

Knuffle Bunny

Written and Illustrated by Mo Willems



Another great book from Mo Willems whose work you know from *Don't Let the Pigeons Drive the Bus!* This one is for the primary students, K-2. This is a storyline that most little ones can identify with—A father and toddler walk to the laundry mat to wash the family's clothes. In go all of the clothes...unfortunately along with Knuffle Bunny, the toddler's "necessary" stuffed animal. On the walk home, the toddler tries unsuccessfully to alert the dad to the fact that Knuffle Bunny is missing. For all of us who've had children who've misplaced that important blanket, pacifier, or toy, we know that panic that ensues! There's a happy ending to the story, but the getting there is the fun. The language, the dialogue created in bubbles and quotations, the art with cartoons superimposed on photographs is amazing and is why this book won the Caldecott Honor Award. Enjoy this one on a number of levels.

Art – Encourage your students to try this unusual artistic style of cartoons and photographs. In the digital age, this is easy to try. Also, if you're low tech or don't wish to go to the trouble to take your own photographs, allow the students to cut out pictures from magazines to blend with their own artwork---i.e., a car cut from a sales ad and a person drawn alongside.

Writing – There are three great lessons to be learned from this story:

1. This book reinforces that everyone has something to write about. Here's a whole book that tells a story about something that we've all experienced. You don't have to have traveled widely or led some amazing life to be a successful writer. Let this validate your students!
2. Additionally, the book is loaded with prepositions that we have to teach students. Let them use the prepositions in a similarly structured story of their own and which you demonstrate for them. The prepositions, interestingly, also are the transitional words for sequencing the story.
3. Thirdly, the book provides a great model for how dialogue is used in writing. Both quotations and dialogue bubbles are used. Show students where the quotation marks are placed and why they are placed appropriately. Perhaps you can let students create dialogue bubbles on paper that can be translated to standard

quotations. Notice the great descriptive words, too, that can be used instead of “said” in dialogue. Get ‘em started early!

Guided Reading – The book has a great flow/sequence mostly moved along by a clever use of prepositions. I would suggest letting students use the little book format (See Helpful Handouts – Guided Reading – Little Books section for directions on folding.) to create their own short story or picture book, using only prepositions at the page tops to facilitate the story.

Word Study – There’s some rich vocabulary to explore in this simple book. Words like *errand*, *machine*, *realized*, *something* (compound word!), *replied*, *bawled*, and *boneless* will be educational and fun if presented in the right way.