

The Biggest Cake in the World

by Joy Cowley

pictures by Diane Perham

Overview

This text is a whimsical narrative that describes the process of creating the biggest cake in the world. Fantasy is interwoven with reality as the text outlines the steps from obtaining the ingredients, to mixing and cooking, to eating the cake. Multicultural comments and greetings are a feature of the final page. An audiotope accompanies this text (item 89172). This book links well with *What's in the Cake Tin?*

Curriculum links: mathematics (measurement, probability), technology

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words “a”, “and”, “for”, “got”, “in”, “the”, “to”
- the initial consonant blends “fl”, “sl”, “tr”
- the digraphs “ch” – “chainsaw”; and “th” – “the”, “thousand”
- the words ending in “ed” – “cooked”, “mixed”
- the honorific “Mrs” and the upper-case “D” for “Delicious”
- the comparative word “biggest”
- the refrain “the biggest cake in the world”
- the use of exaggeration
- the variety of different languages on the final page
- the visual sub-plot involving the little boy.

Setting the scene

Use the cover of this book to set the scene. Introduce the main character, Mrs Delicious. *What sort of book do you think that she is reading? Why is it so big?* Establish that she has a recipe book and that she is going to make something large. *Do you like cooking? What do you like to make? What do you think Mrs Delicious will make?* The little cupcake on the cover of the recipe book is a clue.

What do you need to make a cake? List the possible ingredients, ensuring that you include the ones in the text. For some children, particularly NESB children, a quick sketch of flour and sugar sacks, with labels, would be helpful, or you could arrange to bake a cake together before the reading.

The first reading

Read the title of the book together. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Discuss the illustration. *What are the children doing?* Ask the children to read the title themselves.

As the children proceed with the first reading of this book, they will need to scan the illustrations carefully and cross-check the visual cues to read the text accurately. Monitor the children's efforts closely.

Page 2 – *What has Mrs Delicious got?* Try to introduce the words “full of” into the discussion.

Page 3 – Some children may say “tanker” for “tank”. Write the words on the whiteboard and help them to cross-check.

Page 5 – The children may recognise the “th” in “thousand”, but be prepared to tell them the rest of the word if necessary.

Page 6 – *What is she doing now?* If the children read “stirred” for “mixed”, this is a good opportunity to support them in cross-checking.

Page 7 – Discuss the difference between mixing and cooking this cake and one at home. *How is Mrs Delicious being careful?* (There is a fire hose nearby.) Note that the text doesn't specify how the cake will come out of the oven. *What will she do next?*

Page 9 – *Why are the children covering their ears? What special clothing is Mrs Delicious wearing? Why?*

Page 11 – Children may say “piece” for “slice”. Again, this is a good opportunity to reinforce cross-checking. Discuss the way the people are waiting patiently for a slice of cake and how the slices are being passed down the line.

Page 12 and the inside back cover – Give the children time to enjoy the illustration and browse through the speech bubbles.

Help the children to think beyond the text. *How do you think Mrs Delicious got the cake out of the oven? Which parts of the story could be true?*

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their attempts to self-monitor, cross-check, read expressively, and read with enjoyment.

Locate the words in the text that start with “tr” (“truck”, “tractor”, “trailer”). Make a list of other “tr” words.

Look at the “est” ending of “biggest”. Add “est” to other adjectives, such as “small”, “tall”, “long”, or “short”.

Look at the words ending in “ed” (“cooked”, “mixed”). Use the whiteboard or magnetic letters to add “ed” to other regular verbs.

Locate the name “Mrs” in the text. Discuss this and the upper-case letter for “Delicious”. Write the names of teachers at the school on the whiteboard to illustrate the appropriate conventions.

Explore the visual sub-plot in the story. Talk about what the little boy is doing on each page.

Suggestions for further activities

Enjoy the book and the tape at the listening post.

Look up the *Guinness Book of Records* to find the biggest cake in the world.

As a group, create a flow chart of the sequence for making a cake and illustrate it for display.

Make a cake to share with the class.

Draw yourself eating a slice of “the biggest cake in the world” and add a caption.

As a group, innovate on the text, basing the ideas on the children’s own experiences, for example, “The Biggest Hangi in the World” or “The Yummiest Sandwich in the World”. Illustrate the text as a wall story. Substitute the children’s names for Mrs Delicious.

Use children’s recipe books to look at different cake recipes.

Read *What’s in the Cake Tin?*