

The Garage Sale

by Fran Hunia

illustrated by Elspeth Alix Batt

Overview

In this realistic narrative, a family visits garage sales to find clothes to replace the ones they've outgrown. This story makes links to children's experiences of garage sales, markets, or school fairs and the excitement of finding unexpected treasures. It supports the comprehension strategies of making connections, forming and testing hypotheses, inferring, and analysing and synthesising. This is a relatively long text, so you may need to allow more time for the first reading. The notes for this book highlight opportunities for the children to practise reading silently. There is an audio version on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2004*.

Curriculum links: social studies

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the way the family work together to solve their problems
- the unnamed, first-person narrator
- the relatively complex narrative structure (including the problem with the table)
- the markers of time – “By eight o'clock”, “On Saturday morning”, “The first”, “The next”, “Then”
- the use of dialogue to drive the narrative
- the colloquial language – “just right”, “on our way”, “Right”, “way too small”
- the contractions “can't”, “didn't”, “Let's”, “o'clock”, “they'll”
- the homophones “buy” and “By”; “to”, “too”, and “two”
- the use of hyperbole – “It had everything!”
- the use of commas for phrasing
- the irregular past-tense verbs “bought”, “felt”
- the compound words “anything”, “everything”, “necklace”, “newspaper”
- the detailed illustrations.

Setting the scene

Study the front cover. *What's happening here? How do you know?* (The arrow indicates that the family are leaving the garage sale.) *What's a garage sale? Have you ever been to one? What have you bought?* Clarify that people need to get up early to go to garage sales and that they often go from one to another. If the children aren't familiar with garage sales, draw on their experiences of markets or school or church fairs. Bring out the idea of people selling items they no longer need.

The first reading

Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – *What’s the girl doing?* Draw out the idea that garage sales are places where you can find unexpected treasure.

Have the children read some sections silently, in preparation for reading books at the fluency levels.

Page 2 – *What’s the problem? Who’s telling the story? How do you know? How will they know which garage sales are on? Read page 3 (silently) to find out.*

Page 4 – *Why did they need to get up early?* If the children have trouble working out “eight”, prompt them to read on to the end of the line. *What would make sense? How could you check that word?*

Page 5 – Some children may say “buyed” for “bought”. *Does “buyed” sound right?* Prompt them to cross-check using visual information. *What did the family think of that garage sale?*

Have the children read pages 6 to 8 silently and then think, pair, and share about why this garage sale was better. *Did it really have everything?* Review the family’s reason for visiting the garage sales.

Page 9 – *Did Mum plan to buy a table?*

Have the children read page 10 (silently) to find out what the new problem was and how they solved it.

Page 11 – *What do you think they’ll suggest?*

Page 12 – *What do you think of this idea? Why?*

Return to the illustrations on page 5 or 9, drawing attention to the numbers of people browsing. *Why do you think garage sales are so popular?*

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text with a partner. Observe their use of strategies and their ability to read fluently, using the commas for phrasing.

Focus on the narrative structure. Have the children think, pair, and share to identify the problems in the story and what the family did to solve them.

Focus on the use of dialogue in the text. Talk about the use of contractions and colloquial language to make the dialogue sound more natural. Draw attention to the way the writer uses dialogue to help tell the story.

Identify the markers of time in the text. Talk about how these help the reader to follow what’s happening.

Explore the details in the illustrations, especially the signs, labels, and price tags. *How are these helpful?*

Ask the children to compare their own experiences of garage sales, fairs, or markets with those in the story.

Focus on the irregular past-tense verbs “bought” and “felt”. *Do we say “buyed”?* *Does “feeled” sound right?* Explain that there are some verbs that can’t have “ed” added to them and that the children need to use their knowledge of spoken English to help them decide what sounds right. For ESOL children, who are less likely to be able to draw on their knowledge of English syntax, try to use these verbs often in subsequent conversations.

Find the compound words in the text. Remind the children about the strategy of looking for the biggest part of the word they know when they are attempting to read unfamiliar words. Use the words “anything” and “everything” to show the children how they can use what they know to create other words, for example, “something”, “nothing”, “anyone”, and “anywhere”.

Find sentences containing the homophones “to”, “too”, or “two” and talk about their meanings. Do the same for “buy” and “By”. Talk about other examples of words that sound the same but are spelt differently and mean different things.

Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audio version on the CD *Readalong 2004*.

Enlarge and photocopy garage sale advertisements from your local newspaper. Identify the features of the advertisements and have the children create their own.

Have the children pick out items from the garage sale on page 5 that they would like to buy. Ask them to list or draw several items and give the reasons for their choices.

Have the children list what they would try to sell if they had a garage sale at their house.

During shared writing, model the writing of a recount or narrative about a visit to a garage sale, market, or fair. Include features from the text such as dialogue and markers of time. Encourage the children to incorporate these features into their own writing.