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| **Away in a Manger**  **Author unknown**  Publisher: **Various version widely available online (first published in the late nineteenth century)** | **2 guided sessions** |
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| The focus of these guided reading sessions is understanding a Christmas carol, with its archaic language and unusual phrasing. There are also *Re-think Reading!* plans based around carols for Year 2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6. (There are many different versions of ‘Away in a Manger’ and teachers may wish to adapt this plan to match those used in school.) | |

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| **Books by the same author** | **Linked texts** |
|  | Other Christmas carols that the children might know.  *Away in a Manger* by Jean Claude (2020)  The following books can only be obtained as used/second-hand or may be found in a public library:  *Away in a Manger (A Pop-up Christmas Carol Book)* by R Lipking (1989)  *Away in a Manger: A Story of the Nativity* by Mares and Paul Nussbaumer (1965)  *Away in a Manger* by Thomas Kincade (2005) |

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| **National Curriculum Programme of Study** | |
| **Word reading** | |
|  | **apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words** |
|  | **read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs** |
|  | * Reading the text independently |
|  | **re-read books to build up pupils’ fluency and confidence in word reading** |
|  | * Reading the carol several times for different purposes |
| **Comprehension** | |
| **develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding:** | |
|  | **become very familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their particular characteristics** |
|  | * Reading and understanding the nativity story as a carol |
| **understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to:** | |
|  | **draw on what is already known or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher** |
|  | * Clarifying vocabulary and the meaning of parts of the carol |
| **explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them** | |
|  | * Clarifying parts of the text that don’t make sense * Freeze framing each verse to demonstrate their understanding * Drawing their understanding of each verse |

**Session 1**

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| **Book Introduction** | Ask the children if they know any Christmas songs or carols. Which ones? What are they about?  Explain that the focus of the session will be reading the carol ‘Away in a Manger’ and exploring what it means.  Share an image of a nativity scene, or models if you have a set. Who are each of the characters and what happens in the Christmas story?  Introduce the vocabulary cards (Resources below); put sound buttons on the words if the children need them. Sound out and read the words. Take each word in turn and explain what it means. Children use the nativity image or models to show where the words could be used.  Provide each child with a copy of the carol. |
| **Strategy Check** | What will you do if you get stuck?   * Sound out and blend the word. * Think of a word that would make sense. * Re-read the sentence from the beginning.   Remind the children that you want them to keep thinking about what you are reading and if there are any words you don’t understand to let you know at the end. |
| **Independent Reading** | Children read the carol aloud at their own pace (or together if it is challenging for the group to decode independently – this could be an echo-read). |
| **Respond to Text** | Clarify: Are there any words or things that happen that you aren’t sure about? Model this if the children don’t mention anything. Possible phrases might be ‘no crib for a bed’, ‘no crying he makes’. Work out what the words/phrases mean with the children.  Check meaning: tell me about what is happening in this carol. Clarify any confusions. |

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| **Post-session task**  Children practise reading the carol at home and to others in school to develop fluency. |

**Session 2**

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| **Book Introduction** | Remind the children about how you read fluently and with expression: read so it sounds like a story and is interesting for someone to listen to. |
| **Strategy Check** | Before re-reading the carol, recap: What will you do if you get stuck?   * Sound out and blend the word. * Think of a word that would make sense. * Re-read the sentence from the beginning.   Remind the children to keep thinking about the story and to let you know at the end if there are any words they don’t understand. |
| **Independent Reading** | Children practise reading the carol fluently in pairs and then each pair reads a verse to the rest of the group. If they find this difficult you could read it to them and get them to copy you (echo-reading). |
| **Respond to Text** | Working in pairs, ask the children to read the first verse again and then act it out.  Key questions might be:   * Who is in this verse? * What are they doing? * Where are they doing it?   Create a freeze frame and take a picture of it if a camera is available.  Repeat for the second verse.  The whole group create a freeze frame of the third verse. |

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| **Post-session task**  Stick the first three verses of the carol in the children’s reading journals and ask them to draw a picture to go with each verse. |

**Other independent activities based on the book**

* Learn the carol off by heart.
* Read or sing the carol to the class. You can find a backing track here [Away in a manger - BBC Teach](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/z4hyscw). (Be aware ‘Thee’ and ‘Thy’ has been modernised to You and Your, and the transcript contains some errors.)

**Resources**

**Vocabulary cards**

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| manger | lowing |
| crib | nigh |

**Away in a Manger**

Away in a manger

No crib for His bed

The little Lord Jesus

Lay down His sweet head

The stars in the sky

Look down where He lay

The little Lord Jesus

Asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing

The poor Baby wakes

But little Lord Jesus

No crying He makes

I love Thee, Lord Jesus

Look down from the sky

And stay by my side

'Til morning is nigh