

Sebastian's Special Present

Written by Sarah Prince

Illustrated by Alex Stitt

Level 15

Getting ready for reading

Discuss any time that children have wanted a pet. Were they allowed to have it? Did they get the pet they wanted. What did they do to try to persuade their parents to get them a pet?

Talking through the book

Introduce the book and ask: *What type of book is this likely to be? Fiction? Factual?* Read page 2 and ask: *What do you think now? What do you think will happen in the book?*

Reading the book

Have the children read the rest of the book individually. Then ask them to discuss how the book was the same as their predictions and how it was different.

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

Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions.

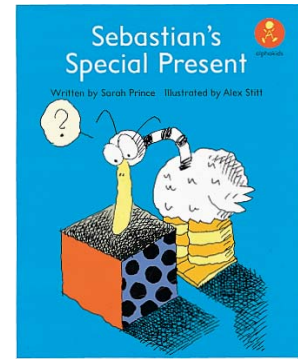
What did Sebastian want for his birthday?

What did he do to try to talk his parents into getting him a pet?

Why did Sebastian's mother tell him 'If I hear one more word about getting a pet, you won't be getting anything at all'?

Why did Sebastian's parents get him some pets for his birthday?

Why did they keep the present secret?



TEXT FEATURES

- **This is the third Alphakids narrative about Sebastian. In this book Sebastian desperately wants a pet for his birthday but despairs of ever getting one, while everyone keeps secret what his real present will be.**
- **The text features direct speech and speech balloons.**
- **Illustrations extend the text and carry the humour of the story.**

Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore analogy with the rime from – *bet, get, jet, let, met, net, set, vet, wet*.

They could also investigate the use of contractions: *that's, don't, Isabella's, won't, wouldn't, can't, he'd, you're*. What parts of the text are these used in?

Being a text user

Discuss:

The illustrator has chosen to draw the pets as boxes with legs. What would happen to the story if he had drawn ordinary dogs instead?

How else has the illustrator made the story funny?

Being a text critic

Discuss:

Do children always get what they want for their birthday?

Was it fair to keep secret what Sebastian was getting for his birthday?

Would this happen in your family?

Literacy learning centres – follow-up activities

WRITING CENTRE 1

Children could write the next adventure of Sebastian and Duke and Lady, for example: 'Duke and Lady Go to Obedience School'.

WRITING CENTRE 2

Children can make a list of 10 things they most want for a birthday present, then a list of five things that cost NO money. They could then choose one special present and say why they chose this.

Alternatively, they could invent a pet of their own choice, and draw and label its features.

INTERACTIVE LITERACY CENTRE

Children could work in cooperative groups to practise and perform a readers theatre of the book.

BOOK BROWSING CENTRE

Children can revisit other stories about Sebastian: *Sebastian* (level 9) and *Sebastian Has the Hiccups* (level 12). Other Alphakids books about pets are: *Looking for Fang* (level 5), *A Pet for Me* (level 8), *The Dragon* (level 15).

Keeping track

Asking children to reflect on their learning provides insights into what they feel is important in learning. It can assist teachers to more closely match learning activities to the interests of the children.