

The Little Engine That Could

by Watty Piper

An everlasting classic story of determination that will remain in the minds and hearts of all readers for years to come.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *This is a story about a little engine that believes it can accomplish anything despite how small it is.* 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 what that clown is doing on top of the train?

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 *The Little Engine That Could*

- rumbled: to travel with a deep rolling sound
- jolly: bringing pleasure or enjoyment
- bobbed: a woman's short haircut
- merrily: full of enjoyment
- jerk: to pull something with a sudden movement
- berths: a bed on a train
- parlor: a living room that is used for entertaining guests
- roundhouse: a circular building where trains are stored or repaired
- freight: goods or cargo carried by a train
- indignantly: angry at unreasonableness
- dingy: faded and dirty
- sighed: to breathe long and loud
- weary: tired
- hitched: to hook onto
- aboard: on or in a ship or train
- steadily: staying the same

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Have any of you ever been on a train? Have any of you ever seen a train?
- What are some of the toys that the train was carrying that you would want to play with?
- What type of food is spinach? What other food looks like spinach?
- Why didn't the Shiny New Engine want to help the little train?
- How did the clown get the other trains to stop?
- How did the dolls and the toys feel when none of the other trains would help them? How did they feel when the Little Blue Engine decided to help them?
- What did the Little Blue Engine say while he was pulling the train?
- How do you think the children will feel when they get their toys and good food?

Do

Train Mechanic

Set out a variety of wheels, tires, old tricycles, broken lawnmower parts – anything safe that is no longer working or valuable. Provide a variety of tools such as wrenches, levels, screwdrivers, and ratchets so the children can experiment with the tools and how they work.