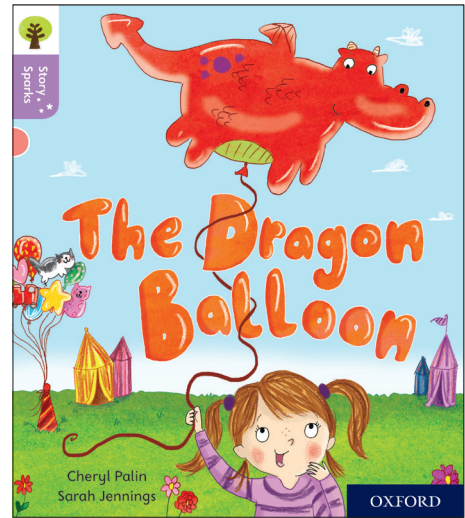


The Dragon Balloon

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Illustrator: Sarah Jennings

Teacher's Notes author: Liz Miles



Synopsis

Pip lets go of her dragon balloon and it floats up into the sky. Tom and Ben try to grab it and a girl tries to catch it in a net, but the balloon moves on, and chases a hen. Eventually, the balloon floats back to Pip. From high up on Dad's shoulders, Pip is able to stretch up and grab the balloon.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- As the books in this series were created to develop comprehension skills, children may initially require additional support with some elements of the skills that lead to comprehension.
- Explain that you are going to read a story about a balloon. Point to the word 'balloon' on the cover and encourage the children to read it with you. Ask: *Have you ever had a balloon?* Encourage the children to describe their balloons (or balloons they have seen), including the colour and shape, and to tell you what happened to the balloons. Look at the picture on the cover and ask: *How do you think the girl feels about her balloon?*
- (*Predicting*) Say: *I wonder what happens to this balloon.* Encourage the children to imagine places the girl might take the balloon and what might happen to it.
- (*Predicting*) Read the back cover blurb together and ask the children to suggest what might happen to the balloon when Pip lets it go.
- Return to the front cover and point out the smaller balloons in the background. Ask: *What sort of balloons are these? What shape is the girl's balloon?* Support the children to read the word 'Dragon' in the title.

Strategy check: word reading

Before reading, draw the children's attention to the word reading strategies that they are currently developing. For instance:

- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, e.g. 'p-i-ck-s'.
- This book includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending. There are also some high-frequency tricky words (also known as common exception words) in the book. Support the children with these words, explaining that they are tricky but also very common and useful. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them:
I go the to
- There are a number of story words used in the book. These include common words that may not conform to the phonics teaching that children will have learned at this point, and story-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar. They are listed and defined on the inside front cover. Explain to the children that these words may be challenging but they are important for the story.

Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the book independently:

balloon dragon

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the book aloud and help them where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Once a child has decoded a difficult sentence, encourage them to read it again to check their understanding.
- (*Summarizing*) After reading p5, ask the children to summarize what they know so far. Prompt them by asking: *What is the girl's name? What has happened to the balloon? How do you think Pip feels?*
- (*Predicting*) Say: *I wonder what will happen next.* Encourage the children to discuss what Pip and Dad might do.
- On p6, encourage the children to read the words with expression. Ask: *What do you notice about the words 'up and up'? Can you make your voice higher with each 'up'?*
- On p7, point to the question mark and discuss its meaning. Encourage the children to use appropriate intonation and read the sentence like a question.
- (*Predicting*) After reading p11, say: *I wonder where Pip and Dad are going. Do you think they will find the balloon?* Encourage the children to make predictions and help them to spot the balloon in the illustration.

Returning to the story

- (*Summarizing*) Ask the children to retell the story in their own words. Ask: *Can you remember what happened to the balloon in the story?* If necessary, prompt the children by asking questions about the order of events and details, e.g. say: *Who tried to grab the balloon next? What sort of animal did it chase?* Encourage the children to look back through the book to see if they have forgotten anything.
- (*Clarifying*) Ask: *How did the balloon move around?* Check that the children understand that the balloon was blown along by the wind.
- (*Clarifying*) Return to p9, and ask the children to reread the boy's speech bubble with intonation and expression. Encourage them to consider how the boy might be feeling as he says it, e.g. excited. Ask: *Who is the boy talking to? What is he telling them to get in the net?*
- (*Questioning*) Look again at p10 and encourage the children to ask some 'What?' and 'Why?' questions about this page. You may need to help the children by giving examples, e.g. say: *What is the woman thinking? Why is the hen running?* Discuss the answers to the children's questions as a group.

Independent reading

- Introduce the book as in the Group/Guided reading section above.
- Encourage the children to read the book as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example b-o-b-s, g-r-a-b, n-e-t.
- This book also contains a number of story words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story. They are listed and defined on the inside front cover. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- Remind the children to use the pictures to support them when reading the text.

Speaking and listening

- Look together at the bunch of balloons on the cover. Ask the children to pick a balloon and think of a story about it to tell aloud.

- You may need to prompt the children, e.g. say: *I wonder who might buy the balloon. What do you think they will do with it?* If necessary, tell your own story about one of the balloons to give the children some ideas.
- Encourage the children to share their story with the group. Ensure others listen carefully and are given an opportunity to ask questions at the end.

Writing activity

- Ask the children to think of their own balloon in the shape of an animal. Encourage them to draw their balloon and to choose a colour for it.
- Ask the children to think of a title for a story about the balloon. They could use the book as a model, e.g. *The Cat Balloon*, *The Dog Balloon*, or focus on their balloon's colour, e.g. *The Red Balloon*, *The Green Balloon*.
- Model how to write all or some of the title above their balloon illustration. Support the children to write their titles.

Cross-curricular suggestion

Mathematics

- Bring in a selection of balloons of different shapes and sizes.
- Encourage the children to use everyday language to describe the balloons, referring to their size and shape.
- Ask the children to count the balloons. The children could also arrange them in order of size or group them by shape.

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Curriculum links and assessment

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale

- Is able to read some words from the YR high frequency word list. (READ) (Standard I, 6)
- Can talk about the main points/key events in a text, e.g. main story setting, events, principal character. (R) (Standard I, 8)
- Knows a wider range of GPCs and can sound and blend to read most CVC words (including words with double letters, e.g. bell, hiss). (READ) (Standard I, 10)

Letters and Sounds: Phase 2

- *Story Sparks* Level 1+ books are designed to support children with the transition from phonic readers to richer reading with highly decodable fiction. These books tell a story using natural language, with a high proportion of phonically decodable words and a selection of high-frequency tricky words. Each book also has a limited number of non-decodable but achievable story words to enrich the language and expand children's vocabularies.

ENGLAND The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework: Reception

	Early Learning Goals	Book-related assessment pointers
ELG 03 Speaking	Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. (ELG03.1)	Check the children can ask and answer questions about the story and listen to others' answers to their questions.
	Children develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (ELG03.3)	Check the children can develop and describe ideas for their own balloon story, using elements of the book as prompts.
ELG 01 Listening and attention	Children give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. (ELG01.3)	Check the children listen to and consider predictions that others make about the story.
ELG 02 Understanding	Children answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (ELG02.2)	Check the children can explain how the balloon got lost and why, and can answer questions about their own experiences of balloons.
ELG 09 Reading	Children use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. (ELG09.2)	Check the children use phonic knowledge to read regular words such as 'bobs' and can read tricky words like 'go'.
	Children demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (ELG09.3)	Check the children can summarize the story to others, explaining how the balloon got lost.
ELG 10 Writing	Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. (ELG10.1)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to write a title for their balloon story, including the word 'The'.

SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes, Early Level

	Experiences and outcomes	Book-related assessment pointers
Listening and talking	To help me understand stories and other texts, I ask questions and link what I am learning with what I already know. (LIT 0-07a / LIT 0-16a / ENG 0-17a)	Check the children can ask and answer questions about the story and listen to others' answers to their questions.
	I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts and I use what I learn to invent my own, sharing these with others in imaginative ways. (LIT 0-09b / LIT 0-31a)	Check the children can develop and describe ideas for their own balloon story, using elements of the book as prompts.
Reading	I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read and write. (ENG 0-12a / LIT 0-13a / LIT 0-21a)	Check the children use phonic knowledge to read regular words such as 'bobs' and can read tricky words like 'go'.
	I enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts, sharing my thoughts in different ways. (LIT 0-19a)	Check the children can summarize the story to others, explaining how the balloon got lost.

Writing	I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read or write. (ENG 0-12a / LIT 0-13a / LIT 0-21a)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to write a title for their balloon story, including the word 'The'.
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WALES Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework, Reception

	Framework objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Oracy	use a variety of questions, e.g. 'Who?', 'What?', 'Why?', 'When?' and 'How?', to establish why things happen and to clarify understanding (YR_OracSpea.9)	Check the children can ask and answer questions about the story and listen to others' answers to their questions.
	use appropriate, increasing vocabulary in and through play activities (YR_OracSpea.5)	Check the children can develop and describe ideas for their own balloon story, using elements of the book as prompts.
Reading	recognise that words are constructed from phonemes (sounds) and that phonemes are represented by graphemes (written letters): – orally blend combinations of known letters (YR_ReadStrat.5i) apply the following reading strategies with support: - recognition of high-frequency words (YR_ReadStrat.6ii)	Check the children use phonic knowledge to read regular words such as 'bobs' and can read tricky words like 'go'.
	use pictures to aid understanding of text (YR_ReadStrat.12)	Check the children can use the pictures to help them summarize the story to others, explaining how the balloon got lost.
Writing	copy and write letters, words and phrases, e.g. from the environment or those modelled by the practitioner (YR_WritMean.6)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to write a title for their balloon story, including the word 'The'.

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Level 1

	Levels of progression	Book-related assessment pointers
Talking and listening	ask and answer questions for specific information (LI_com_talk.2)	Check the children can ask and answer questions about the story and listen to others' answers to their questions.
	use vocabulary from within their experience to describe thoughts and feelings (LI_com_talk.3)	Check the children are able to describe what some of the characters' feelings might be at various points in the story.
Reading	use reading strategies (LI_com_read.2i)	Check the children use phonic knowledge to read regular words such as 'bobs' and can read tricky words like 'go'.
	show understanding of the meaning carried by print, pictures and images (LI_com_read.1)	Check the children can summarize the story to others, explaining how the balloon got lost.
Writing	write words using sound-symbol correspondence (LI_com_writ.4i)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to write a title for their balloon story, including the word 'The'.