



READING ALOUD WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

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Reading Aloud with Young Children

Vignette 1¹



The teacher seats her twenty grade 1 and 2 students around her. It is the beginning of the school day, so she starts with a familiar song to settle them down.

Teacher (*singing*): क्या तुमने, क्या तुमने, हाथी देखा जी? क्या तुमने, क्या तुमने, हाथी देखा जी?
 वो तो यूँ...वो तो यूँ...वो तो यूँ - यूँ करता जी!
 (*showing how an elephant moves its trunk*)

The children repeat after her, enjoying singing and imitating the movements. The teacher sings about one or two other creatures before moving on.

Teacher: Okay, okay. (*Holding up the book *Ek Sau Santeesva Pair*², showing its front cover*). Today we will read a story about another creature.

Students: Yay, a story!

Teacher: Yes, come closer. Can you all see the book? (*Pointing to the cover*) What do you see here?

One student: I see a sun.

Many others: Trees!

Teacher: So...where do you find many, many trees?

¹ The vignettes in this handout are inspired from read-aloud sessions the author observed at QUEST, Maharashtra, and at Muskaan, Bhopal (the latter for a Parag Initiative project).

² Published by Pratham Books (2017). Written and Illustrated by Madhuri Purandare. You can access the book here: <https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/10145-ek-sau-santisvan-paer>

Students: A jungle!

Teacher: Yes, so this story is probably set in a jungle. The name of the story is *Ek Sau Santeesva Pair*. (*Children don't show surprise*). We are learning numbers in class, aren't we? Which numbers do you know?

Students: 10, 20, 50... 35...

Teacher: 20 is bigger than 10, right? And, 50 is bigger than 20, isn't it? Do you know a number bigger than 50?

Older students: 100! Like 100 rupees is more than 50 rupees...

Teacher: That's right! 100 is much bigger than 50. And, look, the name of the story is *Ek Sau Santeesva Pair* (*reads with emphasis*). This means more than a hundred legs! WOW! Which creature could have SO MANY legs?

The children's eyes widen in wonder.

Student 1: Ant! **Student 2:** Spider?

Other students: Noooo! Ants and spiders don't have so many legs. Spider only has eight legs!

Student 3: Oh, oh...I know! That thing that becomes a butterfly!

Student 4: The thing that crawls on leaves (*shows the movement with hands*).

Teacher: Yes. What is it called?

Student 5: *Illi* (*broader category for caterpillars, centipedes and millipedes in Hindi*)

Teacher: *Illi*, yes. Have you seen one?

Student 3: Yes, I have seen green ones. They come from green eggs.

Student 4: I have seen brown ones.

Teacher: So you're saying that *illis* can be of different types and colours... Right, so who is this story going to be about?

Students: *Illi*!

Teacher: Yes. This story is about a kind of *illi* called *gojar*. Shall we see what happens to the *gojar illi*?

Students: Yes, let us read!

(The teacher tells them about the author-illustrator and starts reading out the story.)

Children like to hear a good story, as this vignette shows. Most language and literacy experts are also enthusiastic about the power of storytelling and reading aloud in classrooms.

In **oral storytelling**, teachers narrate a story to children and discuss it with them; while in **reading aloud**, the teacher reads out from a book. Even non-fiction (for example, books about animals or plants) can be used for read-alouds, not just storybooks.

In classrooms where teachers read aloud regularly to children, it may appear as if the teacher just picks up a book, reads it aloud, and children automatically become engaged with the reading. But this is not the case. Careful thought, planning and practice goes into it. In this handout, we hope to make some of this behind-the-scenes activity transparent.

Why Read Aloud?

In classrooms across India, many children are taught to read by copy-writing *aksharas* from the board and, later on, copy-writing words, sentences, and passages. Even if they learn to read this way, they may still not understand *what reading is about*, or *why we read*.

There are many purposes of reading: reading for enjoyment and pleasure; reading for information; reading for communication, and so on. When we read aloud books regularly to children, we are sharing some of these reasons for reading with them. Without this understanding, children may not be able to make any sense of the rest of literacy instruction (Stahl, 1992).

Read-alouds also show students how language functions and how meaning is formed (Barrentine, 1996). Read-alouds demonstrate *how good readers read* fluently with correct expression, pace and intonation; how readers process and think about the text and how they connect what they're reading to their prior knowledge or experiences.

Like oral storytelling, read-alouds *can engage children's imagination and curiosity*. Children actively think about what they're reading and listening to: What has happened up to this point? What is going to happen next? Why? How?

What's more, this activity lets students *experience the joy readers derive out of reading*. All these motivate students to read independently, perhaps even preparing them for a lifelong journey of exploring the joys of reading!



Figure 1. Children reading independently, SAJAG, Mumbai

Developing Effective Read-Alouds

Reading aloud well requires thoughtful planning and considerable practice (Shedd & Duke, 2008). We will discuss this process in detail. We have also shared a ***Read Aloud Planning Guide*** in **Annexure I**. You can use this to make notes while you plan for a session. To give you an example of the different aspects of planning, we have included the notes of the teacher in our opening vignette (read-aloud session with *Ek Sau Santeesva Pair*) in the annexure.

Choosing Texts to Read Aloud

- Select books that are likely to be interesting and engaging for your group. That is, books that suit their age, context, needs and interests. Themes that reflect current conversations in class or issues your students are grappling with will be a good choice too. According to the *Good Books Guide* (National Book Trust, 2014³, see Figure 2) young children may like books about self (that is, books reflecting own likes/dislikes, experiences, fears, etc.), family life, friendship, animals, nature, affection, myths and simple fantasies.
- Choose books that are capable of generating higher-order conversations. That is, depending on your students' age and level, does the book/text allow for going deeper into the theme, to explore connections with students' lives and the things they see around them?
- Young children enjoy books with simple plots/structure and characters that are easily relatable—someone whose thoughts and experiences reflect theirs.

³ An English version is available online at <http://eli.tiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Guide-to-Good-Books-1.pdf>

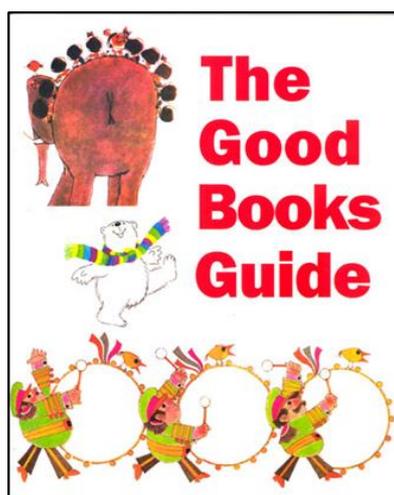


Figure 2. The Good Books Guide, National Book Trust, 2014

- Select books with rich language. Interesting use of language, rhymes, play with words and sounds make reading a book an enjoyable experience for young children.
- Look for books with powerful illustrations that will capture children’s attention and imagination. Richly illustrated pages or bold photos help students follow the story, and encourage them to ‘re-read’ the book, even if they are not reading in the conventional sense yet. For older children (Grade 4 and up), you can read illustrated or chapter books, but we recommend that you start with picture books.
- Select books that are inclusive and that don’t present certain groups or communities in a stereotyped or disrespectful manner. For example, you could select books that show children with disabilities making decisions, instead of as powerless and dependent.
- Over time, use books from different genres and forms, including poetry, non-fiction, adventure, humour, and so on.
- Consider using books that also offer interesting opportunities for language learning, like different print concepts, vocabulary, story structure, writing styles and so on.

Deciding the Focus/Purposes of the Lesson

Be clear about the purpose(s) of the read aloud. Examples of purposes are:

- Demonstrating Concepts about Print⁴.

⁴ Refer to the ELI Practitioner Brief on ‘Emergent Literacy’ for more on Concepts about Print.

- Learning the structure of stories.
- Learning to predict and to check predictions using later information.
- Learning to make connections, for example, connecting the text/story to self (child), to the world at large, and to other texts that children may have read earlier.
- Learning to make inferences.
- Discussing illustrations and how these visual elements relate to the text/story—Do they extend the story? Do they change the meaning of the text? Do they tell us anything important about the setting or the mood?
- Discussing one or more literary elements, like plot, characters, theme, language, setting, genre. For example, if you choose *character*, you could help students identify the main characters in the story, and compare these characters to themselves or people they know; discuss the intentions behind the characters' actions; examine how characters change in the story (Wolf, 2004).

In the vignette at the beginning of this handout, the teacher wanted to *help children learn to predict, and check those predictions using later information* in the book (see **Annexure I** for details). Remember, you can pick *more than one* thing to focus on during a lesson – for example, you may choose to draw children's attention to the illustrations and the theme at the same time.

To decide on the purpose(s) for your session, think about the strengths/features of the text as well as the needs of your students. For example, at QUEST, a facilitator once used the book *Jui Mauski Ki Beti*⁵ to help students identify the different emotions of the protagonist (a little girl called Anu) by attending to her speech and actions through the story. The story is about Anu going to meet her aunt's new-born for the first time, and it allows for rich connections with students' experiences relating to the arrival of a younger sibling. Through this discussion on Anu's emotions, the facilitator also hoped her students would learn key emotion words to communicate their feelings and discuss the motivations and actions of central characters in the books they read.

⁵ You can access the book at https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/78-jui-mauski-beti?story_read=true

Practicing Your Reading-Aloud

Performance is one part of a good read aloud. If you don't read with expression and carry your readers along, soon you will find that most students are wriggling around, or distracting each other during your reading. Therefore, it is critical to practice reading with expression, intonation, pace, and voice. Practice reading your book *aloud* a couple of times before bringing it to your class. Think about when you will lower your voice; when you plan to be loud and forceful; where you will slow down and where you will pick up pace; how to read dialogues of different characters in different voices; and so on. This practice will also allow you space during the session to observe children's responses to the text. Initially, ask a friend for support and feedback as you practice.

Setting Up for the Read Aloud



Figure 3. A teacher reading aloud in her class, Mumbai Mobile Creches, Mumbai.

- Try to create a special atmosphere for the read-aloud—choose a specific place in the classroom where your students will gather to listen, like the reading corner⁶.
- Ask the children to sit around you and make themselves comfortable (see Figure 3). Hold the book such that the students can see text and illustrations clearly. If the book is small, show it around after every one or two pages so that children can see the illustrations up close.

⁶ Refer to the ELI Practitioner Brief on “Creating Print-rich Environment” for details on reading corners.

- You can have post-its or slips of paper with questions and comments you plan to bring up during the session.

Opening up the Conversation—Setting Context and Arousing Interest

How will you introduce the book to your students such that it arouses their curiosity and interest? Maybe you could ask them to describe the picture on the cover and think about what the book will be about. Ask them questions that help them connect the pictures and predictions with their own lives. If they see a cat and a mouse on the cover, you could ask them to think about the relationship between cats and mice they have seen. Based on this, ask them to predict what the story will be about. You may also want to see if there is any important information, concepts or word meanings that they need to know to follow along as you read.

Vignette 1 shows how the teacher attends to these elements in setting the context for *Ek Sau Santeesva Pair*. She draws students' attention to the title, asking them to think of creatures that have many legs. She knows that they might not understand the number 'hundred and thirty-seven' right away and hence supports them to get an idea of the value ('more than a hundred') to create excitement about the story. Once the children guess the creature, she asks them to share their own experience with it—the kinds and colours of millipedes they have seen. These students understand the word '*illi*', but not '*gojar*' used in the story. Thus, the teacher explains this key word right at the beginning. She also asks them to describe the picture on the cover, hinting at the setting of the story.

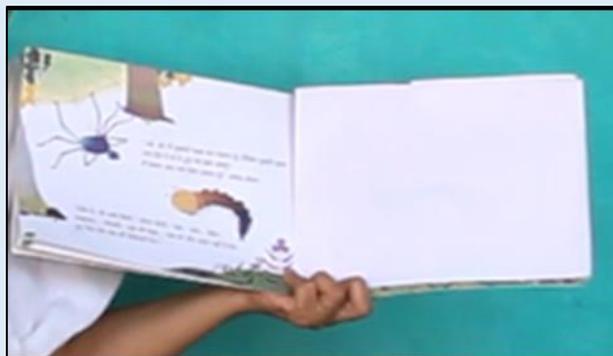
Interacting During the Read Aloud

Some teachers ask the children questions at the end of the read aloud. This may not be the richest way to read aloud books to children. Instead, try to stop at three or four places *during the reading* and invite children to join in.

As for where to stop and what to ask, ask yourself what your purposes in using that book are. If you intend to teach students about the relationship between illustrations and text, stop at specific pages where the connection between the two is interesting. If you hope to teach children how to predict, stop at the pages when something is about to happen and ask students

what they think will happen next. Vignette 2 shows one such exchange in the book *Ek Sau Santeesva Pair*.

Vignette 2



(A spider has offered to help fix the millipede's broken leg. The teacher covers the next page with paper, and initiates a discussion).

Teacher: How do you think the spider will fix the millipede's leg?

Child 1: He will tie it with a rope or thread.

Child 2: No, he will stitch it with a *suji* (needle).

Child 3: He could use *gond* (glue) to stick it together.

Teacher: These are interesting ideas. What else could happen? *(No response from children)* We are talking about a spider. Can you think of other ways in which a spider might attach the leg?

Child 4: Oh, I know! He will use his *jaal* (web)!

Teacher: Okay, why do you think so?

Child 4: Because that's the sticky thing spiders use to catch insects.

Teacher: That seems very likely, yes. Shall we see what the spider actually does?

(The teacher reveals the next page. The illustration shows the spider spinning his web around the millipede's broken leg. The teacher points to it and reads the text. At the end, she asks students if they've noticed which of the predictions occurred).

Notice that the teacher asked questions that elicited thoughtful responses from the children. In many classrooms, teachers ask 'who' and 'what' questions. For example,

Teacher: Who offered to help the millipede with his leg?

Children: Spider.

Teacher: Right, spider.

Such exchanges do not help children understand the book on a deeper level. Richer conversations, like in Vignette 2, push children to think about ‘how’ and ‘why’ and make them think harder and more deeply.

As you read, draw the children’s attention to illustrations as well. You can think of the ones you want to spend some time on while you plan: Which ones can help students’ comprehension and response to the text, keeping your purpose in mind? Are there any interesting elements or details to point out? Are there aspects of illustrations that might hinder children’s comprehension that you should alert them to?

You can also keep a list of words that children may not understand, so that you don’t forget to explain them.

Remember that the talk *during* the read-aloud should be relatively brief, and not break the flow of the reading.

Discussing the Book After Reading it

You have talked to children about the book *before* reading it; you have talked to children *during* reading it; now, it is time to talk to them *after* reading the book! What kind of talk would be most helpful at this point?

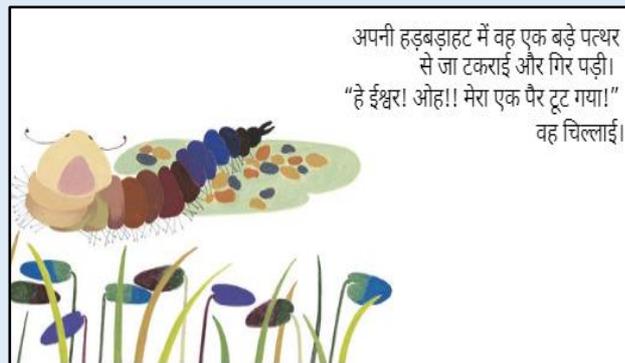
Here, too, plan questions that can elicit thoughtful responses from your students, rather than one or two word answers. You could start with questions about their overall impression of the book: “Did you like the book? Why/Why not?” After a round of such conversation, ask more specific questions related to your teaching purposes (**Annexure I** presents the questions the teacher in the vignette had planned).

Jessica Hoffman (2011) recommends using three strategies to encourage interactive discussions around books. These apply to discussions *during* and *after* the read aloud, but it is better to reserve longer conversations for after the read aloud, so that you don’t break the flow of the story. You can re-read the book on another day before engaging children to have longer discussions around the book.

Strategy 1: Encourage student talk. In Indian classrooms, students are typically allowed to speak only in response to teacher’s questions, and even then, only when their name is called out. This discourages students from responding spontaneously. But spontaneous responses will help the class to build a shared understanding of the book (*discussed next*). So, your first goal is to get children to talk freely⁷. Allow them to ask and answer questions, respond to each other, and make comments during or after the read aloud.

Strategy 2: Co-construct meaning. Many teachers believe that they need to *tell children what the text means*. But children are meaning makers! Build on this capacity in your conversations with them about the text. Follow-up on students’ spontaneous comments to guide the meaning-making process of the group. Vignette 3 presents an example. Involve multiple children in the discussion!

Vignette 3

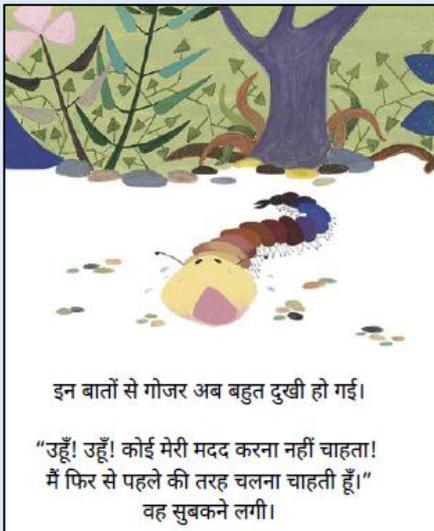


When the class was discussing the story the following day, a student wondered why the millipede stepped out to look for food—weren’t there enough leaves right by her side? The teacher said she hadn’t thought about it and opened the page where the event is described. Looking at the illustrations on that page, another student exclaimed that the leaves around the millipede were blue. The teacher asked what that could indicate, and through discussion, the class came to an interpretation that perhaps the millipede went out because the leaves around her had rotted. It is possible that the author did not intend this, but the teacher recognised it as valid. She used the opportunity to weave text and illustrations together to co-construct the meaning of an event in the story.

⁷ If you are worried about noise and confusion, use simple techniques for managing your class. For example, you can draw attention to a particular response you want others to build on (“*Sapna, what did you say?*”) or summarize the debate up to that point (“*So, Rajesh is saying ___ but some of you feel it could be ___*”); or use simple reminders (“*Okay, let us come back to your thoughts on THIS book*”) (Hoffman, 2011).

Strategy 3: Reconstruct meaning. Sometimes, children misunderstand the meaning of the story. At such points, it is okay for you to step in, ask the class to look back at the text and check the collective understanding being constructed. This way, you can help students notice and correct their incorrect meaning-making, as shown in Vignette 4.

Vignette 4



The teacher stops at the point where none of the millipede’s ‘friends’ and ‘neighbours’ helps her, and asks students about what the millipede might do next. Some students respond saying that the millipede will ask the butterfly for help, perhaps because butterfly comes to their mind. They did not correct that response based on earlier events in the story: the millipede had already asked the butterfly and it had refused to help.

Rather than dismissing it as an incorrect response and simply ‘fishing’ for correct responses from other students, the teacher pursued it and asked if others also thought this could happen, why or

why not. Later, she also showed them the page where the millipede asks the butterfly for help. This way, she slowly guided the class to arrive at the correct understanding of events in the story.

If you have built a classroom culture of ‘free’ discussions and respecting each other’s responses in collective meaning making, then you don’t need to worry about your correction or reconstruction discouraging students from share their responses in future.

Children’s Response to Text

Give your students chances to respond to the text through talk, but also through other modalities, like art, writing and performance. We share some ideas, but you can think of many more.

Art. Encourage students to respond to the story through art and drawing. These should be genuine opportunities for students to reflect on what they have read or heard, and not just

for reproducing illustrations from the book. You can give them some prompts: ask them to think about and depict what they felt was the most important event in the story, something that stayed with them after the read-aloud, how they imagine a crucial event playing out, or any connection with own lives and experiences that the story evokes.

Performance. In discussion with the class, you could adapt the book (if it is a short one) or important scenes as a play. Children love performing, and it engages them deeply as they bring their mind, bodies and voices to it. Drama is also an opportunity for encouraging them to reflect on the text and their thoughts and feelings about it. Wolf (2004) suggests *sticking close to the text* at the beginning, asking students to think about how they would portray a reaction or an exchange in selected scenes. Discuss the dialogues with students and write the script for them if they cannot do it themselves.

Over time, or with older students, you can move to *conversations that were not there in the book* (Wolf, 2004). It could be an unwritten exchange between two-three characters in the text, about how their lives carry on after the book ends, and so on. Children will have to dig deep into what they know about the characters and *create* these exchanges. You can encourage them to talk about these choices. As you may have realised, props, setting or audience is not a concern. The primary idea is to get students reflect on and articulate their responses to what they have read.

Another useful idea is for students to ‘become’ character(s) from the book or its author. The rest of the class can ‘interview’ them about their motivation and feelings, what they would have done in another situation, how they could have handled a situation differently, why the author chose to write things a certain way, and so on.

Written responses. Encourage your students to share their responses to texts in writing. We present a few ideas here. Model these ideas before expecting students to write independently. You could also create interesting worksheets (see Figure 4) to help young children structure their responses.

- Students’ overall response to the book or story: what they liked and disliked, and why.
- Writing about similar incidents from their lives.
- Children could write a letter thinking about what they’d like to tell or ask a character, and their thoughts and feelings about the character and his/her/its

actions. Similarly, they could write to the author with their comments, questions and suggestions.

- Where resources allow, children could maintain a ‘journal’ recording their responses to the books read aloud to them. When reading aloud chapter books or longer texts with older children, you can ask them to record their ongoing responses, questions, predictions also in this journal (Wolf, 2004).
- Students could extend the story or write a different ending. Or identify a central event in the story and write imagining how the story will unfold if that event is changed.

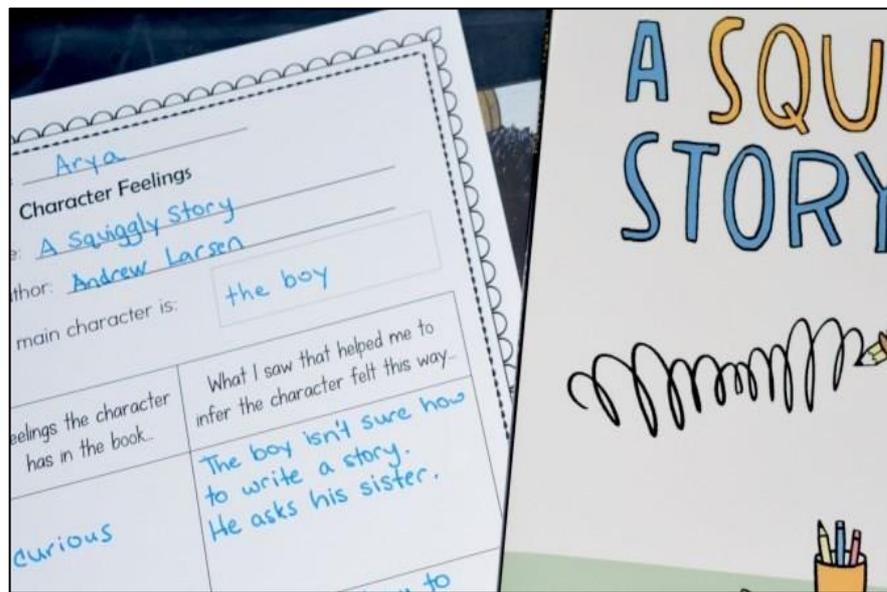


Figure 4. Worksheet for *Character Feelings*, with a student’s entries. www.thecurriculumcorner.com

- You could ask students to list out the different feelings of a key character, with information that supports their determination (see Figure 4).
- The class could create their own books⁸ adapting the theme or writing style from the books read out to them.
- For non-fiction, children could record five important details they learnt from the text as words or short phrases. They can also create an ‘information web’, taking your help

⁸ Refer to the ELI Practitioner Brief on “Children’s Writing: Creating Books in the Classroom” for more ideas and examples.

to decide the main categories (e.g. a web on *snakes* could be separated into details on appearance, types, diet and habitat).

Observations and Reflections

After the read aloud, record your observations of students. Your notes can be about the group's response or responses of some students. Reflect on the entire read-aloud experience: What were your students' strengths and needs in terms of learning? Were you able to address the purpose of your session adequately? What about your strengths and needs as the facilitator? You can use this information to plan your subsequent sessions. Refer to **Annexure I** for the observations and reflections of the teacher in our vignette.

Summary

To conclude, here are some ideas for a good read aloud:

1. Pick interesting texts well-matched with your students' contexts, needs and capabilities.
2. Ask yourself what you might use the chosen book for: to help children make predictions, connect story with their lives, study the illustrations. Pick interesting things to work on with the book.
3. Plan to talk about the book throughout the session—*before* reading, *during* reading, and *after* reading. When you talk, keep the discussions rich. Don't ask 'who-what' questions. Ask deeper questions that help children think hard about the text.
4. Don't 'explain' the book to the children. Instead, construct the meaning of the book *together* with them. Don't be afraid to correct children if they misunderstand the story completely. Re-direct their attention to what the book says, and see if, together, you can construct a more appropriate understanding of the story.
5. Give children chances to respond to the text through talk, but also through writing, art, and performance.
6. Plan your read aloud—don't walk into the classroom, pick up a book and read it out without thinking it through. Plan – then, practice, practice, practice!

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Author: Akhila Pydah | **Conceptual Support and Editing:** Shailaja Menon

Copy Editing: Chetana Divya Vasudev | **Layout and Design:** Harshita V. Das

Annexure I: Read Aloud Planning Guide⁹

Key Planning Areas	Teacher's Notes
<p>The Book /Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which book are you considering reading aloud? • Is the text of appropriate quality? • Is the book capable of generating higher-order conversations? • Describe your students – age, context, instructional needs. Will this text be appropriate for your students? Will it engage them? 	<p>Book - Ek Sau Sainteesva Pair (Pratham Books, Madhuri Purandare)</p> <p>The text is of good quality. On the face of it, it is a story of the protagonist getting hurt and someone helping her. But it can generate conversations around empathy, kindness and what 'friendship' means.</p> <p>My students are first and second graders in an NGO-run school located in their community (a rural <i>basti</i>). They speak Hindi and Pardhi / Gondi bilingually.</p> <p>The story is short and has a simple plot for these young children to follow easily. The illustrations will appeal to them. The characters (insects, birds etc.) as well as the theme of hurting oneself, seeking help, friendship, etc. are likely to be very relatable for this age group.</p>
<p>Focus / Purpose of the Lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of this lesson? • Is this text the right one for your purpose? 	<p>My purpose is to help students learn to predict actions, events and responses in a story based on what has happened up to that point as well as their world knowledge. They should also be able to check their predictions using the information revealed later in the book. Skilled readers engage in this kind of continuous meaning-making as they read. This book has 2-3 important places where students could be asked to predict. At the same time, the plot is not too complex to overwhelm them.</p>

⁹ Menon, S. Class Handout, M. A. Education Programme, Azim Premji University. Adapted from the Northshore Read Aloud Planning Form; Combs, M. (1996). Developing Competent Readers and Writers in the Primary Grades; and Hoffman, J. L. (2011). Coconstructing meaning: Interactive literary discussions in kindergarten read-alouds.

<p>Opening Up the Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you introduce the book such that it arouses students’ interest? • What important information, background knowledge or word meanings are necessary for children to follow the book? 	<p>In the opening discussion, I will draw students’ attention to the title, asking them to think of creatures that have so many legs. They might not readily understand the number ‘hundred and thirty-seven’ but it is important for them to get an idea of the value (‘more than a hundred’) to create excitement about the story. So, I will focus on that.</p> <p>I will also ask them to look at the cover page and predict the setting.</p> <p>Children might be familiar with the word, ‘<i>illi</i>’ but I might have to explain that ‘<i>Gojar</i>’ is one kind of <i>illi</i>.</p>
<p>Interacting During the Read Aloud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions - Invite discussions in 3-4 places across the book selected <u>based on your lesson’s focus</u>. • Illustrations – Which illustrations will you draw students’ attention to during the read aloud? • Essential Words – Are there 2-4 words in the text that are important/difficult for <u>your</u> students to understand? (These are different from the ones discussed in the introduction) 	<p>I will invite responses at the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pg. 7: The millipede breaks her leg. What will happen now? (general predictions) 2. Pg. 11: No one helps the millipede. What will she do now? (Prediction cannot include options that millipede has already exhausted). 3. Page 14: The spider offers to help the millipede: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spider says he can count only until 8, why is that so? (requires bringing their prior knowledge to the story) • How do you think the spider will fix millipede’s leg? (Prediction based on prior knowledge) (I will cover the opposite page). • After the millipede counts and finds the broken leg, ask about the significance of the title of the book. <p>I will encourage children to notice illustrations on each page as we read through.</p> <p>Difficult words to cover as we read: <i>Khumari</i> and <i>Dubki</i> (p.4); <i>Subakne</i> (p.12)</p>

<p>Discussing the Book After Read Aloud</p> <p>Think of questions that elicit thoughtful responses from children to the book, rather than short responses without any elaboration.</p> <p>The purpose is to support students’ attempts to understand and respond to what they have read.</p>	<p>After reading the book, I will ask the following questions to invite a discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Broad Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you like this book? Why? Or why not? • Which part of this story did you like? Why? • Which part of this story did you dislike? Why? 2. Digging deeper. My students aren’t used to giving extended responses. They usually answer with “<i>achha laga /bura laga</i>” or “<i>haan/na</i>” without any explanation. But, I hope to build upon these responses a bit more and try to have some conversation around empathy, kindness and friendship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you like the birds and insects the millipede asks help from? Why so? • Would you call them millipede’s friends? How so? Or, why not? • The bees were busy with work, and hence couldn’t help. Is that different from the response of the butterfly and sparrow who were very rude to millipede and didn’t help her? How so? Or why not? 3. Personal Connects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has something like this ever happened to you? How did that make you feel? • What would you do if your friend was in trouble? Can you share some examples?
<p>Observations</p> <p>After the session, record your observations of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were largely with the reading, although I saw a few drifting off now and then. I tried to bring them back to the book with questions that directed their attention to the illustrations. • Grade 2 students (who have more experience with read-alouds) were better at making predictions. Grade 1 students found it difficult to keep information in mind while making

<p>This could be about the whole class as a group or some important responses of some students</p>	<p>predictions. For example, though the millipede had already asked butterfly for help, some children did not take this part into account when, a bit later in the book, I asked them to predict what the millipede would do next. They said it could ask a butterfly for help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing around personal connects was rich, but I felt that some students shared generally without really comparing/contrasting with the story in their minds.
<p>Reflections</p> <p>Think back on the read aloud experience and consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students’ strengths and needs in terms of their learning • Your strengths and needs as the facilitator • Your next steps with this group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Younger students need more support with/modelling of using prior information (from the text or knowledge of the world) for understanding as well as making predictions. • Older students could make predictions and bring their knowledge of the world to the story (e.g. the reason for the spider being able to count only till 8). But I did not confirm, in every instance, if they were checking their predictions against new information. I will need to focus on this more consciously. • I feel this book required more of “general predictions” requiring children to bring their world knowledge to understand the text in front of them. This is an important skill. But gradually, I need to introduce them to books that require more specific “within-text” predictions as well, that is, predictions based on the information revealed in the story. • Students were very engaged in sharing personal connects. But I probably need to ask them to explain the connection more clearly. • In general, children need more support for extended discussions on a topic/ response. This might be one reason why we could not explore the themes of empathy and kindness in this book as well as I would have liked to.