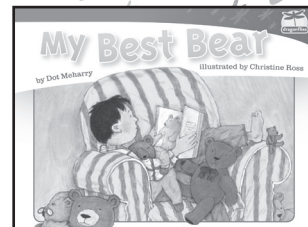


My Best Bear

by Dot Meharry

illustrated by Christine Ross



Overview

A boy shows the reader his collection of bears, then snuggles into bed with his “best” bear.

Suggested purposes

This book supports the comprehension strategies of connecting with real-life experiences, using illustrations to understand text, forming and testing hypotheses, and inferring. It provides opportunities for practising one-to-one word matching, directionality, and recognising high-frequency words. The illustrations provide opportunities for developing students’ oral language.

Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words – *but, is, my, this*
- the repeated initial consonant -b – *bear, best, big, blue, but*
- the upper-case and lower-case forms of initial letters – *bear, Bear, best, Best; my, My; this, This*
- the digraph -th – *this*
- the high proportion of single-syllable words (which supports one-to-one matching)
- the opposites – *big and little, old and new*
- the adjectives used to describe the bears
- the title as a support for reading the last page
- the exclamation mark for emphasis on page 8
- the child’s evaluation of the bears suggested by the word “best”
- the extra information provided in the illustrations

Setting the scene

Bring a teddy bear or a collection of bears to school. Encourage the students to help you describe each bear, using the structure of the text. *This is my soft bear. This is my little bear. Which bear do you like best? Do you have a favourite soft toy? Why do you like it best?*

The first reading

Discuss the bears in the cover illustration. *Which bear do you like best? Which bear does the boy like best? Why do you think that?*

Encourage the students to attempt the title, providing support as necessary. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Back cover – Read aloud the preview question. Help the students to make connections between the preview question and their own experiences.

Title page – Listen to the students read the title again.

Page 2 – Draw out the idea that the boy is showing his bear to the reader. Prepare the students for the sentence structure of the text by asking: *What kind of bear is this? What is the boy telling us about the bear?*

Remind the students of the strategies you want them to focus on during the reading. Listen to them read the text, supporting them as necessary. Observe their one-to-one word matching and their strategies to work out the adjective on each page.

Page 5 – Note the “enlarged” hands that emphasise the small size of the bear. If the students read “small” for “little”, point out the initial consonant and prompt them to cross-check. *Could that word be “small”? Why not?*

Pages 6 and 7 – The concepts of old and new may be challenging for some students. Discuss the pictures in detail. Talk about the worn state of the old bear as opposed to the pristine new bear that still has its shop tag. *What can you tell me about these bears? How are they different?* As the students read page 6, help them to cross-check the illustration with the initial letter of “old”. *How do you know that word is “old”?*

Page 8 – Observe which students notice the change in the text pattern. This is the end of the story. *Which bear do you think he will finish with?* If necessary, refer to the discussion about the cover illustration. Discuss the use of the exclamation mark. *How does the author want you to read this page?* Practise reading the sentence together expressively.

Review the students’ earlier predictions about the boy’s “best” bear. Encourage them to infer, making connections to their own experiences and using information from the illustration. *Why do you think the boy likes this one best?*

Ideas for revisiting the text (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Listen to the students reread the text, observing their one-to-one word matching and how they manage the change in the text pattern on the last page.
- Locate some of the high-frequency words. Find “is” on page 2. *Can you find “is” on the next page too? Tell me the letters in the word. Now find “my”? How do you know that says “my”?*
- Find all of the words in the text that start with “B” or “b”. Together, list more words that start this way.
- Ask the students to listen to and practise articulating the sound of the digraph “th” in “this”. “Th” can be a difficult sound for young children to articulate. Put your tongue out as you say it. Draw out the similarity in the sound of the word “the”.
- Discuss the two sets of opposites – “big” and “little”, “old” and “new”. Extend the students’ thinking by asking them to complete others, for example, “off and ...”, “open and ...”.
- Talk about other adjectives that could be used to describe the bears, for example, “furry”, “cuddly”, and “soft”.
- Extend the students’ use of descriptive language by discussing one or two illustrations in greater detail. Model the use of new vocabulary as needed. You could talk about the illustrator’s use of pattern, for example, the striped chair, the starry pyjamas, or the big bear’s checked trousers and zigzag cardigan, or focus on a particular picture. *Does your bedroom look like this? How is it different? What is the boy thinking on page 4? Which illustration do you like best? Why?*
- Using the words and punctuation cards for this book, reassemble the sentences with the students.

Suggestions for further activities

- Make a teddy bear mural and add a caption for each bear, using the text as a model, and adding other adjectives.
- Have a teddy bears' picnic. Each child could bring a "best" bear or soft toy to school (with the promise that it would be looked after carefully!).
- Make an "opposites" book.
- Read other books or poems about bears.
- BLM word activity: practise writing high-frequency words

The students can practise writing the high-frequency word "this". They can then draw a picture of their own best bear in the space provided.

- BLM comprehension activity: draw pictures to match captions

The students can read each sentence and illustrate the appropriate bear in each box.