

From the Author

When I write in rhyme, I usually throw combinations of words around inside my head until I discover a phrase that excites me and piques my curiosity. Then I wonder, *what is this world I've stumbled upon, and what story lies within it?*

For *Ready, Steady, Hatch!*, some of these phrases were:

- a clutch of eggs was sprouting legs
- the newborn chicks did circus tricks

When writing this particular book I also decided to challenge myself by using an internal rhyme on every line in addition to the rhyme at the end of each couplet.

Example:

Round and **bright**, and creamy **white**, amid the pumpkin **patch**,
a clutch of **eggs** was sprouting **legs**. READY, STEADY, **HATCH!**

I knew that this would make it fun for me while creating it and fun for my audience to read aloud (and listen to) once it was finished.

So I had settled on a rhyme scheme, and I had my setting – the story involved a clutch of chicks who were new to the world. I didn't know yet what happened next, but I was curious to find out, and that was part of the fun.

Think about how you feel when you enter a playground for the first time. You are curious and you wonder, *what is in this playground and what can I play in it?* I was sure my chickens must have felt the same way – they had been born into a pumpkin patch and they wanted to discover what's in it and what they can play there.

My chickens were curious about their new world. I was curious about my chickens in their new world. So, in a way, we went on an adventure together to discover the rest of the story.

Questions for Students*

* Most questions incorporate ACELY1646 (F), ACELY1656 (1), ACELY1666 (2), ACELY1676 (3) when addressed as a group.

1. Is this story imaginative (make believe) or informative (real)? How do you know?

Which parts are real and which parts are imagined?

- Are chickens real?
- Do chickens hatch from eggs?
- Can chickens do circus tricks?
- Can chickens speak English?

Discuss some examples of what the book might tell us if it were more informative.
Hint: what are some facts you know about chickens?

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating - ACELY1648 (F), ACELY1658 (1)

2. The characters in this book are *anthropomorphic*. This means they are animals that behave like people; for example, the chickens do circus tricks and they speak English.

Create your own anthropomorphic character.

- What animal is it?
- What is its name?

- What are some things that it does like a person would do? (You can make it as crazy as you like.)
- Draw a picture of your character.

Creating literature - ACELT1831 (F), ACELT1832 (1), ACELT1833 (2), ACELT1601 (3)

3. Mother Hen is the only character in the story who is named.

What name would you give to the smallest chick who goes missing?

What would you name some of the other newborn chicks?

Creating literature - ACELT1831 (F), ACELT1832 (1), ACELT1833 (2), ACELT1601 (3)

4. [Science x English] Create your own informative text. Draw a chicken and see if you can label more than five parts. (For teachers: e.g., comb, eyes, beak, tail, feathers, claws.)

Investigate and discuss what is the purpose of each part.

Biological sciences (Science Understanding) - ACSIS012 (1)

Communicating (Science Inquiry Skills) - ACSIS012 (F), ACSIS029 (1), ACSIS042 (2), ACSIS060 (3)

5. Discuss as a class:

- How did the smallest chick get left behind?
- Why do you think the other chicks go to look for her?
- Do you think the smallest chick was sad at all throughout the story? Why or why not?
- Do you think the other chicks were sad at all? When? Why?
- When the chickens are sitting on the fence after searching, what do you think is meant by this dialogue: 'Perhaps she's lost inside a fox!' and 'There's no way back from that.'

Responding to literature - ACELT1783 (F), ACELT1582 (1)

6. Look at the illustrations and discuss what you think the various characters feel throughout the story?

- Look at the smallest chick when she finds the cherry. How do you think she feels?
- Look at Mother Hen counting the chicks when they've returned. How do you think she feels?
- Look at the chickens sitting on the fence after they have searched for the smallest chick. Do you think each chicken feels the same way? How do you think each one feels?
- Look at the chicks amongst the vine when the cherry rolls to its feet. How do you think each of them feels then?
- How about when the smallest chick explodes out of the cherry at the end?

Language for interaction - ACELA1429 (F), ACELA1444 (1)

7. [Drama x English] List a range of emotions as a class; for example, happy, sad, scared, excited, etc.

Emotions can be expressed in a variety of ways. Take turns to show the rest of the class how these emotions are sometimes expressed. Try using your whole face and your whole body. Try using only one part of your whole face/body, for a more subtle expression.

Drama - ACADRM028 (F-2) Language for interaction - ACELA1787 (1)

8. How do you think the chicks feel after breaking out of their shells?

Discuss a time when you have discovered a new place.

- Where was it?
- What was it like?
- What did you play there?
- How did you feel?

Responding to literature - ACELT1783 (F), ACELT1582 (1)

9. Think of an imaginary world you would like to visit; for example:
- a world where everything is made from chocolates and lollies
 - a world where everything is upside down
 - a world where everyone flies

Write a description of your imaginary world.

- Describe what you can see, smell, taste, hear, touch.
- Describe some of the fun things you would do there.
- Describe how you would feel in your imaginary world.

Creating literature - ACELT1831 (F), ACELT1832 (1), ACELT1833 (2), ACELT1601 (3)

10. Identify some of the rhymes used in this story.

Can you think of some other words that rhyme with these?

Can you think of some different rhyming words of your own?

Phonics and word knowledge - ACELA1439 (F)

11. Most of the story is told with one verse on every two-page spread.

How many rhyming pairs are in each verse of this story?

Which rhymes do you think are called 'internal rhymes'? Why? (For teachers: in the first verse, bright/white and eggs/legs; the rhyme occurs in the same line.)

12. [Music x English] Can you identify a chant (or song) in this story? (For teachers: *Marching, HEY! Marching, HEY!...*)

Think of some actions and perform it together as a class. Note: You might need to use the playground for more room.

Change some of the words in the chant to make a chant of your own. Hint: You can keep the same rhythm by substituting words with the same number of syllables.

Music - ACAMUM080 (F-2)

Creating literature - ACELT1831 (F), ACELT1832 (1) Examining literature - ACELT1579 (F), ACELT1585 (1), ACELT1592 (2), ACELT1601 (3)

13. How do you think the rhyme contributes to the mood of the story?

What would the story be like if it was not in rhyme?

Examining literature - ACELT1600 (3)

14. There is one verse in the story that has a different rhyme scheme from the rest. Can you spot it? (For teachers: This is the dialogue between the chickens sitting on the fence.)

Why do you think I chose to make it different?

(For teachers:

- This is a dialogue, an aside, a reflection.
- A little variation can add more interest.
- There is a change in mood at this point – it is at its lowest. The internal rhyme used through the majority of the book adds a certain jolliness to the way it sounds. By dropping the internal rhyme at this point, we are reinforcing the change in mood.
- The chickens have just about given up – giving up momentarily on the stricter rhyme scheme fits with their attitude at this point.)

Examining literature - ACELT1600 (3)

15. What do you think the smallest chick was doing inside the cherry while the others were looking for her?

Creating literature - ACELT1831 (F), ACELT1832 (1)

16. How do you think the story might have been different if it were told from the smallest chick's point of view?

Write a story about her adventures inside the cherry. (Bonus points if you make it rhyme.)

Things to think about: What is going on inside the cherry? Can she see out of the cherry? Can she control where the cherry goes or does she simply go where the cherry goes? What places does she end up in and what does she do there? Is the cherry always rolling? In what other ways might it be moving?

Texts in context - ACELY1675 (3)

Creating literature - ACELT1593 (2), ACELT1833 (2), ACELT1601 (3), ACELT1791 (3)

17. The chickens make three attempts to find the smallest chick.

What are the three things they do?

What are some other methods they could have tried?

Try writing one of these methods in rhyme as it is done in the story.

Creating literature - ACELT1593 (2), ACELT1833 (2), ACELT1601 (3), ACELT1791 (3)

18. [BONUS QUESTION] Can you dress up like the chicken inside the cherry? Send a photo to Ford Street if you can! (fordstr@internode.on.net)

Creating literature - ACELT1580 (F), ACELT1586 (1), ACELT1593 (2)