

Ben and the Scaredy-Dog



Written by Sarah Ellis Illustrated by Kim La Fave

Story Summary

New neighbors are moving in across the street and Ben can't wait to say hello and make friends with their daughter, Erv. That is, until he notices that this family has a pet dog. Dogs make Ben nervous. But when Ben

is brave enough to go visit, he learns that Max is an "old scaredy-dog" who is afraid of things, too. Can Ben overcome his fear and make a new kind of friend?

Sarah Ellis has written more than twenty novels and picture books for young readers. Her many honors include the Governor General's Award, the Mr. Christie Book Award, the Sheila A. Egoff Children's Book Prize, and the prestigious Vicky Metcalf Award for a body of work. Written from her insightful memories of her own childhood and keen observations of the world around her, Ellis' stories masterfully reflect her readers' own experiences. She lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Kim La Fave is a multi-award-winning illustrator and designer in paint, pencils, or digital media. His honors include the Governor General's Literary Award for Illustration, the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award, the Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award, and the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award. A graduate of the Alberta College of Art, Kim also honed his skills in Toronto and New York before returning to British Columbia where he now lives with his wife and family.

Additional Resources

Pair this book with:

The Night Lion by Sanne Dufft

https://pajamapress.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/TheNightLion_ReadingGuide1.pdf

Picture Book Ages 3+ | ISBN: 978-1-77278-044-4 | Pages: 32

Themes

Fear, courage, confidence, friendship

BISAC Codes

JUV002070 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Dogs

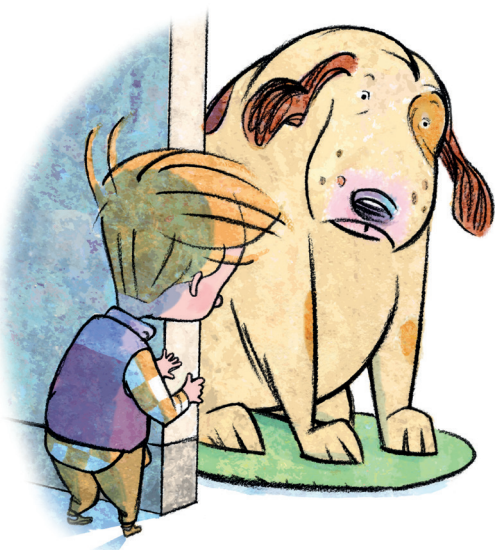
JUV039050 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Emotions & Feelings

JUV039060 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship

JUV039090 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / New Experience

Reading Level

Lexile Measure: AD510L



Curriculum Connections

This guide contains a read-aloud guide and three robust follow-up activities.

Activity	Main Subject Area	Specific Skills and Topics
Read-Aloud	Reading Comprehension	Activate prior knowledge, predict, infer, make connections
What Do You See When You Look at a Dog?	Belonging and Contributing (K) Writing (Gr. 1-3)	Communicate thoughts and feelings Organizing ideas, using commas
Facing Fear	Belonging and Contributing (K) Character Education	Communicate thoughts and feelings Courage, confidence
Potpourri	Visual Art Science Belonging and Contributing	Patterns Structures, Simple Machines Friendship

THE READ-ALoud

Students will relate readily to Ben and his fears. They will see ways to become more confident and to help peers become more confident as well.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- use comprehension strategies (eg. activate prior knowledge, predict, infer, make connections)
- demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self-image
- communicate with others in a variety of ways

You Will Need:

- *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*

How to Proceed:

Before Reading

Read the front cover, including the names of the author and illustrator. Have students recall other books about Ben that they may have read (e.g. *A+ for Big Ben*, *Ben Says Goodbye*). Ask them to predict what this book may be about.

During Reading

First spread: Read the first three paragraphs. Ask, “How does Robin feel about dogs? How does Joe feel about dogs? How do you know?” Repeat the question in the first line of the page and invite a few students to answer it. Then read the last paragraph. Make sure students know what jaws are. Invite them to feel their own jaw. Ask, “How does Ben feel about dogs?”

Second spread: After reading, ask, “Why did Ben change his mind?”

Third spread: After reading, ask, “How would you describe Erv?” Boost students’ vocabulary by suggesting a few generic descriptors (e.g. confident, shy, outgoing) and have them choose which ones describe Erv. “What do Erv and Ben have in common?” (They both have a short-form name. If students have read *A+ for Big Ben*, they will know that Ben can also whistle.)

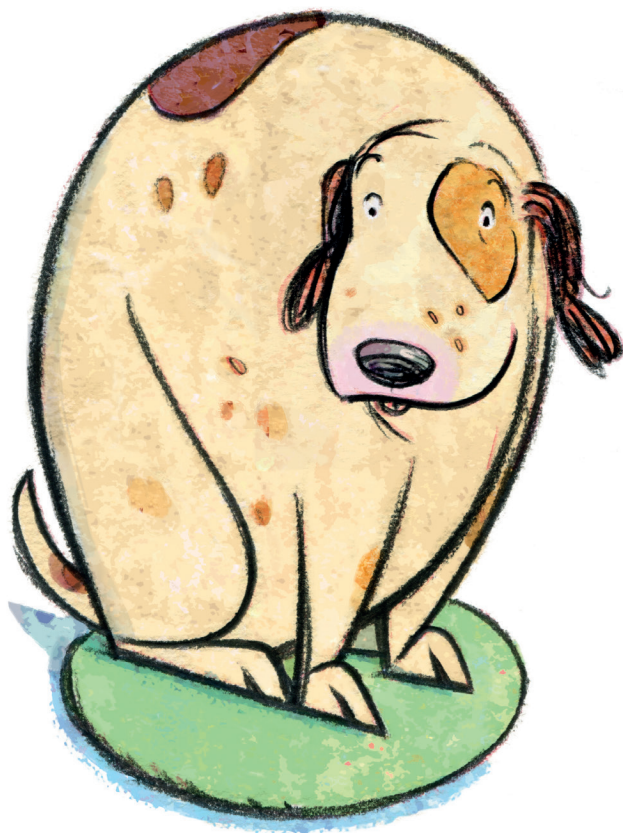
Fourth spread: After reading, ask, “Why did Ben hope the unpacking would take a long time?”

Fifth spread:

After reading, ask, “How would you describe Robin?” Suggest words like helpful, supportive, encouraging.

Sixth spread: Before reading, ask, “How might Ben be feeling right now?” (perhaps afraid, unsure, nervous). After reading, ask, “How might Ben be feeling now?” (perhaps surprised that the dog is afraid).

Seventh spread: Have a volunteer say, “You’re just an old scaredy-dog, aren’t you?” in their best “dog-talking voice.” Invite students to imagine the ruins of a dragon palace. Ask if students ever talk to their grandmother or another relative online.



Eighth spread: “Do you think the things Ben had heard about dogs were true? What might be better advice about how to behave around dogs?” Suggest a longer conversation about this at a later time.

Ninth spread: After “Tickety-tick,” ask, “What was that?”

Tenth spread: Sing Ben’s words to the tune of “Happy Birthday” as you read them.

Eleventh spread: Read this page slowly, with meaning. Whisper the last sentence. Pause for a few seconds before turning the page.

Twelfth spread: To highlight the contrast in mood, begin this spread in a big, excited voice. Again have a volunteer repeat Erv’s words to Max in their best “dog-talking voice.”

Thirteenth spread: “How might Erv’s mom’s words make Ben feel?” (perhaps proud, confident)

Fourteenth spread: “How did the words ‘You must have a way with dogs’ change the way Ben felt about himself? How can we use words to make others feel good?”

After Reading

Use some words and images from the story in a brief positivity exercise: Have students pair up and lean against their partner, back-to-back (while sitting on the floor). Pause after each instruction. Invite them to: Be very quiet. Take a deep breath. Inside your head, say, “I am brave” (pause). “I am confident.” Add other self-affirmations that would be meaningful to your group. “Think about some of the things you know how to do. Think about your partner. Think of something you and your partner have in common. Think of some kind words you could say to your partner. Stand up. Face your partner. Say something kind.”

At some point, collaboratively with students, make a list of things to tell Ben about how to behave around dogs, to replace his misconceptions. You might include fun ways to interact with pet dogs, how to be a responsible pet owner, and safety rules about dogs belonging to strangers, stray dogs and guide dogs.

WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT A DOG?

In this activity, students will learn to accept that different people feel differently about things.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- express how they feel about a particular thing or situation
- develop an appreciation of the multiple perspectives encountered within groups
- sort ideas for their writing in a variety of ways, with support and direction (e.g. by using pictures or simple graphic organizers such as a web or list)
- use punctuation to help communicate their intended meaning (in this case, commas)

You Will Need:

- *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*
- chart paper and markers
- drawing paper
- writing paper

How To Proceed:

1. Display two pieces of chart paper, each bearing the word “dogs” in the middle. Re-read the first page of *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*.
2. Ask students to tell what Ben’s brother and sister see when they look at a dog, while you create a web with the words on one of the pieces of chart paper.
3. Ask students to tell what Ben sees when he looks at a dog, while you create a word web on the other sheet of chart paper.
4. Ask students to tell what they see when they look at a dog. Record positive responses on the first word web and responses that reflect fear or dislike on the second. Comment that people have different perceptions of things and both points of view are valid.

5. Repeat the activity with something else that polarizes people in a similar way (examples: roller coasters, the dark, cats, horses, bikes, making new friends, the first day of school, the fire pole on the playground structure)
6. Have students look closely at the dog picture Ben made on the first page of the book. Discuss briefly how his feelings about dogs influenced his picture. Invite students to make a picture based on the discussion in step 5.
7. For students who are writers: Tell students they will write a sentence to go with their picture. Their sentence should contain a list of at least three items that they “see” when they look at whatever it was you discussed. Return to the first page of *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*. Point out that the author has used commas to separate items in a list. Co-create one or more sentences with your students, beginning with the words “When I look at a _____, I see”. Demonstrate how to separate the items in your list with commas. Note: There are regional differences in the use of the Oxford Comma (the comma before “and” in a list). *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog* includes the Oxford Comma. If it is conventional in your region to omit that comma, simply omit it in the sentences you write to demonstrate. If students comment on this, explain that there are regional differences.



FACING FEAR

Everyone is afraid of something. In this activity, students will explore different strategies for overcoming fear.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- explore what it means to be brave and develop strategies for overcoming fear
- develop confidence in themselves and others

You Will Need:

- *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*
- *The Night Lion* by Sanne Dufft
- *The Night Lion* reading guide, available here: https://pajamapress.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/TheNightLion_ReadingGuide1.pdf

How To Proceed:

1. Re-read *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*.
2. Read *The Night Lion*. Try some of the activities suggested in the reading guide.
3. Invite students to comment on how each of the boys were able to overcome their fear.
4. Guide students in exploring how empathy was involved in each boy's experience. Ben realized that Max had fears too and the dog was comforted by leaning against Ben and hearing him hum. Morgan provided "the necessities of life" for his stuffed lion, who in turn scared away Morgan's nighttime fears.
5. Discuss how students can employ empathy themselves, even while dealing with their own fears. Examples: If you are afraid of making new friends on the first day of school, look for someone else who looks scared and say hello to them. Begin to overcome fear on the monkey bars by encouraging a friend in mastering them. If you and a friend are both nervous about giving a speech in class, offer to go first to make it easier for your friend.

Encourage students to talk about ways in which they have supported a younger sibling, relative or student who was afraid.

6. Look at the ninth spread of *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*. Ask, "What did Ben do to help himself be brave?" Look at the tenth spread and invite the students to join you in singing "Happy Birthday" to Big, Brave Ben. Ask, "Where did Ben get those words, Big, Brave Ben?" (from his sister). Turn back to the fifth spread. Discuss Robin's three helpful comments ("You can do it," "Think positive," and "say to yourself, 'Big, Brave Ben'").
7. Ask students what "brave" looks like. Invite them to stand in a way that communicates "brave." Listen to a recording of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "I Whistle a Happy Tune." It mentions some elements of posture (head erect, strike a careless pose) as well as the "happy tune" strategy that Ben used. Do students think those are helpful suggestions?



POTPOURRI

Here are some short follow-up activities related to art, science, and friendship.

Learning Expectations:

Students will:

- Visual Art: explore and represent repetition of color and shape in patterns in everyday objects (e.g. textiles)
- Science: design and build a structure for a specific purpose
- Science: identify some of the six basic types of simple machines—lever; inclined plane; wheel and axel—and give examples of ways in which each is used in daily life to make tasks easier
- Belonging and Contributing—explore the theme of friendship

You Will Need:

- *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog*
- various art papers, wrapping paper, scrapbooking paper
- writing and drawing utensils, scissors, glue
- a collection of photos of actual castles in ruins (an abundance of such photos is available online)
- building blocks and other construction materials
- a collection of books on new friendships—some examples are given below

How To Proceed:

1. **Visual Art:** Leaf through *Ben and the Scaredy-Dog* and have students identify different kinds of patterns (spotted: Max, checks: Ben, plaid: Joe, stripes: Robin, solids: Erv). Provide wrapping paper or scrapbooking paper in a variety of patterns and solids or have students make patterned papers. Give students plain paper for their background and invite them to make a collage of people and animals cut from the patterned and solid papers.
2. **Science:** Show photos of castles and other ancient structures that are in ruins. Invite students to imagine what “the ruins of a dragon palace” might look like and how it came to be in ruins. Have students plan (by drawing) and build (using whatever building materials are available) their own “ruins of a dragon palace.”

Take photos of the palaces and have students describe, by writing or dictating, how they built it and/or a story about the dragons and how the castle came to be in ruins.

3. **Science,** at the beginning of a unit on Simple Machines: Look at the second spread. The person on the moving van is using three simple machines: The hand cart combines a sort of lever (to lift the box) with wheel and axel (to move the box), and the inclined plane (ramp) allows the person to get the box to ground level. All three fulfill the main purpose of simple machines, which is to make work easier. Can students spot the other wheels on this page? Challenge students to find simple machines in other books they read and keep a list of the book titles and simple machines found.
4. **Friendship:** Look at the third spread and discuss Ben’s first impression of Erv. Ask if students remember their first meeting with a friend and have them tell what happened. Read and listen to other stories about new friendships. Examples: *Giraffe Meets Bird* by Rebecca Bender, *Woodrow at Sea* by Wallace Edwards, *Franklin’s New Friend* by Paulette Bourgeois, *Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend* by Mélanie Watt, and “Dudley Pippin and his no-friend”, heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zASkr59bNrs>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Curriculum Documents

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/

Ontario Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum*, rev. ed. Grades 1–8, Language, 05–104. Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2006. PDF.

Ontario Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Curriculum*, rev. ed. Grades 1–8, Science and Technology. Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2007. PDF.

Ontario Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Curriculum*, rev. ed. Grades 1–8, The Arts. Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2009. PDF.

Ontario Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Curriculum*, rev. ed. Grades 1–8, The Kindergarten Program. Queen’s Printer for Ontario, 2016. PDF.

Reading Instruction

www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/resources/guides/Reading_K_3_English.pdf