

The New Cat

by Joy Cowley

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Overview

This is the earliest book in a series about Greedy Cat, and it explains how he got his name. There are six Ready to Read books about Greedy Cat, and all of them are available as big books. There is also a song about him, “The Cat Is Greedy” in *Kiwi Kidsongs 12*. It would be best to share the big book *Greedy Cat* with the children before using *The New Cat* for guided reading so that they are familiar with his personality and with the concept of “greediness”.

Suggested purposes

This book supports the comprehension strategies of making connections (with other Greedy Cat books and with personal experiences of owning a cat) and inferring. It provides opportunities for recognising the high-frequency word “The” and for practising directionality and one-to-one word matching. The repetition and close picture-text match provide support for new readers.

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the opportunities for the reader to infer how Greedy Cat got his name
- the detailed, humorous illustrations
- the repeated high-frequency word “The”
- the words starting with “m” – “meat”, “milk”
- the repetition of the phrase “Gobble, gobble”
- the upper-case and lower-case forms of “G” in “Gobble, gobble”
- the one word change per page on pages 2 to 7
- the text in the same position on every page
- the two lines of text on pages 2 to 7, necessitating the use of a return sweep
- the text on the cat box (on the front cover) and the food containers on pages 2, 7, and 8
- the use of speech marks on page 8
- the exclamation mark for emphasis on page 8.

Introducing the text

Tell the children that you have a book for them to read about getting a new cat. Encourage them to share their experiences of having cats as pets.

If you want the children to “discover” (infer) for themselves that this book is about Greedy Cat as a kitten and how he got his name, then don’t mention him at this point. If you want to provide a greater level of support, encourage them to share what they know about Greedy Cat. *Do you think that Greedy Cat was like that when he was a kitten?*

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.

Discuss the cover. The ribbon and bow by the box suggest that the kitten has been given as a present. *What is the girl getting out of the box? (The children may recognise the girl as Katie.) I wonder what she thinks of her present ...* Remind the children that the new cat doesn't have a name yet. *How would you choose a name for a cat?*

Help the children read the title. *Read me the first word.* Encourage them to sound out "C-a-t". *That's right, when you blend those sounds together, it says "Cat". So we've got "The" and "Cat". The word in the middle must be something about the cat ...* Read the title to the children, articulating the initial sound for "New", and see if they can come in with the word. Encourage them to cross-check for meaning. *"The New Cat" ... does that fit with the picture on the cover?* Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Ask the children to read the title again. The illustration suggests that this cat has a strong personality. Note his facial expression and perky tail.

Page 2 – *What is Mum feeding the cat?* Discuss the illustration and clarify the idea that the cat is gobbling and creating a mess.

Remind the children of the strategies you want them to focus on. Listen to them read the text themselves, providing support and feedback as necessary. They should quickly grasp the pattern of the text. If necessary, support them in verbalising the initial sound of the noun on each page.

Page 3 – The children may read "cat food" for "meat". *Did your finger fit the words? Tell me the first letter of that word. What sound does it make? What could the cat be eating that starts with "m"?*

Page 4 – Note how the cat has climbed up onto the chair and is reaching towards the fish. *Does Mum know what the cat is doing? What do you think about this cat?*

Pages 5 to 7 – *Why is the cat eating all the family's food? I wonder what will happen when Mum and Katie come back!*

Page 8 – Note the change to direct speech. *How will Mum say these words? Those words remind me of something ...* Draw out the idea that Mum's words have become Greedy Cat's name.

Encourage the children to make further inferences from the illustrations. *How does the cat feel? What is Katie thinking?*

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their control of the return sweep and their one-to-one word matching. Prompt them if necessary. *Read that to me again. Show me how you put your finger under each word. Where will you start on this page?*

Locate the high-frequency word “The” in the text. *Find the word “The” on page 2. Can you find it again on the next page? Tell me the letters in the word. Write it on the whiteboard.* Explain that “The” starts with a capital letter in this book because it’s part of a title and it’s at the beginning of sentences.

Locate the words in the story starting with “m”. Listen to the sound “m” makes, look at its visual features, and list other words that start with “m”.

Compare the upper-case and lower-case forms of the letter “G” in “Gobble” and “gobble”.

Read the labels on the cat box and the food containers.

Suggestions for further tasks

Make the big book available for rereading.

Read other books about Greedy Cat as shared texts and make the audio versions available at the listening post.

Listen to the song “The Cat Is Greedy” on *Kiwi Kidsongs 12*.

Draw pictures of Greedy Cat and add appropriate captions, for example, “The biscuits. Gobble, gobble.”

List the food that cats like eating. Draw a cat (or another pet) and the food that it likes to eat.