



# Interactive Story Reading: Using the Bookbug Picture Book Prize 2021 Symbol Pack

These techniques can be used with either the hard copy of the story book or the digital version (PowerPoint Show/Keynote for switch/touchscreen access by pupils) \*

- Decide who is participating and which 'role' each child is to take.
- Collect and distribute the equipment as appropriate (check messages are recorded correctly) *before* getting the children together
- Make sure the children are seated and supported safely and stably and so that they can:
  - see you, the book, their symbol chart, and their message devices
  - indicate the symbols on the chart accurately
  - operate at least one message device
- Do at least one or two sessions with the child on his or her own first, so he or she can learn to feel confident with the activity and the symbols.
- Later, try doing interactive story reading in pairs and small groups.
- Try working with and without speaking children in the group, to see if this stimulates more interaction, questions, and discussion. (Speaking children are usually happy to press message devices as well as speaking out themselves.)
- Remember that although adults may get quickly bored with the same story, younger children often like doing the same story repeatedly and get a lot out of becoming totally familiar ('word perfect') with it. Don't move on too quickly, do revisit often.

## Modelling

- Model the response that you require, by pointing to a symbol chart yourself, as you read the story for the first time.
- If the child needs to be shown repeatedly how to interact, instead of doing it all yourself, try using a role model in the form of a glove puppet that is playing the child's role, and interacting with you, the story reader, as and when the child is expected to interact (e.g. pointing to a symbol or pressing the message device at the right moment). Then tell the child "*It's your turn now*")

## Cueing

Try not to be too directive or heavy handed in prompting children. Instead of physically helping them to operate their device, or saying "hit it now", try these cueing techniques:

- Pausing silently for an extended period, at the key moment
- Looking - making full eye contact - expectantly at the child at the key moment

## Awareness of books & print

- Hold the book up and read out the title on the front page, the author's name.
- Use a sort of dialogue with yourself *"Let's see, who wrote this story?" "Oh yes, Fred Bloggs wrote this book". Who drew the pictures for this story?" It says here that Susie Smith drew the pictures"*
- With each new story, go through the book first without reading the story, show the pictures, point out items of interest, talk about each picture (if necessary, on the 'self dialogue' model as above) - without actually telling the story. This saves time and allows you to keep to the story line without digression, later.

## Story Reading

- Start to read the story out loud and slowly point to each word as you read.
- Go slowly and pause to allow the child to contribute.
- Remember to note any eye gaze/pointing the child is doing and verbalise both sides of the dialogue for them (*"You're looking at the girl, Princess Penelope. She's in the castle. There's a kitten, I think. Is it a kitten? Yes, it's a kitten?"*)
- Rather than prompting the child by asking direct questions (*"what is he doing?"*), try a more oblique comment (*"I wonder what he'll do now?"*)
- Try to keep a clear rhythm, pitch and intonation pattern going as you read, to keep the child's attention and so that even if the child is not understanding the meaning of all of the words, they are at least getting the cues for the repetitive lines/comments and for their interactive turn.
- To stimulate the child's response, make heavy use of the techniques of pausing plus expectant looking. The child will learn to associate a break in the rhythm, and a certain look on your face combined with sudden intense eye contact with the need to respond.
- Combine this with shared/joint attention, making eye contact with the child, then looking back and forth (and trying to draw the child's gaze with yours) between the stimulus item on the book page and the child's symbol chart, so they realise there is a connection.

- If using voice output message devices (Big Mack, Go Talk 9+ or SoundingBoard app), pause at the appropriate moment and look expectantly at whichever child has the relevant message.
- If possible, don't 'dilute' the story or the rhythm of the language at this stage by digressing into long discussions about the pictures or characters (you can go back to these again later).
- Try and draw the child and their symbol pointing and/or Big Mack pressing into the momentum and rhythm of the recital - this will facilitate their responses.
- Don't break the rhythm of the story by stopping to praise the child for a successful response. Say a brief but sincere "good" and move along with the story.

### Page Turning

Never turn any page by yourself. Pause at the end of each page and look expectantly at whichever child has a 'turn the page' symbol or message on their device. If they don't select it, wait, look, prompt with a "what do I do now?" question and look expectantly again.

### Comprehension

After reading the story interactively, go over it to check that the child has remembered and understood the story. They should indicate comprehension by pointing out a symbol on his/her chart or voice output device (or choice from 2 or 3 symbols from a cut-up board e.g. for eye pointing).

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The PowerPoint/Keynote/Grid 3 versions of the book can be used to enable children with physical disabilities to access the book themselves via switch, touchscreen or eye gaze and 'turn the page' independently while listening to the recorded story on the computer/iPad. These versions can also be used for independent reading, once the child is familiar with the story.



Happy Reading!