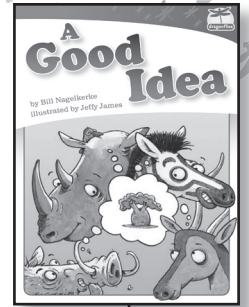


A Good Idea

by *Bill Nagelkerke*

illustrated by *Jeffy James*



Overview

On a hot day, four African animals are inspired with good ideas about how to stay cool. They soon realise that they need to co-operate so that they can all get what they want.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of identifying the main ideas and making and confirming predictions. The repetition provides support for less confident readers, while the engaging vocabulary provides rich opportunities for exploring language and practising strategies to unlock new words.

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

- the theme of co-operation
- the cumulative, repetitive text
- the high proportion of dialogue
- the content words and animal names
- the thought bubbles
- the adjectives – *hot, shady, good, sweet, nice, bubbly, perfect, big*
- the use of italics and exclamation marks for emphasis
- the use of commas to support phrasing
- the lively, humorous illustrations
- the infinitive and past-tense verbs – *lie, lay; nibble, nibbled; drink, drank; roll, rolled*
- the contractions – *I'm, that's, I'll, you've*
- the words with “y” as an “ee” sound – *bubbly, everyone, plenty, sadly, shady, very*
- the initial consonant blends – *cr, dr, fr, gr, pl, spr, sw, tr*
- the digraphs – *sh, th*

Setting the scene

Focus on the cover and ask the students what they know about the animals. Tell them the ones they don't know. *What are the animals thinking about? Why? I'm thinking about how I feel on a very hot day ...* Note the warm tones in the illustration, which support the idea of it being hot. *Where is this story set?*

The first reading

Ask the students to read the title. Check that they understand what an “idea” is. Read the names of the author and illustrator.

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

Title page – Read the names of the author and illustrator.

Pages 2 and 3 – *How are the animals feeling? How do you know?*

If necessary, support the students with working out “nibble” by writing the first syllable on the board. *What would Zebra want to do with the sweet grass? What's a word that starts with “nib” and means “eat”?* Prompt them to cross-check. *If it were “nibble”, what letter would you expect to see near the end?*

Encourage the students to predict the text structure. *Who else will be in the story? What will they say?*

Page 4 – If the students are unsure of “spring”, explain that it has more than one meaning but that there’s a clue in the next part of the sentence. Encourage them to use the illustration to cross-check.

Talk about the text pattern. *Is this what you thought might happen? How does the text change on each page? What will Warthog say?*

Page 5 – Use “Warthog” to demonstrate that there is more than one way to read unfamiliar words: it’s tempting to focus on the medial “th”, but it’s easier to decode this word by breaking it into syllables.

Pages 6 to 10 – *Is this what they were looking for? Imagine how they would feel ...*

Page 11 – *Which part tells you that Rhinoceros took a long time to get to the tree? Poor Rhinoceros. That doesn’t seem fair ... What will the other animals do?*

Pages 12 and 13 – *I wonder if the animals are going to help Rhinoceros. Should they help him?*

Pages 14 and 15 – *Is Rhinoceros telling the truth, or is he tricking them?*

Page 16 – Check that the students understand how Rhinoceros’s plan worked.

Encourage the students to think critically: *There are lots of ideas in this story, but the title only mentions one idea. Which idea do you think the author was thinking about when he chose the title?*

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

- Listen as the students reread the text, observing their ability to read expressively and fluently and their confidence with the content words. If necessary, review the use of commas to support phrasing and pace, and practise reading pages 4 and 5 together.
- Discuss the narrative structure. Identify the introduction, the problem, the anticlimax on page 11, and the satisfying ending.
- Focus on the use of adjectives. Draw out the idea that the adjectives add clarity and interest.
- Focus on the use of repetition and words with similar meanings on page 14. *Find the word that tells us how much sweet grass there was. Is the same word used to describe the amount of water? How much mud is there? Why didn’t the author use the same word each time?*
- Compare the infinitive forms of the verbs “drink”, “lie”, “nibble”, and “roll” with their past-tense forms. Explain that some verbs can’t have “ed” added to them and that the students need to use their knowledge of spoken English to decide what sounds right. For students whom English is a second language, who are less likely to be able to draw on their knowledge of English, try to use these verbs often in subsequent conversations and in reading and writing sessions. You may need to explain that the word “lie” has two meanings and that when the meaning is “to lie down”, the past-tense form is “lay”.
- Focus on any initial consonant blends or digraphs that caused difficulty. Locate examples in the text and list other words that start the same way.
- Write “very” and “shady” on the board and read them together. *What do you notice about their end sounds?* Have the students find other words in the text that have “y” as an “ee” sound.

Suggestions for further activities

- Reinforce the students' understanding of nouns and adjectives by having them create new sentences based on the models in the text, for example, "A long swim would be very nice."
- Write thought bubbles for the characters on page 16.
- Use the text for readers' theatre or perform it as a play for finger puppets.

- BLM word activity: use synonyms

The students can identify synonyms. They can then come up with synonyms for the words listed. They may use a thesaurus.

- BLM comprehension activity: write thought bubbles for characters in the story

The students can write thoughts bubbles for each animal on page 16. They need to show how each animal feels about what has happened.