

Laying Solid Foundations for Learning

Parent and teacher notes to support the stories

Story 1: Afro Ant's adventure

Introducing the story

Read page 1 of the story. Discuss the illustrations and the frustration on Afro's face. Why is being small so hard for him? Ask children to talk about similar experiences they may have had.

Reading skills

Identifying the initial sounds of letters:

Say Afro Ant's name out loud a few times. Ask your children what they notice about his name. (The initial sound of both names begins with the sound 'a'.) Ask them what else starts with 'a'? Go through the first few letters of the alphabet and get the children to make up names – for example, Big Bob, Clever Candice, etc.

Comprehension questions

- Why was Afro Ant so tired of being small?
- What did he decide to do about it?
- Why was the bus drive home very bumpy?
- Do you agree with his final conclusion? Say why.

Activity

Call out five words (pick four words beginning with the same sound, and one word starting with a different sound). Say them slowly. Ask your children to tell you which word is the odd one out. Let them explain why. (This is an auditory discrimination activity.)

Story 2: Vusi and the vuvuzela

Introducing the story

If possible, blow a vuvuzela for the children before reading them the story. Chat about the sound it makes; ask them to describe the sound and how it makes them feel. Look at the illustrations on the first page – ask whether the people are happy and discuss why they are not. Read the story and chat about the ending.

Reading skills

Identifying the beginning, the middle and the end of a story:

Ask your children to re-tell the story, describing what happened at the beginning, the middle and the end of it. Ask them why they think every story needs a beginning, middle and end.

Comprehension questions

- What did Vusi do that made everyone upset?
- When did he play his vuvuzela?
- Do you think it was a clever idea for his father to get him Bafana Bafana tickets? Why?

Activity

Get your children to act out the story, but changing the beginning, the middle or the end.

Story 3: A surprise for Gogo

Introducing the story

Ask your children if they know what a surprise is. Ask if they like surprises – and if so, why. Encourage them to talk about a special surprise that they gave someone, or a special surprise that they received. Then read the story together. Talk about what Gugu did and why they think she did it.

Reading skills

Identifying vowels and consonants:

Try to put up a poster or chart that lists the five vowels. Explain to your children that vowels are similar to builders: vowels build words, and without them no word could exist. Go through the story and search for the vowel 'a', the consonant 'g', the vowel 'e', etc.

Comprehension questions

- How old is Gogo now?
- What presents was Gugu thinking of getting her?
- Who came to the party?

Activity

Play a 'Surprise!' game. Hide an object somewhere in the room. Give one child three clues about where to find it – for example, 'it's near the window', 'it's under the pillow', 'it's closest to the door'. The child has to find it and when s/he does, the rest shout out 'Surprise!'

Story 4: Dirty Duduzile

Introducing the story

Read the story and chat about the illustrations. What did Duduzile have to do before she found her doll? What lesson can we learn from the story? (Keeping tidy and clean is very important for a healthy body and mind.)

Reading skills

Long and short vowel sounds

Call out these words from the story – 'top', 'run', 'doll', 'mom'. Ask children to name where they hear the vowel sound. Is it long or short? (These are short). Then call out these words – 'look', 'like', 'wave', 'smile'. How are they different? Are they long or short? (These are long).

Comprehension questions

- Where did Duduzile look for her doll?
- Where did she find it?
- How did Duduzile get so dirty? How did she clean up?

Activity

Call out a word from the story. If it starts with a vowel, children must stamp their feet and say the sound. If it starts with a consonant, children must clap their hands and say the sound.

Story 5: Mmmm, mud pies

Introducing the story

Read the title. What are mud pies? What would they taste like? Ask children to predict what they think will be happening in this story, judging from the pictures on the first page. Read the story and chat about the events as compared to their predictions.

Reading skills

Syllables

Call out a few words from the story and get children to clap out the syllables. For example, 'mud-dy', 'mar-ve-lous', 'spi-nach' etc. Read a sentence out loud, then select a word and clap the syllables without saying the word. Children must guess the word you thought of.

Comprehension questions

- What is Mondy doing?
- What is his favourite meal?
- What made his sister lose her appetite?

Activity

'Mondy is making a marvellous muddy meal.' Ask children what they notice about this sentence. This is called alliteration or a tongue twister. Ask children to make a tongue twister about meat, potatoes and spinach. For example, 'Peel potatoes please!'

Story 6: Proud to be me

Introducing the story

Chat to children about people; are we all the same? How are we different? Tell children that the story is all about people around us that are different in some way, but they are the same inside – they have a heart and need love and friendship – just like us. Read the story and chat about it.

Reading skills

Rhyming words

The story is written as a poem, with rhyming words at the end of each line. Call out some rhyming words from the story – ask children to say what they notice about these words. Chat about their final sounds as these are what make them rhyme. Call out a word and get children to brainstorm as many rhyming words as they can.

Comprehension questions

- How are May and the little boy different to us? What can they do?
- What does Jason like best of all?
- What is a 'Proudly Me Parade'?

Activity

Give children a piece of paper and get them to decorate it with pictures of things they like about themselves. They can also paste items, such as the wrapping of a favourite chocolate, photographs of their family etc. They can then chat about their page. Place all the pages together to create a friendship book.

Story 7: Ntombi Hippo

Introducing the story

Get children to chat about the illustration on the cover. Can they tell what the story will be about? Where does it take place? Who is in the story? Read the story and then compare actual events with the story.

Reading skills

Beginning and ending sounds

Call out a word from the story, for example, 'spring'. Ask children what sound they hear at the end – 'g' – can they think of a word that starts with that sound? Call out more words, making sure that the end sound is a single sound and not a blend (other examples: and, wants, lion, springbok). Children name the end sound and think of a word that begins with that sound.

Comprehension questions

- What does Ntombi love to collect?
- What is a Monkey's wedding?
- What does Ntombi love to do?

Activity

Create paper dolls and outfits that children can dress their dolls in. Label each item of clothing. Children can have fun creating a winter wardrobe for their paper doll, or a wedding outfit, party clothes etc.

Story 8: Yellow Yolanda

Introducing the story

Ask children why they think Yolanda is called Yellow Yolanda. Chat about the illustrations for the story; can they figure out why? Read the story and chat about the events.

Reading skills

Sounds in words

Call out these words and instructions, one at a time. Draw a picture to show what is left when you don't say the 'every' in 'everyone'; when you don't say the 'room' in 'bedroom'; when you don't say the 'room' in 'bathroom'. This gets children to listen to the parts of words, which helps them to break down words for easy decoding when reading.

Comprehension questions

- What did Yolanda have for supper?
- What did she help her friend do?
- What is Yolanda's new name? How did this happen?

Activity

Provide children with paints in various colours. Get them to create a picture on paper – it should be an 'accidental' picture like the way Yolanda's overalls got painted. Children can dictate a sentence for their picture. All sentences must then be read to the class. Create a class book called 'Rainbow pictures'.

Story 9: Friends

Introducing the story

Chat to children about friends. Why are friends special, how do we look after our friends, what makes a good friend? Read the story and chat about the illustrations.

Reading skills

Middle sounds (long and short)

Call out a few words from the story and ask children to listen out to the sounds in the middle. If the middle sound is long they must open their arms out wide. If the sound is short they must hold up their thumb and second finger showing a short distance between them. For example, good, happy, sad, mean, play, make.

Comprehension questions

- How do friends make us feel?
- What fun activities do friends do together?
- Tell us about your friends.

Activity

Provide children with magazines, pairs of scissors and glue. They must search through the magazine and find pictures to show how friends make us feel. Write captions for each picture, as dictated by the child.

Story 10: Fastest, smartest, smallest

Introducing the story

Read the story and stop to discuss the events as they unfold. Discuss any challenging words that children may not understand in the context of the story.

Reading skills

Individual sounds

Select words from the text that are short and easily broken up into their parts. For example, s-a-t, b-i-g, a-n-d, f-r-o-m, w-a-s-p, l-e-f-t etc. Say the individual sounds and ask children to identify the word you are saying.

Comprehension questions

- What is Ratty?
- Which insects entered the race?
- Was it a fair race? Why do you think so?

Activity

Get children to enact the story, but they must change the outcome of the story – and its title.

For example, 'Biggest, meanest, maddest' or 'Fattest, widest, bumpiest' etc.

They must also include a commentator in their re-enactments.

Laying Solid Foundations for Learning

Parent and teacher notes to support the stories

Story 11:

Introducing the story

Go through the story first and discuss the images with your children. What do they see? If possible, have a quick look at the sky: are there clouds? What 'pictures' can they make from the clouds? Read the story, stopping at each page to look at the illustrations. This story also deals with time sequences and number.

Reading skills

Initial sounds

Call out a few words from the story and get children to name the initial sound. Then they can name other words that begin with the same sound.

Comprehension questions

- What did the girl see in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening?
- What was she doing at those different times of day?
- What do you do at those times?
- How many cloud pictures did she see in the morning? How many more in the afternoon? How many altogether?

Activity

Get children to listen out for a specific sound as you re-read the story. Each time they hear the sound they must clap their hands. This is an auditory figure-ground activity.

Story 12:

Introducing the story

Before reading the story chat about safety. Name dangerous items and activities both in and out of the home. Read the title; what does it mean? Ask children to chat about their pets, are they their best friend? Why? Read the story and chat about the silent story evident in the illustrations.

Reading skills

Syllabification

Call out a few words from the story and get children to break them up into their syllables. For example; Bhe-ki, bud-dy, spe-cial, pic-nic etc. Children can clap, stamp or jump the syllables.

Comprehension questions

- Describe the dangers the boy faced at home.
- Is the boy aware of his surroundings? Why do you think so?
- Is the dog truly his best friend? Why do you think so?

Activity

Call out five items – children listen carefully and only draw those items within the parameters you set. For example, draw all the dangerous items found in the kitchen – call out