



Running words: 266

Book Summary

This story looks at how perseverance can help a person overcome an obstacle. Monkey is learning to swing, but she keeps falling. She is ready to give up, but her mother and Snake encourage her to keep trying. After a snack and a nap, she tries again. She swings farther, but still falls. Her mother and Snake once again encourage her to persevere. Monkey keeps trying until she learns to swing, and she feels proud of her accomplishment.

Themes

Animals, birds, and insects;
Character education; Overcoming obstacles

Features of the Book

- The information contained in the illustrations
- Content words for discussion: *again, learning, try*
- Phonics and phonemic awareness: consonant blend – *sw*; short vowel sounds – *belly/better/fell/get/listen/when/yelled*

Strategies

Swing, Monkey, Swing introduces and reinforces the following strategies:

- making connections;
- determining author's purpose;
- visualising.

Materials

- Copies of the Sentence Strips reproducible for this book, cut and ready for use
- Copies of the BM, pencils

Swing Monkey, Swing

by Kitty Thomas

Introducing the Text

Begin by asking the students to think of the times when they have learnt to do something. Write their answers in a list.

- What activity did you try to learn?
- Could you do the activity right away, or did you have to try it many times before you succeeded?
- How did you feel before you succeeded? How did you feel after you succeeded?

Reading the Text

Hand one book to each student. Ensure that the content words (*again, learning, try*) are integrated naturally into the discussion. An understanding of these terms will help the students appreciate the author's purpose and the decisions the characters make in the story. Encourage the students to use the information in the illustrations and text to make predictions, then to revise or confirm these as you work through the book.

Cover

Together, read the title and the name of the author on the cover and the title page. Look at the illustrations.

- *What is on the cover?* (a small monkey)
- *Where is Monkey?* (in the forest)
- *What do you predict this story is about?* (a young monkey learning to swing in the forest)

Page 2

- *What is Monkey doing?* (swinging between the vines)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey is learning to swing on the vines. Have a student point out the speech marks. Remind the students that these marks indicate who is speaking in the story.

Page 3

- *What happened to Monkey?* (She fell.)
- *What do you think her mother is telling her?* (to try again)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey fell while trying to swing and that her mother is encouraging her to try again.

- *Why doesn't Monkey want to try again?* (Swinging is too hard, and she's doesn't want to fall again.)
- *Do you predict Monkey will try again or give up?*

Page 4

- *Who is talking to Monkey now?* (Snake)
- *Does Monkey like what Snake is saying? How can you tell?* (No, she is scowling and turning away from Snake, and her arms are crossed.)

Read the text together. Confirm that Snake is encouraging Monkey not to give up, but Monkey is feeling cross.

- *Why doesn't Monkey listen to Snake?* (She thinks that he can't give her advice because he can't swing.)

Page 5

- *What is Monkey doing?* (sleeping in her mother's arms)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey is taking a nap. Discuss with the students why Monkey's mother gave Monkey a snack and then held her for a nap.

- *Do you find things more difficult to do when you are hungry and tired?*
- *How do you think Monkey will feel when she wakes up?* (less cross and tired, ready to try swinging again)

Swing Monkey, Swing

Pages 6 to 7

- *What is happening on these pages?* (Monkey tries swinging again and falls again.)
- *What do you think Monkey’s mother and Snake are telling her on page 7?* (to try again)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey felt better after her nap and tried swinging again, but she also fell again.

- *Do you predict Monkey will try again or give up?*

Pages 8 to 9

- *What is Monkey doing?* (talking to Snake and trying to swing again)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey listened to her mother and Snake and tried swinging again.

- *Even though she fell, is Monkey getting better at swinging?* (Yes, she swung more times before falling.)
- *Do you predict Monkey will try again or give up?*

Pages 10 to 11

- *What is happening on these pages?* (With her mother and Snake’s encouragement, Monkey is trying to swing again.)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey is trying to swing again with her mother and Snake’s support. Discuss why Monkey’s opinion of swinging has changed. (Now that she can swing, she likes it.)

- *How many more times does Monkey try to swing?* (several)

Page 12

- *What do Monkey and her mother see?* (a young hippo swimming in the water with her mother nearby)

Read the text together. Confirm that Monkey and her mother are watching a young hippo learning to swim.

- *Why does Monkey shout, “Swim, Hippo, swim!”?* (to give the hippo encouragement just like she received from her mother and Snake about swinging)

Revisiting the Text

- Revisit the list of activities the students made at the beginning of the story. Based on their experiences of trying something new, have the students visualise how Monkey must have felt trying to swing. Ask them to compare their feelings about learning something new with Monkey’s feelings and behaviour.
- Find and list the “sw” consonant blends in the story. With the students, add any other words they know that begin with this blend.
- Write the words *belly/better/fell/get/listen/when/yelled* on the board. With the students, create a list of other words that contain the short “e” sound.

Following Up

- Encourage the students to think about the author’s purpose in writing this story. Many stories have messages or morals that they try to teach. Ask the students what they think is the message of this story. If no one suggests it, introduce the moral, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”
- Give the students copies of the BM for this story. They can write the speech bubbles using information from the story.