

THEME: PETS Brrr! When it's cold outside, it's a good time to stay indoors and read. Students love to read about animals, especially pets. But what kinds of animals make good pets? Help students understand our responsibility toward animals with the following I Can Read! books and activities.



SHARED READING

Display *Biscuit* and read the title aloud. Help students identify the beginning sound /b/. Show them another word in the story that begins with /b/, such as *bed*. Tell students that Biscuit is a pet. Ask: "What is a pet? What do you have to do for a pet?" List student answers on the board. Then read the story aloud, pointing to the words as you read them. Have students list the things the girl does for Biscuit. Ask students to draw pictures of Biscuit (or of their own pets) and dictate sentences that begin, "Biscuit wants _____."



At Home: Count how many things Biscuit wants before going to bed. Count how many things your child wants or has to do before bed. Who has a longer list? Ask: "How is Biscuit like you? How is Biscuit different from you?"



BEGINNING READING

Read *The Berenstain Bears and the Baby Chipmunk* aloud. Prompt students to "read" repeated words, such as *chipmunk* and *Brown Eyes*, when they appear in the story. After reading, have students list reasons why Brown Eyes does not make a good pet. Display photos of wild and domestic animals cut from magazines. Ask: "What kind of animal is this? Would it make a good pet? Why or why not?" Have each student draw a picture of his or her favorite animal and dictate one sentence that tells why that animal does or does not make a good pet.



At Home: With your child, take a walk in your backyard or around your neighborhood. Identify the animals you see. Discuss which ones would make good pets and why.



READING WITH HELP

Read *Scruffy* aloud. Pause occasionally to have students read familiar words, such as *Mom*, *Dad*, and *cat*. Discuss how Todd's presents will help him care for his cat. Then display pictures of common pets and a grab bag of pet-care items (e.g., a leash, fish food, I.D. tags, birdseed). Have student volunteers pull items from the bag one by one. Ask: "What is it? What does it do? What kind of pet uses it?" Have students place each item next to the image of the appropriate pet.



At Home: Choose two or three pets and help your child create a list of questions about their care and feeding. Then take a field trip to an animal shelter, pet store, or library to find the answers.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Emma's Strange Pet*. Then have pairs of students choose without looking from two envelopes, one labeled "Front" and one labeled "Back," into which you have placed photos of animals cut in half. Have students glue the two halves onto a piece of paper to create a new, very strange pet. Ask students to name this new animal and create a guide to its care and feeding. Invite students to describe their pets to the class.



At Home: Have your child use pictures from magazines and/or the Internet to create a new pet from the parts of other animals, such as a dog's ears, a bird's wings, and a pig's body.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *The Animal Rescue Club*. After reading, review the Author's Note at the end of the book. Then help students research nature centers and/or wildlife rehabilitation organizations in your area. As a class, write a letter to employees of two local organizations, inviting them to visit your classroom. Include in each letter a list of questions students hope to have answered.



At Home: Plan a field trip with your child to a nature center or wildlife rehabilitation center in your area. Help your child research the center in advance and prepare questions for the visit.

VALENTINE'S DAY AND LOVE On a cold February day, what could be better than a cup of hot cocoa and a good book about valentines and love? These I Can Read! books and activities help students appreciate the friends and family members they love best.



SHARED READING

Read *Dumpy's Valentine* aloud, following the words with your finger as you read. After reading, ask: "Who is saying, 'Toot! Toot!?' and "Why do the people give presents to Dumpy and his friends?" Make an oversized class valentine for a special person who goes out of his or her way to help your class. Have each student contribute something special to the valentine. Deliver the card with a "Toot! Toot!"



At Home: With your child, make a list of people in your neighborhood or town who help your family in various ways. Make valentine cards for these people and deliver them in person.



BEGINNING READING

Read *A Kiss for Little Bear* aloud. Prompt students to choral read the words *Little Bear*, *kiss*, and *grandmother* when they appear in the story. After reading, ask: "What makes Little Bear happy at the beginning of the story?" and "What makes Grandmother happy?" Have students think of three people they love. Help students write the names of their loved ones on a sheet of paper. Invite students to describe what their loved ones do that make students feel happy. Have each student dictate sentences describing one nice thing they plan to do for each of their loved ones.



At Home: Play "Mystery Heart" with several friends or family members. Take turns guessing who put the paper heart into your outstretched hand while your eyes were closed.



READING WITH HELP

Read *Arthur's Great Big Valentine* aloud. Have students choral read the italicized rhyming passages. List the rhyming words from these passages on the board. After reading, brainstorm more rhyming words about love, friendship, and Valentine's Day, and write them on the board. Place two copies of each student's name into a bag. Have students draw the names of two other students. Then have students make two valentine cards—one for each of the students whose names they drew. Encourage students to write a two-line rhyming verse inside each card.



At Home: Have a Valentine's Day party at home. Discuss the plans for the party with your child. Prepare for it together by making invitations, decorations, and treats.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Emma's Yucky Brother*. Ask students with siblings to share the best and worst parts about having brothers and sisters. Ask students without siblings to share the pros and cons of being only children. Ask: "What do brothers and sisters fight about?" and "Why do Max and Emma have trouble getting along?" Have students imagine that they are either Max or Emma. Have each student make a valentine card, either from Max to Emma or from Emma to Max. The cards should include short notes describing how the siblings feel about each other.



At Home: Discuss adoption with your child. Ask: "Do you have to be related to a person to love him or her?" and "What makes a family?" Have your child write down some questions about adoption. Help your child to answer the questions using library or Internet research.

THEME: CAREERS From an early age, students begin hearing the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Encourage students to explore a broad range of career choices with the following I Can Read! books and activities.



BEGINNING READING

Read *The Fire Cat* aloud. Help students choral read the phrases “big paws” and “big things.” Ask: “What does Pickles see in himself that is special? How do Pickles’s special gifts make him a good firefighter?” Ask students to think about how they are special. Ask: “What can you do well? What job could you choose that would use your special gifts?” Have students draw pictures of themselves doing jobs that suit their gifts. Have them dictate one sentence each to describe their pictures.



At Home: Visit a fire station and meet the firefighters who work there. Ask them what talents and skills a person needs to be a firefighter and what tools they use to do their jobs.



READING WITH HELP

Have students read *Teach Us, Amelia Bedelia* aloud. Highlight the ways in which the illustrations help students understand the story. Discuss why teaching is an important job. Ask: “If you were a teacher, what would be the most fun about your job? What would be least fun about being a teacher?” Briefly describe your own interest in education and your training as a teacher. Have students write several sentences from the prompt “If I were teacher for a day...”



At Home: Brainstorm with your child to come up with a list of jobs related to running a school. Discuss the responsibilities and rewards of each career. Ask: “Which job would you choose?”



READING ALONE

Have students read *Hill of Fire*. Help them decode unfamiliar words, such as *woolen* and *coughing*. Ask: “Why does our world depend upon the work of farmers?” Have students use library and Internet research to investigate the origins of their favorite foods. Have each student create a poster that shows where his or her favorite food comes from. The poster should include illustrations and descriptions, including where and by whom the food is grown.



At Home: Take your child on a trip to a grocery store with a large produce section. Write down the names of several unfamiliar fruits and vegetables, and use library and Internet research to find out their origins.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *First Flight*. Say: “The Wright Brothers were inventors who created the first airplane. What things do you use or see each day that you feel thankful someone invented?” Make a list of inventions on the board. Have students choose an invention and do library and Internet research to find out more about it. Instruct students to make 10 to 15 inventor/invention flash cards containing biographical information, descriptions, illustrations, and diagrams. Have pairs of students exchange cards to learn about another invention.



At Home: Discuss the inventions you and your child might create if anything were possible. Would you want to invent teleportation? Or how about shoes that make it possible to walk on water? Let your imaginations soar.

THEME: FIELD TRIPS AND ADVENTURES With spring in full bloom, encourage students to escape the winter routine and seek adventure! These I Can Read! books and activities help transport students to exciting new places.



SHARED READING

Read *Peanut and Pearl's Picnic Adventure* aloud. Highlight the words that begin with the /p/ sound. List *Peanut*, *Pearl*, and *picnic* on chart paper and underline the *p* in each word. Then display pages 10 and 11. Ask: "What does Peanut pack for lunch? What does Pearl pack for lunch? If you were going on a picnic, what is one thing you would pack for lunch? Who would you invite to have a picnic with you?" Have students draw pictures of themselves and their friends and family members having a picnic.



At Home: Plan a picnic with your child. Together, make a list of items to take along, and choose a date and location. Pick a fun, alternate indoor location in case of inclement weather.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Fancy Nancy at the Museum* aloud. Pause after each "fancy word," such as *masterpiece*, *gallery*, and *landscape*. Have students repeat these words and the text that defines them. Then ask students to think about what makes paintings *masterpieces*. Have them paint their own "masterpieces". Suggest that they paint *still lifes*, *portraits*, or *landscapes*, as described in the story. When the paintings are finished, hang them in your classroom to create an art museum. *Ooh la la!*



At Home: Visit an art exhibit at a local museum, gallery, or library. Encourage your child to talk about his or her favorite paintings or objects.



READING WITH HELP

Have students read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe: Welcome to Narnia* aloud. Help students decode unfamiliar words as necessary. Then ask students to list some of the ways in which Narnia differs from our world. Have each student draw a wardrobe like the one from the story. Students should cut three sides of their wardrobe doors so that the doors open. Instruct each student to draw a magical scene from Narnia on a second sheet of paper and then glue that page behind the doors so that when the doors open, the scene appears.



At Home: Watch a Narnia movie with your child. Encourage him or her to create a fantastic land and describe the adventures he or she might have there.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Minnie and Moo: Wanted Dead or Alive*. After reading, divide students into small groups, and assign each group a scene from the book. Explain the process of choosing characters and writing dialogue. Then have each group create a skit from its scene. Additionally, have each group create a poster to use as a backdrop for its scene. Encourage students to use simple props and costumes, such as sunglasses, hats, and coats. Have the groups perform for the class in sequential order, staging the story from beginning to end.



At Home: Create a costume box with old clothes and accessories. Encourage your child to dress up and tell a story about characters who go on an adventure like Minnie and Moo.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *Dinosaur Hunter*, instructing them to list and look up any unfamiliar vocabulary words as they go. Review the Author's Note on page 48. Assign pairs of students particular dinosaur fossils found in North America, and then distribute copies of a map of North America. Have students research and plot the fossils' locations on their maps. Students should also draw pictures and write descriptions of the dinosaurs that became the fossils. Collect the maps, pictures, and descriptions to create a paleontologist's guide to North America.



At Home: Plan a field trip to a natural history museum, or visit a museum Web site. Have your child take notes and create an index card file of facts and illustrations about dinosaur fossils.

THEME: FRIENDSHIP As the school year winds down, students' minds turn to friends and fun. Help students discover what makes certain friendships extra special with the following I Can Read! books and activities.



SHARED READING

Read *Oh, Cats!* aloud, pointing to each word as you go. After reading, review the sets of rhyming words in the story. Then read the book again, this time inviting students to choral read the second rhyming word of each set. After reading, have students create pictures of their own cat friends using cardboard circles and triangles for faces and ears, pipe cleaners for whiskers, and buttons for eyes. Display the artwork in your classroom.



At Home: Read *Oh, Cats!* aloud to your child. After reading, point out pairs of rhyming words, such as *see* and *three*, and have your child think of other words that rhyme with them. Ask your child if he or she would rather have animals or people as friends and why.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Danny and the Dinosaur* aloud. Pause after reading unfamiliar words in the story, such as *Indians*, *Eskimos*, and *bundles*. Give a short definition of each word and ask students to choral read it. After reading, show students pictures of prehistoric animals, such as brontosaurus, ichthyosaurus, and pterodactyl. Ask students to identify the type of dinosaur in the story. Have students imagine what they might do if they had a prehistoric animal as a friend. Invite them to share their ideas with the class.



At Home: Plan a trip to a natural history museum, or take your child to the library to find other books about dinosaurs. Discuss which types of dinosaurs would make good friends and why.



READING WITH HELP

Have students take turns reading *A Bargain for Frances* aloud. Have them choral read Frances's songs. Then discuss what Frances means by, "Do you want to be careful, or do you want to be friends?" Ask: "What do you think Frances likes about Thelma? What is nice and not so nice about Thelma?" Draw a T-chart on the board. Label one column "Nice" and the other column "Not so nice." Help students fill in a chart for both Thelma and Frances. Then have each student create one chart that describes a friend and one that describes him- or herself.



At Home: Encourage your child to invite a friend to your home. Plan to do some of the things Frances and Thelma enjoy doing together, such as having a tea party and jumping rope.



READING ALONE

Have students read *The Smallest Cow in the World*. Aid comprehension by asking: "What is it about Max that helps him understand Rosie? How is Max a good friend to Rosie?" Ask students to describe what a good friend says and does. Write a list of adjectives on the board. Ask students to give examples of unusual friendships like Max and Rosie's. Then have them write and illustrate stories about unusual friendships that they have seen, heard about, imagined, or experienced themselves. Invite volunteers to read their stories to the class.



At Home: Discuss the concept of imaginary friends. Why do some kids need them? Ask your child to describe, draw, and/or write about an imaginary friend he or she has had or would have liked to have had as a younger child.

THEME: THE WAY WE TRAVEL Warm, clear weather makes summer a good time to travel. Use the following I Can Read! books and activities to spark students' imaginations about the many different ways we travel.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Space Cat* aloud. Pause periodically to ask students what they think Space Cat will do next. After reading, say: "Space Cat and Earl travel in a rocket. Today we will make our own rockets." Distribute an outline of a rocket like the one pictured in the story, along with construction-paper shapes for the body, the nose, the fins, and the propulsion fire. Show students how to glue the shapes into the outline to make their rockets. Name the parts of the rocket as you glue them into place. Ask: "What faraway places will you visit in your rocket?"



At Home: Talk with your child about the best ways to travel to certain destinations, such as a neighbor's house, the grocery store, or another country across an ocean.



READING WITH HELP

Have students read *Captain and Matey Set Sail* aloud. Explain how reading with expression can sound like people talking. Have students practice reading the dialogue as though they are talking to one another. After reading, distribute copies of world maps. Have students working in pairs imagine they are pirates. Instruct them to locate and list all of the oceans and seas they might sail in search of treasure. Challenge students to list the smallest and largest bodies of water they can find.

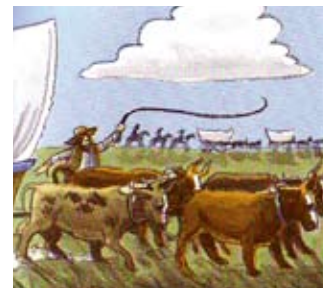


At Home: Build a pirate ship from cardboard boxes by visiting Mr. McGroovy's website at <http://www.mrmcgroovys.com/t-plans-cardboard-pirate-ship.aspx>.



READING ALONE

Have students read *The Josefina Story Quilt*. Explain that covered wagons like Faith's measured four feet wide by ten to twelve feet long by ten feet high. In your classroom, have students measure and mark with tape the size of a covered wagon. Discuss what items students' families might be able to fit into a space that size. Ask: "If you could only take two sets of clothing and one special item, what would you take? What would be most difficult for you to leave behind?" Have students draw, write, and/or speak to the class about their decisions.



At Home: Do library and Internet research with your child to learn more about wagon trains. Create a nine-patch quilt out of construction paper that illustrates what you have learned.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *First Flight*. After reading, prompt students to list vehicles that fly. Write the names of these vehicles on the board. Have students choose a vehicle from the list and use the library and Internet to complete a research project. Projects might include a diagram of an airplane, zeppelin, or hot-air balloon; a presentation that explains how airplanes fly; a time line showing U.S. war planes throughout history; or an informational web site describing the appearance of flying machines in stories, poems, and songs of different cultures.



At Home: Take a field trip with your child to an airport, airplane museum, or display of model airplanes near you. Compare the airplanes you see to the airplane in *First Flight*.

THEME: AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP Students love to celebrate the Fourth of July with parades and fireworks. Use these I Can Read! books and activities to help them understand the origins and expressions of American citizenship.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Captain Cat* aloud. Point to the words as you read the story. After reading, say: "Pete is in the Army. Army bases fly the American flag to show that their soldiers protect the United States." Display the front cover of the book and have a student volunteer point to the flag. Explain that the fifty stars on the flag represent the fifty states of the United States of America. Distribute coloring sheets of the flag and have students color them red, white, and blue.



At Home: Do library and Internet research with your child to find out what year your state entered the Union. Find images of the American flag throughout its history and create a poster of the flag the year your state entered the Union.



READING WITH HELP

Have students read *Amelia Bedelia 4 Mayor* aloud. Prompt students to decode Amelia Bedelia's jokes by analyzing the illustrations. After reading, say: "Mayors run cities and towns. They are elected by citizens who vote. Voting is an important part of good citizenship." Discuss an issue that affects your class directly, such as a field-trip destination or a new class or playground rule. Ask students to generate ideas based on this issue, and list their ideas on the board. Then have students vote by secret ballot. Have a runoff between the two items that earn the most votes.



At Home: Find an article in your local paper about your mayor or other city official. Read the article to your child. Discuss the issue and the official's stance in basic terms.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Sam the Minuteman*. Ask: "What is a patriot? Are the colonists in this story patriots?" Then have students imagine they are colonial newspaper reporters covering the beginning of the American Revolution as described in the story. Use several examples from newspapers to illustrate good headlines and use of quotations from sources. Then have students work in groups of three to write stories datelined Lexington. Student articles should include headlines, illustrations, and imaginary quotes from patriots in *Sam the Minuteman*.



At Home: Find out more about patriots of the American Revolution through library and Internet research. Talk with your child about the qualities that characterize a patriot then and now.



ADVANCED READING

Before students read *The Drinking Gourd*, briefly describe and discuss the context of the story. After reading, discuss the Author's Note on page 64. Ask: "Is it ever acceptable for an American citizen to break the law?" Prompt students to support their answers with facts and examples. Make a list on the board of reasons based on facts and reasons based on emotion. Then divide the class into two sides and conduct a debate on Deacon Fuller's decision to break the Fugitive Slave Law, or have students debate a controversial contemporary law.



At Home: Use library and Internet research to study routes on the Underground Railroad. On a map of North America, draw several paths to Canada taken by runaway slaves.

THEME: BACK TO SCHOOL For most students, August means back to school! Remind students how much fun school can be with the I Can Read! books and activities below.



SHARED READING

Read *Biscuit Goes to School* aloud. Have students “read” along each time Biscuit says, “Woof!” Pause on pages 22 and 23. Ask: “What do you think will happen next? What is the teacher thinking?” Explain to students that there are special schools for puppies like Biscuit, where they go with their owners to learn good behavior. Have students pretend that they are puppies at school. “Train” them to sit, lie down, stay, beg, and fetch. Invite a dog trainer to your class to explain what is important in training a real puppy.



At Home: With your child, make a list of favorite animals. Take turns choosing an animal and telling a story about what happens one day when that animal goes to school.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Morris Goes to School* aloud. Pause before reading the alphabet and numbers, prompting students to recite them with you. Ask: “What does Morris want to learn? How does school help Morris?” Give each student a sheet of paper containing the outline of a candy jar with a blank line below it. Have students color pieces of candy inside the jar. Then direct each student to exchange his or her paper with a partner, count the pieces of candy, and write the number under the jar. Create a bulletin board with the candy jars to look like the candy store on page 62.



At Home: Brainstorm a list of questions about moose, such as “What do moose eat?” and “How big is a real moose?” Visit your local library to find the answers to your questions.



READING WITH HELP

Have students read *The Adventures of Snail at School* aloud. Have them take turns reading dialogue between Snail and Mrs. Harvey. After reading, discuss how ordinary objects like the water fountain, the fire extinguisher, and the music baton lead to Snail’s magical adventures. Display several different objects common in a school setting. Ask students to imagine what adventures Snail might have with the objects. Then have them draw comics and write short descriptions of Snail’s new adventures.



At Home: Discuss with your child some ways that he or she can be helpful at school, like Snail. Help your child make a thoughtful gift for a favorite teacher, such as a card, picture, or treat.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *Prairie School*. Encourage students to make connections between Noah’s experience and their own. Ask: “Are there times you’d rather do something else besides come to school? What can a book teach you about the things you like to do?” Have each student choose a favorite book and create a poster persuading other students to read it. The posters should appeal to both logic and emotion, and should address an audience of students the same age. Display the posters in the hallway of your school.



At Home: Observe the night sky where you live and compare it with a star map. Draw a picture showing the constellations you can see from your home. Take a field trip to a planetarium to learn more about the stars.

THEME: FAMILIES After a summer filled with fun family activities, encourage students to think about their relationships with family members. Use these I Can Read! books and activities to help students appreciate the traits that make their families so special.



SHARED READING

Display *The Day I Had to Play with My Sister*. Have students predict what the story might be about. Ask: "Why do you think the boy has to play with his sister?" and "What do you think the boy and girl are doing?" Then read the story aloud. Check comprehension by asking: "What problem is the boy having with his sister? How does the problem make the boy feel?" Have students describe how to play hide-and-seek to a person who has never played before. Write the rules on chart paper and display them in your classroom.



At Home: Play a game of hide-and-seek. Then play "sardines," a game in which one player hides and the other players who find him or her squeeze into the same hiding place.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Father Bear Comes Home* aloud. Prompt students to read repeated words, such as *Little Bear, Hen, Duck, and Cat*. After reading, ask: "How do you know that the members of the Bear family care about one another?" and "What kinds of activities does the Bear family do together?" Send a note home requesting photos of students' families. Have students share their photos with the class. Encourage them to introduce their family members and describe the activities they enjoy together.



At Home: Include your child when you plan your next family outing. For example, allow him or her to choose a movie, help find your destination on the map, or prepare food for a picnic.



READING WITH HELP

Have students read *Grandpa Spanielson's Chicken Pox Stories, Story #2: A Snout for Chocolate* aloud, including the words in the speech bubbles. After reading, ask: "How does Grandpa's story help Barney? Why does Grandpa call it an 'anti-itch' story?" Have each student draw a picture of a time when he or she was sick. Each picture should show how a family member helped the student feel better. Encourage students to include speech bubbles in their pictures.



At Home: Role-play that you are sick or injured and need to stay in bed. Have your child tell a story to help take your mind off your discomfort. Then switch roles and tell a story to your child.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Rafi and Rosi*. Point out that brothers and sisters like Rafi and Rosi may help each other, have fun together, trick each other, and even get mad at each other. Instruct students to write the names of their family members in various spots on a large sheet of paper. Have them connect the names with arrows and along the arrows write the ways in which their family members help or care for one another, have fun together, or argue with each other.

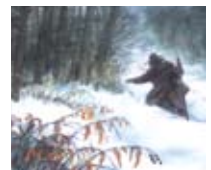


At Home: Take a walk outside with your child to observe the natural surroundings. Point out to each other the plants and creatures you see. Share what you know about them. Use library and Internet research and simple science experiments to find out more about them.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *Finding Providence*. Divide them into small groups and instruct them to imagine that each group is a family living in Providence just after it was founded by Roger Williams. Each family has a chance to propose how the town will be organized, who will run the government, and how the citizens will be cared for. Each group proposal should include a map of the settlement and a written description of how the town should be run. Invite groups to present their plans to the other families and come to a consensus.



At Home: With your child, generate several questions about Narragansett families living in New England during the mid-1600s. Use the Internet and library research to answer your questions.

THEME: HALLOWEEN Welcome to October, the spookiest month of the year! Share Halloween traditions and autumn fun with the following I Can Read! books and activities.



BEGINNING READING

Read *This Book Is Haunted* aloud. After reading, ask students to describe how ordinary things—such as shadows, tapping branches, and echoes—can sometimes become scary. Discuss the elements of a good ghost story. Then divide students into small groups. Explain that each student should tell a spooky story to his or her group. Once all of the members of all of the groups have had a chance to tell their stories, invite volunteers to share the best stories they heard in their groups with the rest of the class.



At Home: Turn off the lights, light a candle or a flashlight, and reread the story together. Help your child “read” simple parts, like the echo.



READING WITH HELP

Have students take turns reading *Happy Haunting*, *Amelia Bedelia* aloud. After reading, review pages 47–49, where the children showcase their costumes. Say: “Amelia Bedelia took sayings like ‘in a pickle’ and ‘all ears’ and made them into costumes.” Brainstorm with the class to list other idioms that might be turned into costumes, such as “letting the cat out of the bag” and “feeling like a million dollars.” Then have students draw a picture of their favorite “idiom costume.” Have other students guess the saying that corresponds to each picture.



At Home: With you child, plan a fun, scary trick to play on a friend, family member, or the trick-or-treaters who visit your home on Halloween.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Minnie and Moo and the Haunted Sweater*. For fluency, have students take turns rereading the story aloud with a partner. Before class, assemble a grab bag of common objects, such as a pillowcase, a flashlight, a pencil, and a clock. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group choose an object from the bag. Have groups brainstorm about how the object might become haunted, as the sweater was haunted in the story. Have each group write a story about its haunted object. Have groups read their stories to the class.



At Home: Talk about different objects that can seem haunted, such as a haunted tree. Tell a scary story about the haunted object by taking turns, adding one sentence at a time.



ADVANCED READING

Have students read *The Witch Who Was Afraid of Witches*. Then brainstorm a list of other Halloween characters, such as vampires and werewolves. Have each student choose a character and write a scary monologue. Explain that a monologue is like a speech that tells a story about the character who is speaking. Say: “Think about how your character spends Halloween. What might be fun for your character? What might be scary? How would your character tell the story of what happened last Halloween?” Have volunteers perform their monologues.



At Home: Make a list with your child of questions about Halloween, such as “Where did the idea of witches come from?” Find library and Internet resources that answer your questions.

THEME: THANKSGIVING Turkey, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie—yum! But let's not forget that there's more to Thanksgiving than delicious food. Use these I Can Read! books and activities to remind students that Thanksgiving is also about history, family, and gratitude.

1 BEGINNING READING

BEGINNING READING

Read *Silly Tilly's Thanksgiving Dinner* aloud. Prompt students to identify the end sounds of repeated words, such as *forgot* and *remember*, when they appear in the story. After reading, say: "Who would you invite if you were having Thanksgiving dinner at your house? What food would you ask each guest to bring?" Help each student make a guest list. Then distribute several index cards to each student. Have students write a guest's name on each card, draw a picture of the food the guest will bring, and write or dictate the name of the food beneath the picture.



AT HOME: Talk about the Thanksgiving foods your family likes to prepare. Help your child read simple words in a favorite recipe. Prepare a simple Thanksgiving dish together.

2 READING WITH HELP

READING WITH HELP

Read *I Am the Turkey* aloud. Choose students to read short lines of dialogue, encouraging fluent expression. After reading, review the story of the first Thanksgiving, including the roles of the Pilgrims, the Native Americans, and the wild turkeys. Ask: "How did the Pilgrims live when they first arrived in America? What were they thankful for on that first Thanksgiving?" Have students think about their own lives and what they are thankful for. Invite students to take turns sharing their thoughts with the class.

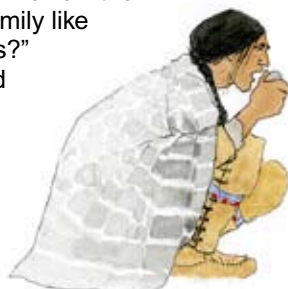


AT HOME: With your child, make Pilgrim, Native American, and turkey decorations—such as place mats, napkin rings, and name tags—for your Thanksgiving table.

3 READING ALONE

READING ALONE

Have students read *At Home in a New Land*. Review the Author's Note on page 64. Ask: "How is Carl Erik's family like the Pilgrims? How are they different from the Pilgrims?" Draw a Venn diagram on chart paper to compare and contrast the two groups. Have students create their own Venn diagrams to fill in as you go. Answers might include that the Swedish in Minnesota came to America to escape poverty and starvation, while the Pilgrims came to escape religious intolerance.



AT HOME: Discuss your family heritage with your child. On a globe or map, locate the place(s) from which your ancestors emigrated. Talk about what your ancestors were thankful for in America.

THEME: HELPING OTHERS December is a time of parties, presents, and sweets! With such festivity in the air, students may forget to be good helpers. Use these I Can Read! books and activities to remind students how important their help can be to others.



SHARED READING

Read *Little Critter: To The Rescue!* aloud. After reading, talk to your students about emergency situations. When might it be important to call 911? When should you not call? On pages 18–19, Little Critter gives the operator two important pieces of information. Reread these pages and have students learn what they are (telephone number and address). Help your students memorize their own numbers and addresses. Have students make emergency contact lists that their parents can keep by the phone.



At Home: Unplug your phone from the wall or draw a keypad on a piece of paper and spend some time teaching your child how to dial 911 so they know how to help in an emergency.



BEGINNING READING

Read *Mrs. Brice's Mice* aloud. Prompt students to predict what the very small mouse will do next. Discuss how Mrs. Brice takes care of her mice and how the very small mouse helps the others. Then have students brainstorm ways that they can help others. Distribute three paper mice to each student to color and decorate. Create a "Nice Mice" wall in your classroom. Challenge students to find three ways to help others at home or at school during the week. Whenever students share their stories about helping others, have them tape a mouse to the "Nice Mice" wall.



At Home: Have your child choose a favorite animal. Do library and Internet research to find out if and how animals of that species help one another.



READING WITH HELP

Have students take turns reading *Spider-Man 2: Spider-Man Versus Doc Ock* aloud. Help students decode and understand difficult words, such as *responsibility* and *withdrawal*. After reading, discuss how Spider-Man got his powers. Talk about the ways in which he helps others and how he feels about helping them. Then have students work in pairs to create original superheroes. Students should draw pictures of their superheroes and create stories in which their superheroes help people in distress. Invite volunteers to share their stories with the class.



At Home: Check your local library or bookstore for books or comics about superheroes. Read these stories with your child, and discuss the different ways that superheroes help others.



READING ALONE

Have students read *Elvis the Rooster and the Magic Words*. Ask: "How do the other characters in the story help Elvis the Rooster? What lesson does Elvis learn from the other characters? According to the story, what are the effects of being rude to others? Have you experienced these effects in your own life?" Then have students work in groups of three or four to create skits comparing Elvis's behavior before and after Cluck Gable's visit to the coop. Allow students to adapt scenes from the story or to make up their own situations to show how Elvis changes.



At Home: Take turns making up sections of a story about a character who behaves badly and other characters who want to help him or her.

THEME: ZONDERKIDZ Zonderkidz books encourage children in their faith by presenting biblical stories and Christian characters so they are accessible to even the youngest reader. Use these I Can Read! books and activities to share biblical values with your students.



SHARED READING

Read *Jesus and His Friends* aloud. Emphasize important characters by pointing to them as you read. Pause after reading the word *miracle* and define it. Have students repeat the word with you. After reading, ask students to recall some of the miracles from the story. Then have students fold a sheet of drawing paper in half. On the left side of the page, instruct them to draw one of the problems described in the story, for instance, the short supply of fishes and loaves. On the right side of the page, have them draw the miracle that solved the problem.



At Home: Have your child dictate his or her favorite stories about Jesus' miracles. Write the stories in a blank book, and encourage your child to illustrate them.



SHARED READING

Read *Noah and the Ark* aloud. Ask students to "read" repeated words such as *ark*, *boat*, and *rain*. After reading, create a Noah's ark bulletin board for your classroom. Have one group of students work together to color a large image of an ark with windows and a plank. Have another group of students color a large rainbow. Then distribute pairs of animals for students to color and cut out. Allow each student to choose a location on the bulletin board for his or her animals.



At Home: Take your child to a zoo. Make a list of all the animals you see and as many other animals as you can think of. Encourage your child to tell a story about what it might have been like to travel on Noah's ark.



READING WITH HELP

Read *Jake Helps Out* aloud. Model how to sound out longer words like *accident* and *sandcastle*. Then discuss the ways in which Jake is a good helper. Explain that students will learn more about how people help others by interviewing people they know at school. Tell them that an *interview* occurs when one person asks another a list of questions. Brainstorm a list of at least ten appropriate questions. Have students choose three or four questions from the list and conduct interviews during lunch or recess. Invite students to share their results with the class.



At Home: Jake is especially good at helping in certain ways. Make a list of your own and your child's strengths as helpers. Arrange to use your gifts at a church or community event.



READING WITH HELP

Have students take turns reading *Jake's Brave Night* aloud. Make a list of action verbs from the story, such as *snuggled*, *crawled*, *climbed*, and *tickled*. Have each student write a sentence using one of the words. Have volunteers read their sentences aloud while miming the action word. Then ask students: "Have you ever been afraid of something, like Jake? What do you do when you're afraid that makes you feel better?" Have students write a letter to someone who is afraid and give that person advice on what to do.



At Home: Make a list with your child of things that make him or her feel safe. Talk about how your child can use or imagine things from the list when he or she is feeling afraid.