



The Chocolate Unicorn

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BOOK BAND: LIME

BEFORE YOU START

Prepare a **group journal** to help you record group discussions and responses to the text as you work through the book.

Prepare an outline of the character Olive, ready to complete using the **Role on the Wall** technique.

SESSION 1: CHAPTER ONE



Focus: Thinking Aloud, Predicting and Empathising

Without sharing the front cover or title of the book, cover the text and display the illustration from page 3 to explore the children's early impressions of the character.

- Who could this be?
- What clues do you have to make you think that?
- What do you know about her?
- What could she be doing, thinking or feeling?
- What do you like about this illustration? What does it remind you of?
- Who and what might this story be about?

Record the children's responses in the **journal**. Once you have recorded their predictions you can return to these as you read the book, comparing the children's initial thoughts to how the story actually unfolds.

Read the title of the book and share the illustration on the front cover. Ask the children to predict what the story could be about. Ask them to justify their responses, drawing out any **connections** they make to other stories or to real-life events.

Read the first two pages until page 4, 'What if someone saw her?'. Discuss how this information compares with the children's predictions and early impressions of the character.

- What more have you learned about the character?
- What does she worry about?
- Why might someone worry about these sorts of things?
- Is there a difference between the types of things that worry her?
- Can you think of other things that she might worry about?

Allow the children to make personal connections to the text and the character. You could discuss whether any of them have ever been worried about something and how it feels, both physically and emotionally, to dwell on worries. The children might also make **connections** with other stories in which characters have to deal with feeling worried or afraid.

Look at the author's use of repetition in the opening two pages.

- Why do you think the author has used the same two-sentence paragraph structure each time?
- Does this help emphasise how worried Olive is?

If the children can imagine other scenarios in which Olive might be worried, they could try and mimic this sentence structure.

Read the rest of the chapter. Allow time at the end for children to respond to what they have heard and revise their predictions about how the story might develop.

Look back at the illustration of Grandpa on page 5.

- What do you notice about Grandpa?
- Is there anything in the illustration which puzzles you?
- What would you like to know?
- How has Olive drawn him on page 8?
- How does this reflect what you see in the illustration on page 5?
- Do you think Grandpa will play an important role in the story? If so, in what way?



SESSION 2: CHAPTER TWO



Focus: Close Reading, Clarifying and Empathising

Ask the children to summarise what they know so far about the story and the characters.

Introduce the outline of Olive to be added to using the **Role on the Wall** technique. Ask the children to come up with words or phrases to describe Olive's feelings or personality and her outward appearance or behaviour. For example, they might note how strong-willed Olive is as she resists eating the chocolate unicorn all week, or they might think that she is shy or easily embarrassed because she doesn't want people to see her dressed up in costume. Encourage children to consider what they learn about Olive from both the text and the illustrations.

Read Chapter Two, pausing at different points to clarify the children's understanding and allow for discussion around what the children notice.

Begin to explore their responses to the start of the book with the help of the **four basic questions**. These questions can be used as a basis for discussion throughout the sessions.

- Tell me... was there anything you liked about this text?
- Was there anything that you particularly disliked... ?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns... any connections that you noticed... ?

As children respond it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings 'likes', 'dislikes', 'puzzles' and 'patterns'. Record the children's responses in the **journal** and return to any queries as the sessions continue.

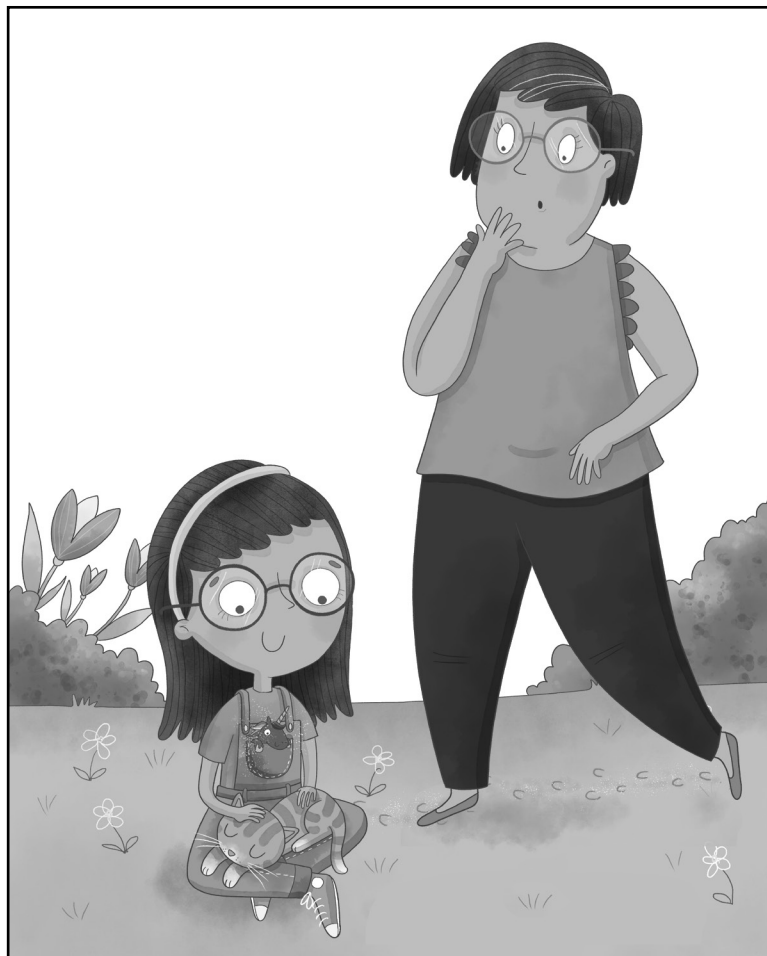
Children might identify similarities or make connections with other familiar stories in which toys or objects come to life.

Consider Olive's character again.

- Has Olive started to change? If so, how and why?
- Is it the unicorn? Is it magic?
- Why do you think she 'rushed forwards' on page 17?
- How would you describe her behaviour?

Children may wish to add their new observations to the **Role on the Wall** in a different colour to show how Olive is changing.

Move on to consider the unicorn's behaviour and personality. Give the children time to discuss and note down any words or phrases they would use to describe the chocolate unicorn. When they share these, encourage them to explain which part of the text or illustrations gave them that impression.



SESSION 3: CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR



Focus: Close Reading, Re-reading and Developing Fluency

Read Chapter Three, pausing to clarify the children's understanding and allowing for discussion around the **four basic questions**. Discuss the main events in this short chapter.

- Why do you think the magician put the hat on Olive's head and not on the chocolate unicorn?
- Was Olive volunteering to take part?
- Do you think that the chocolate unicorn is really alive?
- Can other people see the unicorn or only Olive?

Look back at the illustration of Mum and Olive on page 22. Remind yourself of what they are saying to each other.

- How might they be feeling?
- What might they be thinking? How is that different or similar to what they are saying to each other?
- How do you think Mum feels about seeing her daughter stroking the cat and volunteering for the magic show? Is she surprised?
- How might Olive have behaved in the past in these two situations?

Read Chapter Four until page 25, 'and scrambled up the tree' so that children can discuss what might happen before turning the page.

- Do you think that Olive should follow the chocolate unicorn up the tree? Why / why not?
- Is it something Olive should be worried about?

Children might make personal connections to their own experiences in parks or woodlands. If they have ever tried to climb a tree or wanted to climb a tree, encourage them to share how this felt.

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Read to the end of the chapter.

Ask the children to return to the **Role on the Wall** and consider how Olive has changed.

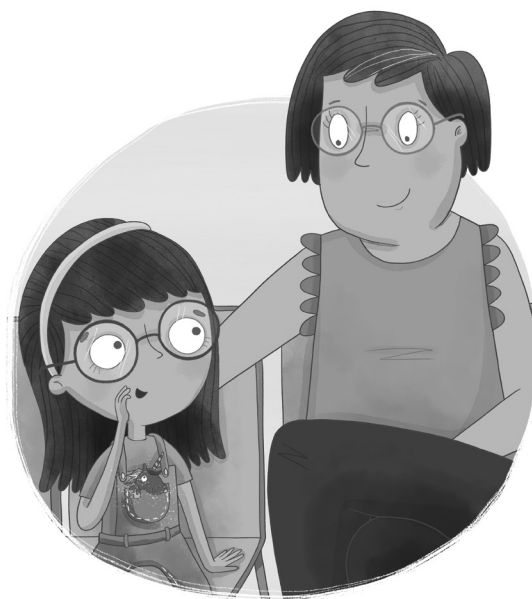
- Do you think Olive still needs the chocolate unicorn? Why / why not?

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Look at the ways in which Jenny McLachlan shows rather than tells the reader how characters are feeling. How characters are feeling rather than *telling* them. Look at how punctuation gives the reader information about the characters.

- On pages 24 and 25, why might the words 'that' and 'so' be written in italics?
- Would you read these words any differently if they were not italicised?

Look at places where the dialogue has been punctuated with question marks and exclamation marks. Consider how the dialogue might be read differently to the narration. Give the children time to practise reading some of these sentences with a partner.



SESSION 4: CHAPTER FIVE



Focus: Empathising, Clarifying and Close Reading

Read Chapter Five until the end of page 31. Return to the phrase at the top of the page: 'the more things she tried, the braver she became'.

- Do you agree? Why / why not?
- Have you ever been worried about something but become less worried after you tried it?
- What do you think this might mean for Olive as the story progresses?

Children might draw on their own personal experiences of trying something new, such as learning to ride a bike, wanting to try out a swing at the park, going down a higher slide or climbing a tall climbing frame.

Continue to read on until page 37, "It's too wet for me. I'd go gloopy." Give children time to discuss the new character introduced in this chapter.

- How would you describe Eric? Why do you think that?
- Why do you think Eric hasn't said anything?
- Why do you think Olive was hesitant to ask him if they could build the sandcastle together?
- How does the author show that the unicorn might be excited about the possibility of building a sandcastle?

Discuss Olive's choice at this point in the chapter.

- Do you think Olive should go swimming?
- What are her reasons for going? What reasons might she have for not going?
- Do you think she should go without the chocolate unicorn?
- Should she try and persuade Eric to come with her?
- What would you do in her situation?
- What might make her decision easier or harder?

Explain that you would like to write a **note of advice** to Olive to help her decide what she might do. Work with the children to recap the different options available to her and the impact of each of these on Olive and her new friend, noting their suggestions. Use the children's suggestions to **shared write a note of advice**. Spend some time discussing with the children how to phrase the message effectively.

- What is most appropriate?
- What might make Olive feel at ease?
- What could you suggest she does?

Keep returning to the focus and purpose of the writing. When it is finished, re-read the letter with the children and discuss how effective it is in helping Olive to reach a decision.

- Does it give clear and reasonable suggestions for what she could do next?

Read to the end of the chapter.



SESSION 5: CHAPTER SIX



Focus: Re-reading, Summarising and Thinking Aloud

Rer-read Chapter 5 and then on until the end of the story. Engage the children in **book talk** about the book as a whole, discussing how the book made them feel, allowing them time and space to tell you their likes and dislikes, referring to different parts of the text or particular illustrations.

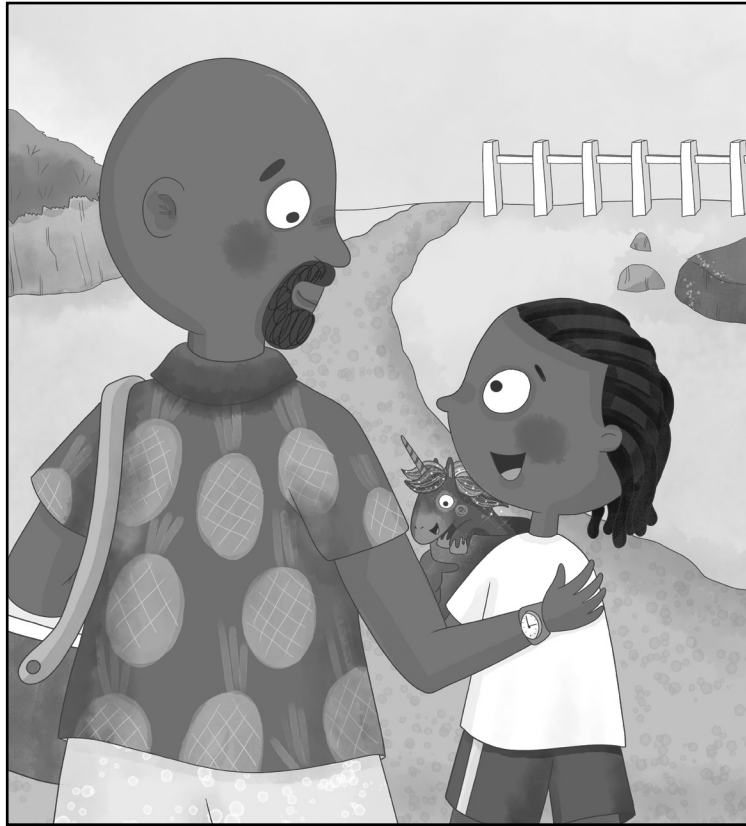
- What did you think of the ending?
- How did you feel when Olive suggested letting the unicorn go home with Eric instead?
- How do you imagine Eric might feel when he discovers the unicorn?
- Do you think Olive needs the unicorn anymore? How did the unicorn help her?
- Did this remind you of any other books you have read before?
- What adventures do you think Eric and the chocolate unicorn might have next?

Through modelling, ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold, such as: *the most memorable part of the story was... because... ; my top moment in the story was... because...* and ask them to discuss their favourite part of the story in pairs. Encourage children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these.

Discuss how the children felt about the book compared to their original expectations.

- When you first saw this book, what kind of book did you think it was going to be?
- What made you think this?
- Now you've read it, was it as you expected?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why / why not?

IDEAS TO SUPPORT THE SESSIONS



These are areas you could further develop depending on your professional judgement of the children's learning needs and their interests.

Developing wider reading experiences

Read and explore other books with **intertextual links** with *The Chocolate Unicorn*, particularly books in which the main character is trying to come to terms with difficult emotions, such as:

- *Jack's Worry* by Sam Zuppardi – Candlewick Press
- *Ruby's Worry* or *Ravi's Roar* – Tom Percival – Bloomsbury
- *Me and My Fear* by Francesca Sanna – Flying Eye Books
- *The Dark* by Lemony Snicket, illustrated by Jon Klassen – Orchard Books
- *When Sadness Comes to Call* by Eva Eland – Andersen Press
- *A Book of Feelings* by Amanda McCardie, illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino – Walker Books

Supporting reading fluency

- While reading with the group, model skills and strategies such as predicting, sampling, confirming, self-monitoring, self-correcting, 'thinking aloud', interpreting things which are only implied, and the full range of cueing systems (semantic, syntactic and graphophonic).
- Occasionally, you could hide some words with a post-it note, asking the children to refer to the illustration for ideas. You could give another clue by revealing the first syllable or letter.
- You could make a pairs game to develop visual memory and book language, creating cards using laminated images from the book. Make pairs of cards, one card for an illustrated location or character and one for matching words from the story. Spread these out face down. Children take turns to turn over two cards. If they match, they can keep them. If not, they have to turn them back over again. The game proceeds until all the pairs have been found.
- You could create a simple jigsaw by writing questions with corresponding answers directly underneath on one side of a piece of paper, then printing an illustration on the reverse and cutting the sheet of paper up to separate the questions and answers. The children lay out the questions and answers in order. They can check their layout by turning them over to see if they have created the illustration correctly.
- You can explore different ways of representing the /i / (long vowel 'ee') phoneme, such as in *party, bouncy, she, fairy, minty, fudgy, believe, anything, needed, toffee, before, glittery, marzipan* or *parakeet*.
- You might also explore words which include the digraph 'ou' making the / a / sound as in *bounce, house, found, around, out* and *outside*. There are also examples in which 'ou' makes a different sound (*you, trouble*) and in which the phoneme /a / is spelled using a different digraph: *brown*.

Vocabulary building

- Children could make **word collections** which describe a particular character and their feelings or a place, event or situation.
- The text could also be used to investigate the structure, impact and placement of prefixes and suffixes. For example, children could investigate regular and irregular verbs in the past tense, such as *bounced, stroked, scratched, needed, opened, decided, gobbled, vanished, spotted, pulled, galloped, trotted, followed, pinged, rushed, scooped, saw, flew, ran, began* and *ate*.

Opportunities to revisit the text independently

- With the children, make a set of magnetic or stick story props to use in a retelling of the story and to support children in their own independent retellings. If possible, provide extra copies of the book to support this.
- If the children have a good memory of the text through repeated readings, they can be given copies of the story to read to partners. This helps children to see themselves as readers.
- Allow the children to re-enact the story through play. Revisiting stories through a range of play-based experiences helps children to step into the world of the book and to explore it more completely.
- Create **freeze frames** of key events or scenes in the book. When presenting the **freeze frame**, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening, or individual characters could speak their thoughts out loud.
- Use **hot-seating** to explore one of the characters further. One member of the group **role-plays** a character and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character's motivation and responses.
- Make a **story map** as a way of retelling the story. This breaks the story down into episodes and sequences its events. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently.
- Encourage the children to take the book home to read alongside a parent or carer and suggest that they use the 'Tips for grown-ups' pages to support their discussions.

Experiences linked to the text

- The children could share personal stories about times they have overcome a worry or a fear, or a time when they had to be brave.
- They might also relate experiences from their own lives related to those in the story: building a sandcastle, going on a bouncy castle, seeing a magic show or paddling in the sea.

These resources were created by Bloomsbury and The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). For more teaching resources, visit:

www.bloomsburyguidedreading.com

www.clpe.org.uk