

Teacher Edition



Best of Friends

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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

- Fanciful names are used to suggest what the cat has done – 'Top-off', 'Half-done', 'All-gone'
- Direct speech is used throughout
- Ellipses are used

Vocabulary

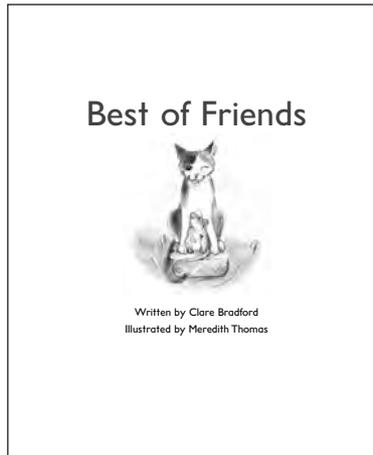
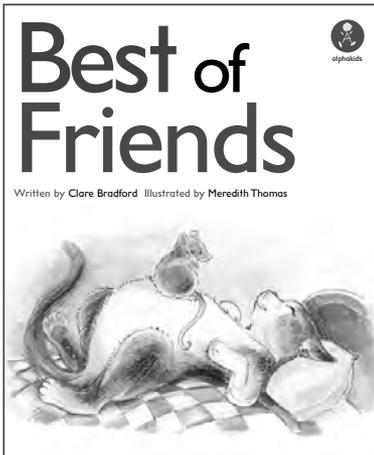
beautiful, delicious, gobbled, hollow, responsible, unusual, wedding

Setting the context

Talk to the children about other stories they may know that feature cats and mice.

Do cats and mice get along? Why?

Do you know any stories about cats and mice? What happens?



Front cover and title page

What kind of book do you think this is?

Why?

Draw out aspects of the cover that indicate that it is a story or narrative.

What do you think the story will be about?

How might the story start?

Point out features on the cover and title page such as the title and the names of the author and the illustrator.

● **Predict**

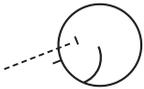
Look at the pictures on pages 2 and 3. How do you think the cat and mouse feel about each other? What tells you this?

Ask the children to check the first few words of the story. *What do these words tell you about the type of story this might be?*

● **Read** to the end of page 4.

● **Reflect**

What did the cat and mouse find? Why was this important to them?



Observe and support

Can the child understand the text at the literal level?
What part of the text tells you that the cat and the mouse are friends?

If the child experiences difficulty ask them to re-read sections of the text.

What did you find out about the cat and mouse in that paragraph?

Once there was a mouse whose best friend in the world was a cat. The cat and the mouse lived together and shared everything they had.

One day the mouse said, 'It's time to store some food for the winter so that we won't be hungry when it snows.'

'Yes indeed,' said the cat.

'Let's go and see what we can find.'



2

The two friends went looking for food. They found a tub of butter that had been tossed into a rubbish bin. The tub had not been opened.



3

'Ah!' cried the cat. 'This butter will taste delicious on cold winter days.'

'But our house is not big enough to store such a large tub of butter,' said the mouse. 'Where shall we hide it?'

'I know,' said the cat. 'Let's put it in the hollow tree beside the river.'

So they put the butter in the hollow tree.



4



5

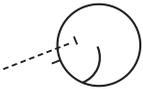
● **Predict**

What do you think will happen next? Why is the cat eating the butter? Do you think the cat will tell the mouse what she has been doing?

● **Read** to the end of page 7.

● **Reflect**

*Why did the cat keep thinking about the butter?
How did the cat manage to get to the butter without the mouse knowing?
What will the mouse say when she finds out?*



Observe and support

Ask one child to read aloud to you while the others are reading silently. Does the child read the text fluently?

I liked the way you read that. It sounded like talking.

As the days passed, the cat kept thinking about the taste of butter.

'Oh, how I wish I could try some,' said the cat to herself.

So she went to the mouse and said, 'Dear friend, my cousin is getting married today, and I would like to go to the wedding. Will you look after the house while I am gone?'

'Certainly,' said the mouse.



6

The cat said goodbye to the mouse and went straight to the hollow tree.

She took out the tub, opened it and gobbled up the butter at the top. Then she put the tub back and went home.



● **Predict**

What do you think the cat will say to the mouse?

How will she make the mouse believe she has really been to a wedding?

What might happen?

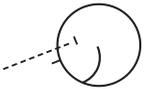
● **Read** to the end of page 11.

● **Reflect**

What has the cat done?

Do you think the mouse believes the cat's story? Why?

What might happen next?



Observe and support

Check the child's ability to self-monitor if they make an error when reading. Does the child notice if they have made a mistake? Do they re-read to the point of difficulty?

What did you notice? What might fit there? What would make sense?

'Goodness,' said the mouse. 'That was a very short wedding. Did you have a good time?'

'Oh yes,' said the cat. 'The bride looked beautiful.'

'What is your cousin's name?' asked the mouse.

'Top-off,' replied the cat.

'How interesting,' said the mouse. 'I've never heard a name like that before.'



8

After this the two friends lived together happily for a while. But the cat could not stop thinking of the tub of butter. Again she went to the mouse.

'Dear friend,' said the cat, 'my second cousin is getting married today. Will you take care of the house while I go to the wedding?'

'Of course,' said the mouse.



9

Then the cat went to the tree, took out the butter and ate it until the tub was half empty.

When she arrived home the mouse said, 'Back so soon? Did you enjoy the wedding?'

'Oh yes,' said the cat. 'I danced until my feet were sore.'

'And what is your second cousin's name?' asked the mouse.

'Half-done,' answered the cat.

'Half-done?' repeated the mouse. 'What an unusual name!'



10

For a long time the two friends lived together happily. But then the cat's thoughts returned to the tub of butter.

'Dear friend,' said the cat, 'my third cousin is getting married today. Will you take care of the house while I go to the wedding?'

'It would be a pleasure,' said the mouse.

The cat went to the tree, took out the butter and finished it. When she had licked the tub clean, she put it back in the tree and returned home.



11

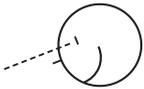
Predict

*What is the cat doing?
Will the mouse believe her?
What will happen next?*

 **Read** to the end of page 13.

Reflect

*Why do you think the mouse says, ‘You certainly have strange names in your family’?
Why does the cat say, ‘I hope no one has eaten it’?
What will happen when the mouse gets to the hollow tree?*



Observe and support

If meaning is lost while the child reads, try the following:

*What would make sense here?
How can we make this sentence make sense?
Look at the picture. What could you try?*

'Home already?' asked the mouse.
'How did the wedding go?'

'Wonderful,' said the cat.
'The food was delicious.'

'And what is your third cousin's name?'
asked the mouse.

'All-gone,' replied the cat.

'You certainly have strange names in your
family,' said the mouse.



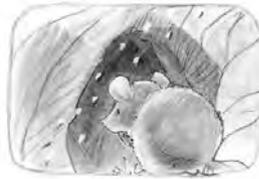
12

At last winter came and the cat and mouse
had no food left.

'I know,' said the mouse. 'We should fetch the
tub of butter we stored in the hollow tree.'

'An excellent idea,' said the cat. 'I hope no
one has eaten it.'

They set off, with the mouse leading the way.
She put her head inside the hollow tree.



13

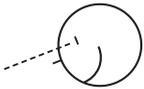
● **Predict**

*Look at the pictures on pages 14, 15 and 16.
Why is the cat chasing the mouse into a hole? What has happened? Do you think they are still the best of friends?*

● **Read** to the end of page 16.

● **Reflect**

*Does the mouse really think that the cat's cousins ate the butter?
Why does she say that it was the cat's cousins who ate the butter?
Did the mouse think that the cat would try to eat her too?*



Observe and support

Can the child identify new vocabulary by using contextual information?
What does 'responsible' mean? How do you know?
If the child has difficulty, ask: *What is another word that would make sense there?*

Here it is!' the mouse cried. But when she pulled it out she saw that the tub was empty.

'Ah hah!' cried the mouse. 'I know who is responsible for this. Your three cousins came one-by-one to eat our butter. First Top-off, then Half-done, and last of all...'

'Watch what you say about my family,' shouted the cat, 'or I'll eat you too.'

'... All-gone!' cried the mouse, and she jumped into the hollow tree.



14



15

The cat leapt after the mouse, but the hole was too small for a cat.

And since that time, no cat has ever made friends with a mouse, and no mouse has ever made friends with a cat.

But cats still love butter. So watch out where you keep yours.



16

After reading

Being a meaning maker

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

Where did the cat and mouse hide their tub of butter?

What happened to the butter?

How could the mouse have known that the cat was eating the butter?

Could the cat and mouse ever be friends again? Why?

Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore the following language features:

- the different pronunciation of words with similar spelling: done/gone
- use of hyphens in the names 'Top-off', 'Half-done', 'All-gone'
- double letters in the book: butter, hollow, shall, tree

Being a text user

Is this a true story? How do you know?

What are stories like this trying to tell us?

You may like to consider the language used that indicates that this is a folk tale: Once there was, indeed, shall

What do these words tell you about what type of story this is?

Being a text critic

What does the author think about greed? Do you agree?

Why do you think the author wrote the book this way?

What did you learn from reading the book?

Did you like the book?

Who would you recommend the book to?

Responding to text



Children could work in cooperative groups to practice and perform the book as a readers theatre.



Children could retell the text as a comic. Provide large sheets of paper folded into eighths.



Children could read through the book to find all the words that have double letters.

Writing links

Shared writing

Discuss other animal relationships that are used in folk tales. For example, elephants are portrayed as being frightened of mice; dogs and cats hate each other; cats and birds are enemies. Brainstorm reasons for these relationships.

Independent writing

Children could innovate on the story to write about relationships between other animals, e.g. dogs and cats.

Possible assessment focus

Can the child:

- explain the features of a folk tale?
- read the text expressively and fluently?



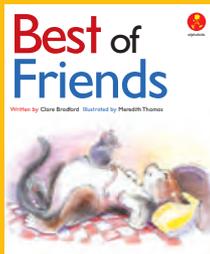
whole text activity



sentence activity



word activity



Teacher Edition

Topic: Traditional stories

Curriculum link: English, SOSE

Text type: Folk tale

Reading level: 22

Word count: 742

Vocabulary: beautiful, delicious, gobbled, hollow, responsible, unusual, wedding

Possible literacy focus

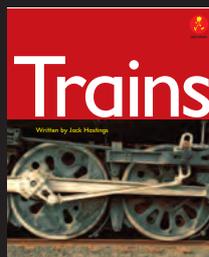
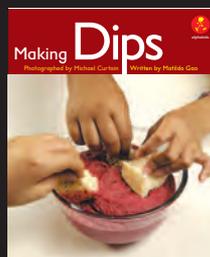
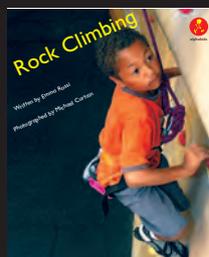
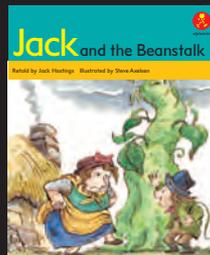
Understanding inferences in the text.

Understanding the structure and features of folk tales.

Summary

This book is a folk tale about how cats and mice came to dislike each other.

Other books at this level



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