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 Sausage, ready to complete using the Role on the Wall technique.

Collect some examples of party invitations to use in Session 2.

In the interests of inclusion, find out if there are any children who are from homes that do not celebrate or believe in birthdays.
SESSION 1: CHAPTER ONE

Focus: Predicting, Questioning and Empathising

Share the title and front cover and then read Chapter One. 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.

Consider the characters introduced in the first chapter and their different personalities.

- Would you like to have a pet like Sausage? Why / why not?
- What about a pet like Fitz or Spatz? Why / why not?
- What does ‘snooty’ mean?
- Why are the cats behaving like this?
- Why do you think they find it difficult to share?
Introduce the outline of Sausage to be added to using the **Role on the Wall** technique. Ask the children to come up with words or phrases to describe Sausage’s feelings and personality or his outward appearance and behaviour. For example, return to pages 8-9 and consider what the different events in the year tell the reader about his personality. He is also described at the opening of the story as ‘playful, loyal and loving’.

- What do Sausage’s actions suggest?
- What do other people think about him?
- What do the cats think about him?

Revisit the **Role on the Wall** outline at key points in the story as the children find out more about Sausage.

Allow the children to discuss their responses to the story so far and to make personal connections to the story, for example talking about a time when they had a party or attended a party.

- What kind of party have you had?
- What types of party have you attended?
- Did you enjoy them?
- What happened at the party?
- What will the family need to organise for Sausage’s party?
- What do you think the cats think about this?
- What do you think will happen next?
Focus: Questioning, Clarifying and Summarising

Read Chapter Two until the end of page 14, stopping at different points to clarify the children’s understanding and allow for discussion around the four basic questions.

Ask the children to reflect on what needs to be included on the party invitation. Show the children a variety of party invitations. Look at the key details common to each one, such as:

- guest name
- date and time of the party
- venue
- dress code / theme
- contact details

Create a party invitation with the group.

- How should the invitation be laid out?
- What decorations could you use?

Shared write the party invitation to an imagined friend, supporting the children in adopting an appropriate tone for the purpose and audience. Read it aloud together to check that all the details are included. Children could go on to make their own party invitations following this session.

Read on until the end of the chapter.

- What plan do you think the cats have?
- Why do the cats think it is unfair that Sausage is having a party?
- What could the family do to ensure everyone feels included?
- Have you ever felt jealous?
- What can you do to help yourself manage your feelings if you feel jealous?
Focus: Clarifying, Thinking Aloud and Empathising

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

- What does Sausage want as his birthday present?
- How many friends does Sausage have?
- Can you name them?
- Do you know what types of dog they are?
- Which of his friends does Sausage really want to come to the party? How do you know?
- How does Sausage feel about the party? How do you know?
- What do you predict will happen next in the story?
Return to the start of the chapter, in which Elly, Jack and Gran begin to prepare things for the party. Encourage the children to make personal connections to the story, such as considering what they would have at their own party if they were planning one for themselves.

- What is your favourite party dish? Why?
- What is the same or different about your favourite dishes?
- How is the food prepared?
- Who prepares and makes the party food?
- What is special about party food? How is it presented?
- Why don’t you eat this kind of food every day? What would happen if you did?

Return to pages 18-19 where the cats begin their ‘skulking and sulking and plotting and planning’. Discuss with the children how the reader knows that the cats are determined to spoil the party.

- What do you know from their body language and gestures as well as how they are behaving?
- Which words give you clues about their personalities? For example, ‘sniggered’ or ‘plotting’.

Re-read and revisit the text and illustrations, and ask the children to investigate what they have found out about the characters of Sausage, Fitz and Spatz so far. Draw a Venn diagram for the characters, then write in each circle what you know about their appearance and personality. Where the circles overlap, write down anything the characters have in common.
Focus: Questioning, Clarifying and Empathising

Read Chapter Four until the end of page 27, then pause to clarify the children’s understanding and allow for discussion around the cats’ plan to ruin Sausage’s party.

- What did the children think had happened to the invitations?
- What did Gran think has happened?
- What about Sausage?
- What really happened? What do you think of this?
- What do you think will happen now?
- How will everyone feel when they find out?
- How could the party be saved?
Read the whole of Chapters Four and Five and discuss how Sausage feels at this point in the story. Explain that you would like to write a note of advice to Sausage to make him feel better and less sad. Consider with the children what helps them to feel better when they are sad. Use the children’s suggestions to compose a note of advice through shared writing. Spend some time discussing with the children how to effectively phrase the message.

- What is most appropriate?
- What might make Sausage feel better?

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 Sausage feel better.

- Does it offer him hope, or give suggestions for what he could do next?

You could ask the children to pretend to be Sausage, reading the letter and showing you how they feel as they read it.
SESSION 5: CHAPTERS SIX AND SEVEN

Focus: Re-reading, Empathising and Summarising

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

• How was the party saved?
• What do you think of how this was resolved?
• How do you think the cats feel now their plan has been foiled?
• How do you think Sausage feels now?
Read Chapter Seven until page 44. Reflect on the party and the different things that have been organised.

Ask the children to share their favourite party games, discussing the rules of the games and what they most enjoy about them. Record the names of the games in the journal.

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.

Go through the story and consider the different emotions Sausage has felt throughout the story – his high and low points. Work with the children to choose words that describe his emotions at different points. Write these on sticky notes and then organise them to show the shades of emotion, Sausage has felt and create a graph of emotion.

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 narrative in pairs. Encourage the children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these.
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 involving birthdays such as:

- *Kipper’s Birthday* by Mick Inkpen – Hodder
- *The Birthday Invitation* by Lucy Rowland, illustrated by Laura Hughes – Bloomsbury
- *Happy Birthday Maisy* by Lucy Cousins – Walker
- *When’s My Birthday?* by Julie Fogliano, illustrated by Christian Robinson – Walker
- *So Much* by Trish Cooke, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury – Walker
- *Alfie and the Birthday Surprise* by Shirley Hughes – Red Fox
- *Happy Birthday to You!* by Dr Seuss – HarperCollins
- *Spot’s Birthday Party* by Eric Hill – Warne
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.

- Explore the many examples of alliteration in the text, such as: ‘silly sausage’, ‘bouncy birthday banana’, ‘skulking and sulking and plotting and planning’ and ‘sniggered a sneaky snigger’.
Vocabulary building

- Children could make word collections which describe a particular character and their feelings or a place, event or situation.
- The text uses a range of interesting verbs which children could collect and discuss, such as skulking, sulking, plotting, planning, sneered, sharpened and grinned.

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.
- 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 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

• Provide the children with card and resources to make their own birthday cards and invitations.

• The children could make party hats by rolling paper into a cone shape and decorating it or make paper chains and other decorations that involve repetitive patterns.

• The children could create pretend cakes. Provide them with kitchen tools, malleable materials, and candles and other decorative embellishments. Encourage them to experiment with colours and flavours.

• In small groups, help children explain to others how to play their favourite game. **Shared write** a set of instructions using command sentences and photographs or drawings. Help the children consider who will read the instructions, how the information will need to be organised and the kind of language to use. The children could make a ‘Party Games Book’ from their collection of games instructions.

• Encourage parents to come into the setting and talk about the different events they celebrate as part of their culture or religion. They could bring in party food traditional for the event they talk about.

• Hold a multicultural celebration event to which all parents are invited to contribute. The children could teach others how to play a traditional party game that they enjoy with their own families.

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