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 Harvey, ready to complete using the Role on the Wall technique.
Focus: Predicting, Questioning and Thinking Aloud

Before revealing the title, show the children the front cover illustration and elicit their initial responses to the image.

- Do you have any questions about the illustration?
- Who do you think this character is?
- What do you notice about his body language and his gaze? Does this suggest anything about the character?
- What is on his shoulder?
- How do these characters feel about each other?
- Why do you think that?
Read the title of the book to the children. Clarify and explore the word ‘quest’ with the children. Encourage the children to make any intertextual connections to other stories they know and share any personal connections they have to the story, such as if they own a pet.

- What type of story do you think this is? Why?
- Do you have a cat or another pet?
- What do you have to do to look after your pet?
- Do you have a favourite animal?
- Would you be able to keep that animal as a pet?
- Why do some animals make good pets?
- Which animals do not make good pets? Why?

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. Record the children’s responses in the journal. You can return to these as you read the book, comparing the children’s initial thoughts to how the story actually unfolds.

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Read Chapter One and ask the children to share their initial responses.

- Is the first part of the story as you predicted, or not?
- How does the title of the book link to what you have heard so far?
- What kind of quest might Harvey be about to go on?
- How do you think the cover image relates to what you have read so far?

Ask the children to predict what might happen next, based on the story so far. Explore the children’s personal connections to the story.

- Have you ever wanted something but not been able to have it? How did this feel?
- What advice would you give Harvey?

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Introduce the outline of Harvey to be added to using the Role on the Wall technique. Ask the children to come up with words or phrases to describe Harvey’s feelings and personality or his outward appearance and behaviour. For example, they might comment on how much Harvey wants a pet, based on his visit to the park and also his sadness at being told he isn’t allowed one.

Revisit the Role on the Wall outline at key points in the story as you find out more about Harvey.
Focus: Questioning, Clarifying and Summarising

Re-read Chapter One and then read Chapter Two until the end of page 13. Pause and ask the children to predict what might happen next.

• How might Harvey’s mum react when she finds a slug in her glass?
• Will she let Harvey keep Slimy?
• Do you think a slug would make a good pet? Why / why not?
• What pet might be suitable for a small flat?

Read aloud to the end of Chapter Two, then begin to explore the children’s 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.
Focus: Clarifying, Thinking Aloud and Empathising

Read Chapters Three and Four, stopping at different points to clarify the children’s understanding and allow for discussion around the four basic questions.

Return to the Role on the Wall and add to it, reflecting on Harvey’s decisions and how he has gone about trying to get a pet. Tell the children that they are going to help Harvey try to persuade his parents to let him have a pet.

- How can you tell that Harvey really does want a pet?
- What do you think Harvey needs to say to his parents to show that he is responsible enough to have a pet?
- Is there a pet small enough for Harvey’s flat?
Model the kinds of things that Harvey could say to convince his parents to allow him to have a pet. Talk with the children about what it means to be responsible and to look after things.

- Are there things, animals or people you need to look after?
- What are your responsibilities in school? And at home?

Children might talk about routines and jobs, such as tidying up, watering plants, feeding the birds or class pets, recycling, etc. They may mention helping their parents care for their younger siblings or pets at home.

- Why is it important that you all take responsibility for looking after things, animals or people in the school or at home?
- What would happen if you didn’t take responsibility for these?

Extend this to thinking about the ways in which Harvey will need to look after a pet.

- What do pets need?
- What would Harvey need to be responsible for?

Talk through the children’s ideas, encouraging the children to expand on these to make them more convincing, perhaps by using conjunctions in their speech to add detail or explanation.

You could then work up these ideas into a letter to Harvey’s parents, choosing a pet you agree would be suitable for a flat. Re-read the letter as you shared write it and again as a whole when it is complete so that the children hear what an informal letter sounds like.

You could ‘post’ the letter and prepare a written reply from Harvey’s parents. You could also set up a class post box in the classroom to allow the children to be able to write letters and messages to each other.
SESSION 4: CHAPTERS FIVE AND SIX

Focus: Re-reading, Empathising and Summarising

Re-read the whole text from the beginning until the end of Chapter Five. Pause to consider if Harvey’s next choice of pet is a good idea or not.

- What could happen?
- Would a flea make a good pet? Why / why not?
- How do you think the story will end?
- Does Harvey’s mum suspect what has happened? How do you know?
Read on until the end of the story and talk about the book as a whole. Engage the children in book talk, discussing how the book made them feel and allowing them time and space to tell you their likes and dislikes, with reference to different parts of the text or particular illustrations.

- What did you notice about the way in which the story is structured? Did this remind you of any other books you have read before?
- Why do you think Harvey’s parents changed their minds about him having a pet?
- Why is a hamster the perfect pet for the flat?
- Why is it the perfect pet for Harvey?

Through modelling, ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold, for example: 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.

Give the children the opportunity to create their own perfect pet, either through drawing or writing or using other art materials. Ask them to share their pet with the group, explaining why it would be perfect for them.
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 stories with similar themes such as:

- *Fizzy and Bandit* by Sarah Crossan, illustrated by Nicola Colton – Bloomsbury
- *Thank You for Looking After Our Pets* by Tim Hopgood – Simon & Schuster
- *A Dog with Nice Ears* by Lauren Child – Orchard Books
- *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell – Macmillan

Investigate non-fiction texts and information about keeping a pet such as:

- *We’re Getting a Cat!* by Vivian French, illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino – Walker Books
- *Our Very Own Dog: Taking Care of Your First Pet* 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.

- There are opportunities to explore different ways of representing the /iː/ (long vowel ‘ee’) phoneme in Harvey, sunny, spotty, scream, we, steep, needed, flea and tiny.

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 any patterns in adding -ing to verbs, such as swimming, catching and moving. They could look at regular and irregular past tense verbs, such as tickled, screamed, shook, stopped and found.
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 the main character 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

• Encourage children to talk about their own experiences with pets. Supporting resources can be found here: Ferne and Rory’s Vet Tales: Choosing a Pet – CBeebies: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETIWYbuNjjA.

• Use this discussion as a starting point to explore things that everyone needs to stay alive, comfortable and healthy.

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

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