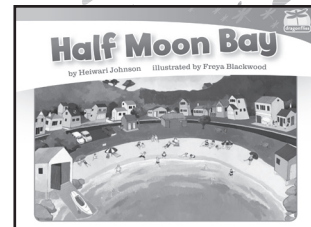


Half Moon Bay

by Heiwari Johnson

illustrated by Freya Blackwood



Overview

This poetic text, perfect for reading aloud, evokes the sights, sounds, and feelings of a summer's day at the beach. Text features such as alliteration, repetition, and lively verbs provide a stimulating model for writing.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of making connections with real-life experiences and visualising. The high proportion of content words means that it may be better to share this text before using it for guided reading. Although the word count for this book is low because it is a poem, this is compensated for by the greater degree of difficulty.

Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the variety of initial consonant blends
- the -sh digraph – *shines, shout*
- the -ou digraph – *out, round, shout*; the -ee digraph – *breeze, green*
- the “l” sound for “y” – *cry* and *fly*
- the rhythmic nature of the text
- the use of alliteration, repetition, and rhyme
- the use of commas for phrasing
- the descriptive language (adjectives, lively verbs, and vivid combinations of ideas)
- the compound words “lawnmower”, “sailboats”, and “seagulls”
- the details in the illustrations (the fish and bird cloud shapes on page 5, the safety aspects, and the changing perspectives)
- the title included in the sign

Setting the scene

Use the cover to stimulate a discussion about what the students might see, hear, and do on a summer's day at the beach. Tell the group that in this book, some children will tell them about all the things they see and hear at the beach.

The first reading

If necessary, support the students with reading the title. Establish that the title is also the place name on the sign. *What is a bay?* (The illustration on the cover supports this concept.) Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Back cover – Read aloud the preview question. Help the students to make connections with the preview question and their own experiences.

Title page – *How is it different from the cover?*

Listen to the students read the text themselves, offering support as necessary. You could use a shared reading approach for the first few pages to establish the poetic structure.

Page 2 – *What's the day like? What makes it hot?*

Page 3 – *What are these people doing? What are they lying on?* Talk about how quickly grass grows in summer. Observe the students' use of decoding skills.

Page 4 – Discuss the meaning of “whines”. Reread pages 2 to 4 together to clarify the rhyme pattern.

Page 5 – If necessary, support the students with the decoding of “breeze” and clarify its meaning. *In the summer, what kind of breeze would it be?*

Page 6 – *What kind of boats are these?* Prompt the students to attend to the visual information. *Can sailboats fly?*

Page 7 – *What noise do seagulls make? What word has the writer used?*

Page 8 – *How do you know the children are enjoying themselves?*

Reread the whole text together relishing the rhythm and language. Why did the author write this poem? How did it make you feel? Is this what it's like when you go to the beach?

Ideas for revisiting the text (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Listen to the students reread the text, observing how they manage the vocabulary and their ability to read rhythmically and fluently.
- Focus on any initial consonant blends or digraphs that the students may have been unsure of. Locate examples in the text and list other words that start the same way.
- Write “out”, “shout”, and “round” on the board. *What's the same about these words?* Show the students how they can use their knowledge of the “ou” digraph to spell other words, such as “about”, “found”, or “loud”. (You could talk about how the “ow” digraph in “down” has the same sound, but don't do this if you think it will confuse the students.) Or you could focus on the “ee” digraph in “breeze” and “green”.
- Write “cry” and “fly” on the board. *What sound does the letter “y” have in these words?* Have the students generate rhyming words by substituting initial consonants or consonant blends.
- Find the compound words in the text. Remind the students about the strategy of looking for the biggest part of the word they know when they are attempting to read unfamiliar words.
- *How does the author describe Half Moon Bay? What really caught your attention?* Explore the use of adjectives and the vivid combinations of ideas. *Why does the author say “the sailboats fly”?* *What picture does that make in your head?*
- Talk about the sound words in the text. *What other sounds might a lawnmower make? Or a seagull?*
- *How does the author make this a poem that is good to read aloud?* You could talk about the use of repetition, the rhyme, the alliteration, and the commas that help with the phrasing.
- Ask the students to examine the illustrations on page 2 or 8 and visualise themselves at Half Moon Bay. *What would you hear? What would you see? What would you feel?* Encourage the students to share their experiences of summer days at the beach.
- Draw the students' attention to the changing perspectives on each page and enjoy discovering details such as the fish and bird cloud formations on page 5, the safety aspects, or the buoy on page 6.
- Make up a night-time (or winter) verse for the poem together, using the text as a model.

Suggestions for further activities

- Read other poems about the beach.
- Paint a group picture of a local beach or lake and have the students add captions about what they like doing there. Add a sign with the name of the beach.
- Innovate on the text for a wall story or big book, for example, “The merry-go-round whirls, the merry-go-round whirls, down at Greenwood Park.” You could have the students record their story on audiotape with sound effects.
- Start a class collection of memorable examples of alliteration.
- BLM word activity: use compound words

The students can find the compound words from the story. They can then write the compound words listed.

- BLM comprehension activity: read and complete sentences

The students can read the sentences and fill in the missing words, referring to the story to find the appropriate words. They can then read their sentences to a partner.