

Going to Grandpa's

by Ngaere Campbell
illustrated by Donovan Bixley

Overview

In this humorous narrative, Baby starts crying when the family set off to Grandpa's place. Her brothers try everything to cheer her up, but nothing seems to work. There is an audio version of this text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2007*.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of making connections, forming and testing hypotheses, inferring, and analysing and synthesising. It's useful for monitoring children's decoding and cross-checking. The rhyme and quirky humour encourage reading aloud.

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the clear narrative structure
- the quirky humour (and opportunities for inferring) in the text and the illustrations
- the lively, expressive dialogue
- the repetition in the structure and the refrain
- the rhythmic nature of the text on pages 4 to 13
- the large number of rhyming words
- the high proportion of decodable text
- the initial consonant blends in "cried", "drive", "Grandpa", "Grandpa's", "place", "tried"
- the verbs ending in "ed" – "cried", "laughed", "tried"
- the use of the conjunction "as" on page 8 to indicate two simultaneous actions
- the possessive apostrophe in "Grandpa's"
- the contractions "He's", "Here's"
- the compound words – "somewhere", "Grandpa".

Introducing the text

Model your thinking about the cover illustration. *I'm thinking about where this family is going. That baby doesn't look very happy ...* Encourage the children to share their experiences of car trips, especially those that involve younger siblings. Have them read the title to confirm the family's destination.

The first reading

Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – *If I link this to the picture on the cover, it makes me think that this story is going to tell us something about the baby ...*

Listen to the children read the text themselves, offering support as necessary. As the story unfolds, encourage the children to think about what they would do in the same situation.

Pages 2 and 3 – Focus on the illustrations first. Draw out the idea that they confirm that the story is going to focus on the baby. If the children read “house” for “place”, direct them to cross-check using the visual (print) information. If they read “cries” for “cried”, remind them of the past-tense syntax (*What **did** the baby do?*) and to cross-check the end of the word.

These pages set the scene. *Who is telling the story? Show me the sentence that tells you that.* Review the problem and ask the children to predict what the boys will do.

Pages 4 and 5 – These pages establish the rhythmic structure of the text. *I wonder what Mum is saying ...* Note that if the children need support with decoding or cross-checking the words on page 4, they will find a high level of support in the page 5 illustration. *Have the boys solved the problem? What would you do next?* Use magnetic letters to draw attention to the onsets and rimes in “boys” and “toys”, “tried” and “cried”.

Pages 6 to 13 – Encourage the children to revisit their predictions in the light of the characters’ increasingly exasperated facial expressions!

Discuss the strategies the children are using to work out unfamiliar words, for example, to decode “Wipe”, using the rule that the vowel “says its name” when the word ends with “e”; noticing the “tick” in “tickle”; or recognising “where” (or “some”) in “somewhere”.

Pages 14 and 15 – Check that the children are attending to the “s” endings on “Here’s” and “Grandpa’s”. *Do you agree that she’s a “poor Baby”?*

Page 16 – Discuss how everyone is feeling, especially the boys!

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their integration of strategies and their use of expression.

Focus on the narrative structure. Identify the introduction, the problem, the repeated attempts at resolution (the complications), and the conclusion. Draw out the idea that the writer doesn’t provide all the information (why Baby cries and why she stops, or how the characters are feeling) so that the reader needs to infer, drawing on: their own experiences of babies and car trips, what the text says, and the information in the illustrations.

Analyse the writer’s style. *How does the writer make this story so much fun to read?* You could discuss the humour in the repeated attempts to stop the baby crying, the repeated refrain, the rhythm on pages 4 to 13, and the use of rhyme.

Focus on the illustrations. *How does the illustrator help the writer to tell the story?* You could discuss the cartoon style, the facial expressions that reveal the characters’ feelings, and the changes in setting as the family drive along.

Discuss the use of the conjunction “as” on page 8 to indicate that two things are happening at the same time. *What two things are happening in this sentence?*

Create new sentences using “as”, for example, “I can clap my hands as I stamp my feet.”

Allocate roles and use the text for Readers’ Theatre, with the whole group joining in with “We tried. The baby cried.” Remind the children of the function of the speech marks.

Identify and list the pairs of rhyming words. Use magnetic letters to create other examples. Discuss the words that rhyme but have different spelling patterns (“nose”, “toes”; “bear”, “there”).

Focus on any initial consonant blends or digraphs that caused difficulty. List other words that start the same way.

Locate the verbs that end in “ed” and identify the root words. Discuss how the “y” in “cry” and “try” changes to an “i” to form “cried” and “tried”. Compare this with the past-tense form of the regular verb “laugh”.

Briefly explain that the possessive apostrophe in “Grandpa’s” in the title and on page 14 is there because the place belongs to Grandpa. Note that in the title, the word “place” is implied. You could make connections to the children’s own use of oral language, for example, “Those are Tim’s [shoes]” or “I’m going to Ruth’s.”

Reread the sentences containing the contractions “He’s” (page 12) and “Here’s” (page 14). Show how the apostrophe replaces the “i” in “is”. Reread the sentences, replacing the contractions with “He is” and “Here is” to show that contractions make speech sound more natural.

Suggestions for further tasks

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

Read or reread *T-shirts (Yellow)*, another rhyming text about a family and also illustrated by Donovan Bixley.

Add thought bubbles to each character in the illustrations on pages 8 and 16.

Together, generate new rhyming words, building on the rhyming pairs in the text. This could be an oral or written activity.