

# Off Went the Light

by Barbara Beveridge

illustrated by Christine Ross

## Overview

Two brothers share a bedroom. Andy can't get to sleep because he can't find his bedtime toys. William can't get to sleep because Andy keeps asking for help. When all the toys are found, Andy happily goes to sleep, leaving William awake and grumpy. Not all of the detail mentioned in the text is shown in the illustrations, so children will need to attend closely to visual features of the print. This text is particularly useful for monitoring children's integration of reading strategies. An audio version of this text is available on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2000*.

**Curriculum links:** mathematics, health and physical education

## Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency vocabulary
- the initial consonant blends "fl" and "sl"
- the digraphs "ph" – "Elephant"; "sh" – "She's", "wish"; and "th" – "They", "them"
- the contractions "can't", "she's", "he's"
- the names of the children and their toys
- the prepositions "on", "off", "under", "in"
- the repetition in the text
- the use of direct speech
- the use of italics for emphasis on page 7
- the use of the ellipsis to indicate a pause on page 8
- the use of enlarged print and an exclamation mark for emphasis on page 8
- the underlying theme of opposites – "on" and "off"; "light" and "dark"; "awake" and "asleep"; "happy" and "unhappy"
- the feelings of the children, expressed through the illustrations and their conversation.

## Setting the scene

Ask the children to talk about any special toys that they take to bed at night. Discuss bedtime routines. *Do you sometimes have trouble getting to sleep?* Discuss sharing a bedroom. *Does your brother or sister ever keep you awake?* Sleepovers, marae visits, or holidays may be other occasions when children find themselves sharing a bedroom.

## The first reading

Look at the cover illustration. *How is the boy feeling? How can you tell? Why isn't he asleep?* Ask the children to read the title. Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – Listen to the children read the title again.

Page 2 – Point out the picture above the bed on the right. Write the boy’s name on the whiteboard. *Who is this?* The children should be able to use their knowledge of “And” to help decode his name. *What sound does “y” often have at the end of a word?* Refer back to the text. *What is Andy saying to his brother?* Listen to the children read the text themselves, encouraging them to attend closely to graphophonic information in order to decode the interest words.

Page 3 – *Who is the other child? Can you find his name?* Help the children to decode “William” by writing it on the whiteboard and covering up the ending so they can just see “Will”. *What did William say? Where was Ted?*

Page 4 – By now the children will be starting to get a feel for the “On/Off” framework of the text. *Now what does Andy need?* If the children need support with “Elephant” you could write the word on the whiteboard and help them decode it. Draw attention to the “ph” digraph.

Page 5 – Note that the children will need to attend closely to graphophonic cues in order to decode Elephant’s hiding place because it is not obvious from the illustration.

Page 6 – Note those children who are able to independently decode the names of the toys.

Page 7 – The use of italics for “not” and the use of the word “Please” indicate that William is losing patience. *How do you think he’d say that? How would you be feeling if it were you?*

Page 8 – Encourage the children to read this page with expression. *What will William do now? Has anything like this ever happened to you?*

## Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text, observing their integration of strategies and their use of expression.

Focus on any of the initial consonants, blends, or digraphs that the children may have been unsure of. Locate the words in context and make a list of other words that start the same way.

Focus on the digraph at the end of the word “wish”. List other words that end with the digraph “sh” or the rime “ish”.

Look at the use of contractions in the text. Read each sentence where a contraction appears, replacing the contraction with its extended version. Draw out the idea that contractions make dialogue sound more natural.

Focus on the names of the toys. *How did you work out that it said “Mr Moon”?* *What was there about the words that helped you?* Encourage the children to reflect on their use of reading strategies.

Talk about the structure of the text and how the alternating use of the phrases “Off/On went the light” develops the idea of how irritated William is by Andy’s requests for help.

Talk about the other opposites implied in the text – “asleep” and “awake”, “light” and “dark”, “happy” and “unhappy”.

Discuss the characterisation and the behaviour of the brothers. *Who is older? How can you tell? Was Andy being fair? What else could Andy have done? What could William have done? What will happen on the next night?*

### Suggestions for further activities

Listen to the story on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2000*. Make your own audio version or act out the story.

The children could retell the story to a friend, including some of the details in the illustrations.

Ask the children to suggest ways that Andy could overcome the problem of his “lost” toys. Then record the answers in the form of a problem-solving chart.

Discuss bedtime routines or rituals that the children may have.

Encourage each child to draw a picture of his/her room and show where their belongings are kept.

Model the use of contractions in shared writing.