

Birthday Cakes

Written by Jenny Feely

Illustrated by Mitch Vane

Level 4

This book recounts the experiences a family has with blowing out candles at their birthday parties. It is a fairly repetitive text supported by colour illustrations. Some number words are introduced. There are two lines of text, with a return sweep, placed consistently on the page. It uses the sentence structure: ... *had ... on his/her birthday cake. He/she blew them out with one big blow.* The sentence form changes towards the end of the book.

Getting ready for reading

Bring in a cup cake with a birthday candle on it. Have one of children pretend it is their birthday. Light the candle and have them blow the candle out.

Discuss the birthdays children have been to, focusing on the ritual of the birthday cake. *What do the candles tell us? Who blows them out?*

Talking through the book

You might say: *This book is about all the birthdays a family has had this year. Every time someone has a birthday they have a cake with the right number of candles on it. Then the candles are blown out with one big blow.* Turn to the appropriate page and say: *Tina is the youngest, she's two. Jess is five, Tom is ten, Dad is forty and Grandma won't tell how old she is but she has so many candles on her cake she needs all the family to help her blow them out.*

Reading the book

Children read the book individually while the teacher observes each child's reading behaviours and prompts children to use cues to read unfamiliar words. The teacher may select an additional teaching focus based on these observations.

Returning to the text

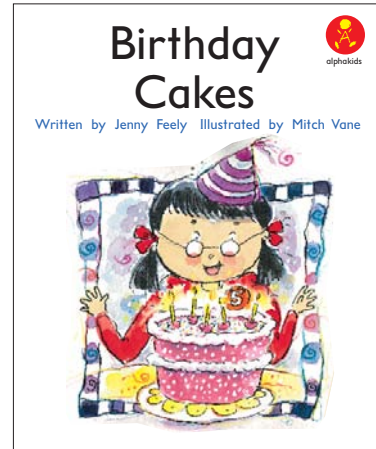
Select the most appropriate teaching focus for the learning needs of the group. Choose one or more of the following.

BEING A MEANING MAKER

Discuss:

Could Grandma blow out all her candles by herself?

Is it easier to blow candles out when you are younger?



Check this

Teachers can observe children's emergent reading behaviours for evidence of using all sources of information.

Direct children's attention towards a source of information they are neglecting. After an error ask:
Does that make sense?
Does it sound right?
Does it look right?

BEING A CODE BREAKER

Vocabulary

- High-frequency words: *had, on, her, his, he, she, with, them, we, said*
- Word families: *cake – make, lake, shake, take, bake, rake; had – Dad, sad, bad, lad, mad; blow – grow, flow, row, know, tow*

Sounds and letters

- Hearing sounds: /bl/ – *blew, blow*; /b/: *birthday, big*; /t/ – *Tina, ten, two*

Writing conventions

- Punctuation: upper case letters, full stops, speech marks
- Grammar: use of *her/she, his/he*

BEING A TEXT USER

Discuss:

Why would you read this book?

BEING A TEXT CRITIC


Discuss:

How do different families celebrate birthdays?



Literacy learning centres – follow-up activities

WRITING CENTRE

Children innovate on the text, referring to their family's birthdays. Provide number cards to help with the number of candles. 

WORD CENTRE

Children make and record words using onsets and rimes:

cake: make, lake, shake, take, bake, rake
had: Dad, sad, bad, lad, mad

INTERACTIVE LITERACY CENTRE

Children work in pairs to take turns reading the text to each other.