

Pie Corbett's Reading Spine

The books for the 4–5 age group build on the Nursery selection. They still mainly use patterned language, but begin to have a stronger emotional connection with the reader. There is also plenty to discuss and to wonder about. Many of them lend themselves to retelling and creating new versions or further adventures featuring the same characters.



Owl Babies

Martin Waddell (Walker Books)

By now children should be familiar with the conventions of books such as cover, author, page-turning, as well as terms such as word, letter, full stops/capital letters, title, story and so on. Draw the distinction between the person who wrote the book and the artist. There is plenty for the children to discuss, especially the graded reactions of the three baby owls. Martin Waddell talks about getting the idea for the book from hearing a lost child in a supermarket crying, 'I want my Mummy'. This is a great book about basic feelings and comfort. Draw, paint or make huge owls. Make owl masks and act the story out as it is being told.



The Gruffalo

Julia Donaldson (Macmillan)

Everyone loves this book! Read and re-read it until the story is in the children's heart forever. Ask: *Why do the animals ask the mouse to come to their houses? Why does the mouse tell the animals about the Gruffalo? How is mouse really clever? Why is the Gruffalo 'bursting with laughter'?* Map the story to see the pattern and retell with plenty of actions. Use puppets/finger puppets to retell the tale. Make a Gruffalo den/corner. Paint an enormous Gruffalo picture.

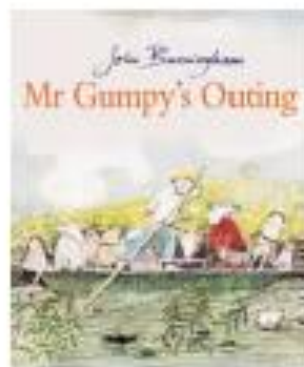


Handa's Surprise

READ & RESPOND

Eileen Browne (Walker Books)

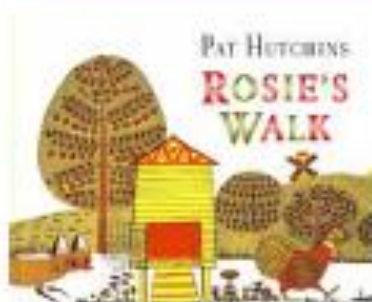
This is another picture book, like *Rosie's Walk*, in which the pictures say more than the words. Make the effort to buy the fruit to show the children. Draw or paint the animals and fruit. Retell the story and act it out, using a wallpaper map. Change the animals and fruit to invent a new version. Discuss what we know about Kenya from the story. (See the *Read & Respond* titles for further ideas.)



Mr Gumpy's Outing

John Burningham (Bloomsbury)

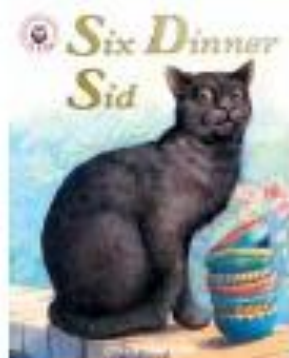
Another cumulative tale that can easily be used to make your own version. Ask: What happens when everyone comes for a ride another day? Use a roll of sturdy lining paper and draw a long map. Use this to draw the different animals and write what they say inside speech bubbles. Ask: Who in the story is naughty? Should Mr Gumpy have been more sensible? This is a lovely story to chat about and play at. Provide the toy animals or puppets and a floor map.



Rosie's Walk READ & RESPOND

Pat Hutchins (Random House)

This is a clever book. Try reading it to the children without looking at the pictures. Then show the book and enjoy the slapstick. Ask: Is Rosie clever or is the fox silly? Pick up on any design or pattern that interests the children and imitate with crayons or paints. Draw the map, notice the prepositions and create new journeys with a fierce animal following! (See Read & Respond title for further ideas.)



Six Dinner Sid

Inge Moore (Hodder)

It would be worth talking about pets and the vet before starting the story. Then read and enjoy the beautiful art work. Make the houses out of cardboard boxes and play at the story. Ask: Why would the cat want six dinners? Why don't the neighbours talk to each other? Discuss the six different characters and then invent new ones, using alliteration, such as: As Cervo he was curious... Hold pretend phone calls between the vet and the owners about their cat, and then make up what the owners would say to each other about Sid! Ask: How are the people in Pythagoras Street different and why was this better?



Mrs Armitage

Quentin Blake (Random House)

Oh, the joy of Mrs Armitage! Make sure that you bring a real bike into the classroom! Read and all chant the story together. Discuss the pictures and words. Draw a huge basic bike and add extra ideas like Mrs Armitage. Recreate the bike in the classroom by starting with a chair and then add on all the things that are in the story. Finally, add sound effects and perform the story. Ask: What might be added to the roller skates?



Whatever Next? **READ & RESPOND**

Jill Murphy (Macmillan)

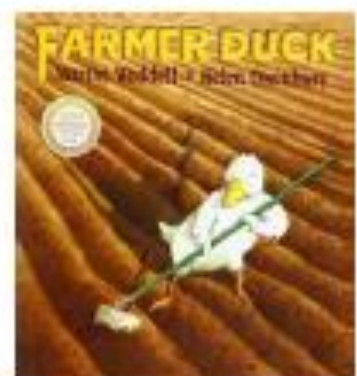
Show the inside title page. Ask: *What sort of character will the bear be? The story is an obvious invitation to wonder how could we make a rocket, where would we travel and who would we meet? Such play could lead to new versions of the story ('You and your stories. Whatever next?'). Ask: Did Baby Bear really travel to the moon? Where did the story take place? (See the Read & Respond title for further ideas.)*



On the Way Home

Jill Murphy (Macmillan)

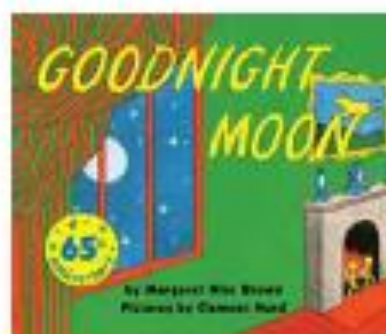
Look carefully at the front cover and ask: *What do we think is going to happen in the story? Act the story out with children taking the different roles. Ask: Why doesn't Claire tell the truth? Why does she cry at the end? Notice how each mini story fits the basic story mountain pattern – main character, dilemma, resolution. With the class create your own versions, map, retell and write.*



Farmer Duck

Martin Weddell (Walker Books)

This is basically Animal Farm for five-year-olds. Compare the inside cover spread at the front with the back – and the cover – what do they think is going to happen? Then look at the inner title page for more clues. Act out the animals moaning. Tell the story of what the farmer did next. Ask: *What did the animals say? Did they all set to work? Set up a farm area for play. Write messages to the farmer!*



Goodnight Moon

Margaret Wise Brown (HarperCollins)

What other stories have a moon in them? (Owl Babies, Where the Wild Things Are, Can't You Sleep Little Bear?). Make a list of all the things in your classroom and say: In the classroom there was a clock, chair, a sand tray, a computer and lots of tables. Then say good night to all those things and extend each idea – present this as a list poem. For example: Goodnight clock that ticks. Goodnight chair where we can sit. Goodnight sand tray where we play each day. This is a gentle and comforting story for the end of the day. Let children take it in turns to read or tell the story in a role-play area to a baby – and NOT just the girls. Let them learn to be comfortable with a book at an early age.