

REALBOOK NEWS

for teachers and parents
helping children enjoy
learning English as a
foreign or additional
language

ISSUES 16 & 17

REALBOOKS are written to entertain and delight children. Real books is a name given to a category of picture books using authentic language, which are different from picture books written with graded vocabulary to help English children learn how to read English.

REALpictureBOOKS are part of most English speaking children's cultural experience. They include classics like Eric Carle's Hungry Caterpillar or Pat Hutchins's Rosie's Walk as well as newly published books. Every year many thousands of new picture books are published in the UK.

Today **REALpictureBOOKS** are becoming part of programmes introducing English to non-native speaking children. Children enjoy them; they help create the feel-good factor about learning English (see [Articles](#))

They provide stimulating experiences which match children's all-round learning needs and provide interesting experiences in which to pick-up English.

When children have opportunities to read and browse in their own time, children not only pick-up language (literacy) they also develop skills in getting information from pictures and different print styles (visual literacy, see [Articles](#).) Children who are used to reading an assortment of well selected **REALpictureBOOKS** develop confidence in using English and approaching new ideas. They also become more creative as they are exposed to the art and design of some of the best artists in Britain today.

Having, holding and reading a book at your own speed is important if children are to get the most from a book and consolidate their own learning. Young children like to return to a book over and over again; their threshold of boredom is different from adults and older children. Book browsing is a form of child-led play that is important for consolidating learning.

REALBOOK NEWS was founded in 1997 in response to requests for information on suitable **REALpictureBOOKS**.

REALBOOK NEWS selects the **Top Ten** books used by adults and a selection of newly published books for Nursery and Primary aged beginners in English (see [selection](#).)

Advice is also given on how to use **REALpictureBOOKS**

See [Using Realbooks](#). Back Issues – Issue 1 to Issue 17 can be found in [archives](#).

Using REALpictureBOOKS

When to use REALpictureBOOKS

- . Home Reading
- . Part of a lesson/an addition to a programme
- . For the entire lesson/ as the programme
- .

How to use REALpictureBOOKS

It is important that when a child sees a REALBOOK for the first time he can understand what it is about. If the language level is too advanced and pre-presentation has not been successful, a child could feel English is too difficult, become de-motivated and 'switch off'.

Presentation of a new book See [articles](#)

Presentation is most effective in sequential steps over a period of time :

- . Pre-presentation to introduce new vocabulary before a child sees the book.
- . Presentation of part or all the book
- . Re-presentation many times until the text is well known.
- . Follow-up activities where suitable .

Use the voice in presentation to aid learning and increase fun

- . stress exciting or vital language
- . alter the tone of voice to insert excitement and suspense
- . pause to give a child the opportunity to complete sentences or say refrains himself
- . use special 'parentese' language techniques to help children use and develop English naturally See [articles](#)

Reading REALpictureBOOKs

Read to children as often as they request. If you encourage and praise them, they soon join in finishing off words or phrases. If a short text is well presented and is at the right level for a child's English, a child generally picks up a lot of it after 5 or 6 readings on different days.

Follow up Activities □ Activities should be fun, with hidden learning. □ Activities can include:

- . drama - puppets, plays, group rhyme recitals
- . making books - copying stories or pictures, re-writing stories and personalizing them.
- . reading aloud together, taking turns.
- . Book browsing in a Book Corner

Don't overkill: REALpictureBOOKs have a magic for children. Young children do not understand and enjoy books in the same way as adults; it is difficult for most adults to get down to the same level as a child. ' *Tread softly because you tread on my dreams*'. William Butler Yeats (Poet and Playwrite).

Editorial Issue16 (shortened)

Issue 16 of **REALBOOK NEWS**, now only on the website, has been expanded to cater better for the needs of the increasing number of parents and teachers who want to get a **REALpictureBOOK** into the hands of children beginning to learn English as a foreign language.

New sections include Editor's Choice, my choice as Editor-Founder of **REALBOOK NEWS**, and also Top 10. These are books that have become such favourites with children that they know most of the story or rhyme text off by heart and take great pride in reciting it to any willing adult listener. Children love an audience!

Adults often ask about making their own collection of books and so I have included a section on Collecting Books. Where to buy books is another question that frequently arises from adults living outside Britain. All the books selected by **REALBOOK NEWS** are available on Amazon.co.uk at UK Book shop prices. To buy one or several just click on the Amazon links and you go through to www.Amazon.co.uk and make your order. You can pay by credit card.

For those of you who want to know more about how and what children can learn whilst enjoying picture books, please look in the Articles section which cover titles like Visual Literacy, Reading about Feelings and Books for Boys.

REALBOOK NEWS has been one of the organisers of an International Conference on **Learning English through Picture Books** this November

2004 at the International Youth Library, which is affiliated to UNESCO, in Munich. Housed in Schloss Blutenburg, 150 enthusiasts from 22 countries will hear presentations from researchers, methodologists and prize-winning authors and illustrators including Pat Hutchins, Tony Ross and Stella Blackstone. During the Conference participants will have the chance to view two different exhibitions sent by the British Council, The Magic Pencil and Imagine, and enjoy an evening reception sponsored by the British Council.

I will be reporting back on the findings of this Conference in my next editorial. Issue 17.

Enjoy the books together! Opal Dunn

Editorial Issue 17 (shortened)

Issue 17 of **REALBOOK NEWS** is the second edition to be only on the website. It aims to help the increasing number of parents and teachers who want to include **REALpictureBOOKs** in part of young children's programmes of beginning to learn English as a foreign language.

This Issue is the last that I will edit and publish as **REALBOOK NEWS** is being taken over by the EFL Unit of the Language Teaching Centre at the University of York. The next editor/ publisher I am proud to announce will be Annie Hughes, the Assistant Director of the Unit, who is also well known for her passion for picture books.

The 500 picture books reviewed in the last 17 Issues of **REALBOOK NEWS** have also been given to the EFL Centre and the collection will be available in York for students' reference and research.

My hope is that under the guidance of Annie Hughes the website will develop into a bigger resource and reach a wider audience world-wide.

The enthusiasm and networking generated from the Munich Conference on Learning English through Picture Books last November led participants to petition the British Council to organise a second Conference at the same place on the same lines in 2006. The Ludwig Maxmillans University, Munich, plans to publish the 16 research papers together with the Methodology Lectures and the final Plenary later this year (MAFF). The feed back has been exciting; some University Lecturers inform us that they have re-written their courses to include a module on using well selected picture books.

I include in this Issue books by the three illustrators and authors who lectured at the Conference and generously gave up time to get to know participants individually - Tony Ross, Pat Hutchins and Stella Blackstone, who is in fact Tessa Strickland, publisher of Barefoot Books. It is my hope that if you are organising regional Conferences you will think of inviting one of them. As we found in Munich, having speakers from outside the EFL world adds a new and stimulating 'cross-over' dimension.

The British Council recently published a pre-view of David Graddol's updated research on the position of English learning world-wide. According to Graddol, English is being repositioned as a 'basic skill' to be learned by Primary

School children alongside Information Technology, in preparation for learning other subjects in English at Secondary School. This has implications for those using **REALpictureBOOKS** as it is well known that these children are more confident users of English. They are generally more visually literate and understand more types of discourse. They also have a larger vocabulary which is important as English has a huge lexicon - a possible working vocabulary of around half a million words. French uses only about 200,000 and German around 150,000 words.

You may be interested in the discussion group [Tefl Kids@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Tefl_Kids@yahoogroups.com) started by Lucy Mellerish and helped by Susi Tueler, (who both presented picturebooks at the Munich Conference). They introduce one **REALpictureBOOK** each month and suggest related, useful activities.

I feel that the Munich Conference was a landmark confirming the importance and value of including **REALpictureBOOKS** in young children's English learning experience. The publication of the Conference Book (MAFF) will be important as it will take the Conference message to a wider audience. It is with this feeling of achievement that I handover to Annie Hughes and thank you for your support and enthusiasm over the last 8 years. Children need picture books and through reading for pleasure, you are sewing some seeds for a life-long love of books.

With very good wishes to you all,

Opal Dunn

Issue 17

Editor's Choice ...

Happy Dog, Sad Dog

Author **Sam Lloyd**

Illustrator:

Publisher: **Little Tiger Press**

ISBN: **18-5430-874-2**

Format:

Reading **Beginner**

Level:

School Level: **Nursery and lower
Primary**

Categories: **Story**

Great – simple message, humorous and a reasonable price, too! The comparison of opposites is made easier by the clear black-outlined graphic images of the dogs. Each spread is a complete experience that children can understand at their own level. The simple and easy-to-pick-up text uses one phrase *lots of dogs* and 13 words describing *dog: clean dog, dirty dog, and hot dog, cold dog, and awake dog, asleep dog*. The final spread ends with an empty kennel *no dog*.

Suitable for beginners of all ages; post beginners also enjoy it as a quick read. Try substituting cat for dog; children love it!

Top 10

Next Please

Author: **Ernst Jandl**
Illustrator: **Norman Junge**
Publisher: **Red Fox**
ISBN: **00-9943-933-6**
Format: **Paperback**
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Nursery and lower**
Level: **Primary**
Categories: **Story**

First published in Munich in 1970 this book still remains a favourite with children. Set in what is a common experience - a Doctor's waiting room, the Doctor turns out to be a Doctor who specialises in toys and the five waiting patients are all toys! One by one the toys file in to see the Doctor *Next please. One goes in.* (Turn the page.) *Two waiting.* (Turn the page.) and the door shuts.

But *Door opens. One comes out* and he looks so much better and happy, too. Going to the Doctor might be a good thing to do after all! (Turn the page.) *Next, please. One goes in.* and so it continues until *Next please. Last one goes in* and the reader can finally see the Doctor who is making all the toys better! The illustrations are set in the same waiting room, which enables the reader to count the sorry-looking patients whose faces show remarkable feelings as they wait patiently. The last toy *to go in* is a Pinocchio-like boy, who has broken his nose. Can the Doctor fix this? Most of the story is carried in the detailed pictures making this a good book for the first lessons in English.

Rosie's Walk

Author: **Pat Hutchins**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Mini Treasures**
ISBN: **00-9945-673-7**
Format: **paperback**
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story**

This is a mini-picture book edition of the well-known classic by award-winning Pat Hutchins. First published in 1968, this children's pocket sized book costs only £1.50 – less than many birthday cards..... This is the story of Rosie, a beautiful brown and yellow hen. *Rosie, the hen went for a walk. (Turn the page) across the yard, (turn the page) around the pondover the haystackpast the mill....through the fenceunder the beehives* and all this time she was so confident she never looked round to see if any one was following her. On each spread a sly old Fox manages to get closer to Rosie and the reader might think that on the final spread Rosie will be gobbled up by the Fox, but no! *Rosie got back in time for dinner.* The very detailed illustrations show what really happened. This easy-to-pick-up text, rich in prepositions of place, makes this a great story for children who know about country-life and bees!

Conjuror Cow

Author: **Julia Davidson**
Illustrator: **Nick Sharratt**
Publisher: **Puffin**
ISBN: **01-4056-848-4**
Format: **Paperback**
Reading Level: **Post Beginner**
School Level: **Nursery and lower**
Level: **Primary**
Categories: **Rhyme/Song, Novelty**

Everyone's waiting. The lights have gone low. So open the curtains.... (turn the half flap to add suspense) ... and on with show! Join the animals in the audience and wait for Conjuror Cow's magnificent magic show to begin.

Abracadabra and Rat-a-tat-tat! I can make a white rabbit.... (turn the half page)...come out of this hat. But oh dear, no white rabbit popped out of the top hat, but a bunch of flowers instead. *Abracadabra excuse my mistake. I'll make that white rabbitturn the half page) come out of this cake!*

But no white rabbit! Twice more Conjuror Cow tried and finally the audience shouted *Open your cloak Conjuror Cow. Yes! Open it now!* And Conjuror Cow did and guess what was inside. *Lots of white rabbits taking a bow!* A delightful well rounded story told in easy to understand rhyming language by award- winning Julia Davidson. Nick Sharrat's fun illustrations create the feeling of theatre showing how the animal audience reacts to each scene. A wonderful beginning from which, individual or class drama can develop naturally, if it is encouraged with a few simple props.

Susan Laughs

Author: **Jeanne Willis**
Illustrator: **Illustrator Tony Ross**
Publisher: **Anderson Press**
ISBN: **08-6264-896-3**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Post Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story**

NASEN Special Educational Needs Children's Book Award
2000

Susan is a sweet little girl. She can do all the things most little girls and boys can do.

Susan laughs, Susan sings, Susan dances, Susan hides

A natural way of listing all that Susan can do in the simple present tense, which can lead on to children comparing themselves with Susan and listing all they and others can do. For example I laugh, I swim or Hilda laughs, Hilda runsand so on. But what a surprise to see on the last page that Susan, who can do all these things, is sitting in a wheel chair. *That is Susan - through and through - just like me, just like you.*

Tony Ross's crayon illustrations are easy for children to decode and copy. The double spread showing Susan doing an addition sum and getting it wrong, and then solving it another way, will make many children and adults smile. Susan's right, Susan's wrong, Susan's weak, Susan's strong. This book has a strong, relevant message conveyed without sentimentality. It is easy to use, even with beginners, though some teachers might like to save the surprise ending for the second presentation. Through sharing this simple book you will probably find out a lot about how the children in your class think and feel. Also Red Fox ISBN 0 09940756 6

Cluck, Cluck Who's There?

Author: **James Mayhew**
Illustrator: **Caroline Jayne-Church**
Publisher: **The Chicken House**
ISBN: **19-0343-494-7**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Novelty**

Hattie the hen laid an egg and, lift the flap, it is hidden in the straw underneath. Cluck said Hattie. Hattie, the white hen, laid another egg Cluck cluck, she said. And then another egg Cluck, cluck, cluck. Hattie sat on her three eggs and waited. Lift the flaps over the windows to see how long she waited. One day she heard a noise. Tap, tap, tap! Who's there? Cheep, cheep, cheep and out popped three little chicks. But Hattie lost the chicks. Did the mouse who looks on in each spread have something to do with this? Lift the flaps to find out. This well-rounded simple story with easy-to-pick-up language is attractively illustrated with cleverly situated flaps-ups that blend into each picture.

How Kind!

Author **Mary Murphy**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Walker Books**
ISBN: **18-4428-466-2**
Format: **paperback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School Level: **Nursery and lower
Primary**
Categories: **Story**

Mary Murphy's lively, black outlined, colourful animal drawings, all with communicative eyes make this amusing repetitive tale come to life. *Hen gives Pig an egg. How kind, said pig. Pig kept the egg safe and warm. Hen is so kind he thought I would like to do something kind too.*

Pig gave rabbit a carrot. This is for you Pig said. How kind, said Rabbit. Pig is so kind thought Rabbit I will do something kind too.....

And so the story continues with a Cow and a Cat and a Puppy until Pig says to the Puppy *Would you like to see my egg? Puppy looked at the egg and said, It's nice. What is it for? CRACK went the egg. CHEEP went a chick.....*and they took the chick back to the Hen. Can you guess what the Hen said? A great story to dramatise using a few props, a narrator and the 7 animals. Hopefully the phrase *How Kind* will be absorbed into class and family language and used when appropriate!

Mr Cool

Author/illustrator: **Hildegard Muller**
Publisher: **Cats Whiskers**
ISBN: **19-0301-204-X**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Post Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story**

Originally published in Germany this eye-catching book is about 3 bears, Spotty and Spike and Growly Mike, who play together happily. One day Spike finds a scooter *It's super* and off he goes.

Before long he turns into *Mr COOL!* and goes off by himself, *I'm Mr Cool and I want to ride on my scooter.* His friends are sad, *Spikes so cool, he won't play with us any more.* And then *CRUNCH!* Guess what? But all is well, as his good friends know how to solve the problem. The vibrant illustrations, which sometimes spread to both pages, are full of humour. The deceptively simple text laid out in an easy-to-decode fun way, underlines the importance of friends. A vibrant modern story with a message, which primary children of any level will understand. It's a cool experience!

All Kinds of People

Author **Emma Damon**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Tango Books,
London**
ISBN: **18-5707-067-4**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Post Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story, Novelty**

What makes you or anyone special? Do you look like your best friend? No you look like you!

People come in all different skin colours. Some people have short hair. Others have long hair.

Some people like to dance. Others like to paint.

There are as many different kinds of people in this world as there are clouds in the sky and fish in the sea. But EVERY ONE IS SPECIAL, including me!

This story ends with a chart to be filled up, which includes Name. Height. Weight, Skin Colour, Hair and Hobbies, with a built in mirror on the back cover to help. This humorous picture book helps children to think positively about themselves and warmly about others of different races and backgrounds. For many children this book sparks off projects. Some create their own simpler flap-up books about their family, their looks as well as likes and dislikes!

An island in the Sun

Author: Stella Blackstone
Illustrator: Nicoletta Ceccoli
Publisher: Barefoot Books
ISBN: 18-4148-192-0
Format: hardback
Reading Level: Post Beginner
School Level: Any
Categories: Story

This beautifully illustrated book with colours that evoke the oceans is based on the game 'I spy with my little eye'. The rhyming, cumulative text takes you on a journey with a young boy, who sets sail for a distant island with only a fishing rod and a telescope. As he makes his way across the ocean, he uses his telescope. *I spy with my little eye an island far from me and a dolphin jumping free and the sun in the sky and a bird flying by. And on the island someone is waiting for me on the beach beside the sea. Together we laugh, together we play. Together we fish 'til the end of the day.*

What did I spy with my little eye? And shall we sail home now, just you and I?

His newly found friend was a little dog. Many boys will relate to this story and others may dream of having their own pet dog that goes everywhere with them. The language of this adventure is soon picked-up and some boys might like to act the story solo, borrowing a soft toy dog from a sibling.

Reciting this story-poem could be a deep and lasting experience for some boys. A lovely book - 'this is the stuff that dreams are made of'

In the Dark, Dark, Wood

Author: -
Illustrator: **Jessica Souhami**
Publisher: **Frances Lincoln**
ISBN: **07-1121-692-4**
Format: **paperback**
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story, Novelty**

A shortened version of the traditional rhyme illustrated with colourful, clear illustrations that are likely to stimulate children's imagination and creative ideas.

I'm going to tell you a really spooky story, so listen carefully to me

In the dark, dark wood,/ There was a dark, dark house, Hoo-hoo-hoo! Haa-haa-haa!

Although you cannot open the front door, lift-up-flaps make it possible for the reader to open the ground floor, first floor and attic windows and see the frightening animals waiting for them! Turn the page and you are into the dark, dark room and then turn over again to the dark, dark cupboard, then the dark, dark shelf and turn again to find the box on that shelf and finally on the last page you find the ghost who lives in the box. Watch out for the scary hand that beckons you on each page.

Children enjoy joining in the chorus *Hoo-hoo-hoo Haa-haa-haa* from the first time you read it aloud and soon pick up the repetitive language. A fun book for browsing over and short enough for children to copy to make their own books, with or without the flaps, but with the scary white hand that beckons you on each spread.

New Books ...

Hurry, Hurry, Mary Dear

Author: **N.M Bodecker**
Illustrator: **Erik Blegvad**
Publisher: **Simon and Schuster**
ISBN: **06-8986-122-2**
Format: **paperback**
Reading Level: **Early Readers/Reference Books**
School Level: **Primary up to the age of 10 years**
Categories: **Story, Rhyme/Song**

Hurry, Hurry, Mary dear, fall is over, winter's here. Not a moment to be lost, in a minute we get frost! In an hour we get snow! Drifts like houses! Ten below! Detailed watercolour illustrations by a Danish-American artist illustrate the hilarious nonsense-rhyme about poor frenzied Mary written by his Danish-American Art School friend. Through this rhyme we can learn about country-life preparations for the cold of winter before we had today's technology. Poor Mary rushes around as she is pushed by her husband to hurry as he sits in his rocking chair complaining of exhaustion *These winters are severe. Hurry, Hurry* and Mary did, but not to do what you or I or her husband expected! There is a moral to this rhyme which is ideal for class choral speaking divided into two groups one giving the husband's endless instructions and the other for the voice for poor exhausted Mary. A valuable insight into country life at the turn of the century, which can lead to interesting comparisons and cross-curriculum studies.

Merry Christmas. A Superdog Adventure

Author **Raphael Thierry**

Illustrator:

Publisher: **Anderson Press**

ISBN: **18-4270-419-2**

Format:

Reading **Post Beginner**

Level:

School Level: **Nursery and lower**

Primary

Categories: **Story**

A thought provoking tale written in simple, spoken language that is easily transferable to the classroom. *Hey, you've got a surprise coming! Reindeer wearing his Santa hat says to Superdog. Who me? Yes, you. It's Christmas.* Superdog could hardly believe it. *What could it be?* So Superdog goes through his wish list *Perhaps a new collar? Or a new post? as he was often tied to a post or maybe a nice soft bed? Or actually I wouldn't mind a bit of freedom!* he said looking at his lead that tied him to his post. Suddenly a superb Christmas present dropped in front of him *and a voice from above cried Merry Christmas.* Superdog opened it with a pair of scissors and at the same time cut his lead! *Hey I'm still here!* the post said. And Superdog forgot about Christmas as he went, in spite of his newly found freedom, to hug his post. *It's true Superdog is just too attached to his post.*

The framed superb crayon outlined drawings convey feelings and allude to Christmas. The book printed on high quality muted-green paper is an ascetic experience which children are likely to remember for many Christmas to come.

Albert

Author: **Lani Yamamoto**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Frances Lincoln**
ISBN: **18-4507-056-9**
Format:
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story**

Older children might be excused for feeling that this smallish book, with simple print and naïve-style black outlined drawings, had been created by another child. Far from it; this first in an Albert series introduces simple philosophy asking some of the challenging questions that interest children.

One rainy afternoon *Albert had done everything. There was nothing left to do*, and since it was still raining, *Albert began to think.....*

If I am in my house..... and my house is in the street.....near the park In the town....and the town is in the country And the country is on the earth...and the Earth is in the universe.... Then what is the universe in?

Although his mother shouts from downstairs *What are you doing? Albert was already on the way to his biggest adventure yet*. Guess what?

A child-friendly experience which is likely to fascinate children of all ages, especially boys. Follow up by making universe pictures with children looking up into the sky from their little classroom in a school, in the playground in a street, in a town ... An ideal way to practice prepositions of place whilst provoking thought.

Bob

Author **Tracey Campbell**
Illustrator: **Pearson**
Publisher: **Cats Whiskers**
ISBN: **19-0301-269-4**
Format: **paperback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School Level: **Nursery and lower**
 Primary
Categories: **Story**

Bob was a superb black and white feathered rooster who *lived with a bunch of chickens. The chickens clucked all day long, and so did Bob, 'Cluck, cluck, cluck.'* One day Henrietta, the black and white cat, *told him the truth.*

You are a rooster . You must stop clucking and learn how to crow. That's what roosters do.

Will you teach me? asked Bob. No said Henrietta. I am a cat.

I can only teach you how to meow. So Bob learned to meow and then he met a dog and learned to WOOF-WAG Bob went on to meet other animals until finally he met an animal called Fred, who looked like Bob. Fred taught Bob how to crow and off he went home as proud as proud could be. But one night a fox came to the hen house and, as loud as Bob crowed, the Fox was not frightened. So Bob finally had a good idea that managed to frighten the Fox away.

Beautiful colour wash detailed paintings add to the countryside feel of this story. A popular story with boys, this is a fun story to act.

BEEGU

Author **Alexis Deacon**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Red Fox**
ISBN: **00-9941-744-8**
Format: **paperback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories: **Story**

A unique and moving story about a yellow, outer space creature called Beegu lost on earth and looking for her mother. Beegu, with three eyes and very long ears, soon found *no one seemed to understand her*. She spoke another language and *Wouldn't someone stay still to listen. From far away she thought she heard her mother calling..... But it wasn't her. Beegu didn't like being alone. She needed to find some friends and she did at last* –some snugly puppies in a box!

One full moon night *she thought she heard her mother calling* and this time *it was*.

Re-united with her parents, Beegu explained about earth creatures *some were big and unfriendly, but there were small ones who seemed hopeful. Beegu would always remember those small ones*. A captivating story which subtly deals with emotions helping readers to relate an outsider, who experiences rejection, loneliness, parting and re-union. The short and fairly repetitive text is supported by black outlined drawing. set in wide-open spaces and coloured in attractive muted retro-like colours. Great for dramatisation or making your own 'stranger on earth' book. A multi-layer tale, that should lead to interesting discussion. Good for browsing.

A Bird-Brained Hen

Author **Jessica Souhami**

Illustrator:

Publisher: **Frances Lincoln**

ISBN: **07-1122-026-3**

Format: **paperback**

Reading **Post Beginner**

Level:

School Level: **Nursery and lower**

Primary

Categories: **Story**

A simple re-telling of the traditional tale of Henny Penny, the foolish hen, who thought that the sky must be falling, when an acorn accidentally fell on her head.

One day an acorn fell, BOP! on Henny Penny's head. OOF! she said What was that? And she looked up. The sky must be falling she said. I must go and tell the King. So Henny Penny hurried along. And very soon.....she met Ducky Daddles. Hello, said Ducky Daddles Where are you going? I'm going to tell the King that the sky is falling. You can come too. So they hurried along. And very soon

On their way they were joined by Ducky Daddles, Cocky Locky, Goosey PooseyAnd very soon..... they came to Foxy Loxy's house. Hello, said Foxy Loxy. Where are you all going? Come in ... Foxy Loxy was making soup.....

The repetitive phrases make this an easy-to-pick-up story and ideal for dramatisation.

Children love to copy Souhami's simple stylised collages of animals, which always include some humorous touch.

Go wild with OPPOSITES

Author: **Neal Layton**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Chrysalis**
ISBN: **18-5602-484-9**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story**

Just 12 words of text and humorous outlined illustrations sure to make any reader, especially boys, laugh out loud. Go wild with

Hard a crab with eyes popping out on stalks ready to nip you and soft a cuddly appealing kitten with a yellow bow waiting to be picked up.

Big an elephant squinting to look at the little white mouse with pink ears looking with fear in her eyes up at the huge, unkindly looking elephant.

Other opposites are slow-fast, prickly-smooth, curly-straight and last of all a cock crowing for noisy and a grey rabbit for quiet.

These easy-to-pick-up words can be transferred by children to make their own illustrations of their favourite opposites or, if there is time, their own mini-book of 5 or 6 spreads.

Children generally have plenty of other ideas of opposites; make a list of them and include happy and sad. Never mind if they say them in home language, just translate them into English and add them to the list.

Living in Australia

Author: **David Hampton**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Franklin Watts**
ISBN: **07-4964-643-8**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Early Readers/Reference**
Level: **Books**
School Level: **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories: **Information**

The clear photographs and simple text broken into key facts make it easier to find out about everyday life in Australia. From Canberra, the capital, to living in the outback and from shopping to family life, there is a lot to interest children in this introduction to Australia. Ideal for Project Work or preparing for holidays. Other titles in this series include Italy, France, India and Kenya.

Red Rockets and Rainbow Jelly

Author: **Sue Heap**
Illustrator: **Nick Sharrat**
Publisher: **Puffin**
ISBN: **01-4056-785-2**
Format:
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Any**
Categories: **Story**

Another exciting book created by two award-winning authors and illustrators, Sue Heap and Nick Sharratt. A wonderful romp through Nick and Sue's favourite coloured things is a natural way to introduce the use of colours as adjectives in English. First we are introduced to Nick and Sue. *The Nick likes red apples. Sue likes green pears. Nick*

likes yellow socks. Sue likes yellow ducks. Nick likes orange hair. Sue likes purple hair and purple flowers. Nick likes brown bears and black cats. Sue likes black and white cats and black and white hats..... The colours are vibrant. On every page or spread Nick Sharratt has included either Nick or Sue and introduced his typical humour. The story ends with *Sue likes Nick and Nick likes Sue.....* Easy to transfer to making personal lists of colours *I like..... My mother likes My brother likes.*

The Flyaway Alphabet

Author **Mary Murphy**

Illustrator:

Publisher: **Egmont**

ISBN: **14-0520-535-0**

Format: **paperback**

Reading **Early Readers/Reference**

Level: **Books**

School **Primary up to the age of**

Level: **10 years**

Categories: **Story, Rhyme/Song**

Award-winning author/illustrator has created an unusual book that will appeal to children who are beginning to write in English and know the alphabet letter names but are having difficulty with the letter sounds. This is a natural and fun way to find out how the addition of letters to alter the spelling of a word also alters the sound. The alphabet letters have escaped from the cage when the Keeper was cleaning it and the old lady Alphabet Keeper is trying her best to catch them in her fishing net. *The letters land in the park. The Alphabet Keeper sneaks up But **p** turns upside down and the **park** turns into **bark**. Then **b** turns backwards and the **bark***

*becomes **dark**. I can't see them!* says the Alphabet Keeper and the letters fly away again. So she chases them by bus and **h** flies down and turns the **bus** into a **bush**. Then she takes a boat and so she goes on until *she nets them all hiding in a cloud. You can all stay in here, she says. But **t** turns **here** into **there** and there they are, free again!* Did the Alphabet keeper ever get them back? Playing with words in this way gives children confidence and builds on their ability to play with the 26 Alphabet letters to make some of the 44 sounds in English. The text is simple and easy to pick and dramatise. A book that encourages children to start their own play with rhyming sounds.

How to catch a star

Author **Oliver Jeffers**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Harpercollins**
ISBN: **00-0715-033-4**
Format: **hardback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories: **Story**

A little boy loved stars so much that every night he watched them from his bedroom and wished that he had one of his very own. One day he decided that he would try to catch a star but first he had to work out a plan. *He thought that getting up early in the morning would be best, because then the star would be tired from being up in the sky all night So, the next day he set out at sunrise. But he could not see a star anywhere. He sat down and waited for one to appear.* Finally when he saw a star he *tried to grab it* and after trying

many ways to get closer to the star he gave up. Then he thought he would get a seagull to help him, but the seagull was not co-operative. At last he saw something floating on the water. *It was the prettiest star he had ever seen.* How did the boy catch the star and have *a star of his very own?* The short text is supported by very simple scenes, that children can easily understand and copy. A delightful story that sparks the imagination, and stimulates ideas on how to catch

Boy

Author: **James Mayhew**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **The Chicken House**
ISBN: **19-0444-218-8**
Format: **hardback**
Reading Level: **Early Readers/Reference Books**
School Level: **Primary up to the age of 10 years**
Categories: **Story**

The first in a series of atmospheric book experiences, that transpose you into the life of a prehistoric Boy living in a cave with his parents. *Boy woke up. It was cold in the cave. Where's warm said Boy to his Ma and Pa.* But Boy didn't want to share his parents Bed with them and so *went outside and waited for the sun to come up. Boy went through the leafy green forest and sat in a tree. Here's warm, he thought. GRRRRRRR said a hungry Sabre-Toothed Tiger This is my place, you can't stay here. So Boy ran off and sat in the long tall grass. Here's warm, he thought. Taroooooot said a*

Woolly Mamouth This is my place, you can't stay here!
So Boy went on and met a Sleepy Dinosaur who also told him *This is my place, you can't stay here. So Boy ran over the hill and up a mountain Here's warm, Here's very warm* but he didn't know it was a fiery hot volcano and soon it began to shake. So boy ran back through all of the places he had come by until he reached his cave and climbed into his parents' bed. The repetitive story language makes this easy-to-pick-up for any child that has some knowledge of pre-history. The muted colours of the pastel pictures help to create pre-historic Boy's world to which many Boys will easily relate.

Twenty-Four Robbers

Author: -
Illustrator: **Audrey Wood**
Publisher: **Childs Play**
ISBN: **19-0455-035-5**
Format: **paperback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories **Rhyme/Song**
:

A traditional skipping rhyme with a strong beat to which children easily respond. An old lady, owner of a house describes how Twenty-Four Robbers keep coming back to her house not to steal but to ask for things.

Not last night, but the night before... Twenty-four robbers came knocking at my door. I asked them what they wanted. And this is what they said..... H O T Hot Peppers!!!! I gave them my peppers, and then they rode away. But

twenty-four robbers came back the next day. After the woman had given them many things they decided to reward her generosity. They re-cap on all that she had given them including Hot Peppers and then they give her a pot of hot pepper stew. On each spread the detailed black outlined vibrant illustrations portray the lively but scary Twenty-Four Robbers.

A great rhyme to say aloud in two parts with the woman narrator and the Twenty-Four Robbers. A story with a message that sharing is better than stealing.

Pass the Parcel

Author:	Sue Baker
Illustrator:	Annie Kubler
Publisher:	Childs Play
ISBN:	19-0455-029-0
Format:	hardback
Reading Level:	Beginner
School Level:	Any
Categories:	Novelty

A fun adaptation of a traditional party game called Pass the Parcel. *Mouse has brought a parcel, but no one knows who it is for as it hasn't a label. It looks as though it's for you! Open it!* So the reader turns back the two flaps to reveal another layer of wrapping *Oh no! It's for someone else. But who? Pass the parcel!* Snake comes along and goes through but it isn't for him, so once again *Pass the parcel!* The game continues with six more animals until it comes to Elephant. By now the parcel is considerably smaller and in the shape of a star. *What can it be?* Passing the parcel each time means that same phrases are regularly repeated. With each

un-wrapping the shape of the parcel changes introducing children to various mathematical shapes the names of which are shown for reference inside the front cover. Children love this interactive experience and if given browsing time play the game quite happily by themselves repeating the language as they open up the flaps. Next time you have a Birthday in the class wrap up a small present in several layers of newspaper and Pass the Parcel round the circle until the music stops. The person holding the parcel when the music stops, can open one layer of newspaper. The child who un-wraps the last layer round the present keeps it!

Meg's Mummy

Author: **Helen Nicoll**
Illustrator: **Jan Pienkowski**
Publisher: **Puffin**
ISBN: **01-4138-071-3**
Format: **hardback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories **Story**
:

Meg and Mog was first published in 1972. Since then there have been 12 stories about the Witch called Meg, the cat called Mog and the white Owl. This new story is based in Egypt. Meg and Mog *Fly up the Nile and they landed on a pyramid. My, what a view! Meg says but oh dear wobble, wobble. The cauldron toppled over. Mog was inside the cauldron and was badly hurt. Meg bandaged Mog up but an*

Egyptian from the Museum thought Mog was a cat Mummy from the Museum's collection and returned her to the Museum. Imagine Meg's surprise to find she had lost Mog. She dashed into the Mummy Museum to see if she could find Mog. She eventually found Mog but then how could they escape? Meg decided to make a spell and *a boat appeared*. Meg reached the boat by stepping on *a crocodile* and, saying *Salaam (Goodbye)* they sailed home. An exciting, well-paced story told simply in a few words of text and speech bubbles with Pienkowski's well-known minimal cartoon-like illustrations, which over 30 years later still attract children.

Benjamin's Portrait

Author: **Alan Baker**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Happy Cat Books**
ISBN: **19-0328-593-3**
Format: **paperback**
Reading Level: **Post Beginner**
School Level: **Nursery and lower Primary**
Categories: **Story**

After a visit to an animal Portrait Gallery, Benjamin says *Why don't I paint myself? It looks quite easy. Paint, canvas, water, brush Now it's up to me. First a pencil sketch. Now to brighten it up. PAINTS. Oh dear. What a mess!* Benjamin had to clean himself up and fell into the water. *Now back to work. But Benjamin was not satisfied. There must be a way to get a perfect likeness. Photography...I shouldn't have any*

trouble with that. Just hold steady and ...CLICK! But that didn't work either. Guess why? A delightful book with simple text that leads on to drawing portraits, and also taking photo portraits, without making Benjamin's mistakes, and then comparing the two.

The Mole Sisters and the Moonlight Night

Author **Rosalyn Schwartz**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Happy Cat Books**
ISBN: **19-0328-593-3**
Format: **paperback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories: **Story**

The world is a beautiful place and anything can happen on a beautiful moonlight night. Pastel drawing introduce us to the two Moles sisters and show them carrying a leaf on their heads to the water to make a boat from which they gaze at the moon in the night sky. Oh look. A shooting star. Quick let's make a wish. Mmmm mwah as they put their pink little snouts together to make a wish to go to the moon it worked! We're on the moon. Imagine that! Moles on the moon and as they looked down they said The world really is a beautiful

place Then they saw another shooting star and wished again and they were back in their little boat looking up at the moon. *That just goes to show anything really can happen on a beautiful moonlight night.....* Softy illustrated in pastel this is an easy to understand celebration of beauty and hope. There are three others about the cute Mole Sisters and their thoughts.

Marvin Wanted More

Author **Joseph Theobald**
Illustrator:
Publisher: **Bloomsbury Children's
Paperback**
ISBN: **0747564-481-7**
Format: **paperback**
Reading **Post Beginner**
Level:
School **Primary up to the age of**
Level: **10 years**
Categories **Story**
:

Marvin, the sheep, is not very happy as he is smaller than all the other sheep and he was feeling gloomy. *What's the matter asked Molly one of the other sheep. I can't run as fast or jump as high as the other sheep. I'm too small, it's not fair. Molly said, But I like you as you are, but Mrvin was not satisfied. So when all the other sheep had finished eatingMarvin ate some more. He ate more, he grew bigger and bigger..... until he could not stop!* Every time Molly said

You're getting too big, he said Just a little bit more. Marvin munched the forest, gobbled up mountains and drank lakes until he ate the world Then Marvin had a surprise He was all alone. He had gone too far. What did he do? All ends well as Molly says I like you just the way you are and Marvin has learned the lesson that he has to make the best of how he is. The colourful illustrations support the simple text introducing us to the world as seen by Marvin

If you're Happy and You Know It!

Author: -
Illustrator: **Jane Cabbera**
Publisher: **Gullane**
ISBN: **18-6233-411-0**
Format: **paperback**
Reading Level: **Beginner**
School Level: **Nursery and lower**
Level: **Primary**
Categories: **Rhyme/Song**

Monkey asks *Are you feeling happy today? Join me and my friends for some sing-along fun.....* Sing the song using the familiar words but *Clap your hands* with monkey, *stamp your feet* with pink elephant, *nod your head* with giraffe, *roar out loud* with lion, and so on until you have sung along with 9 different animals. If you are not feeling happy and exhausted by the end of this, make it into a game singing the verse and then adding the name of the animal. Children who get the wrong action drop out of the game and help you judge. Once children know the words of the song they will find that they can read the words easily if you give them the opportunity to spend time looking at the book by themselves.

Collecting Books

Children need time to browse and read books at their own speed, turning the page when they are ready instead of when the adult reader is ready. This is a form of child-led play, which is necessary for children if they are to absorb an experience fully.

Children may want to do other things with a book if they know they have it for themselves over several days. They may want to copy the pictures in the book, copy the text or use the text as a base to write their own text for a new story. In order for them to succeed, help them to put the paper together to make the book. Sometimes children use up all their energy and time cutting paper to make the book that none is left for copying or writing their own story, copying the picture and enjoying the picture book!

Collecting may be for:

- . Starting a home collection
- . Starting a class library
- . Starting a classroom collection as a classroom resource
- . Starting a book circle for adults or children

Adults like to get together and discuss picture books; many want to know more about the books their children are reading. Reading together with other adults in a group is fun and adds different dimensions to the experience.

Funding

Books are expensive. Paperback editions are always cheaper. Suggest to parents that you are going to make an order and they, or the grandparents, might like to buy at least a copy of their child's favourite book. Books make lasting Birthday or Festival presents.

Some PTA (Parent Teachers Associations) have funds to buy books. Some PTAs hold Fairs or Charity Bazaars to collect money to support Class Libraries.

Availability

Books can be bought through Amazon Book Co on line.
www.Amazon.co.uk

Orders can be paid for by credit card and will be sent directly to your home address in any country.

Articles

Articles written by Opal Dunn and published as Feature Articles in **REALBOOK NEWS** .Issues 3 – 15

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