

Locked Out

by Julie Ellis

illustrated by Trevor Pye

Overview

The family in this story faces a predicament that will be familiar to many readers – they have locked themselves out of their house. Luckily, a small window has been left open. Dad, Mum and big brother try to fit through, but with no success. Finally, the smallest member of the family comes to the rescue and solves the problem. The variety of sentence structures and subtle text changes in this text make it particularly useful for monitoring children's reading strategies. There is an audio version of this text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2002*.

Curriculum links: health and physical education

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency vocabulary
- the initial consonant blends “sm” and “thr”
- the contractions “can’t”, “couldn’t”, “Don’t”, “I’m”, “It’s”, “We’re”
- the prepositions “in”, “through”
- the high proportion of direct speech
- the opposites “can” and “can’t”, “in” and “out”, “big” and “small”
- the names of the family members
- the use of “too” as an adverb
- the humorous illustrations.

Setting the scene

Toss your keys in front of the group. *These are my keys. What do you think I need them for? What would happen if I lost them?* Ask the children to share their experiences of being locked out. *What did you do?*

The first reading

Focus on the cover illustration. *Why is the family looking through the window? Why are they looking worried?* Ask the children to read the title. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – *Who do you think the set of keys belongs to? What would the keys be for?* Listen to the children read the title again.

Page 2 – Note that this is the cover illustration shown from the other side of the window and it introduces another member of the family. *What might Dad be saying?*

Listen to the children read the text themselves, offering support as necessary. Page 3 – After they have read the page, ask the children to predict what the family will do next.

Page 5 – *Will Mum be able to get in?* The syntax is a strong support for the children to work out the word “through”.

Page 7 – *Who will have a go now?*

Page 9 – *Is that how you would try to get in the window?*

Page 10 – Observe which children notice the text change from “too big” to “too small”.

Page 12 – Note the bold type and the exclamation mark. *How would Amber say this word?*

Encourage the children to think critically. *What will the family say to Amber? How are they feeling now? What could they do to make sure that they don't get locked out again?*

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their attention to visual information and their use of expression.

Find the word “through” in the text. *Can you think of other words that begin with “thr”?* Make a list. Do the same for “sm”.

Look through the text and ask the children to locate all of the contractions. Make a list on the whiteboard. Demonstrate how the apostrophe replaces a letter or letters. Read a few pages of the book together, replacing the contractions with the unshortened version. *What version sounds better?* Draw out the idea that writers use contractions to make text, especially conversation, sound more natural.

Focus on a page of text, for example, page 7, and locate the speech marks. Note how the speech marks stop and start, even though the same person is talking, so that the writer can let us know who the speaker is. *Who is talking? How do you know? What does she actually say?*

Locate the pairs of opposites in the text. *Find the word that means the opposite of “can’t”. What about “big”? And “in”? Can you think of other pairs of words that mean the opposite of each other?*

Find the phrases “too big” and “too small” in the text. *What does the “too” mean?*

Look through the text, paying particular attention to the expressions on Amber’s face. *Does she look worried? Why not?*

Have a discussion about what your family would do in the same situation. *Who would go through the window in your family?*

Suggestions for further activities

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

Encourage the children to write stories about a time when they were locked out.

Write the words that Mum, Dad or Joshua might say to Amber when she opens the door, inside a speech bubble, and stick it to a photocopy of page 12.

Write your address inside a key shape.

Create a wall or table display of old keys together. Have a lift up flap with the question “What is this key for?” and a sentence and picture underneath giving an answer, for example, “This key is for a padlock”, “This key is for a car.”

As a group, compile a list of good places to keep keys so they won’t get lost.