

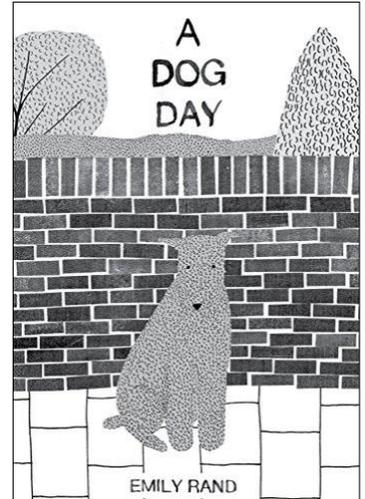
***A Dog Day* by Emily Rand**
Tate Publishing

Story notes by Gail Ellis

Story summary

The first time I read *A Dog Day* aloud was to a group of teachers in Warsaw on a training course. They were immediately drawn in by the beautiful black-and-white pen-and-ink drawings conveying an array of textures, tones, shapes and patterns in the urban landscape, making the illustrations as interesting to look at as listening to and predicting the rhyming story. As Lauren Child writes, ‘Notice how extraordinary the ordinary can be once drawn in black and white and bricks, pavements and tiles have been translated into pattern.’

This is a story about a day in the life of a dog, and the dog, an Airedale Terrier who we see sitting on the front cover, is waiting to go for his daily walk in the park. His owner, however, tests the dog’s patience by taking him on a number of errands before his walk. This is an easy-to-follow story told from the dog’s point of view in rhyming couplets across each double spread:



A Dog Day: © Emily Rand, 2014

He always has to stop and talk.
I thought that we were on a walk!

This is Emily Rand’s first book for children.

Before reading

Picture dictation and introducing the picture book

1. Tell children they are going to listen to a story about an animal and they are going to do a picture dictation to find out what the animal is. Copy the dog’s eyes from the illustration on the front cover onto a sheet of A4 paper, so that all children have the same starting point, and make copies for each child. Tell the children they need to listen carefully to your descriptions and to draw the animal. *Look at the animal’s eyes. Draw a rectangular head. Draw a small, black, triangular nose. Draw two triangular ears. The animal is sitting down; draw the animal’s body. Draw two front legs. Draw a short, narrow tail. Draw short, curly hair.* Repeat each instruction two or three times and use gestures/mime to help convey meaning. Ask, *What animal is it?* Elicit, *It’s a dog.* Show the children the front cover. Allow children to make any modifications they wish to their drawings.

2. Hold up the front cover and ask questions to set the context and to help children predict the content of the story and to elicit key vocabulary (*a pavement, a brick wall, trees, a park, a walk*). For example, *What can you see? What do dogs like to do each day? What do you think is behind the wall? Do you have a dog? Where do you take your dog for a walk? How often?* etc. Tell children they are going to listen to the story to find out about a day in the life of this dog.

3. Show the inside front cover and ask, *What can you see?* Elicit, *grass, leaves, a stick, a ball*. Ask the children if they find anything unusual about this picture book. For example, they may ask why the illustrations are in black and white.

4. Rhyming bingo.

You can introduce the rhyming words before children listen to the story by playing rhyming bingo or you can use this activity in the after-reading stage to consolidate the vocabulary. Introduce or revise the vocabulary in rhyming pairs. Please note, *below* and *hello* have been omitted in this activity. Each child will need a copy of the bingo board and 12 word cards. Copy the word cards onto coloured paper. The children arrange the board and word cards face up on their tables. Ask children to cover any three words on their board by placing the corresponding word card face down so that the blank side is facing up. Call out the words one by one. Children listen, find the rhyming word card and place it face up on their board. The first child to cover all nine words calls out *Bingo!* Ask the child to read out the words facing up on their board and the class to call out the rhyming word: *Ball – wall*, etc.

Reading the story

If possible, have children sit on the floor around you. Make sure all children can see you and the illustrations and can hear you clearly. If this is not possible, walk around giving all children the opportunity to look at the illustrations as you repeat the story. Repetition increases opportunities for exposure to the language and gives children time to work out the meaning.

- Read the title, *A Dog Day by Emily Rand*.
- First double spread. Give the children time to ‘read’ the pictures. Ask, *Where does the story take place?* Elicit, *In a town*. Ask them to notice the houses (terraced houses), the people, the car, the man on the bicycle, etc. and to show you the dog with his owner. Ask, *How do you think the dog feels?* Read the first rhyming couplet in a happy, excited tone.
- Second double spread. Get children to notice the inclined posture of the owner as the dog is striding ahead, pulling on his lead, eager to get to the park. Continue reading in an excited tone and accelerate your voice to convey the dog’s anticipation as they get closer to the park. *The park’s just there, behind that wall. I hope that he has brought my ball*. Get the children to notice the dog’s pointy, raised-up ears and tail and to say what this indicates. Ask, *Who is telling/narrating the story?* Check the children understand it is the dog.
- Third double spread. Read in a surprised and alarmed tone, *But hold on wait ... there’s the ...* Pause and point to the opening in the fence and invite children to predict *gate*. Get children to notice that the dog is now pulling from behind. Ask, *How do you think the dog feels?* Get the children to notice the dog’s ears. They are now flat, indicating his sadness and disappointment.
- Fourth double spread. We see a close-up of the dog from his vantage surrounded by people’s legs and feet. Read in a sad tone, *I really don’t like this busy street. Surrounded by people’s legs and ...* Pause and point to the man’s feet and invite children to predict *feet*.

- Fifth double spread. Now we are back at the man's vantage looking down. Read in a sad tone, *Looking down at me below, no wants to say ...* Encourage prediction of *hello*. Get children to notice the dog's ears, which are flat, and his tail, which is held low, indicating his disappointment.
- Sixth double spread. Give children time to look at the illustrations and to name the shops they can see, *a launderette, a greengrocer, a hardware or tool shop, a butcher's shop*. Read, *The high street is full of shops. So much waiting, so many ...* Invite children to predict *stops*.
- Seventh double spread. Point to the dog. Ask, *What do you think he is thinking? What can he see? Which shop is he in?* Now read in a frustrated, irritated voice to indicate the dog's impatience, *He always has to stop and talk. I thought that we were on a walk!*
- Eighth double spread. Back to the dog's vantage on the same level and viewpoint as the child in the pushchair. Get children to notice the dog's ears pulled back slightly and the child's smile and outstretched hand and to interpret what these signs indicate. They both want to be friendly. Read the next couplet in a bored tone.
- Ninth double spread. Ask, *Which shop is the owner in now? Where is the dog? Why? What is the owner doing?* Read in a miserable tone, *I'm cold outside, how long he's taking ... but is there someone else who's waiting?*
- Tenth double spread. Ask, *Where is the man now? How do you think the dog feels?* It is very enticing for the dog, with the park so close behind the fence. Read the text in a slightly angry tone, indicating the dog's growing impatience.
- Eleventh double spread. The poor dog is still waiting while the man chats to a friend. Ask children to look at the dog, with his ears pulled back, sitting and looking intently at his owner. Read in an exasperated tone.
- Twelfth double spread. The dog is finally in the park, off his lead and free to run with his friends. Ask the children how they think the dog feels now. *Happy and free*. Read in a relieved and happy tone and invite children to predict *friends*.
- Final double spread. Ask, *What is the dog doing now?* Elicit, *sleeping, dreaming*. Read with a sleepy, happy tone and rising excitement, as you read, *tomorrow we'll do it all again ...*

After reading

Thinking about and responding to illustration

The illustrations are full of detail, and children will almost certainly want to revisit them and talk about them. There are many cultural details to notice, such as the houses, the windows, the shops, the people's clothes, etc.

Introduce Lauren Child's words, chanting and using actions, and get children to repeat. Repeat each time you encourage children to notice details in the illustrations.

*The more you look
the more you see,
the more you see
the more you understand.*

Draw children's attention to the techniques the illustrator uses to convey textures like the dog's coat (curly hair), beards and hair, textiles, natural and mineral objects. Ask, *What shapes can you see?* (rectangles, squares, triangles, diamonds, S shapes, octagons, circles, stripes, checks, spots, flowers). *What do you notice about the details in the illustrations? What is the effect of the illustrations? How do the illustrations make you feel? How do the illustrations contribute to your understanding of the story?*

Re-read the picture book.

Developing empathy

Ask children to describe an occasion when they have felt impatient and to say why. How did they feel? How did they express their impatience? What did they do to control their impatience? How does the dog in the story feel? How does the dog express his feelings? Elicit, *Through his body language and the tone of his voice as he narrates*. Do they recognise and understand how the dog feels and do they empathise with him?

Draw an emotions and feelings map

Revise the feelings and emotions the children recognised throughout the story. Select from the words in italics below or include all, depending on the age and language level of the children. Ask the children to express the feelings and emotions with facial expressions and to draw the expressions on Post-it notes to create emotions and feelings cards.

If possible, in collaboration with the art teacher and the children, draw a map of the story on a large sheet of paper (lining paper is good) pinned to the classroom wall. Draw in black and white and in the style of Emily Rand, showing the street and houses, the park and fence, the pavement and people, the high street and shops, the hardware shop, the pavement and child, the butcher's shop, the café, the street and park, the park and dogs, the mat at home.

Ask children to track the dog's emotions from *happy and excited*, to *alarmed and surprised*, to *sad and disappointed*, to *frustrated, irritated and impatient*, to *bored*, to *miserable and angry and exasperated*, to *relieved and happy* and back to *excitement*, by sticking their Post-it notes on the corresponding image of the story map.

Acting out the story

A Dog Day lends itself well to acting out. It will give children practice in varying the tone of their voice to express different feelings and emotions. Rehearse the story first by completing the following activity.

Find your rhyming partner

1. Cut up the sentence strips and divide them among the children. There are 26. If you have more than 26 pupils in your class, pair up children; if you have less, give pupils two or three sentence strips. The children have to find their partner by using the rhyming words as clues.
2. Retell the story, and children listen and line up in the order of the narrative.
3. Children retell the story, using their sentence strips as prompts. Encourage them to adopt the corresponding tone when reading out their text, for example excited, happy, alarmed, sad, impatient, exasperated, relieved and happy.
4. When children are ready, divide the class into two groups, as chanting in groups will increase children's confidence and allow all to participate. Use the story map as a backdrop and ensure children vary their voices to convey the different emotions. Group A chants the first half of the rhyming couplet and Group B the second half. Ideally, arrange to act out the story to an audience, for example parents or another class of children. Two children could play the owner and the dog. Have a lead and a mask for the child who plays the dog. You could also introduce some of the other characters.

Personal response

1. Encourage children to reflect on their learning, participation and effort as well as their personal response to the picture book. Allow children to do this reflection in their own language, if needed, as this will allow greater participation and provide richer data.
2. Children complete the personal response sheet.
3. Conduct a discussion about children's personal responses to the picture book.

Home link – Black and white in nature

1. Ask children to retell the story to their family members. They can do this in their home language if necessary. This will involve the reprocessing of content, and allow the child to expand, extend and intensify what they have learned through one language in school through discussion with the family in the home language.
2. This activity encourages children to research animals which are black and white. It picks up on the theme of nature and the black-and-white illustrations. In class, ask children to give the names of any black-and-white animals they know.
3. Give out the worksheet for children to take home, and explain that they need to unjumble the ten words in the wall with family members to find the names of the black-and-white animals.

Do they know of any others?

Which is their favourite black-and-white animal?

Which is the favourite black-and-white animal of their family members?

Key: cow, zebra, horse, magpie, lemur, whale, Dalmatian, penguin, tapir, panda