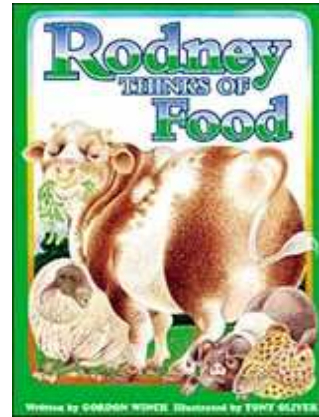


Teaching Notes

Rodney Thinks of Food
by Gordon Winch

Illustrated by Tony Oliver



Rodney Thinks of Food is a picture book with many levels of meaning. It is about good manners and bad manners; bulls and other ruminants; farm life and the Royal Easter Show. Above all it tells a good story, full of wit and humour – supported by hilarious illustrations – creates an array of novel characters and abounds in words that will enrich the vocabulary of young readers. It is ideal for shared, guided or independent reading and will be a library favourite.

Teaching with the Book

Before reading the book with children

1. Talk about farms and farm animals, including cows and bulls.
2. Discuss the character of bulls and their habits. What do they eat?
3. Ask the children what the book might be about: Will it be a factual book? Will it be a fantasy? Will it be serious? Will it be funny? Will it be a sad or happy book?
4. Point to features of the book: the cover, the publisher, the author, the illustrator, the title page the double page spreads, the postscript.

Reading the Book

1. Read the book to the children to produce the maximum enjoyment.
2. Refer to the art on each double page spread. For instance, point to each of the characters as you come to them in the text: His **mother** was proud of him... the **farmer's wife** was proud of him...
3. Have the children predict the meaning of words that may be new to them: ...his manners were *appalling*... Explain any words they find difficult.
4. Talk about the themes in the book as you read. Why are good manners important?

5. Explain the witty use of words: Rodney's eating behaviour was *totally over the fence, so to speak*; the *Mrs A. Angus Bull Obedience School*; *Dr Beau Vine*. Comment on the humorous situations in the book (for example Rodney's wind problem and eating the lingerie).
6. Explain what a psychiatrist does. (One small boy said 'An ordinary doctor looks after your body; a psychiatrist looks after your mind'.)
7. Talk about *ruminants* as the word is explained in the text; talk about *hypnotism*.
8. Ask how we know that Dr Beau Vine's treatment had worked.
9. Ask how the author has concluded the narrative and how the illustrator has made the 'Show Page' (the last double page spread) interesting. (The change in clothes, for instance.)
10. Read and talk about the postscript. Why is it in the book? Why is it important? What extra facts does it give us?

After Reading

1. Ask the children to recall their favourite page(s).
2. Have the children do some 'Rodney illustrations'. Pick their favourite characters or some of the other farm animals in the book. Put together a wall chart of their work.
3. Ask the children to write answers to questions such as What is a ruminant? When was Rodney in real trouble?
4. Re-read the book with the children.

Further Work

The book can be used to extend vocabulary in a class, to build up sight words, to address grammar in terms of sentence structure, to stress correct punctuation and to discuss the nature of the narrative text type.