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

Before revealing the title, show the children the illustration of Alice as featured on the front cover and elicit the children’s initial responses to the image.

- Who do you think this character is?
- Based on appearance, facial expression and body language, how would you describe the character?
- Do you know what sort of animal this is?
- What else do you notice?
- What could she be doing / thinking / feeling?
- What do you like about this illustration?
- Does it remind you of anything?
- Does anything surprise you or seem unexpected?
- Do you have any questions?
Read the title of the book to the children.

- What type of story do you think this will be? Why?
- Do you know any other stories that have an animal as the main character?

Encourage the children to make **intertextual links** by drawing on their existing knowledge of other books. Ask the children to predict what the story could be about and 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.

Read the first three pages of Chapter One, until ‘That’s what anteaters do.’ Discuss what the children already know about anteaters, if anything, and what they might like to find out. Write their responses into the first two columns of a table similar to this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you know about anteaters?</th>
<th>What would you like to know?</th>
<th>What have you found out?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children could research anteaters during independent reading time or collaboratively in small groups. They could use books about animals, such as:

- *Encyclopaedia of Animals* by Jules Howard, illustrated by Jarom Vogel – Wide Eyed Editions
- *Wild Animals of the South* by Dieter Braun – Flying Eye Books

Alternatively, they could access videos such as:

- *The Giant Anteater* – BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p009vwkw
- *Photo Ark: Giant Anteater* – National Geographic: www.nationalgeographic.org/media/photo-ark-giant-anteater

© Bloomsbury
Re-read from the beginning until page 7, “You’re an anteater!” Clarify the children’s understanding of what a ‘film star’ is. They might discuss the difference between a film character and a film star.

- Can you name any film stars?
- Do you have a favourite film star?

Discuss the response of Alice’s family and friends to her ambition. Look at the illustration accompanying the text to help the discussion.

- How do the different animals feel about Alice’s decision?
- How do you know?
- What can you infer from the animals’ body language and facial expressions?

Children might create speech or thought bubbles for the different characters to summarise their responses.

- Do you think Alice made a ‘silly’ decision? Why / why not?
- Why might the other anteaters feel that way?
- How easy or difficult do you think it might be to become a film star?
- Why do you think Alice is so confident?
- Should she be encouraged or discouraged in her ambitions?
- What would you say to a friend or family member who had an unusual ambition?
- What would you have said to Alice?

Read the rest of Chapter One and ask the children to share their initial responses. Give them time to revisit the text and summarise some of the ways in which Alice changes her behaviour after deciding her ambition.

- How do you feel about Alice’s behaviour after she announces her decision to become a film star?
- Do you think Alice is doing the right thing?
- Why / why not?
- How might the other anteaters feel about her new behaviour?
Following this discussion, ask the children what they think they have found out about Alice so far and note this on the outline you have prepared, using the **Role on the Wall** technique. Revisit the **Role on the Wall** outline at key points in the story as you find out more about Alice.

- What do you think Alice could say to convince her family and friends to support her ambitions?

Briefly discuss their expectations of Alice’s visit to Cornelius the crocodile.

- Why might Alice be going to see a crocodile?
- What would you expect from that animal?
Focus: Close Reading, Clarifying and Thinking Aloud

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

Once the children have heard the chapter, they can begin to explore their responses to it with 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’.
Encourage the group to begin to pick out **key vocabulary** they may not be familiar with or understand and add these words to a glossary. In this chapter, explore the term ‘Hollywood’ and what it means to them in social, cultural and geographical terms.

Discuss the introduction of the new character, Cornelius.

- Do you like or dislike Cornelius? Why?
- Was Cornelius like you expected?
- In what ways might you consider Cornelius a friendly animal?
- Why might he be considered dangerous?

Look back at the text on pages 13-16 and ask the children to look for clues in the words and phrases the author, Karen Wallace, has used to demonstrate that Cornelius is still a dangerous animal, for example:

- ‘sometimes he forgot his manners and gobbled [visitors] up’.
- the description of his ‘sharp teeth’ in a mouth ‘as big as a cave’.
- Alice stands ‘far away from Cornelius’ and talks to him ‘nervously’.

They might also draw on their visual literacy skills by responding to the facial expressions that the illustrator, Katy Halford, has given Cornelius.
Encourage the children to try reading the following passage from page 16 aloud:

““Then you must look in my dressing-up box,” replied Cornelius. “It’s full of bits and bobs that I’ve... uh... collected.”

• How does the punctuation affect the meaning and the way you read it?
• Why does Cornelius hesitate before saying ‘collected’?
• How do you feel about him giving the clothes from his dressing-up box to Alice?
• How did he get those items? How do you know?
• Would you have gone to Cornelius like Alice does? Why / why not?
• Why does she choose to go to Cornelius?
• What does it tell you about her plans or her ambitions that she would do this?

Look at the illustration of Alice dressed up as a film star, ready to go to Hollywood (page 19).

• Why has Alice altered her appearance? Do you think that’s necessary?
• How do you think she feels when she looks at her reflection, or when she started paddling away from her home?
• Do you like the way Alice has dressed up for Hollywood? Why / why not?

Add any new observations and insights to the Role on the Wall poster. Children might predict what they think could happen when Alice arrives in Hollywood.
Focus: Close Reading, Re-reading and Developing Fluency

Before reading Chapter Three, ask the children to summarise what they know about the story and Alice so far. Then read the chapter. As you read, stop where necessary to clarify the children’s understanding and allow for discussion around the four basic questions.

While reading, pause on page 29 to discuss the concept of Alice using her ‘best Hollywood accent’.

- What do you understand by the term ‘accent’? What is an accent?
- What might a ‘Hollywood accent’ sound like? Can you compare it to anything else?
- Can you suggest any examples of words that have a different sound in different accents? How might they look if they are written phonetically? Does everyone in the group have similar accents or different ones?

(Explain that, for example, a ‘Hollywood’, or rather a US, accent might include pronouncing ‘–ing’ verb endings as ‘–in’: lookin’, reachin’; or replacing middle ‘t’ sounds with ‘d’, so that ‘bottle’ becomes ‘boddle’; or compressing two or more words together so that ‘I got out of there’ becomes ‘I got outta there’).

Look again at the single word on page 29: “Whaddyathink?”

- Can you recognise any words within that word?
- What does the punctuation tell us about Alice’s sentence? What type of sentence is it?
Divide it into smaller chunks and practise reading it out slowly, drawing out the syllables of sound.

• Can you hear syllables that sound or look similar to more familiar words?
• Can you use the context of the scene to ‘translate’ the dialogue into regular spelling?

After doing this, children could use their phonic knowledge to transcribe their own speech patterns.

Discuss any changes in Alice’s circumstances, both good and bad, and how the children feel about the new experiences Alice has had. Encourage the children to explain their reasons and draw on their knowledge of the story or of the world to justify their answers.

Revisit page 27, on which the important director is introduced. Ask the children how they feel about him and how he behaves towards Alice.

• What words or phrases has Karen Wallace used to demonstrate the director’s characteristics?
• How do his behaviour, his actions and his speech reflect his personality? Encourage children to use the text to develop inferences, using the strategies they have practised when creating the Role on the Wall.
• Why do you think Karen Wallace chose to compare him to a snake?
Karen Wallace chooses to limit her description of the director’s appearance to a single sentence: ‘He was thin with shiny eyes and looked like a snake.’

- What else could Karen Wallace have done to describe the director?
- What other features could she have described?
- Would you have preferred a more detailed description? Why / why not?
- Would a longer description have altered your perception of the character?
- How important do you think this encounter will be to Alice’s journey?
- How do you think she might feel after this meeting / audition?
- Do you think she’ll achieve her dream? Why / why not?
- What do you think Alice needs to do to become a film star?

Ask the children to write a short postcard home in role as Alice, summarising her experiences in Hollywood. Discuss the effect Alice might want to have on her family and friends when they read her postcard.

- Would she want them to know everything that’s happened, both good and bad?
- Would she put a positive spin on events or exaggerate certain aspects?
- How do you think she might be feeling about leaving the jungle and her family behind? Would she miss them?
- Might she still feel excited and confident about becoming a film star?
SESSION 4: CHAPTER FOUR

Focus: Empathising, Clarifying and Predicting

Read the start of Chapter Four until page 33, ‘They didn’t believe an anteater could be a film star.’

- How do you think it would feel to be at that party?
- What might you see? What sounds would you hear?
- Karen Wallace describes it as a ‘big, fancy party’. What other words might you use to describe it?
- How would you expect Alice to feel attending a party like this?
- How does she actually feel? Why do you think that is?
- What might she be thinking in the illustration on page 32?

Read pages 34-35 and allow time for the children to respond to this new turn of events.

Look at the illustration on page 34. Ask children to work in groups of three to produce a freeze frame of this moment in the story, role-playing Alice and the two film stars as in the illustration. The children should use what they know of the characters to influence their facial expressions and body language.

Then use thought-tracking to explore further what the characters are thinking or feeling. As you tap each child on the shoulder, they can vocalise what their character could be thinking in that moment, for example:

- “That anteater might be cute, but there’s no chance of her becoming a film star.”
- “I feel really sorry for Alice but I just don’t believe her dream can come true. Maybe I should talk to her.”
- “I can’t believe they pretended to be my friends! I feel so betrayed…”

© Bloomsbury
Discuss how it might feel when you think people are talking about you behind your back. Ask the children to suggest words to describe how Alice might feel in this moment.

- What do you think Alice should do?
- Should she continue with her dream of becoming a film star?
- Should she go back home to the jungle?

In small groups, ask the children to jot down as many reasons as they can think of for Alice to stay or to go. Alternatively, children could work in groups to discuss their ideas for an adult to write down. Ask each group to sequence their suggestions in order of importance. Spend some time sharing the suggestions as a class.

Explain that you would like to use the children’s ideas to write a note of advice to Alice to make her feel better and to suggest what she could do. Discuss what helps the children to feel better when they are sad or lonely. Use the children’s suggestions to compose, through shared writing, a note of advice. Discuss the best ways to effectively communicate their message.

- What is most appropriate?
- What might make her feel better?
- 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 making Alice feel better about her situation.

- Does it offer her hope, or give suggestions for what she could do next?

Read the letter again, checking it for sense, meaning and flow. You could ask the children to pretend to be Alice, reading the letter and showing you how they feel after reading it.

End the session by reading to the end of the chapter, which tells us that Alice knows exactly what she should do.

- What do you think that could be?
SESSION 5: CHAPTER FIVE

Focus: Re-reading, Summarising and Empathising

Re-read the whole book from the beginning, including the final two chapters. Discuss the children’s responses to this ending using the four basic questions.

• Why do you think Alice made her decision to return to the jungle?
• Do you think that Alice made the right decision? Why / why not?
• Is it the ending you were hoping for or would you have liked it to have ended differently?
• How did the ending make you feel?
• Did the ending remind you of any other stories you know?
• What do you think might happen next for Alice?

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 in pairs ask them to identify their favourite part of the narrative. 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?
• Have you read other books like it? How is this one the same? How is it different?
• Would you recommend this book to a friend?
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 *Alice Goes to Hollywood*, such as:
  - *What Does an Anteater Eat?* by Ross Collins – Nosy Crow
  - *I’m Going to Eat This Ant* by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros – Bloomsbury

**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. 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 /iː/ (long vowel ‘ee’) phoneme, such as in anteater, every, she, see, sadly, speeches, Cornelius, people, magazine, decision, silly, many, tickly, prickly, yucky, teeth, eat, and so on.

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 look at regular and irregular past tense verbs such as slurped, curled, snoozed, stayed, practised, painted, gobbled, loved, waddled, found, made and taught.

• Children could explore the way in which compound words are structured to create meaning. Examples from the text include: anteater, sunshine, Hollywood, afternoon, sometimes, riverbank, sunset, handbag, high-heeled, sunglasses, flashbulbs and dressing-up).

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 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 is a graphic means of breaking a story down into episodes and sequencing its events. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently so they can re-tell it orally or in writing.

• 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**

• Children might use appropriate websites and books to research anteaters and other animals which share their habitats in South America.

• Children could learn for themselves more about how films are made. They could research the history and science of cinema in books and online. Children could even use technology available in the classrooms to create their own live-action or animated short films by writing the script or devising scenes together and then allocating roles such as camera operator, director, set designer, costume designer and actor. Potential web-based resources to help with this include:
  
  ○ *Behind the Scenes: Kung Fu Panda* – Blue Peter: www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/bp-behind-the-scenes-at-dreamworks
  
  ○ *Behind the Scenes: Shaun the Sheep* – Blue Peter: www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/p02grg0f
  
  ○ Interviews with a variety of directors and actors are available on the show *Cinemaniacs* – CBBC: www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/shows/cinemaniacs
  
  ○ The British Film Institute have a wide variety of classroom resources for teachers: www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/teaching-film-tv-media-studies

---

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

© Bloomsbury