

Lāvalava

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Overview

In this personal report, Sofi, a Sāmoan girl, introduces herself and her family and explains how they all wear their lāvalava for different purposes. This text is also available as a big book, and there is an audio version on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2007*. This text has strong links to many other Ready to Read texts about families, special clothing, or diverse cultures.

Suggested purposes

This book supports a wide range of comprehension strategies, including making connections, summarising, identifying main ideas, and analysing and synthesising. It provides opportunities to practise recognising high-frequency words, decoding and cross-checking, and making meaning of sentences that have more than one idea. It's also a good model of a report.

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the information about when lāvalava are worn
- the information about what the family likes to do
- the strong family relationships
- the structure of the text as a report with an introduction, a series of main points, and a conclusion
- the complex sentences running over more than one line
- the highly supportive illustrations
- the first-person narration
- the names for family members – “brother”, “dad”, “grandad”, “grandma”, “mum”
- the Sāmoan words “kilikiti” and “lāvalava” and the macron in “lāvalava”, which indicates a long vowel
- the name “Sofi”
- the strong framework of high-frequency words – “a”, “am”, “for”, “he”, “I”, “in”, “is”, “my”, “She”, “the”, “This”, “when”
- the repeated initial letters in “dad”, “dances”, “dog”; “family”, “for”; “mum”, “my”; “walk”, “wear”, “wears”, “when”
- the initial consonant blends in “brother”, “grandad”, “grandma”, “plays”
- the digraphs “sh” – “She”, “she”, “she’s”; “th” – “brother”, “This”, “the”
- the pronouns “he”, “I”, “she”
- the present-tense verbs – “dances”, “plays”, “sings”, “takes”, “wears”
- the use of the contraction “she’s” on page 7
- the siapo flower panel on every double page.

Introducing the text

You could listen to the audio version to confirm how to pronounce the Sāmoan words before using the text with the children. If you think the content and the Sāmoan words are likely to be unfamiliar to your children, you could share-read the big book version with them before using the smaller version for guided reading.

Have a lāvalava to show the children. Encourage them to try it on and to demonstrate the different ways it can be worn. Pasifika children in particular may relish the opportunity to discuss such a familiar topic. *Where else have you seen a lāvalava?* Note that lāvalava worn in church have a special name – ‘ie faitaga.

If you have no Sāmoan children in the group, make connection to the children’s experiences of wearing special clothing for particular purposes, such as cultural or family celebrations or playing or watching sport.

The first reading

These notes are suggestions for using this book for guided reading. If you’re using the big book for shared reading, encourage the children to read along with you, and increase the level of support.

Introduce the cover. *I’m interested in what we can find out about this girl by looking at this illustration.* Have the children think, pair, and share what they can find out from the illustration. Read the title together. Discuss the purpose of the macron and practise saying “Lāvalava” correctly. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Listen to the children read the title again.

Remind the children of the strategies you want them to focus on during the reading. Listen to them read the text themselves, providing support and feedback as necessary. Observe their use of the visual (print) information, particularly the initial consonants and the verb endings (inflections), when decoding and *cross-checking*.

Page 2 – Model the correct pronunciation of Sofi’s name. Speculate who the various family members in the illustration might be.

Page 3 – If the children focus on Dad’s guitar playing rather than the singing, direct them to cross-check by sounding out “sings”. After reading, clarify the two ideas in the sentence (that Dad wears a lāvalava and that he wears it when he sings).

Page 4 – *Who is this page about? **When** does Mum wear her lāvalava?* You may need to tell the children the word “kilikiti” and explain what it is. *What have you found out about lāvalava so far?* Review the children’s use of the focus strategies.

Page 5 – If necessary, support the children in sounding out the initial blend for “brother”. Write some familiar “br” words, such as “bring” or “brown”, on the whiteboard to reinforce this. Review which family members Sofi has introduced so far and encourage the children to predict who she might introduce next.

Page 6 – If the children use other words for “grandad”, prompt them to cross-check. *Could that word be “grandfather”? Look at the end of the word.*

Page 7 – You may need to prompt the children to draw on their knowledge of spoken English to support them with the change in sentence structure. *What’s Grandma doing? That’s right, she’s ...* On the whiteboard, show how the apostrophe replaces the “i” in “is” to form the contraction. *I’ve noticed that Sofi hasn’t told us about her lāvalava yet. I think there was a clue on the front cover, though ...*

Page 8 – Have the children review their prediction about Sofi’s lāvalava and then encourage them to read this page independently.

Summarise the information in the text – *Tell me what you’ve learnt about lāvalava*. You could create a T-chart with the names of the family members listed on one side and the purposes for wearing their lāvalava on the other. Together, create a summary sentence about Sofi’s family, for example, “Sofi’s family all wear lāvalava for different reasons.”

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text by themselves, observing their fluency and phrasing when reading the complex sentences, how they manage the changes in text structure on pages 7 and 8, and their self-monitoring and cross-checking.

If you’re using the big book, invite emergent readers to locate high-frequency words or to find the words that start with “d”, “f”, “m”, or “w”.

Discuss the information (in the text and illustrations) that helps the reader identify what Sofi and her family are doing on each page. Encourage the children to make connections between this family and what they like to do with their own families.

What have you learned about Sofi? What does Sofi think about lāvalava? Draw out the idea that Sofi thinks lāvalava are special and wants to tell us about them.

Discuss the main ideas about lāvalava in the text. Refer to the T-chart and the summary sentence that you created earlier. *What other ideas does this chart suggest to us about lāvalava?* This activity involves combining the information about the lāvalava in the text with what the children already know to come to a conclusion (synthesising). *Would it be just Sofi’s family who wear lāvalava? Why do you think people might choose to wear lāvalava?* Help the children to form some conclusions (or generalisations), for example, lāvalava are worn by both males and females; they can be worn for many different purposes; they can be worn in different ways; they are comfortable; and they are bright and colourful.

Review the main ideas about lāvalava and make connections to the children’s own experiences of clothing that is special for family or cultural reasons. The discussion could centre around hats, dress-up costumes, sporting gear, clothing for special occasions or celebrations, or comfortable clothing that everyone in the family likes to wear, such as trackpants and T-shirts.

Focus on any of the initial letters or initial consonant blends that the children may have had difficulty with. Locate words in the text that start with the focus letter or blend and list other words that start the same way. You could draw attention to the homophones “wear” and “where” and explain that some words sound the same but are spelt differently and have different meanings.

Model the sound that the digraph “th” makes in “brother”, “This”, and “the”. Remind the children that in order to make this sound, they must put their tongues out! Think of other words that have the “th” sound and say them together, articulating carefully.

Reread pages 4 to 7, focusing on the gender-specific use of the pronouns “She” and “He”.

Reread page 7 and discuss the use of the contraction “she’s”. On the whiteboard or in the group reading book, show how the apostrophe replaces the “i” in “she is”. Reread the sentence, using “she is” to show how contractions make writing sound more natural.

Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audio versions on the CD *Readalong 2007*.

Read the big books *Number 10 Tāwai Crescent* (about an extended family and what they like to do) or *T-shirts* (about a family who love to wear their t-shirts). *Diwali* and *White Sunday in Sāmoa* (both at Purple) show children wearing special clothes on special occasions. Draw out the ideas that as well as considering some clothes to be special (for example, favourite clothes), people often wear particular clothes for particular purposes.

Read or reread other family stories, for example, *Car Shopping*, *Greedy Cat is Hungry*, *“Smile!” said Dad*, *The Race*, and *Time for Bed* (all at Red).

Innovate on the structure of the complex sentence, for example, “I wear my sunhat when I play outside”, “I wear my lāvalava when I dance”, or “I wear my yellow and black scarf when I watch the Hurricanes.”