

Too Big!

by Matoroa Tangaere
illustrated by Philip Webb

Overview

This story, told by a young boy, highlights a situation that children can easily relate to – growing too big for their clothes and toys and not always being too happy about it. The boy finds comfort in a hug from Mum. There is an audio version of this text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2000*.

Suggested purposes

This book supports the comprehension strategies of making connections and inferring. It provides opportunities to practise one-to-one word matching, directionality, recognising high-frequency words, and cross-checking using visual information. *Look at Me* (Magenta) and *Where Is Sam?* (Red) are other Ready to Read texts that feature items of clothing.

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words “am”, “for”, “I”, “my”
- the repeated initial consonant “b” in “big”, “bike”, “But”
- the initial digraphs “ch” – “chair”; “sh” – “shirt”, “shoes”
- the initial consonant blend “sw” in “swing”
- the use of “too” as an adverb
- the exclamation mark for emphasis in the title and on page 8
- the repetitive sentence structure
- the expressive illustrations
- the theme of growing up
- the affirmative, reassuring ending
- the cat that’s featured in the illustrations.

Introducing the text

Show the children some items of clothing that they are obviously too big to fit into. *Could you wear these? Why not?* Encourage the response “I’m too big for them” rather than “They’re too small”. Move on to a discussion about favourite clothes that they have now grown out of. *What are you too big for?*

It’s important to keep the focus on “too big” so that the children don’t become confused when they begin to read the text.

The first reading

Discuss the cover illustration. *I wonder why the boy is looking sad?* Encourage the children to attempt the title. If necessary, draw their attention to the initial “T” and “B”. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Listen to the children read the title again. Remind them of the strategies you want them to focus on during the reading.

Page 2 – *What is the boy thinking?* If the children read “pants” for “jeans”, prompt them to cross-check the initial consonant. *Could that word be “pants”? Why not? Look at the picture. What else could it be? Are you right this time? How do you know?*

Pages 3 to 6 – The pattern of the text supports independent reading. Listen to the children read the text themselves, observing their one-to-one word matching and providing support and feedback as necessary.

Page 7 – *I wonder how the boy is feeling ...* Encourage the children to predict what might happen next.

Page 8 – *How is he feeling now?* Observe which children notice the change in text pattern and whether they attend to the “B” in “But”. Offer support as necessary. They may read “cuddle” for “hug”. *If that word was “cuddle”, what letter would you expect to see at the beginning?* Draw attention to the exclamation mark on page 8. *How does the writer want you to read this page?* Practise reading the sentence together expressively.

Encourage the children to infer from the text and the illustrations. *What might he do with his old clothes and toys?* Note that the illustration of Mum suggests that there will soon be a new baby in the family.

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their one-to-one word matching and how they manage the change in the text pattern on the last page.

Encourage the children to share their own experiences of growing out of favourite clothes or toys. Discuss the expressions on the faces of the characters in the story, including the cat. Draw out the idea that pets often seem to know when you’re not feeling too happy and can make you feel better.

Locate some of the high-frequency words in the text. *Find the word “am” on page 2. Can you find “am” on the next page? Tell me the letters in the word. Now find “for”. How do you know that that says “for”?*

Ask the children to use their word and letter knowledge to locate some of the interest words. *Can you find the word “jeans”? How did you know that that word was “shirt”?* Discuss the initial letters, word length, word shapes, and similarities to other known words.

Find all the words in the text that start with “B” or “b”. Ask the children to suggest more words that start this way.

Listen to the sound of the digraph “sh” in “shirt” and “shoes”. Make the sound together and think of other words that start the same way. Do the same for “ch” or the initial consonant blend “sw”.

Discuss the use of the word “too”. The children may know how to spell “to”. Ask them to show you on the whiteboard how it looks different. You could explain that in this text “too” means “more than enough”, but it would probably be more useful to provide other examples to clarify the meaning. For example, *If I burnt my mouth on my cup of coffee, I would say that it was “too hot”, or if I couldn’t hear what the reading group was saying, I would say that the class was “too noisy”.*

Suggestions for further tasks

Have the children listen to the audio version on the CD *Readalong 2000* and read along with the book.

Make a collection of items that the children are too big for and add labels.

The children could draw and write about something they have grown out of: "I am too big for my bed." "I am too big for my soccer boots."

Read *Look at Me* and/or *Where Is Sam?*

Read the picture book *Titch* by Pat Hutchins (Red Fox Picture Books, 1997), which has a similar theme.