

Happy Birthday

by Robyn Reid

illustrated by Jennifer Cooper

Overview

Emma is turning six and everyone in the family has their own special way of saying “happy birthday”. When she gets to school, her class sing to her. The joy and excitement of birthdays are clearly captured in this cheerful text that children will find easy to relate to. The use of high-frequency words and repetition and a close picture-text match are supports for the reader but there are also subtle text changes that require children to pay close attention to print. The simple interest words on each page provide opportunities for children to practise their decoding skills. There is an audio version of this text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2002*.

Curriculum links: social studies (celebrations)

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words “a”, “Dad”, “it”, “Mum”, “my”, “said”, “with”
- the repeated initial letters “b”, “s”, “h”
- the digraphs “ph” – “phone”; and “th” – “with”, “birthday”
- the initial consonant blends “cl”, “fl”, “sm”
- the compound word “birthday”
- the repetitive text structure
- the use of speech bubbles
- the names of the family members
- the split picture on page 5
- the inclusion of the familiar “happy birthday” song
- the use of italics and musical notes to indicate that the text is to be sung
- the extra information provided in the illustrations (Emma’s name on the title page and her age on page 4)
- the warm family relationships portrayed in the illustrations.

Setting the scene

Talk about birthdays with the children. *When it’s your birthday, how old will you be? What are some things that people do to help you celebrate your birthday?*

Responses might include the giving of presents, singing, or making a birthday cake. If necessary, feed in some ideas that don’t involve buying things. *Do you remember what happened at kindergarten (or other early childhood centre) when you had a birthday? Did the children sing to you?*

The first reading

Look closely at the cover illustration. *What is the girl holding? Who might have given her the presents?* Encourage the children to attempt the title. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – *What is the child’s name? How do you know?* Listen to the children read the title again.

Page 2 – You may need to ask carefully targeted questions to help to establish the pattern of the text. *What is Mum saying? What is Mum doing? Did she just say “happy birthday”? How did she say it? Read the page and tell me.* If the children say “cuddle” for “hug”, encourage them to cross-check using the initial consonant.

Page 3 – *What is Dad saying? Look at Dad’s face. What is he doing? How did he say “happy birthday”?* Listen to the children read pages 3 to 7 themselves, offering support as necessary.

Page 4 – *How old is Emma? How do you know?*

Page 5 – Observe which children notice the change in text structure to “on the phone”.

Page 8 – *Where is Emma now? How will her class say “happy birthday”?* Listen to the children read page 8. Look at the inside back cover. *Why is this written in italics?* You may need to explain that the symbols decorating the page are musical notes. *How does the writer want you to read this page?* Enjoy singing the song together.

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text. Observe their attempts to self-monitor, cross-check, and read expressively.

For children who need more work with initial letters, locate words in the text that begin with “b”, “s” or “h”. Make a list of other words that begin with the same letter.

Find the word “phone” in the text. Write it on the whiteboard. *What sound do these letters make in this word?* Talk about other “ph” words, such as “Philip” and “photo”.

Find the word “smile” in the text. *Can you think of other words that begin with “sm”?* Make a list together. Do the same for “fl” or “cl”.

Locate the word “with” in the text. Focus on the “th” ending. *What sound does this word end with?* Show the children other examples of words with the same ending, for example, “teeth”, “bath”, “mouth”, or “cloth”. *Can you hear this sound in the word “birthday”?*

Locate the compound word “birthday” in the text and show the children how it is two words joined together. Think of other words that have “day” at the end of them, for example, “today”, “yesterday”, “Sunday”.

Focus on page 4 – *What do you think it says inside the card?*

Look closely at the illustrations on pages 2 to 5 and talk about the family relationships shown on each page. For example, *What is Dad doing on page 2? Who is Ben? What is Mum doing while Emma is talking on the phone?*

Suggestions for further activities

Listen to the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2002* and read along with the book.

Make birthday cards for a family or class member who is having a birthday. Say and write “happy birthday” in other languages.

Explore different ways of sending birthday messages, such as by fax, email, a banner, or a message on a cake.

Innovate on the text structure. For example, you could make a class or group Thank You book – “Ben said it with a smile.” “Emily said it with a picture.”

Draw pictures of birthday celebrations and add speech bubbles.

Make a play dough birthday cake. Wrap “presents” at the construction table. Write gift tags for the presents.