The Stars

Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young. Illustrated by Alex Brychta.
Teaching notes written by Thelma Page.

Introducing the story
• Read the title of the book together. Find out what the children already know about the stars. Ask: When have you seen the stars? Do you know the names of any stars?
• Ask the children to sound out the word stars, s-t-ar-s. Talk about the ar grapheme and ask the children to think of some other ar words they already know.
• This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also a number of high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story independently.

Reading the story
• Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Remind the children to sound out and blend new words, for example b-r-igh-t, w-e-e-k-e-n-d.
• On page 1 ask the children to sound out and blend the word children, ch-i-l-d-r-e-n. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word.
• Notice the question mark on page 2. Encourage the children to read with appropriate expression.
• On page 4, ask: Why did Gran say they needed sunbeds?
• On page 8, ask: What do you think the Big Dipper looks like?

Returning to the story
• Ask the children to re-tell the story in their own words.
• Ask the children to explain why Biff called the sunbeds ‘starbeds’. Ask: Why was it a good idea?
• Look again at page 8 and ask: Why does Gran say that the Big Dipper can help them to find all the stars? How do Gran and the children know what stars they are looking at?
• Talk about what Floppy is doing throughout the story and ask: Why do you think Floppy jumped on Chip?
Independent reading

- Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example c-l-ear, t-w-i-n-s.
- Support children with reading tricky words.
- This book also contains a number of challenge words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story:
  
  Leo lion done

  If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children that the text in speech marks shows that characters are speaking. Model for the children how to read all the speech with lots of expression and encourage them to do the same.
- For suggestions of questions to ask the children and discussion points for after they have read the story, please refer to the notes on the inside covers of the pupil books.

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- Ask the children to sit in a circle. Talk about going out after dark. Ask: What do you like about going outside at night? What do you not like?
- Take turns around the circle, asking children to describe how they feel about going outside at night (excited, scared, cold, adventurous). Encourage children to refer to actual experiences.
- As a class, create your own story about going out after dark. Start the story off with a simple opening, for example, ‘One evening, after it had got dark outside, we decided to climb the steep hill at the end of the road…’ and take turns around the circle asking each child to add an event or some details to the story.
- Encourage the children to use descriptive language to convey events and emotions in the story.

Writing activities

- Provide each child with a copy of the story and a piece of A4 or A3 paper.
- Introduce the word constellation, to mean a group of stars with a name. Find stella in the middle of the word. Tell the children that stella means star.
- Look through the book together, finding the names of constellations and make a list. Talk about the pattern of stars in the picture that makes each constellation.
- Ask the children to use the list and the illustrations in the book to make their own poster showing three real constellations.
- Ask each child to invent, draw and name a new constellation, then add it to their poster.

Cross-curricular suggestion

Science – Find pictures of some of the simple and more easily identifiable constellations and talk to the children about what they’re called and what they look like. Ask children to think of other names for these constellations and encourage them to look for them on a clear night with their parents’ help. They can record what they see and report back to the class.
Long Legs

Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young. Illustrated by Alex Brychta.
Teaching notes written by Thelma Page.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Ask children to read the title and look at the picture. Ask: *Who do you think has long legs?*
- Read the blurb on the back cover with the children and ask: *Where do you think Dad’s hat is?*
- Ask the children to sound out and blend the word *long, l-o-n-g*. Talk about the grapheme *ng* and ask the children if they can find any other words in the book that contain this grapheme (*rings, juggling*).
- This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also a number of high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story independently.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Remind the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *b-e-n-t, w-i-n-d*.
- On page 3, ask the children to sound out and blend the word *stilts, s-t-i-l-t-s*. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Ask children if they know what stilts are and clarify if necessary. Ask: *Have you ever seen anyone on stilts?*
- On page 4, ask the children to sound out and blend the word *clown, c-l-o-w-n*. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Talk about the grapheme *ow* and ask children to think of other words they know that contain this grapheme.
- Pause at the end of page 8 and ask: *How do you think they will get Dad’s hat out of the tree?*
- Pause at the end of page 13 and say that even the clown on stilts isn’t tall enough to reach Dad’s hat. Ask: *What do you think they are going to do now?*

Returning to the story

- Look again at page 12 and ask: *Why did Kipper ask the clowns to help get Dad’s hat?*
- Look again at page 14 and encourage the children to look at Kipper’s expression. Ask: *How do you think Kipper feels about getting to sit on the clown’s shoulders?*
- Look again at page 16 and ask: *How do you think Kipper feels now that he has realised how high he is?*
- Ask the children to think of another way that Dad could have got his hat back.
Independent reading

- Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example s-t-i-c-k, t-r-ee.
- Support children with reading tricky words.
- This book also contains a number of challenge words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story:
  - two balls other way blew tall can’t
  - If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children that the text in speech marks shows that characters are speaking. Model for the children how to read all the speech with lots of expression and encourage them to do the same.
- For suggestions of questions to ask the children and discussion points for after they have read the story, please refer to the notes on the inside covers of the pupil book.

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- Make a list of all the characters in the story on the board: Dad, Kipper, Biff, two clowns, a man.
- Ask for volunteers to play each character. In front of the rest of the class help the children act out the main parts of the story.
- Ask the clowns how they will mime juggling and walking on stilts. Ask Kipper what he will say when he meets the clowns. Ask Dad how he will mime losing his hat.
- Encourage suggestions from the rest of the class.

Writing activities

- Provide the children with a template of a hat, and a variety of pencils, crayons and coloured pencils.
- Ask the children to tell you what happened to Dad’s hat in the story. Ask: How did it get stuck in the tree? How did they try to get it down? Who got it down in the end?
- Ask the children to think of one sentence that tells us what happened in the story. Ask them to say their sentence aloud to the person they are sat next to before they write it in their hat shape. Encourage them to use their phonics skills to sound out and spell the words where appropriate.

Cross-curricular suggestion

Maths – The clowns in the story were very tall! Using a big piece of paper, ask the children to take turns to each lie on the paper with their feet at the bottom. Mark the height of each child on the sheet of paper. Help the children to measure each person’s height and make a chart showing how tall each person in the class is. Who is the tallest in the class?
Stage 4

Floppy and the Skateboard

Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young. Illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta. Teaching notes written by Thelma Page.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Look at the cover and read the title together. Ask: What do you know about skateboards? Are they easy to use?
- Read the blurb on the back cover together and ask: Why do you think Floppy wants to go on a skateboard? Do you usually see dogs on skateboards?
- Point to the word skateboard and help the children to read this word. Sound out the individual sounds for the children and encourage them to blend the sounds together.
- This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also a number of high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story independently.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Remind the children to sound out and blend new words, for example j-u-m-p, t-r-i-c-k.
- On page 3, ask the children to sound out and blend the word fantastic, f-a-n-t-a-s-t-i-c. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Ask: Can you think of any other words that could have been used instead of fantastic? (brilliant, great)
- Pause at the end of page 7 and ask: What do you think is going to happen when Floppy has a go on the skateboard?
- Pause at the end of page 14 and ask: Do you think the park keeper will be able to stop Floppy?
- On page 16, ask the children to sound out and blend the word splash, s-p-l-a-sh. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Talk about the grapheme sh and ask them if they can think of any other words that contain this grapheme.

Returning to the story

- Look again at page 3 and encourage the children to look at Biff and Chip’s expressions. Ask them how they think Biff and Chip felt when they saw Wilf do a trick.
- Look again at page 5 and ask: Why do you think Floppy wanted to have a go on the skateboard?
- Look again at page 13 and ask: How do you think Floppy felt when he was on the skateboard?
- Look again at page 14 and ask: Why couldn’t anyone catch Floppy?
Independent reading
- Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example r-a-m-p, p-o-n-d.
- Support children with reading tricky words.
- This book also contains a number of challenge words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story:
  skateboard Floppy shouted wanted
If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children that the text in speech marks shows that characters are speaking. Model for the children how to read all the speech with lots of expression and encourage them to do the same.
- For suggestions of questions to ask the children and discussion points for after they have read the story, please refer to the notes on the inside covers of the pupil books.

Speaking, listening and drama activities
- Read pages 1 to 6 of the story again. Ask: Who seems to be the best at skateboarding? Who is not quite as good?
- Ask the children to think of something they are good at and something they find more difficult.
- Divide the children into pairs and ask them to tell their partner something that they are good at and something that they find more difficult.
- After the children have had enough time to discuss this with their partners, ask them to tell the class about their partner. Begin by saying, Chip is very good at drawing and painting but finds skateboarding more difficult.
- Be ready to suggest things the children are good at if they are unsure.

Writing activities
- Provide the children with a storyboard template with four sections, and a variety of pens, crayons and coloured pencils.
- Talk about Floppy’s adventure on the skateboard and read pages 7 to 16 again to remind the children what happened to Floppy.
- Ask children to choose an animal that they think they could use to make a similar story, for example, an elephant, a snail, an octopus, a duck, etc.
- Ask them to draw four pictures in the storyboard squares to show their chosen animal’s adventure on the skateboard.
- Ask them to write a short sentence about each picture. Encourage them to use their phonics skills to sound out and spell the words where appropriate.
Stage 4

Gran’s New Glasses

Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young. Illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta. Teaching notes written by Thelma Page.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Read the title together and talk about the picture. Ask the children what they think might happen in the story.
- Read the blurb on the back cover and ask: Why do you think Gran needs new glasses?
- Ask the children to sound out and blend the word glasses, g-l-a-s-s-e-s. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word.
- This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also a number of high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story independently.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Remind the children to sound out and blend new words, for example g-l-a-s-s, sh-e-l-f.
- On page 1, ask the children to sound out and blend the word paint, p-a-i-n-t. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Talk about the grapheme ai and ask them to think of other words they know that contain this grapheme.
- On page 5, ask children to sound out and blend the word crash, c-r-a-sh. Tell them that this word shows what happened to the pot when it fell. Ask: Can you think of any other words that could have been used instead of crash? (smash, clunk)
- On page 7 ask: Why does Gran think the pizza has no topping?
- Pause at the end of page 8 and ask: Why do you think Gran is making so many mistakes?

Returning to the story

- Look again at page 7 and encourage the children to look at Biff and Chip’s expressions. Ask: How do you think Biff and Chip feel when Gran keeps making mistakes?
- Look again at page 10 and ask: Where do you think Gran went to get her eyes tested? How do you think Gran feels when she finds out that she needs new glasses?
- Look again at pages 12-13 and ask: Which pair of glasses do you think suited Gran best?
Independent reading

- Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *p-air, s-l-i-d*.
- Support children with reading tricky words.
- This book also contains a number of challenge words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story:
  - *window wall upside new eyes can’t glasses pizza*
  - If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children that the text in speech marks shows that characters are speaking. Model for the children how to read all the speech with lots of expression and encourage them to do the same.
- For suggestions of questions to ask the children and discussion points for after they have read the story, please refer to the notes on the inside covers of the pupil books.

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- Read pages 10-16 again and ask the children to look at Gran in the pictures.
- Ask children to mime being Gran trying on all the different glasses. Divide the children into pairs and say that one person should be Gran and one should be Biff or Chip.
- Ask them to role-play a short scene where Grans tries on a few pairs of glasses and Biff or Chip say what they think. Encourage the children playing Biff or Chip to say what they don’t like about each pair of glasses and the children playing Gran to say what they like about the glasses.
- Allow time for each set of partners to present their scene to the rest of the class.

Writing activities

- Provide the children with paper and a variety of pencils, crayons and coloured pencils.
- Look through the story at the pictures of Gran and ask the class to help you describe her appearance, e.g. her hair colour, her clothes, etc.
- Talk about what the children know about Gran. Ask: *Is Gran kind? Is she fun to be with?*
- Ask the children to draw and label a picture of Gran. Say that they should add short descriptions to the labels, e.g. big glasses, curly hair, etc.
- Ask them to write a sentence saying what they like about Gran. Encourage them to use their phonic skills to sound out and spell the words where appropriate.

Cross-curricular suggestion

Art – Ask children to design a new pair of glasses for Gran. Tell them to draw out their design first and then to use different materials to make Gran’s glasses (you will need to provide them with a template for the glasses).
Stage 4

The Birthday Candle

Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young. Illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta. Teaching notes written by Thelma Page.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Look at the cover and read the title together. Ask: Who is on the cover? How old do you think they are?
- Read the blurb on the back cover together and ask: What do you think will happen in the story?
- Point to the word birthday and help the children to read this word. Sound out the individual sounds for the children and encourage them to blend the sounds together. Talk about the grapheme th and ask the children to think of other words they know that contain this grapheme.
- This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also a number of high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story independently.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Remind the children to sound out and blend new words, for example d-r-u-m-s, u-p-s-e-t.
- On page 4, ask the children to sound out and blend the word contest, c-o-n-t-e-s-t. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Ask children to explain what a contest is. Ask: Can you think of another word that could be used instead of contest? (competition)
- Pause at the end of page 13 and ask: What do you think is going to happen to the candle?
- On page 14, ask children to sound out and blend the word flower, f-l-ow-er. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Talk about the grapheme ow and ask children to think of other words that contain this grapheme.
- Pause at the end of page 16 and ask: Why did Biff and Chip want seven candles on their cake?

Returning to the story

- Look again at page 6 and ask: What game are the children playing? Ask: Can you think of other games they might have played at the party?
- Look again at page 8 and ask: Why is it strange that the cake only has one candle?
- Ask the children to explain why Biff and Chip were disappointed at first. Ask: Were they happy at the end of the story?
Independent reading
- Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example s-i-ng, p-r-e-s-e-n-t-s.
- Support children with reading tricky words.
- This book also contains a number of challenge words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story:
  birthday party teams cake candle enormous happy bongo
  If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children that the text in speech marks shows that characters are speaking. Model for the children how to read all the speech with lots of expression and encourage them to do the same.
- For suggestions of questions to ask the children and discussion points for after they have read the story, please refer to the notes on the inside covers of the pupil book.

Speaking, listening and drama activities
- Talk about the kinds of parties the children like best, e.g. fancy dress parties, sports parties (swimming, football, etc.) or party games at home.
- Ask the children to work in small groups of two or three and tell each other about the best birthday party they have been to. Ask them to say what made that party special.
- Ask each group to choose one person’s idea of a good party to tell the class about. Decide who will report to the class.
- Talk about which kinds of party are the most popular in the class.

Writing activities
- Talk about the information that needs to be included in an invitation to a birthday party, e.g. who it is to, who it is from, where the party is, the date of the party, the time of the party, etc.
- Ask the children to pretend that they are Biff or Chip and to design an invitation that they could have sent out before their party.
- Remind them to think about all the information that they need to include in the invitation.
  Encourage them to use their phonics skills to sound out and spell the words where appropriate.

Cross-curricular suggestion
ICT – Ask children to use a computer to write up their invitation and make it look as exciting and colourful as they can. Remind them to make sure that all of the information is still clear.
Stage 4

The Seal Pup

Written by Roderick Hunt and Annemarie Young. Illustrated by Alex Brychta.
Teaching notes written by Thelma Page.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Look at the cover and read the title together. Ask: What is a seal pup?
- Read the blurb on the back cover together and ask: How do you think the seal pup got lost?
- Point to the word seal and help the children to read this word. Sound out the individual sounds for the children and encourage them to blend the sounds together.
- This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also a number of high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story independently.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Remind the children to sound out and blend new words, for example s-a-n-d, s-e-n-t.
- On page 3, ask the children to sound out and blend the word lost, l-o-s-t. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Ask: Why does Biff think the seal pup might be lost?
- Pause at the end of page 4 and ask: Do you think the seal’s mother is going to come back?
- On page 5 ask: Why do you think Dad sent for help?
- On page 11, ask children to sound out and blend the word glad, g-l-a-d. Encourage them to focus on blending the adjacent consonants in this word. Ask: What word could have been used instead of glad? (happy, pleased)

Returning to the story

- Look again at page 2 and ask: How did the binoculars help Dad?
- Look again at page 11 and ask: Why does Mrs Hill say that she is glad that they called her?
- Look again at page 13 and ask: What did Mrs Hill do to help Sinbad?
- Look again at page 15 and ask: Why do they let Sinbad back into the sea?
Independent reading
- Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *b-oa-t*, *b-e-tt-er*.
- Support children with reading tricky words.
- This book also contains a number of challenge words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story:
  - seal
  - mother
  - rescue team
  - saying goodbye
- If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children that the text in speech marks shows that characters are speaking. Model for the children how to read all the speech with lots of expression and encourage them to do the same.
- For suggestions of questions to ask the children and discussion points for after they have read the story, please refer to the notes on the inside covers of the pupil books.

Speaking, listening and drama activities
- Sit children in a circle and ask them to take turns to each think of an animal and share what animal they have thought of with the rest of the group.
- Ask them to each suggest one thing the animal they have thought of might need every day. Ask them to think about what might happen if the animal was left alone for too long and share their ideas with the group.
- Talk about the ways that we are responsible for making sure that the animals we look after have food, water, exercise and somewhere to sleep.

Writing activities
- Provide each child with a ready-made zigzag booklet, and a variety of pens, crayons and coloured pencils.
- Ask the children to tell you the names of different animals and their young, e.g. cat/kitten, horse/foal, cow/calf.
- Work together to tell the story of a lost young animal. Talk about what happens first, then encourage the children to help you think of two more events. Finish by talking about how the story ends.
- Ask the children to draw four pictures in their zigzag booklets that tell the story and then to write a sentence to match each picture. Encourage them to use their phonics skills to sound out and spell the words where appropriate.

Cross-curricular suggestion
Science – Help children to investigate how different animals look after their young. Ask children to find examples of animals that stay with their young and animals that don’t. Use the information that you find to create fact files/displays for some of the animals.