

Training Ruby

by Jane Buxton

illustrated by Richard Hoit

Overview

In this text, a boy proudly demonstrates how well trained his dog is until finally, temptation proves too strong and Ruby runs away with some sausages. This text supports the comprehension strategies of making connections, analysing and synthesising, and evaluating. It provides many opportunities to practise cross-checking and to focus on regular and irregular past-tense verbs. The repetitive structure provides support for less confident readers. There is an audio version on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2005*.

Curriculum links: science

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words “and”, “come”, “I”, “said”
- the rimes in “jump”, “sat”, “Sit”, and “Stay”
- the initial consonant blend “st” in “Stay” and “stayed”
- the verbs ending in “ed” – “jumped”, “stayed”, “walked”
- the irregular past-tense verbs “ate”, “came”, “sat”
- the use of imperative verbs
- the use of speech marks
- the opportunities for expressive reading
- the repetitive structure
- the relationship between the boy and his dog
- the links to other books about mischievous pets
- the storyline carried by the illustrations
- the humorous ending.

Setting the scene

Do you (or does someone you know) have a dog? Do you (they) take it for walks? How do you (they) make sure the dog behaves?

Check that the children understand what “training” means. *What are some of the words people use when they want their dog to do something? What do they say when their dog does what they want?*

The first reading

Look at the cover. *What is the boy doing? What do you think the title might be? If the word was “training”, what letters would you expect to see at the beginning? How would it end?* You may need to tell the children Ruby’s name. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Listen to the children read the title again. *What does this illustration tell us about Ruby?*

Listen to the children read the text themselves, offering support as necessary.

Page 2 – *What do you think the boy is telling Ruby to do?*

Page 3 – *Is the boy pleased with Ruby? How do you know?*

Page 4 – If the children say “sit” or “sitted” for “sat”, prompt them to cross-check using the “at” rime. *Where do you think they’re going?*

Page 6 – Some children may say “Stop” or “Sit” for “Stay”. Prompt them to cross-check. *Look at the ending. Could this word be “Stop”? Is Ruby sitting down? Why does the boy want Ruby to stay?*

Page 8 – If necessary, support the children with the irregular verb “came”. *Does “comed” sound right?*

Page 12 – Note that the children discover Ruby’s misbehaviour before the boy does.

Page 13 – *How would the boy say this?* Encourage expressive reading!

Is Ruby a good girl? What will the boy do now? Why is it important to train a dog?

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their use of strategies and their ability to read with expression. Check that they’re articulating the “ed” endings.

Locate some of the high-frequency words in the text. *Find me the word “and” on page 2. How do you know that’s the right word? Can you find it on page 4? Can you write “and” without looking at the book?*

Focus on the initial consonant blend in “Stay” and “stayed”. Make a list of other words that start with “st”.

Have the children generate new words by substituting initial consonants or blends for the “at”, “ay”, “it”, or “ump” rimes. Write the words in a list so the children can see the pattern. Read the list together. *Which word is “rat”? How do you know?*

Show the children how they can apply their knowledge of “ed” verbs to their writing. Write the word “walk” on the whiteboard. *Show me how you can make “walk” into “walked”. Find the word “walked” on page 2. What letters can you see at the end? Were you right? Now, how do you change “stay” into*

“*stayed*”? Repeat the process of having the children visualise and confirm several times. Have the children add “ed” to some verbs that aren’t in the text. During subsequent writing sessions, remind the children to draw on what they’ve learnt about adding “ed”.

Reread the pages that include irregular past-tense verbs. Remind the children that not all verbs can have “ed” added to them and that they will need to draw on their knowledge of spoken English. *Does “sitted” sound right? Practise making up some oral sentences together that use the verbs “ate”, “came”, or “sat”.*

Talk about the purpose of the speech marks in the story. *How do you know what the boy said?* Talk about the use of exclamation marks to show the reader how to make the words come to life.

Ask the children to find the words where the boy tells Ruby what to do. You could introduce the term “imperative verbs”. Remind the children of the use of imperative verbs when writing instructions.

Browse through the illustrations together, encouraging the children to tell the story of the boy’s journey with Ruby. Encourage the children to compare the story with their own experiences of dogs.

Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audio version on the CD *Readalong 2005*.

Read or reread *Dog (Red)* and compare the characters of Dog and Ruby.

Read or reread *The New Cat (Magenta)* and *Greedy Cat is Hungry (Red)* and enjoy the connections to Ruby’s behaviour.

Have the children write or draw the next part of the story.

Have the children draw pictures of themselves training a dog. Add speech bubbles, using commands from the text.

Innovate on the text, adding in new commands for Ruby and her trainer. For example, “I said, ‘Run’, and Ruby ran.”

Make magnetic letters available for the children to generate their own rhyming lists using selected rimes from the story.