, glue, and construction paper). Have the students cut out and/or draw pictures of the room that they would like to have and of a separate room for a new baby. Have the children describe what they put in each room and why.

Kindergarten - Grade Three Writing Center:  
Have students make a list of things that they could do to help when a baby comes to their house (to live or just for a visit). What could they do to help make a baby feel safe and comfortable?

Read Aloud Center with Any Group of Young Children:  
Guide students to identify and label emotions throughout the story and relate those feelings to their personal experiences. Vocabulary enrichment is important for young children, who often use the same word, such as “mad”, when they are actually feeling worried, disappointed, or frustrated.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies and Ideas for *Sam and Coodles: the Room at the End of the Hall*

- Page 2. “That room scares me. I hear noises coming from it…” Ask students why a noise in the house might scare Sam. What do they do if they are feeling scared of noises in their house? What are some other words that we can use when we are feeling scared?

- Page 6. “Sam, you are a big boy… you are ready to move into a big boy room.” Ask students what it means to be a “big boy” or a “big girl” in their family. Prompt responses related to responsibilities and jobs, as well as privileges and opportunities to try more activities. What does Sam mean when he says that he is not ready to be “on my own.” How is he feeling? Is he scared, worried, nervous, anxious? When are you on your own? How does it make you feel? Nervous? Proud?

- Page 8. Discuss the emotions that Sam might have felt when he lost Coodles at the grocery store. Worried? Have you ever lost something that was important to you? How did that feel? How could Sam have felt when the store manager returned Coodles? Embarrassed? Relieved? Thankful?

- Page 18. “It is the coolest room EVER!” How does Sam feel now? Happy? Relieved? Surprised?


Another way to extend this book and fit it into your curriculum is to focus on the fun facts about armadillos that appear on the final pages of the book.

**Children’s Engineering Center, for any age:** Have children build models of armadillos, using various materials to make the hard outer shell and the long claws. Consider adding materials such as empty, cylinder shaped oatmeal containers, margarine tubs, and egg cartons. By offering such supplies, you can model reusing and creative recycling for young children!

**Math Center for 2nd and 3rd grade Children:** Use armadillo fun facts and create story problems. For example: How many babies will a group of four mother armadillos have? How far can an armadillo run in five minutes if it runs thirty miles an hour?

**Maps and Globes Center:** Find North and South America on the map and globe.

**Language and Culture:** What are some other words we use that come from Spanish words?

Some examples:

- Banana from *banana*

- Breeze from *brisa*, meaning "cold northeast wind"

- Tornado from *tronada*, meaning "thunderstorm"
Search and Find: Dinosaur Fun

Publisher: Kidbooks, LLC
Illustrator: Shawn Finley
Year of Publication: 2012
ISBN: 9781588657145
Reviewer: Betty Ann Watson

Pages: 16
Ages: PreK-1st grade

The Story

This is a book of nonfiction, so it contains no storyline. However, it uses cartoon-like dinosaur pictures as an opportunity for a parent or teacher to talk with a young child about each of the eight concept areas listed below.

About the Reviewer

Betty Ann Watson is a Distinguished Professor, Emeritus, of Early Childhood Education at Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas.

Concepts in the Book
- The Museum
- A Space Mission
- City Lights
- Perfect Beach Day
- Down on the Farm
- A Pirate’s Life
- Middle Ages
- Back at Home

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This is a large board book that contains pictures and vocabulary associated with eight different concepts, and it can be useful for fostering conversations between parents and/or teachers and young children.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

The book, while not a storybook, is excellent for use in a writing center as a picture dictionary for the eight topics shown. In particular, it could be useful for children who speak a language other than English, so that they can become familiar with the vocabulary associated with each of the topics depicted.

It also could be a valuable aid to a teacher using it one-on-one to point to pictures and give the oral labels for each picture to a young child. The pictures are drawn in a cartoon style, and are fairly small, and thus usually would require an adult helper to verbally assist young children.

It would be particularly useful to young children who are just beginning to need to know how to spell words associated with any of the eight featured topics, and the fact that it is large and available in board book format makes it usable in a center setting. It is very reminiscent of the Richard Scarry books.

Kindergarten and first-grade children could use the book as a picture dictionary. The children could spell the words that they want to use in writing a story or writing about any of the eight topics depicted.

This book can be most effectively used...
- For children who are just learning to speak English. It provides an interesting format for those children to hear English vocabulary matching pictures of objects associated with the eight topics.
- For adult-child interaction in just looking at concept areas appropriate for the child and pointing/talking about the many pictured labels associated with that topic.
Shark Attack!

Author: Gail Tuchman
Year of Publication: 2013
Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.
ISBN: 9781407138350
Pages: 32
Reviewer: Deidre Stewart
Ages: 1st grade & 2nd grade

The Story
An Ocean of SHARKS! This short read aloud gives young beginning readers facts about the most fearsome creatures in the ocean, describing the many types of sharks and how they survive. Not only is this book filled with fun facts, but it also shares additional resources that a student can use online in order complete an array of educational activities.

About the Reviewer
Deidre Stewart is a research associate at Southern Methodist University and an adjunct professor at American Public University.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
This book provides facts about sharks and how they survive in the great blue ocean.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Before reading the story, share interesting facts about sharks. During your reading, stop and ask the children questions in order to check for understanding, clarify vocabulary terms, and review the extra information found at the bottom of each page. After reading, ask the children questions about shark bodies, the things that they eat, their senses, and their breathing. Afterward, revisit pictures from the book with your students.

Activities
A Shark’s Home (Art/Science)
Materials: shoe box, paint and brushes, glue, scissors, small amount of sand, small ocean toys, and blue saran wrap.
Students will decorate the inside of the shoe box, creating a representation of an ocean where a shark could live.

Math Facts: Students will complete math problems by replacing each digit with a letter of the alphabet in order to figure out a shark fact. For example, What is the smallest shark in the ocean?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Code</th>
<th>Math Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1=A</td>
<td>5+2=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=D</td>
<td>1+0=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=E</td>
<td>0+1=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4=F</td>
<td>5+6=11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5=H</td>
<td>3+6=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6=K</td>
<td>4+4=8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7=L</td>
<td>4+5=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8=N</td>
<td>3+6=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9=R</td>
<td>5+3=8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11=T</td>
<td>5+5=10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12=W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing: Children can write a poem about the ocean.

Additional Books for Primary School Children
Hark! A Shark!: All About Sharks, By Ruth Musgrave
Scholastic Discover More: Sharks, By David Burnie
Show Time with Sophia Grace and Rosie

Author: Sophia Grace Brownlee & Rosie McClelland
Illustrator: Shelagh McNicholas
Publisher: Orchard Books
Year of Publication: 2014
ISBN: 9780545631358
Reviewer: Bethanie Stiles
Pages: 40
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade

The Story
Sophia Grace and Rosie are little girl cousins who have a dream of singing in their school talent show. With their tiaras and tutus, they contrive a BIG surprise performance that will make young children want to jump to their feet and cheer!

Concepts in the Book
- Anticipation of the conclusion
- Rhyming
- Cooperation & unity
- A group effort is better than individual undertakings
- Celebration of friendship

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
Show Time with Sophia Grace and Rosie is a fun selection that allows the children to assume the roles of the characters because it uses a child's voice and imagination. The descriptive words introduce new vocabulary and engage young children. Throughout the book, predictive reading enhances the anticipation of the big surprise performance that will unfold.

About the Reviewer
Bethanie Stiles is the Child Development Program Coordinator at West Virginia University.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Creative Arts: Children will have a discussion on how to plan a class performance. Together and with the help of the teachers, the children will spend some time planning a performance that can be acted out by all of the children, such as a magic show, a play, or a song. The children will learn to negotiate different ideas and coordinate them into a single performance. Teachers can introduce ideas if the children are experiencing difficulties in thinking outside of the story line.

Costume materials will be provided to the children, and parent volunteers can assist the children in creating their costumes during small group periods. As a writing component, children can design and write invitations to be sent to friends and teachers in other classrooms and/or their family members. Teachers will facilitate and guide the process, allowing the children to assume the roles of Sophia Grace and Rosie as the constructivists of their own ideas.

This book can be most effectively used...
- As an inspiration to children to be creative thinkers, big idea planners and executors, and cooperative members of a team that can work together.
Spooky Friends

Author: Jane Feder
Illustrator: Julie Downing
Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.
Year of Publication: 2013
Pages: 40
ISBN: 9780545478151
Reviewer: Laura Collins

Ages: 1st grade–3rd grade

The Story
Scarlet and Igor are best friends who can never agree because their thinking is opposite. There are three stories about them. Even though they cannot seem to agree on many things, one thing for sure that they agree upon is that they are very good friends. This teaches children that they can still be close friends, even if they are different from each other.

Concepts in the Book
- Language facilitation
- Vocabulary development
- Teaches children about getting along with each other

About the Reviewer
Laura Collins is the Coordinator of the Home Instruction Program for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) at Montgomery, Alabama Public Schools.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
This book would make a good selection for Dialogic Reading. Children can be engaged in a discussion of the pictures, supporting their language development.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Use the CAR method in Dialogic Reading, as explained below.

The CAR Method:
- Asks the teacher to follow the child's lead while using the following research based strategies to facilitate language.
- Comment and wait (describe the picture: e.g., 'There's a girl, she's dressed like a monster, they are standing back to back'). Wait 5 seconds to give the child time to formulate his or her answer. Ask questions (about the pictures, what is happening in the book, what the child is interested in, or what the child is pointing to) and wait 5 seconds.
- Respond by adding a little bit more. This keeps the conversation going, and, by repeating what the child says and using additional parts of speech, it also expands upon the child's sentences and introduces new vocabulary.

This book can be most effectively used...
- To foster language facilitation, pretend reading, and getting along with others in a preschool or primary school classroom. It also could be useful for teaching children about opposites.
The Birthday Queen

Author: Audrey Wood
Publisher: The Blue Sky Press
Pages: 32
Ages: Pre-K-Kindergarten

Illustrator: Audrey and Don Wood
Year of Publication: 2013
ISBN: 9780545414746
Reviewer: Carrie Lewis, M.A.

The Story

Using finely detailed and pleasingly fanciful illustrations, The Birthday Queen gives young children a magical picture of how to plan ahead for a birthday party. Invitations must be carefully crafted and promptly sent, fun games must be planned ahead of time, and the supplies must be purchased so that the party room can be adorned with balloons and streamers. Although it appears as if the Birthday Queen is accomplishing these things with the help of her three magic wands, the final page hints at a fine secret of parenting: mothers are young children’s ultimate birthday party queens!

Concepts in the Book

- The magical connection between young children and their mothers
- How to plan ahead for a birthday party (can teach young children about sequential ordering)
- Feelings, particularly anticipation, expectancy, and excitement!
- Polite manners and etiquette: sending party invitations, etc.
- Special occasions

A former private school teacher, Carrie has just begun her third year as the Preschool Director at Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Day School, a half-day preschool program in Virginia. She likes helping young children bloom in each area of their schooling.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The feeling of hopeful anticipation before your birthday party is something to which any young child can relate, and the connection to children’s personal feelings and hopes makes The Birthday Queen a fantastic fit for youngsters from three to six years of age. Furthermore, the fanciful pictures and the use of age appropriate language are sure to be pleasing to young children. The fact that Mother turns out to be the Birthday Queen ought to be appreciated by children and parents alike!

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

The following suggestions are for use with preschool and young primary school children (three to six years of age).

Language Arts: There are many talking points that can be used in order to enhance young children’s oral language. For example, you can make sure that youngsters understand what an invitation is and ask the children to describe the appearance of their birthday party invitations (something that they have used in the past, or that they hope to use in the future). Invite the children to share how their parents help to plan their birthday parties. Could anything else be added to the preparations beyond the things that are noted? If you are using this picture book with primary school children, call the children’s attention to how the different forms of punctuation are utilized in the sentences.

Materials: Teacher’s notes about talking points to use with the children, punctuation flash cards and a few further examples of how to use the forms of punctuation (if using the final suggestion)

This book can be most effectively used...

- As a useful springboard for conversation and creative art in the preschool or primary school classroom. The Birthday Queen is full of fantastic talking points for getting children acquainted with each other at the beginning of the school year, and it also could be a fun selection to share with young children shortly before your Mother’s Day unit.
- To show to use a few forms of punctuation. A lesson plan related to the punctuation could aid primary school children in grasping that aspect of grammar.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies and Ideas for *The Birthday Queen*

**Visual Art:** Fold pastel cardstock in half and allow young children to create their own birthday party invitations, using crayons, stamps and stamp pads, stickers, and sundry other craft supplies. You can help younger children by taking down dictations, and any children who are able can use their own conventional and invented spelling. At Circle Time, the teacher can share each child's invitation and see if the class can guess whose it is from the picture that appears on the front. For added fun, allow the child whose party invitation has just been shared to hold the Birthday Queen's wand!

**Materials:** Pastel cardstock (fold in half ahead of time for younger children), crayons, an assortment of art and craft supplies (stamps and stamp pads, stickers, bits of craft ribbon, etc.), copy of the alphabet for young children's reference, fairy wand for use in the Circle Time activity

**Visual Art:** Another fun art activity is to have young children create “The Birthday Queen's Art Gallery” at your school or childcare program. Each of the children gets to draw, paint, or collage a picture of the birthday party that she or he would like to plan, or of a favorite birthday party from the past. If you share this story in this spring, you also can have the children draw pictures of their mothers as The Birthday Queen. At your school's Mother's Day program, display each child's birthday picture alongside his or her Birthday Queen (Mother) portrait to form an art gallery that honors young children and mothers alike.

**Materials:** Plain paper, crayons, an assortment of art and craft supplies, labels and frames for displaying children’s pictures
The Dandelion Seed’s Big Dream

Author: Joseph Anthony
Illustrator: Cris Arbo
Publisher: Dawn Publications
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9781584694960
Ages: Pre-K-3rd grade
Reviewer: Chu Chu Wu

The Story

The little seed had a dream: to find a home that would allow it to grow and become a pretty, golden yellow flower. As the little seed travelled on the wind, many things happened to it, but it never gave up on its dream. During the journey, it got caught in the spider web, had its parachute broken by a broom, drafted to different areas of the city, landed inside a sandwich box in a trashy yard, and just waited patiently. Finally, the dandelion seed landed on a community garden that it claims as home. It grew and bloomed into a pretty yellow flower, and so its patience, courage, and determination ultimately allow its dream to be fulfilled.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

*Dandelion Seed’s Big Dream* is beautifully illustrated. Through the journey of the little seed, the children are able to see the appearance of the landscape in the suburban and urban areas. There are several talking points that could be used to help young children relate to the story. For example, environmental protection is one of the themes, and children can be taught that plants cannot survive without a clean and proper environment. In the story, we see people cooperating and working together as they pick up litter and remove dead plants in order to plant a community garden, the garden that the little seed finally claims as its home. The other theme is how it teaches young children that it takes patience, perseverance, and courage to make one’s dream come true. In addition, young readers can learn about the parts of the dandelion, about how seeds travel on the wind and reproduce to form new plants, and about the differences between a weed and a flower.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Science connection: Teachers can use this book when they talk about an assortment of popular preschool and primary themes, such as the following:
- A plant’s life cycle
- Spring and flowers
- Seeds and how they spread (by wind, insect pollinators, etc.)

Preschool and primary age children can read or listen to books about the types of seeds found from different plant forms. The teacher can take the children for a nature walk and have the children collect different types of seeds in the spring. Children can match seeds to leaves and label types of plants and the usual plant parts (root, stem, leaf, flower, seed). Children can observe how seeds’ shapes and physical structures help them to travel on the wind in order to fulfill their goal of reproduction. The teacher also can talk about the parts of the plants, weeds, and flowers. Furthermore, the teacher can use the little seed’s journey to relate to the children’s personal life experiences, talking about emotional characteristics that can help each child to reach his/her hope, goal, or dream. By focusing the students’ attention on the different landscapes pictured in the story, the teacher can talk about not littering and help the children appreciate the beautiful illustrations.

This book can be most effectively used...
- For teaching art, geometry/shapes, and a few science units, and it also can be used as a springboard for a writing/drawing assignment focusing on the imaginary journey of a plant seed.
- Community gardens are another useful talking point from *The Dandelion Seed’s Big Dream*, and lessons for young children could be planned around a gardening unit.

Concepts in the Book
- A plant’s life cycle
- Flowers and weeds
- Insects, pollination, and wind
- Community garden
- Environmental protection
- Beneficial emotional characteristics: hope, patience, perseverance, and courage

About the Reviewer
Chu Chu Wu is an Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education in the School of Education at Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, GA.
More Classroom Strategies and Ideas for *Dandelion Seed’s Big Dream*

**Reading and writing:** After reading the story, children can write a new journey for the little seed, or a journey for a different kind of seed. This practice encourages students to use their observational skills and their imagination in order to create a new story. Younger children could use pictures and dictate sentences to the teacher.

**Art and science:** Primary age children can collect different types of seeds, observe the seeds, and illustrate the structure and the characteristics of each seed and the related plant type. Seeds also can be useful for arts and crafts. Children can predict which kind of seed will travel the furthest and find out the answer by dropping each seed sample from the air. Children can note the ecstatic aspect of how a seed moves in the air.
The Garden Monster

The Story
Jim and Jilli plant a garden in hopes of winning a medal in the Vegetable Parade. Can Fiercely the dog scare the Garden Monster away?

About the Reviewer
Penny Hitt, M.Ed., is a Head Teacher at Harding Academy Pre-K in Searcy, Arkansas, and has taught young children for twenty-two years.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
It is a great gardening and science book with fantastic illustrations and young children can use their imaginations and act out the story.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Children can grow a class garden as a follow-up activity, and you can have the children brainstorm what to grow in their garden. For a related science activity, the children can research bugs, slugs, and monsters that could attack the garden. As a talking point, ask the children if they would build a scarecrow to protect their garden, or if they feel that they would need a Fiercely (from The Garden Monster).

For a math activity, the children can be taught how to graph their favorite vegetables.

Dramatic play can be provided by allowing the children to dress as their favorite vegetables and having a vegetable parade.

For an art and language arts/writing lesson plan, have the children create medals honoring and describing the winners from your vegetable parade (for example: the tallest plant, the best bloom, etc.)
The Story

Posy is moving away from her friends to a new home, and she is feeling sad about having to leave her two best friends. While baking a pie to make themselves feel better, they realize that they could have a "Good-Pie Party" to say good-bye to their friends and neighbors.

Concepts in the Book

- Planning a party
- Writing invitations
- Separation and moving away
- Making people pyramids
- Following a recipe

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The themes within this book include moving, separation from valued friends, and how to handle change in a positive manner. These all are areas that young children will experience and could use support in handling.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Activities for Children from Kindergarten through Second Grade

Create a class recipe book for which each child has to make and taste a pie with his or her family. The children can type out their recipes, and the teacher or a parent volunteer can compile the submissions to form a class cookbook. You can sell it on campus for fundraising purposes.

Party Planners: As a project-based learning activity, allow the children to plan a class party. Groups of students can be in charge of particular areas, such as invitations, games, food, etc. Each group will research options and then follow through with at least one of them. This can include having to speak with or write letters to maintenance workers, custodians, and parents. Other groups of children will have to create a way to raise funds, follow a budget, and research food prices.

As a written response, students can make text-to-self connections and write about what kind of party they would like to have if they were moving. You also can read other "moving" books, and students can discuss the text-to-text connections that they make between the titles.

This book can be most effectively used...

- Any time that a child is moving away or coming into your classroom, The Good-Pie Party can be useful for sharing with primary age children. It also could be appropriate if your children are organizing a party and need a few pointers.
**The Tree House That Jack Built**

**Author:** Bonnie Verburg  
**Illustrator:** Mark Teague  
**Publisher:** Orchard Books  
**Year of Publication:** 2014  
**Pages:** 40  
**ISBN:** 9780439853385  
**Ages:** Kindergarten-3rd grade  
**Reviewers:** Melissa Bialowas

### The Story

Jack built a tree house and has many animal visitors. From seemingly familiar rhymes, such as “And here is the dog who chases the cat who swats the parrot who pecks the lizard...” to those pointing out background details, such as “the ladder, the birdbath, the marvelous things Jack made with his tools...”, each page has incredible illustrations and draws you into the story. This isn’t a book to rush through; rather, children will want to spend some time looking at each page and picking out the things to which they feel drawn in light of their personal interests.

### About the Reviewers

Melissa Bialowas has the best job ever as the mother of four-year-old twins, and she also teaches at Bridge Builder Academy in Plano, Texas.

### Why Our Reviewers Recommend This Book

The book has a great rhythm and rhyme and a storyline that will have children dreaming of animals and machines.

### Classroom Strategies and Ideas

**Pretend Play:** Children can use animal puppets for pretend play that relates to the story.

**Science:** You can set up simple machines that are safe and age appropriate for young children, such as ropes, pulleys, boards, leavers, and fulcrums.

**Sand/Water Table:** Offer a spinning wheel in this center.

**Block Center:** The children can try building their own pretend tree houses.

### This book can be most effectively used...

- As a great read aloud that could be used to foster conversation on many different topics. The pictures of the outdoor environment make me feel like camping and sleeping under the stars, and young children are likely to have a similar response! The simple machines and the many things that have been built could be connected to lesson plans about inventions, engineering, and science.
The Very Cranky Bear

Author: Nick Bland
Illustrator: Nick Bland
Publisher: Orchard Books
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 24
ISBN: 9781741699920
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade
Reviewer: Lindsay Giroux

The Story

On a cold and rainy day, four animal friends find themselves seeking shelter in the cave of a cranky bear. Zebra, Moose, and Lion each think of a way to try to cheer up the cranky bear. Ultimately, though, it is the sheep's thoughtfulness that turns bear's frown upside down.

Concepts in the Book
- Rhyming
- Focus on thoughtfulness and helping others
- Feelings and emotions
- Facial expressions and how they can relate to feelings

About the Reviewer

Lindsay Giroux coaches preschool teachers on classroom management and social-emotional skills as the SEFEL Coordinator for Wake County Public Schools, NC.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The Very Cranky Bear is sure to delight young children. It has a nice rhyme scheme, and it also features colorful illustrations. The book's focus on helping a friend can offer a useful lesson for all young children.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Art: In the story, each animal gives the bear a makeover in order to cheer him up. Just like the moose gives the bear antlers to try to improve his mood, children could use art and craft supplies to create animals with wacky features like the illustration of the bear with his antlers and stripes.

Dramatic play: Teachers could make animal masks that represent the characters and invite young children to act out the story.

Literacy & social-emotional: Teachers can use the story as an aid to creating their own class book that focuses on how you can help your friends, utilizing photographs of classmates (e.g., When Javier feels cranky, going outside can cheer him up. When Sarah feels cranky, giving her a hug can cheer her up.)

Science and Nature: Teachers can introduce children to nonfiction resources about sheep and shearing wool. Explorations could include touching wool, watching a video of a sheep being sheared, or attempting to make pillows out of wool.

This book can be most effectively used...
- To share when discussing feelings and how to respond to the feelings of a friend. Teachers can use it as a springboard for a discussion about how children could handle a situation in which a friend appears cranky and how children can show kindness to each other.
**Things that Go!**

**Author:** James Buckley Jr.  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Publisher:** Scholastic Inc.  
**ISBN:** 9780545533768  
**Pages:** 32  
**Reviewer:** Sonya Knee  
**Ages:** Pre-K–2nd Grade

### The Story

This book can be used to teach young children about various forms of transportation, including cars, airplanes, boats, and trains. It details the changes in such forms of transportation from past to present and includes safety precautions to be used for each. It features a glossary, a digital book edition, and supplementary online activities.

### About the Reviewer

Sonya Knee is an ESOL teacher at Charleston County School District in Charleston, SC. She teaches children from kindergarten through the fifth grade.

### Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

The focus of the book is part of the usual early childhood curriculum, and young children are interested in learning about various modes of transportation. The illustrations are very appealing and realistic. There are educational online activities that accompany the book, and there also is a digital copy of the book.

### Classroom Strategies and Ideas

As part of a unit on transportation, it can be useful as a teacher read aloud for preschool and primary age children. Paired reading also could be used in first and second grade, and preschool and kindergarten children could talk about the transportation pictures in pairs.

This book can be included in the class library in the transportation section of a preschool or primary school classroom. Pre-K and K students can look at the pictures, and primary age students can read the words.

Pre-K and K students can use this book as a reference for drawing transportation pictures. The teacher can label each of the children’s pictures and compile them to form a book. Similarly, primary age students can draw pictures related to what they have read and write a sentence of their own on each page.

Past and Present Comparison Activity: Second grade children can select one form of transportation, such as an airplane, and create a simple Venn diagram to note similarities and differences in the past and present uses and forms of it. Pictures, either drawn by the children or cut from magazines, could be used to show similarities and differences in the appearance.

ESOL students could use it to become familiar with new transportation vocabulary. Also, they could create a transportation dictionary by drawing pictures, labeling them, and compiling them into a book that could be laminated for future use.

First and second grade children can read the digital edition of the book and utilize the supplementary online activities.

### Concepts in the Book

- Various forms of transportation
- Safety precautions to use with these conveyances
- Some differences between past and present forms of transportation

### This book can be most effectively used...

- As a read aloud, as a reference book, or as a selection that primary age children can read on their own. It should be included as part of a unit on transportation. It also can be used to illustrate differences in the past and present.

---

**61**
The Story

Tony Baloney, Pam Ryan's fictitious penguin character, is feeling excited for the first day of school! He attends the same school that his older sister also attends and looks up to her and her experiences. This book talks about his experiences getting ready for school, the ups and downs that he has in the new environment on the first day of school, and ultimately his discussion with his family after he gets home from school.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Tony Baloney: School Rules is about the first day of school and how to follow the rules within that environment. A variety of discussions that are pertinent to the lives of young children could be facilitated through the use of this story.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

1. Discuss the choices that were made by Tony Baloney, identifying examples of good and bad choices. Ask children about any other choices that he could have made.
2. Compare and contrast Tony's school environment to your classroom.
3. Compare and contrast Tony's school rules to your classroom rules.
4. At the beginning of the school year, you can read the book prior to establishing classroom rules (kindergarten), and use it as a springboard for a discussion that allows the students to assist in forming your shared classroom rules.
5. Discuss the school environment mentioned in this book, and then have the children identify other environments that have rules and how they might be the same or different.
6. Discuss and act out the different routines the children in the class engage in before they come to school. How do they differ from Tony's usual routine?
7. Use Tony and his stuffed animal, Dandelion, as a way to talk about coping skills. Discuss how your students handle difficult situations.
8. Emotions and feelings could be discussed through the use of this story. Tony experiences various emotions indicated by the text and the pictures. The students can imitate the facial expressions from the pictures, discussing each emotion and situations in which they have felt that particular emotion.
9. Discuss the family structure. Do the students have older brothers and/or sisters that have shared school experiences with them? Discuss these connections in relation to Tony's family structure.
10. Discuss the B Emergencies. Select another letter from the alphabet and create or convert rules using alliteration.

Concepts in the Book

- Alliteration and the Alphabet
- Beginning of the school year
- Rules
- Following instructions
- Self care and routines
- Emotions and feelings
- Making friends and good choices
- Coping skills

This book can be most effectively used...

- As a story that the teacher reads to the whole class as a prompt for discussion. In an early childhood classroom, it could be used as an introduction to what kindergarten and its rules might look and feel like.
Train

Author: Elisha Cooper  
Illustrator: Elisha Cooper  
Publisher: Orchard Books  
Year of Publication: 2013  
Pages: 40  
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade  
Reviewer: Michele Lucia

The Story

This story about trains features trains that transport people, trains that carry goods, trains that are slow, trains that are fast, trains that travel in cities, and trains that travel through tunnels. Different landscapes are shown as the trains pass through them, and parts of the train, such as the cab and the sleeping cars, are shown and described.

Concepts in the Book
- Time
- Weather
- Transportation and travel
- Geography

About the Reviewer

Dr. Lucia lives in South Carolina and is a Specialization Coordinator for Walden University’s Bachelor’s program in Child Development and Master’s program in Early Childhood Studies.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

There are several themes in the book that appeal to young children, as it features everything from trains and train cars to changing landscapes.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Art
Some basic shapes can be photocopied, and preschool and kindergarten students can cut the shapes out before gluing them down on larger paper to create a train picture.

Preschool and kindergarten children can be provided with such materials as crayons and pencils, and prompted to draw their own pictures of trips that they’ve taken, and of things that they remember from the book, etc. Furthermore, students can be provided with watercolor paints and prompted to draw pictures in the same style as the illustrations that appear in this book.

Shoe boxes, a hole punch, and cord can be used to construct a simple train. Holes can be punched through the narrow sides of the shoeboxes, and the cord can be threaded through the holes and knotted in order to keep the cars separate. The train can then be decorated with paint, stickers, or other materials. This preschool and kindergarten craft can also be used with first grade children by cutting wheels from cardboard and using straight pins to attach the wheels to the box. The pins should be bent once pushed through the wheels and the box.

Allow preschool, kindergarten, and first grade children to create their own trains using clay.

Allow preschool, kindergarten, and first grade children to dip train wheels in paint and make pictures by rolling the trains on paper.

Creative Movement: Allow the children to pretend that they are the different cars of the train and recreate the noises that the trains make in the book (pre-k and kindergarten).

This book can be most effectively used...
- As a read-aloud, and as a springboard to activities that could be planned for the various centers found in a preschool or primary school classroom.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies for Train

Language Arts and Writing: With tools as simple as paper and pencils, preschool children could "write" tickets and plan trips. Primary school students can be prompted to write journal entries about trips that they have taken (pre-k - first grade).

Math and Sorting: Have children count miniature trains, sorting them by color, etc. Use numbers as labels on miniature trains, and have children put them in order (pre-k - first grade).

Dramatic Play: The dramatic play area can be made into a train station, and the children can role play the part of the conductor, the passengers, etc. (pre-k and kindergarten).

Puzzles: Find or create a puzzle of a train (pre-k and kindergarten).

Block/Transportation Area: Trains can be added to the block area, and/or an area with trains and track can be created so as to allow free play, construction, etc. around the theme of trains (pre-k and kindergarten).

Social Science: Have children draw maps of a certain area (first grade).

Cooking: Create snacks using food that can be shaped together to make a train. Round crackers, for example, can be used as wheels, and cheese can be cut into the shape of train cars (pre-k - first grade).

Technology: There are many educational online games having to do with trains, such as Train Traffic Control and Mini Trains (pre-k - first grade).
Trouper

**Author:** Meg Kearney  
**Illustrator:** E.B. Lewis  
**Publisher:** Scholastic Press  
**Year of Publication:** 2013  
**Pages:** 32  
**ISBN:** 9780545100410  
**Ages:** Pre-K-3rd grade  
**Reviewer:** Tricia Kruse

### The Story

Based on a true story, Meg Kearney’s story of Trouper the dog is as soft and warm as the pleasing watercolor illustrations by the famous children’s illustrator E.B. Lewis. Told from the dog’s point of view, Trouper recalls his past or “before time”, the period in which he lived on the streets along with Boo, Curly, Digger, and the others in his pack. Ultimately, the story shares how he came to find acceptance and a safe, new home. The sentence, “My heart was a cold, starless night until your face shone through the bars like a mini sun.”, captures the hope and connection that Trouper feels when he first meets his new boy. Through rich text and revealing illustrations, readers will find something special about Trouper that makes his adoption by author Meg Kearney and her family even more touching.

### Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Meg Kearney’s Trouper is a heartwarming story about hope, love, and acceptance. The titular character’s hopefulness and ability to keep a soft heart in a hard world is inspirational for young children and their parents and educators alike.

### Classroom Strategies and Ideas

**Age level:** Preschool  
**Area:** Book area  
**Materials:** Copy of Meg Kearney’s Trouper  
**Book making materials:** Construction paper, crayons, pencils, etc.  
**Pictures of the classroom, the children, and possibly of their family members**  
**Laminator**

**Talking points:** Begin a small group time by reading Meg Kearney’s Trouper aloud to the children. After the story, start a discussion about the emotions and feelings that this story could suggest to the children. Ask open ended questions like, "How do you think Trouper felt about seeing all of his dog friends being adopted?", "Why do you think that Trouper was the last to be adopted?", "Have you ever seen someone that looked different from you?", and "How did that make you feel?". After the children have shared their feelings and answers, say something like, "We are going to make our own classroom book." Teachers could plan on having the children make a book about feelings, about the children’s families, or about what the children think makes them special. Laminate the pages to aid children’s continuing use, and keep your handmade book in the book area so that the children can refer to it throughout the school year. Make sure to add to it as a way to welcome any new children to the class.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies for Trouper

Age level: Primary
Area: Language Arts
Materials:
Copy of Meg Kearney's Trouper
Paper
Envelopes
Art materials: crayons, colored pencils, markers

Talking Points: This selection could be used in a biblio-therapeutic sense and could be especially useful for sharing with children from military families. It could serve as a useful aid to initiating a discussion with children about such emotionally charged issues as missing limbs and separation of parents from their children. The story could represent, for many children, a desire to feel cared for and loved, even though they may feel and look different from their peers.

After reading the story, provide children with paper. Ask them to write a letter to Trouper letting him know how they feel about his story. Writing prompts could include any of the following: Tell Trouper about someone you know (a person or even a doll) that is missing a limb. Share with Trouper how your heart felt when he was alone in the kennel. Trouper says he felt blue. What color would you use to describe how you feel sometimes? Continue the lesson with instruction about how to address an envelope. You can have the children mail their letters to Trouper!
Twin Magic: School Bully, Beware!

Author: Kate Ledger
Illustrator: Kyla May
Publisher: Scholastic
Year of Publication: 2013
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9780606319720
Ages: Pre-K-1st grade
Reviewer: Jean Foster Paulsel, Ph.D., CFLE

The Story
Twins Lottie and Mia, along with their friend Toby, meet Max, a new boy at school. Max appears unfriendly and does many things to intimidate the other children. After Max kicks the four-square ball into the tree because he can’t play right then, the twins use their magical powers, including their wings and their flying ability, to retrieve it. They then offer to wait until the next game and allow Max to play. Max apologizes for his bullying and says that it’s been a very hard first day of school for him. Everyone agrees to be friends, and the children begin to cooperate and play together.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
Twin Magic: School Bully, Beware! is the story of twin girls who have magical powers that allow them to move things, including themselves! They use this secret magical power to help others.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
Preschool and kindergarten: Use the story to teach young children about the concept of helping others. A toy unicorn and costumes with wings can be useful props for the dramatic play center.

First Grade: Focus on the concept of friendship by offering the children age appropriate titles related to that theme in your reading center.

Concepts in the Book
- Helping others
- Friendship
- Anti-bullying
- Understanding of feelings
- Forgiveness

About the Reviewer
Jean Foster Paulsel, a Certified Family Life Educator, is the owner of Paulsel Consulting Services, and she provides training and consultation for early care and education programs.

This book can be most effectively used...
- At Circle Time to help children understand how being friendly can make a bad day better. It also can be a useful prompt for fostering discussion about how to show sensitivity to each other’s feelings.
Under the Same Sun

Author: Sharon Robinson
Illustrator: AG Ford
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 40
ISBN: 9780545166720
Ages: 1st grade-3rd grade
Reviewer: Valentina Kloosterman

The Story
From the book’s jacket: Grandmother Bibi and Auntie Sharon have come to visit the family in Tanzania - all the way from America! Soon it will be Bibi's eighty-fifth birthday, and her seven grandchildren are planning a big surprise! After days together at home telling stories and filling gaps from the years spent apart, it's time to embark on their secret journey: a safari in Serengeti National Park. But too soon it's their last day together. And, in a bittersweet moment, at the ruins of an old slave port in Bagamoyo, Bibi's African-born grandchildren come to learn what happened to their ancestors who arrived by slave ship in America.

Concepts in the Book
- Separation and togetherness
- Family (love and affection)
- Diversity
- Slavery in the US
- Animals
- Africa

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
It can be used as a foundation for discussion and a springboard for class assignments in areas such as family, diversity, Africa, animals, and slavery in the US.

About the Reviewer
Dr. Valentina Kloosterman, an educational psychologist, teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in psychology and research in Florida. Her areas of expertise include early childhood education, diversity, and talent development.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Language Arts: vocabulary (looking up and defining new words - can be included in a word journal and/or on a word wall), writing original stories about families, writing poems about families and/or the plight of slavery.

Role Play: Have children act out various scenes from the book for comprehension.

Social Studies: creation of family trees, creation of various timelines (e.g., of ancestors in one's family, and of the slave trade in the US).

Science: study of animals and environments in the various continents (could focus on research, drawing, and writing in an animal journal, which would include facts and images).
Volcanoes: Run for Your Life!

Author: Laaren Brown
Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.
Pages: 32
Ages: 1st grade-3rd grade

The Story

Volcanoes: Run for Your Life! focuses on how volcanoes are formed and come to be, how they work, and where they are located. The book also lists volcano records and volcano heroes and talks about The Ring of Fire. A "Hot Fact" appears in the margins of each page and offers an extra side note. Furthermore, it has a glossary at the end that can help the reader review words. There also is an interactive fun activity online that is associated with book.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

You can use Laaren Brown's Volcanoes: Run for Your Life! to aid children in understanding the concept of book and print, and it also fosters children’s knowledge and thinking skills. It can be used as a vocabulary lesson, can be useful for small or whole group forms of instruction, and can help you teach young children about geography.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Volcanoes: Run for Your Life! can be used during Circle Time as a picture book, and you can have the students tell you what they think could be going on in the story from looking at the pictures. It can be used to teach parts of the book and print concepts. Furthermore, you can use the interactive online site to teach shapes and other related concepts.

Art Center: Children will draw pictures of volcanoes.
Materials: Crayons, paper, glue, scissors, pictures of volcanoes, pencils, markers, and world map.
Instructions: Children will use art materials to draw volcanoes in various parts of the world.

Language Arts Center: Children will use vocabulary words listed in the book.
Materials: Pencil, paper, vocabulary words, journal
Instructions: Children will make sentences using vocabulary words and practice writing/spelling the words. Children will look up the definition of each word.

Reading Center: Children will have an assortment of age appropriate books on volcanoes and their environment.

Science Center: Children will make volcanoes.
Materials: baking soda, vinegar, container to hold everything, paper towels
Instructions: Place some of the baking soda into your container, pour in some of the vinegar, and wait for the reaction.

Math Center: Children will use math concepts to discuss volcanoes.
Materials: Volcano matching game, shape poster, pictures of volcano and location
Instructions: Children will count how many volcanoes and locations. Also, children will match volcanoes to their locations and discuss what shapes the volcanoes resemble.
Whales & Dolphins: Photo Fact Collection

Publisher: Kidsbooks, LLC  Year of Publication: 2013
Pages: 30  ISBN: 9781588657206
Ages: Pre-K-3rd Grade  Reviewer: Scheery Lu Renken-Goekler

The Story

*Whales and Dolphins* is a nonfiction book that talks about the characteristics and habits of whales and dolphins. It also discusses the habitats of whales and dolphins and how they relate to people. Notable features are the detailed illustrations and the excellent descriptions of the animals and their habitats, characteristics, and behavior.

Concepts in the Book
- Letter recognition
- Listening
- Rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration
- Sentence and syllable segmenting

About the Reviewer

A Kindergarten Teacher at Messiah Lutheran School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Ms. Renken-Goekler has a Master's Degree of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and is a Lutheran Colloquy (Minister of Religion).

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration make the book fun and pleasing for young children. The picture book is very full of illustrations that are vibrant and useful, depicting the animals and their habitats, characteristics, etc.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

The first strategy is for use at Circle Time. The teacher can show the students large, three-dimensional pictures/models of whales and dolphins and then read the book aloud to the students. Before reading aloud, the teacher can invite the children to explore and play with the large, three-dimensional whale and dolphin models. After the children explore the whales and dolphins and before reading the books, the teacher can say: “Turn on your listening ears because I’m going to ask you some questions about the book.” After the book is read, the teacher can ask the students to retell the story as a group. The teacher could expand upon the narrator’s focus on the comparison of whales and dolphins, as noted below.

Whales and dolphins are the same in each of the following:
- by being mammals
- by being warm blooded
- by having a spout or blowhole
- by not being fish
- by having lungs, rather than gills
- by propelling themselves through the water with their tails
- by living in herds or pods

This book can be most effectively used...
- As a developmentally appropriate thematic unit on whales and dolphins through a Play-Based Curriculum.
More Classroom Strategies for *Whales & Dolphins*

Whales and dolphins are different in each of the following:

- by how dolphins can be found communicating with humans
- by how dolphins can jump over 10 feet out of the water
- by how dolphins can do amazing acrobatics

In order to expand upon the introduction, the second strategy is for use in the dramatic play area, which can be prepared to replicate the ocean. The center could contain a table, a table cloth, place settings, chairs, and a copy of the book. Students take turns meeting the large, three-dimensional whale and dolphin models and finding something in common as they make a connection of introducing a new sibling to the family.

The third strategy is for use in the writing center. This center holds blank paper, writing utensils, and a copy of the book. Students can draw a picture of what they feel it could look like for whales and dolphins living in the ocean. Younger students can dictate a sentence about their drawing to the teacher as she writes it down. Older children can write their own sentence or story underneath their picture or on a separate page.

In order to help integrate the book into the classroom and curriculum, the next strategy is for use in the sensory center. This particular center can feature a water table that has water in it, buckets, shovels, pretend food that whales and dolphins could eat, and small, three-dimensional whales and dolphins. Students can flow between the sensory and dramatic play center and experience life as whales and dolphins.

The fifth strategy is developing phonological awareness through reading groups or whole group instruction. The teacher can ask the students “What kind of words are /zap-trap/, /bubble-trouble/, /racing-chasing/etc….” If the students are unfamiliar with rhyming words, this would be a good lesson plan for introducing the concept to the children. And, if the students are familiar with rhyming, the class could find and list the rhyming words.

In order to reinforce rhyming words, the class could try a Shared Reading. The teacher could reread the book aloud to the students, leaving off the final word of each line so that the students could participate by saying a rhyming word.

**Age Level of Children:** Primary (1st Grade to 3rd Grade),

**Language Arts and Social Studies:** Using a Venn diagram, have the children compare and contrast Whales & Dolphins.

Read the book aloud to the students. After reading the book, write out on the whiteboard the things that whales & dolphins have in common, and also a few of their differences. Once you finish that, you can draw a Venn diagram, and the children can come up and put each thing from the list under the appropriate section.

**Closure/Reinforcement/Extension:** Using their own Venn diagrams, have the students come up with two things that they could compare. For example, students could compare sports, songs, movies, animals, etc. This can be a particularly good activity for pairs of children to undertake together.
What If You Had Animal Hair?

Author: Sandra Markle
Illustrator: Howard William
Publisher: Scholastic
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 32
ISBN: 9780545630856
Reviewer: Mia Mercurio

Ages: Kindergarten–3rd Grade

The Story

The layout of the story is simple and easy to follow. On the left page, an animal is introduced, and facts about the animal and its hair are noted. On the right page, a human child is drawn with that animal's hair, and a note shares some great feat that humans could accomplish if they had that type of hair.

Concepts in the Book
Importance of hair on a variety of animals, as well as on humans

About the Reviewer

Mia Mercurio is an Associate Professor in the Department of Special Education and Reading at Southern Connecticut State University. Her area of research focuses on the use of children's literature in the content areas, and she also is a reviewer of children's books for various publishing companies.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

This book is wonderfully written and illustrated. It contains a format that children will find entertaining and informative.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

I envision this book as part of an early childhood unit on animals, or a unit on the human body. If the unit focuses on animals, the teacher could assign each group of children an animal to research, making sure that each group can focus its research on the assigned animal's hair or fur. I would then read the story and have each group present its findings, and the children could compare their findings.

For preschool children, I would try to get material or fake fur samples to represent each of the animals from the story. The book would be shared as part of a unit on the human body, and I would talk with the children about what our hair is made of and what it does for us. As I read about each animal, the children could feel the samples and talk about how each animal's fur/hair could be useful to that particular animal.

The end of the book has informational pages that explain how hair grows and how we, as humans, take care of our hair. I would use these pages with younger children to talk about personal appearance and grooming.

With the primary age students, I would take samples of my hair (dyed), some of my dad's (grey), and some of my daughter's (red) and allow the children to see the samples under a microscope and note the differences. The children could also study the parts of the hair and the structure of hair, and what makes some hair straight, curly, or wavy.

This book can be most effectively used...

- During a unit on animals and compare each of these animals to humans.
What’s New? The Zoo!

Author: Kathleen Krull
Illustrator: Marcellus Hall
Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 40
Ages: 1st grade-3rd grade
Reviewer: C. Miki Henderson, Ed.D.

The Story

This book provides a tour of zoos around the world through the ages. It starts four thousand years ago with zoos in Sumeria and ancient China, India, Greece, and Ethiopia, as well the menageries of Kublai Khan, Charlemagne, Pope Leo, and the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II, and then progresses on to the modern period. Each zoo is described with appropriate facts. The book closes by telling of recent efforts to save species and reintroduce some of them into their natural habitats. The illustrations are in a cartoon style and feature multicultural children. Curious primary school children will enjoy learning about the contributions of zoos throughout the ages and the impact that they can still have on modern society.

Concepts in the Book
- Conservation
- Culture
- History
- Animal habitats and those found at zoos

About the Reviewer
Possessing twenty-seven years of experience in the education field, C. Miki Henderson, Ed.D., is currently an assistant professor of Early Childhood Education at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book

Primary age children could use this book for the factual information that it provides in a child friendly format.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas

Animals Around the World: Children may feel curious about animal origins after reading this book. You can invite youngsters to find out where their favorite animal comes from.

Habitats: Depending upon where animals come from, their habitats must be designed with their needs in mind. Using art supplies and empty shoeboxes, allow children time and space to develop the proper habitat for their favorite animal family.

Zoo Research: Using the Internet, assist children in finding a zoo’s website and checking out its details. Help the children become familiar with the zoo and its offerings. Children can play “tour guide” as they show their zoo to the class and share some of the fantastic things that they have found interesting.

Conservation Persuasion: In small groups, have children choose a national or international conservation cause to research. Each group will develop a brief persuasive presentation on their cause and create a poster motivating others to support them.

Zoos in Space: In pairs, children will create their own alien animal and habitat and draw it on paper. They will add their habitat to those of the other children from the class, creating a fantastical zoo!

This book can be most effectively used...
- In several different sittings, according to their particular curricular or time constraints, area of interest, and the children’s attention span. There are a lot of useful facts to glean from the book, and it could be used to aid children in planning their own projects or research interests.
Zoe’s Jungle

Author: Bethanie Deeney Murguia
Illustrator: Bethanie Deeney Murguia
Publisher: Arthur A. Levine
Year of Publication: 2014
Pages: 40
ISBN: 9780545558693
Ages: Pre-K-Kindergarten
Reviewer: Robbie B. Roberts

The Story
Similar to Max in "Where the Wild Things Are", Zoe uses her imagination to turn a negative situation, the dreaded five minute countdown before having to leave the playground, into an imaginary jungle chase after her sister, the Addiebeast. Minutes pass as her mother counts down, and the jungle gym becomes a swinging vine, and a balancing board becomes a shortcut for a river full of alligators, all used to help catch up to the Addiebeast just as mom calls out, "We're going now!"

Concepts in the Book
- Play
- Using your imagination
- Sisters
- An exploratory adventure

Why Our Reviewer Recommends This Book
Children naturally love to explore and use their imagination. This book models for children how anything you imagine, such as turning a playground into an imaginary jungle, is both possible and fun.

About the Reviewer
Dr. Robbie B. Roberts is director of the Harris Early Learning Center, a child development center of Auburn University, located in Birmingham, Alabama.

Classroom Strategies and Ideas
All suggestions are appropriate for preschool and kindergarten children, ages 3-6 years.

I Spy (Creative group activity with a twist): Children could use play binoculars (made in art from paper rolls) to play an exploratory version of I Spy. The twist would be for the children to each spy something in the classroom and to use their imagination so that they could describe what they see as something else. Friends can get three guesses of what each of the children is spying. If no one guesses correctly, the student will tell the other children what they are looking at and why it reminds them of the real thing that they are describing.

Any of the following could be used as an additional creative and introductory activity before the book reading: On a day with many puffy white clouds, have the children go to an outside play area/school garden, look at the clouds, and name what they can see in the cloud formations. This would be a nice introductory activity for modeling how to use your imagination prior to reading the book, particularly if the children also are allowed to create their own pictures.

Center/Playground: Depending upon the play area, either inside or outside, teachers could talk with the children about how they could change an indoor play area/center or the outside play area into something else. For example, Zoe imagined a jungle, and various play pieces and equipment on the playground were pictured as swinging vines, a river shortcut, and such things, and a climbing tunnel appears as a dense underbrush. Children could do the same thing on their own playground and decide what various pieces of their play yard equipment could represent. Taking that same imaginary play inside, a classroom center or loft could become a bear cave when studying camping, using blue paper on the floor for a river, artfully crafted fish, and a bridge formed so that children cannot fall in. Young children are only limited by their own imagination.

This book can be most effectively used...
- In a whole group shared book reading, followed by a discussion of ways that we can use our imagination and turn common things and situations into something new.
- It would be an excellent book to share when you feel as if you are having trouble getting children to finish their play and cleanup or line up for the next part of your school day.

(continued on next page)
More Classroom Strategies and Ideas for Zoe’s Jungle

Science and vocabulary: Many of the new and challenging words in the book are related to science and exploring. You can ask the children what they think any unfamiliar words might mean and relate the words to more familiar vocabulary, calling attention to such words as the following: explorer, glimpses, rare, elusive, creature, quest, mission, stealthy, dense, relentless, feat, ingenuity, and unfathomable. This will expand their understanding of the story and add to their growing vocabulary.

Math: Children always enjoy counting backwards, as well as trying to figure out just how long a certain amount of time is. Using a classroom timer, the teacher can set the timer in one minute increments for five separate periods. Each time that the buzzer goes off, the children can count down an additional minute, going from five down to one and then done. This will allow the children to practice counting backwards, as well as helping youngsters see just how long each one minute increments is. The activity could be useful for helping the children see how long they have to clean up before a new activity begins, or just how many minutes remain before finishing their playtime, like Zoe and Addie in the book.

Literature/Class book writing: The book ends with Zoe not feeling sad because play time is over; rather, she feels excited because it is now story time, and she has her new imaginary adventure to share! Using the final words of the book, "It all begins with a fearless explorer...", once the children have turned their play area into a new imaginary place for adventure, have them join in a shared book writing activity in which each child adds a new sentence or line to the class’ written adventure story.

Art: A variety of art media can be used by the children in illustrating their own class adventure book. Art and craft materials also are used when making binoculars for the "I spy" activity that appears at the beginning of this section.
Meet the Editor

A former private school teacher, Carrie Lewis is the Preschool Director of Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Day School in Virginia. Some of her favorite things about educating young children are introducing preschoolers to gardening and art and seeing how their language abilities bloom over the course of the school year.

Carrie holds an M.A. in English from England’s University of Reading, and she has fond memories of working with primary school children in the U.K. She also teaches Sunday school to preschool children at St. John’s Episcopal Church and enjoys volunteering on behalf of her local AEYC affiliate and Smart Beginnings, a United Way program that focuses on school readiness.

Carrie has also achieved the following honors:

- English Department's Writing Program Honors, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, VA, Spring 2006 and Spring 2009
- English Department’s Explication Essay Award, Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, Lynchburg, VA, Spring 2008 and Spring 2009
- Helen Owen Calvert Art Essay Award, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, VA, Spring 2008