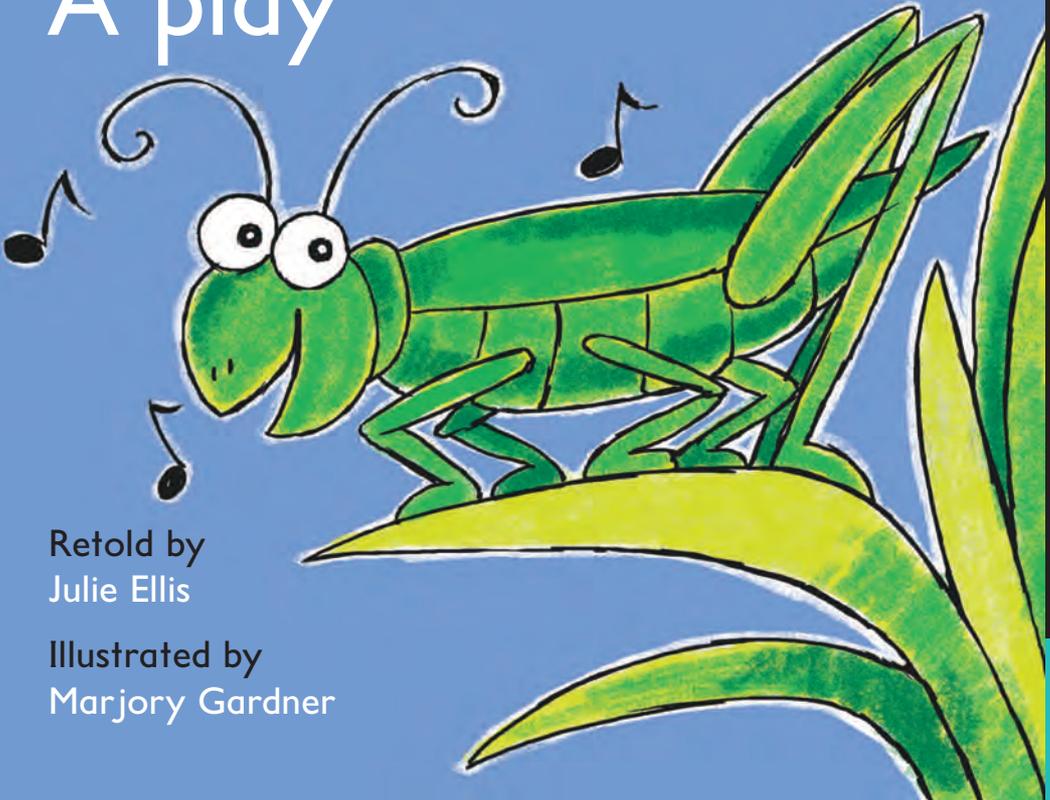


Teacher Edition



# The Cheerful Cricket

A play



Retold by  
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Illustrated by  
Marjory Gardner

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© Eleanor Curtain  
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Photographs  
© Eleanor Curtain  
Publishing

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## How to use this book

The Alphakids Plus teacher editions support teachers as they guide children's reading and thinking during one or more guided reading sessions. Teachers can observe children as they read and choose from the given suggestions to suit individual needs.

### Before reading

#### Setting the context, front cover and title page:

The suggestions help teachers to set the scene and prepare children for reading the book. Prompts help to determine children's prior knowledge. Where necessary, background information is provided. Teachers are encouraged to check that children understand the vocabulary listed and to discuss the meanings and/or the structures of these words. Previous experiences with similar text types may also be discussed.

### During reading

#### Predict, Read, Reflect:

Questions encourage children to engage with the text by making predictions. They then read a section of the text and reflect on what they have read. The focus is on the content, language and text features of the book.

#### Observe and support:

Prompts help teachers to focus on the strategies children use as they read. Teachers can then select from and adapt the suggestions according to the needs of the individual child. The suggestions aim to develop a child's reading abilities. Interruptions to the child's reading should be minimal.

### After reading

#### A selection of reading and writing activities:

The last pages of the teacher edition provide follow-up activities and include the assessment focus.

## Selected text features

- An illustrated cast list is provided
- Narrators are used
- Characters are indicated by text in different colours

## Vocabulary

busily, carrying, characters, cheerful, cricket, gathering, happily, hungry, hurried, ignored, marching, narrator, scurrying, shared, shivering, squirrels

## Setting the context

Talk with the children about plays.

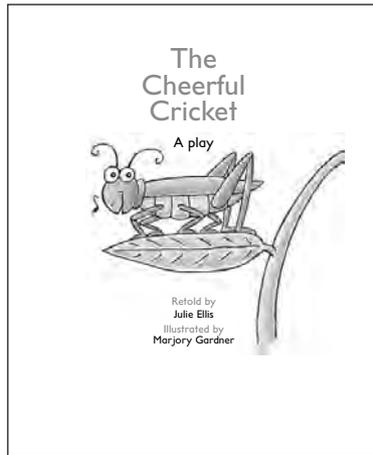
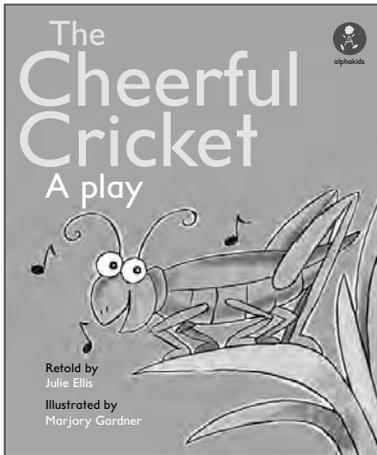
*Have you seen a play performed?*

*Have you ever been in a play?*

*How do you think the people in a play know what to say and do?*

You might like to show the children some examples of play scripts.

Explain to the children that you will first read 'The Cheerful Cricket' together like any other book and then you will read the play in parts as the script directs.



## Front cover

Explain to the children that this book is a play script.

*What do you think the play might be about?*

*Who might the main character be?*

*Do you think this cricket is happy?*

*How can you tell?*

## Title page

*What information do you find on a title page?*

*What does the word 'retold' mean?*

*What does this tell us about the story?*

## **Predict**

Look at pages 2 and 3.

*What information do these pages give us?*

*Apart from the cricket, what other characters will be in the play?*

*Where is the play set?*

Turn to pages 4 and 5.

*What are the mice doing?*

*What is the cricket doing?*

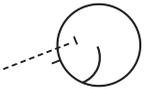
## **Read** to the end of page 5.

## **Reflect**

*How do you know which character is talking?*

*Why does this play need a narrator? What information do the narrators give us?*

*Why are the mice collecting food? Do you know other animals that do this?*



## **Observe and support**

Is the child able to self-correct when reading?

*Can you check that you are right? Where was your mistake? What would look right there?*

**Characters**

**Cricket**

**Squirrels**

**Ants**

**Mice**

**Narrator 1**

**Narrator 2**

**Narrator 1:** One sunny day, a cheerful cricket sat in a tree, singing happily.

Mice were carrying grain to their hole under the tree.

Squirrels were carrying acorns along the branches of the tree.

Ants were carrying crumbs to their nest in the tree trunk.

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

2

3

**Narrator 2:** Some mice hurried by, looking cross.

**Cricket:** Where are you hurrying to on such a nice day?

**Mice:** We are busy gathering food for winter.

**Cricket:** Why don't you stop and rest for a while?

**Mice:** We don't have time to rest. We have a lot of work to do. Goodbye.

**Narrator 2:** The mice hurried on crossly. They ignored the cricket's singing.

**Narrator 1:** But the cricket sat in the tree and went on singing. He sang and sang.

Some squirrels came scurrying by, looking grumpy.

4

5

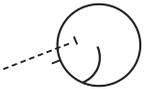
## **Predict**

*What are the squirrels doing? What tells you this?  
Do you think the cricket will help them?  
What sort of character do you think the cricket is? What makes you think so?*

## **Read** pages 6 and 7.

## **Reflect**

*Why do you think the squirrels are grumpy? How do you know this?  
What do you think the ants will be doing?  
How do you know when the cricket is talking?*



## **Observe and support**

Does the child integrate a range of cues when working out new vocabulary?  
Example: Point out the word ‘marching’ on page 7.  
*What kind of word are we looking for here? Could it be a word that tells us how the ants are moving?  
Look at the end of the word. What sound do these letters represent?  
What would make sense here?*

**Cricket:** Where are you scurrying to on such a nice day?

**Squirrels:** We are busy gathering food for winter.

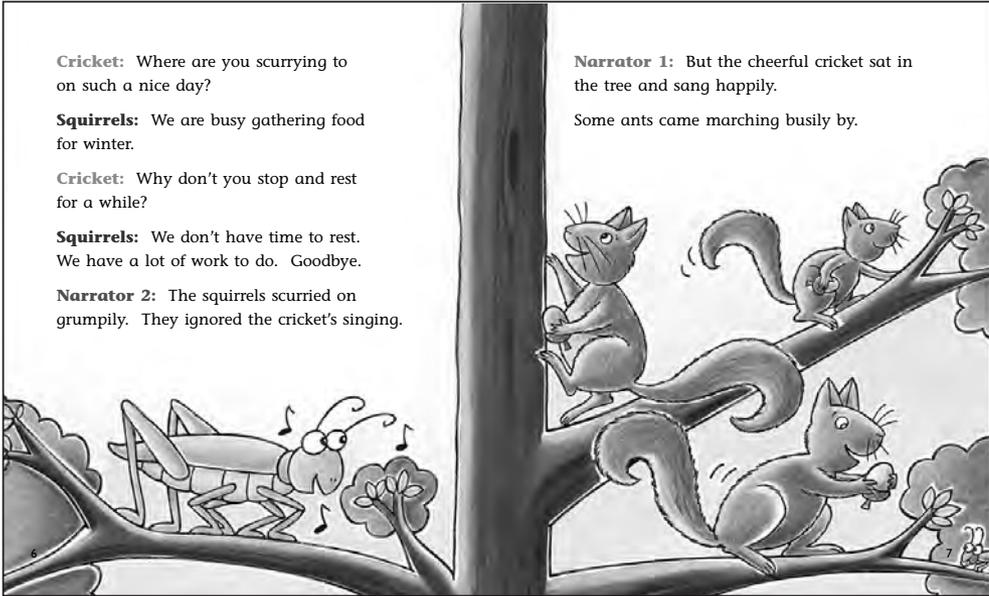
**Cricket:** Why don't you stop and rest for a while?

**Squirrels:** We don't have time to rest. We have a lot of work to do. Goodbye.

**Narrator 2:** The squirrels scurried on grumpily. They ignored the cricket's singing.

**Narrator 1:** But the cheerful cricket sat in the tree and sang happily.

Some ants came marching busily by.



## **Predict**

Look at the picture on pages 8 and 9.

*What are the ants doing?*

*Do you think they are enjoying the cricket's singing?*

Look at pages 10 and 11.

*What do you think the cricket and the mice are talking about?*

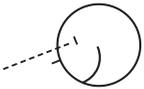
## **Read** to the end of page 11.

## **Reflect**

*Do you think it is fair that the mice won't share their food?*

*What would you have done if you were one of the mice?*

*How might the mice sound when they talk to the cricket?*



## **Observe and support**

Can the child read different parts in the script in an expressive manner?

Example: *How would the cricket's voice sound after the mice told him they would not share their food?*

**Cricket:** Where are you marching to on such a nice day?

**Ants:** We are busy gathering food for winter.

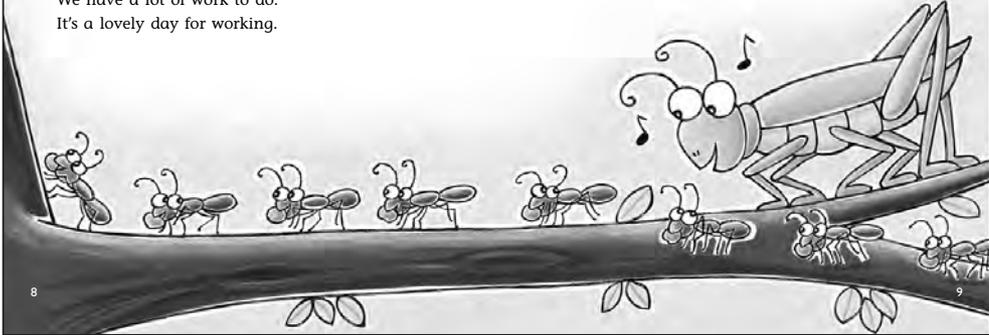
**Cricket:** Why don't you stop and rest for a while?

**Ants:** We don't have time to rest. We have a lot of work to do. It's a lovely day for working.

**Cricket:** [*singing cheerfully*]

Hi Ho! Hi Ho! It's off to work you go,  
The sun shines down, the sky is blue,  
Yahoo! Yahoo!

**Narrator 2:** The ants smiled at the cheerful cricket and marched in time to his song.



**Narrator 1:** The weather got colder and colder. One morning, the cheerful cricket woke up shivering.

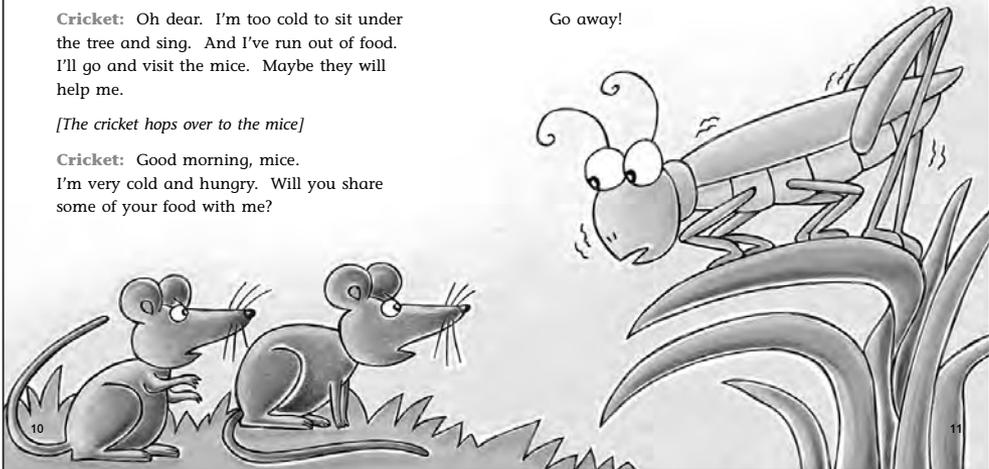
**Cricket:** Oh dear. I'm too cold to sit under the tree and sing. And I've run out of food. I'll go and visit the mice. Maybe they will help me.

[*The cricket hops over to the mice*]

**Cricket:** Good morning, mice. I'm very cold and hungry. Will you share some of your food with me?

**Mice:** We don't want to share our food with you. While we were working hard, you just sat in the tree and sang.

Go away!



● **Predict**

*What do you think the cricket might be asking the squirrels?*

*What might their response be? What makes you think so?*

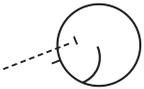
*What characters are speaking on this page?  
How can you tell?*

● **Read** to the end of page 13.

● **Reflect**

*Did it surprise you that the squirrels wouldn't share their food?*

*What would you have said if you were one of the squirrels? Why?*



**Observe and support**

Does the child integrate a range of cues when reading?

*Does that make sense? Does it sound right? Look at the letters. What sounds do they represent?*

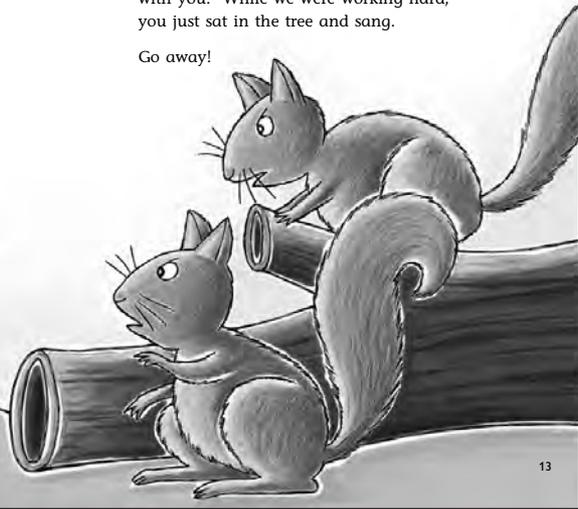
**Cricket:** Maybe the squirrels will help me.

*[The cricket hops over to the squirrels]*

**Cricket:** Good morning, squirrels.  
I'm very cold and hungry. Will you share  
some of your food with me?

**Squirrels:** We don't want to share our food  
with you. While we were working hard,  
you just sat in the tree and sang.

Go away!



## **Predict**

*What do you think the cricket is asking the ants?*

*What do you think the ants will say?*

*Look at page 16. It looks like a happy ending. What might have happened to make the cricket happy?*

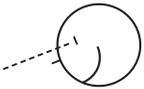
## **Read** to the end of page 16.

## **Reflect**

*How is the cricket feeling now?*

*Do you agree with the ants' decision? Why?*

*Which character do you relate to most? Why?*



## **Observe and support**

Is the child able to understand the conventions used in a play script?

*Which part tells us who is talking?*

*Why are the characters' names written in different colours?*

*What do the words in the brackets tell us?*

*Would the play make sense without the narrators?*

*Do all plays have narrators? Why?*

**Cricket:** Maybe the ants will help me.

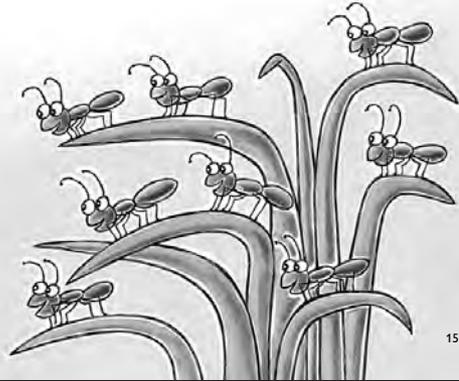
*[The cricket hops over to the ants]*

**Cricket:** Good morning, ants. I'm so cold and hungry. Will you share some of your food with me?



**Ants:** Of course! We would be happy to share our food with you.

Thank you for singing for us all summer. We marched in time to your song and it helped us to get our work done.



**Narrator 1:** The ants looked after the cricket during the long, cold winter. They gave him food and he promised to sing for them again.

**Narrator 2:** So when you hear the cricket singing in summer, you will know he is keeping his promise. And if you look very carefully, you will see the ants nearby, marching happily in time to his song.



## After reading

### Being a meaning maker

Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions:

*Why did the mice tell the cricket that they did not have time to rest?*

*How did the cricket help the ants?*

*How did the ants help the cricket?*

*Did the cricket do any work?*

*Is it fair that the ants gave the cricket food? Why?*

### Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore the following language features:

- use of adjectives and adverbs throughout the book: sunny, happily, hurried, scurrying, grumpily, busily
- the sound /w/: were, where, we, why, went, work, weather, woke, winter

### Being a text user

*What kind of book is this? How do you know?*

*Why does the book start with a list of characters?*

*How do you know which character is speaking?*

*What does a narrator do in a play?*

### Being a text critic

*What does the author think about singing while others are working?*

*Do you agree? Why?*

*Should people be looked after if they haven't collected food themselves?*

## Responding to text



Children could work in cooperative groups to practise and perform the play as a readers theatre. Encourage the use of rhythmic sound effects, e.g. rubbing blocks together to show the squirrels scurrying, tapping blocks lightly for the sound of the ants marching.



Children could write a list of questions that they would like to ask the different characters in the book. Have children share their questions with a friend, taking turns to answer as if they were the characters from the book.



Children could make lists of words that describe different actions, e.g. hurried crossly; marching busily; scurried grumpily, etc. These could be used as a writing reference when complete.

## Possible assessment focus

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Can the child:

- use the conventions of a play script to work out when it is their turn to read?
- read their part with an awareness of characterisation?
- explain the role of the narrator?



whole text activity



sentence activity



word activity

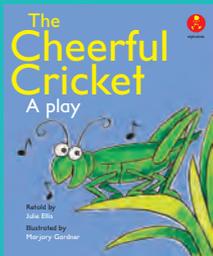
## Writing links

### Shared writing

Using the characters from ‘The Cheerful Cricket’, scribe a play using ideas from the children. Use appropriate conventions for this text type. After writing the play you might have the children practise and then perform the play.

### Independent writing

Children could retell the play as a story. Encourage the use of a range of adverbs and adjectives in the story to show the ways that the animals in the story went about their tasks. Discuss how speech is punctuated in a story.



## Teacher Edition

**Topic:** Work and play

**Curriculum link:** English, SOSE

**Text type:** Play script

**Reading level:** 18

**Word count:** 519

**Vocabulary:** busily, carrying, characters, cheerful, cricket, gathering, happily, hungry, hurried, ignored, marching, narrator, scurrying, shared, shivering, squirrels

### Possible literacy focus

Understanding the conventions used in a play script.

Understanding the role of a narrator.

Being familiar with issues related to performing a play.

### Summary

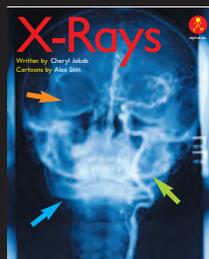
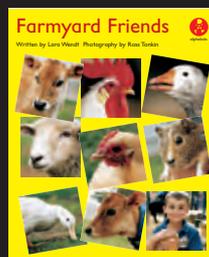
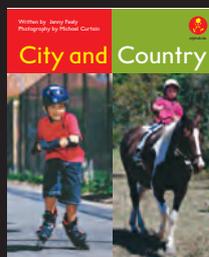
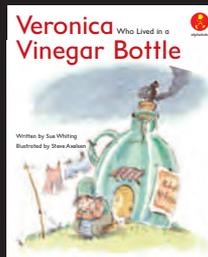
This is a play about a cricket who sings all summer while other animals collect food for winter. When winter comes, the cricket is looked after by ants who enjoyed his cheerful singing during the warmer weather.

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## Other books at this level



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