

## The Cotton Weaver

Written by: Mio Debnam

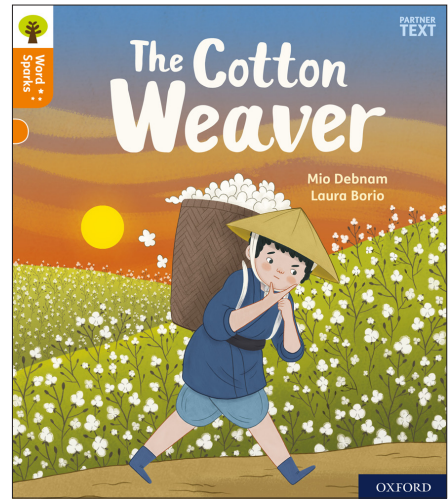
Illustrated by: Laura Borio

Teaching notes written by: Suzy Ditchburn

Text type: Fiction, Folktale, Partner Text

GPCs: Alternative spellings: /ar/, /air/, /or/, /ur/, /oo/, /ai/, /ee/, /igh/, /oa/, /l(y)oo/, /oo/, /sh/

**Focus words:** beneath, discover, explore, free, lonely, mysterious



### Synopsis

In this Japanese folktale, a cotton farmer called Taro saves a spider from a snake. As the harvesting season starts, he works hard all day, picking cotton and then making thread. He's exhausted and doesn't have enough time to do it all himself. One morning, he wakes up to a basket full of neatly spun thread. The next day it is mysteriously spun into cotton sheets. This happens every day until Taro spots the spider he'd saved from the snake. It was the spider spinning his cotton into thread and sheets!

### How to use this book

Each *Word Sparks* book contains a small number of focus words. The focus words are to discuss with the child. The child may be able to decode some of these words themselves.

You might like to read the book more than once:

**First read:** Focus on understanding and enjoying the book.

**Second read:** Encourage fluent sounding out and blending.

**Third read:** Look in more detail at the focus words or follow a particular learning focus that you're working on.

This page is for the adult to read.

This page is for the child to read.



These focus word boxes are for the adult to read. Whenever it feels right, pause and talk about the focus words.

### Group/Guided reading

#### Introducing the book

- Look together at the cover and ask the children to read the title to you.
- Open the book and explain how it works: you will read the left-hand page and then the children will read the right-hand page.

#### Strategy check

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. 'w-ea-ve, weave'.

## Reading the book

- Read the adult page to the children, pointing out what is happening in the picture.
- Whenever you come across a focus word which is underlined in the adult text, check the children's understanding of the word in the context.
- Ask the children to read the child page aloud, supporting where necessary with any unfamiliar words or concepts. Praise and encourage them as they read.
- On p9, ask the children to think of any other adverbs that are similar to 'glumly'. (miserably, sadly)

## Returning to the book

- Look back at p3. Ask the children to think of an adjective to describe Taro's behaviour towards the spider. (kind, selfless, helpful) (Understanding vocabulary choice)
- Now look at p12. Ask the children to find a word on this page that means the same as 'confusion' or 'astonishment'. (amazement) (Understanding vocabulary choice)
- Look again at p15. Ask the children if they can think of another word for 'precious'. (special, valuable) (Understanding vocabulary choice)
- Look back at p22. Ask the children why they think the spider was saved again. (because she had shown kindness to Taro, like Taro had shown her) (Drawing inferences)

## Independent reading

- Introduce the book as in the *Introducing the book* section above.
- Encourage the child to read their parts of the book using their phonics knowledge as independently as possible.
- Encourage them to sound out and blend new words that they come across. Remember to give lots of encouragement and praise.
- Use the focus word boxes to discuss the focus words.

## Speaking and listening

Encourage the children to talk about the story and how kindness is repaid with kindness. Ask them to think of the benefits of being kind to someone or something.

## Taking vocabulary further

- Encourage the children to write all the words they know that are similar to the word 'kind'. Then ask them to think of some adjectives which are the opposite of 'kind'. You can use the Word Clouds Activity Sheet if you want to extend the activity.
- Encourage the children to spot the focus words wherever they can, for example in other books they are reading or listening to, during conversations or while watching television.

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