

Billy Twitters and His Blue Whale Problem

by Mac Barnett

Billy should have heeded his parent's warnings, now what is he supposed to do with a blue whale living outside his house? This story will become an instant classic.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *How would you take care of a blue whale?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder why this boy is pulling a whale behind his bike?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *Billy Twitters and His Blue Whale Problem*

- responsibility: somebody or something for which a person or organization is responsible
- barnacles: a small invertebrate animal with a shell that clings to things
- fabulous: amazingly or almost unbelievably great or impressive
- lectures: an educational speech on a subject made before an audience
- baleen: a bumpy material on a whale's jaw
- tangerines: a citrus fruit with easily peeled orange skin and sweet flesh
- prehistoric: before recorded history
- pedaled: foot-operated lever on a bike to make it move
- blowhole: nostril of a sea mammal found on the top of its head
- manual: a book that contains information and instructions about how to do something
- krill: a tiny ocean crustacean resembling a shrimp that is food for baleen whales

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What did Billy's mother want him to do?
- What happened when Billy didn't clean his room or eat his baked peas?
- Where did Billy take his whale?
- How did his teacher react? His friends?
- What did Billy need to do to take care of the whale when he got home?
- What did the whale eat?
- Where did Billy decide to live?
- Why did Billy want to live inside the whales' mouth?



Do

Bigger or Smaller? Heavy or Light?

You will need: a variety of small and large objects found in your classroom, that you can use for size and weight comparison. For example to measure size, a tennis ball vs. a basketball, a small paper clip vs. a large paper clip or a wrist watch vs. a wall clock. To measure weight, a golf ball vs. a wiffle ball, a feather vs. a rock or a cup full of sand vs. a cup full of marshmallows.

Display two objects, ask the children which one is larger and which one is smaller. If desired, you can lay the two objects on the ground. Have the children stand by the object that is smaller, or stand by the object that is larger. Repeat the steps for the heavy and light objects.

Extra Activity

If desired, you can have the children search their classroom for two objects that they can use for size or weight comparison. Have the children present the two objects to the class and, as a class, decided which is larger and which is smaller, which is heavier and which is lighter.