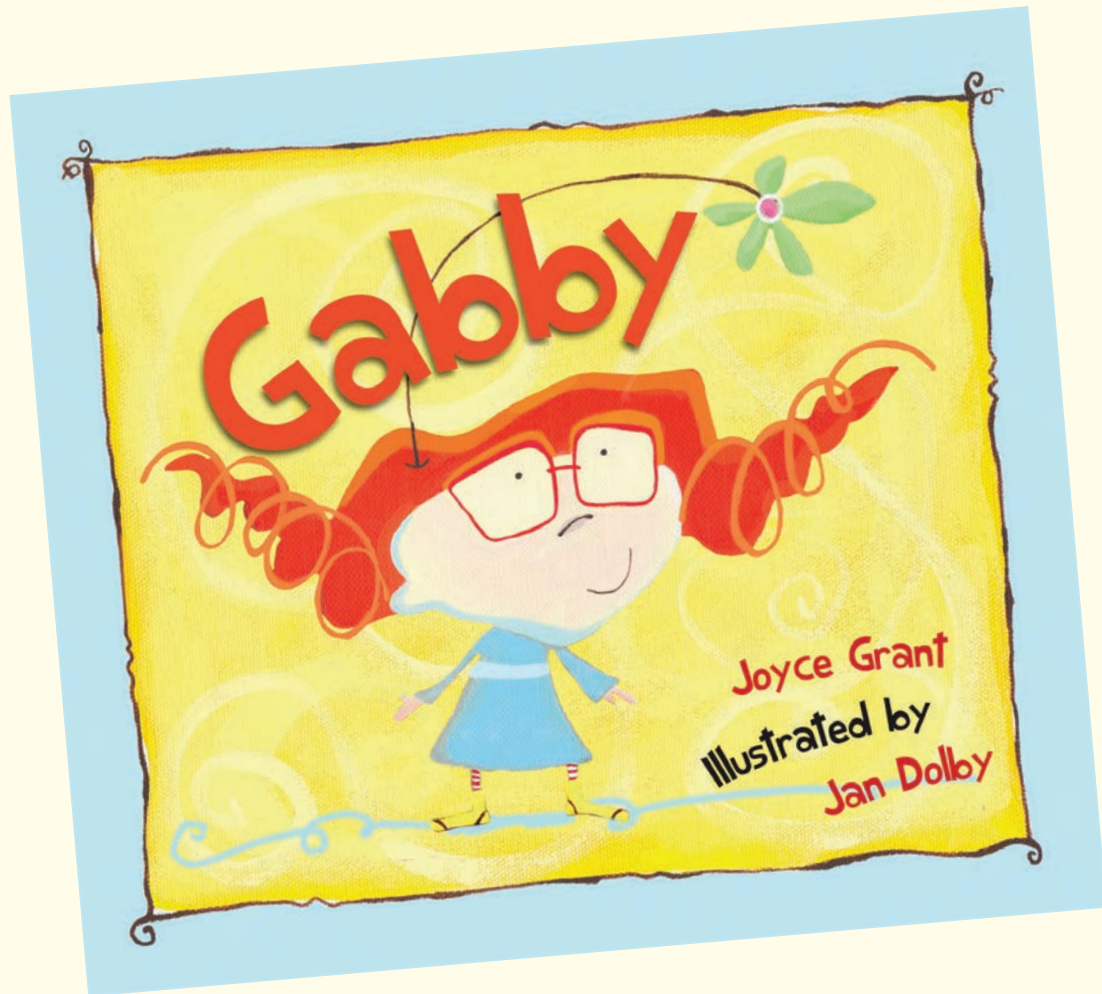




"Gabby"

The Teacher's Guide



Nominee,
Rainforest of Reading Award
2014



Top 10 Best Bets
Ontario Library Association
2013



Canadian Toy Testing Council
Toy Report,
2014 Award-Winning Books
Recommended Reads 2014



Canadian Children's Book Centre's
Best Books for Kids and Teens
2013



Joyce Grant

Joyce Grant is a freelance journalist and a children's literacy advocate living in Toronto, Ontario. She wrote *Gabby* after doing research into literacy that showed how much faster many children learn to read when they can touch and move letters. She also wanted to show the connection between words and the things they represent. *Gabby* is Joyce's first picture book. It was followed by *Gabby: Drama Queen*, the second book in the series. Joyce has a B.A.A. in Journalism.

Visit Joyce's website at www.joycegrantauthor.com

Joyce has literacy games, ideas and activities at www.gkreading.com

Check out her free, kid-friendly, teachable news at www.teachingkidsnews.com

Twitter [@jgcanada](https://twitter.com/jgcanada) and email joycegrant@sympatico.ca

Gabby is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Gabbypicturebook



Jan Dolby

Jan Dolby is an illustrator who loves animation and children's literature. Her illustrations are bright and whimsical, much like her personality. Jan is married with two children. Born in Newfoundland, she now lives in a century home in the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Ontario. *Gabby* is her first Canadian picture book. She also illustrated *The Sugar Plum Tree* by Katherine James, *Phobiatopia* by Tami Su and *Jig, Jiggle, Sneeze* by Joy Vitalis.

Visit Jan's website at www.jandolby.com

She's on Twitter [@jandolby](https://twitter.com/jandolby)

Email her at jandolby@bell.net



Gabby was published by [Fitzhenry & Whiteside](http://www.fitzhenry.com) in Markham, Ont. It was edited by Christie Harkin, the cover was designed by Daniel Choi, and Cheryl Chen helped to get the word out through marketing and publicity.

This is when Joyce and Jan saw the very first copy of "Gabby," at their publisher's Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

They were very excited!



The Teacher's Guide

This guide was written to help you use *Gabby* in the classroom to develop reading, writing, and comprehension skills with elementary students from Kindergarten to about Grade 3. On each page you'll find an activity and the learning outcome related to it. The Teacher's Guide was written by Joyce Grant and illustrated by Jan Dolby. It is free to use in your classroom. You can download a copy of this guide at www.joycegrantauthor.com.

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Synopsis

Gabby has a magic book. When she drops it, the letters fall out. She puts the letters together into words, and whatever she spells comes to life! She puts together the letters C, A and T and a cat appears; she makes a FISH to feed the cat. When some other letters drift together to form a BIRD, Gabby has to figure out a way to keep them from fighting. She makes FRIENDS. The book ends with Gabby, the cat and the bird sitting down to read another book on a PILLOW she has made.



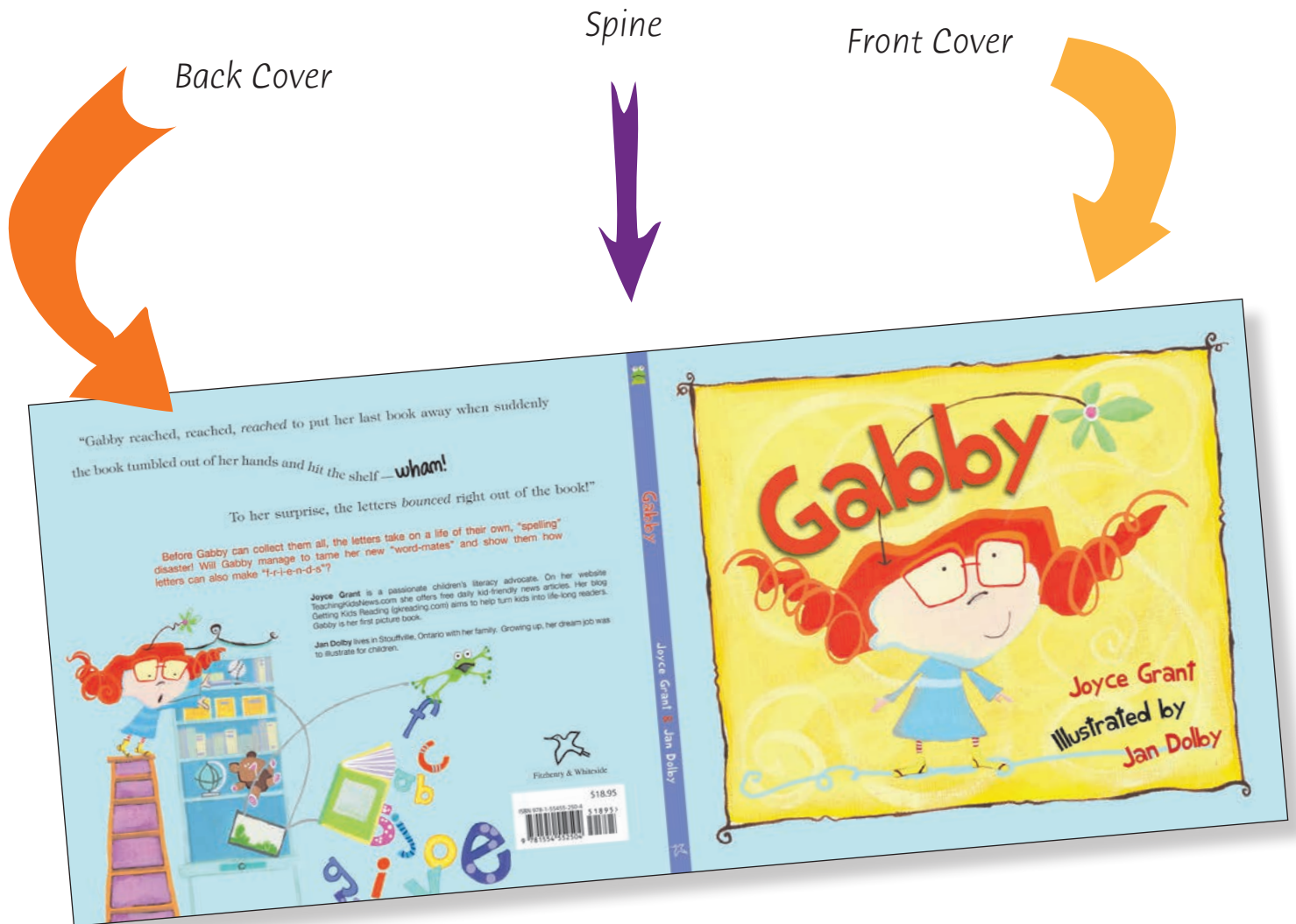
Interesting facts



- There is a frog on nearly every page; he holds a tiny letter. When you put the letters together, they spell Gabby's full name (Gabriella).
- *Gabby* was written, illustrated and designed in Canada. Then it was sent digitally to China where it was printed and bound.
- Most picture books have exactly 32 pages. (This is because the printing process involves large pages of paper folded into eighths.)
- The last two pages of *Gabby* are known as “back matter” – material that relates to the book but isn't part of the story. In this case, the back matter is fun literacy activities.
- The second book in the *Gabby* series is *Gabby: Drama Queen*. It introduces two new characters – Gabby's best friend, Roy (who is Indigenous), and wacky neighbour Mrs. Oldham.

Before Reading Gabby

Before reading the book, talk about the “parts” of a book: front cover, spine, back cover, hard cover vs. soft cover, copyright page (which includes the date it was published and the publisher’s name), title page, dedication and “back matter” (in this case, the literacy activities at the back of the book).



While Reading “Gabby”

After you’ve read *Gabby* with your class once, consider reading it again and incorporating these great activities.

Questions

- The letters have spilled out all over the playroom that Gabby has just finished tidying up! What do you think she should do with them?
- What could Gabby give the cat to eat? (So many great possibilities!)
- When the bird and the cat are fighting, what can Gabby do to fix things?
- At the end of the story, Gabby reads another book. What book should she read next?

Actions and Sounds

- When Gabby reaches to put her book away, have the students reach, reach, reach up high into the air to put away an invisible book.
- When the book goes “wham!” have students gently pat their thighs or the floor and say, “Wham!”
- Twice the cat says “meow!” – have the class say “meow!” too.
- When Gabby finds the letters FISH, she finds “a teeny tiny h that was stuck right in her hair.” Have the students take a tiny invisible h out of their hair and hold it up to look at it.
- Just before Gabby finds the suspicious letters (BIRD), have the class make a “suspicious noise” like: Dunh-dunh-duuuuuuuunh! Or Uh-oh!
- When the bird says “brawk!” the kids have just gotta shout “brawk!”

Cats and Birds: Verbs

When the cat and the bird come to life, separate the class into a “cat” side and a “bird” side. Then the birds can spy the cat. The cats can glare at the bird. The bird can flap its wings. The cat can (quietly) hiss at the bird. And best of all, when each animal relaxes, your class can as well... and what good timing, right near the end of the book and your students are nice and calm! “The cat relaxed... everyone relax... Aaaaah.” “The bird stopped its frantic flapping... all the birds can relax as well... Aaaaah.”

Phonics

Be sure to let the students figure out the words Gabby is creating before you give it away. Exaggerate what Gabby saw: A C on the carpet, an A on her armchair, and a T on the table... a C, an A, and a T! A C... A... T... Cuh... Ah....Tuh! Keep going until all of the students are interrupting you with the word “Cat!” and then you can point to them and say “1, 2, 3...” and everyone says “Cat!”

Movement

Students can create the letters with their body or hands. Lie down or stand up and make a C. How can they make an A or a T? Let them try to figure out how they can look like the letters, either alone or in groups. Take some photos of the “body-letters” and print them out to put up in your classroom, along with the actual letters underneath.

Name that Character!

For each of the images on the following pages, have the child write the name of the object on the line below it.



Extensions for this activity:

- The student writes the words in French or any other language.
- The student writes just the first letter of each word.
- Children come up with interesting or silly names for each character.
- Teachers can provide the first letter, or even all of the letters, scrambled.
- Children can write a short sentence about each character.
- The child writes the emotion he or she thinks the character is feeling.

Learning outcome:

- **Identifying letters and words.** Repeating words, naming characters, identifying labels and names, letters and letter sounds. Children can use their first language or secondary languages in the classroom.

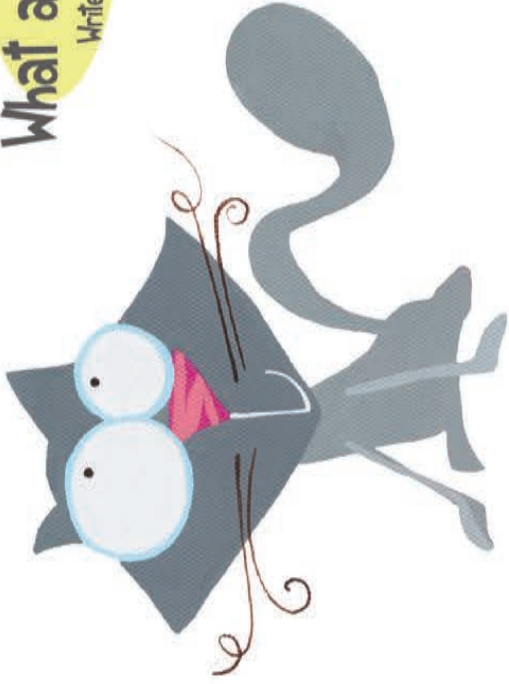
What are these animals?

Write the words below the images.



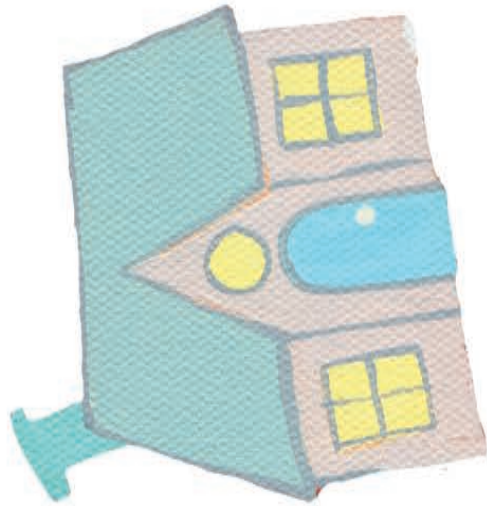
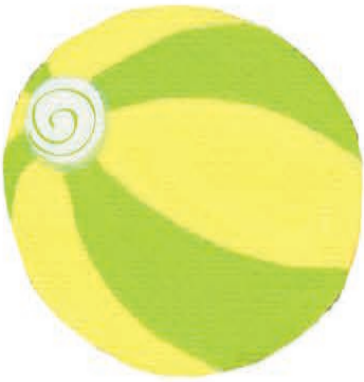
What are these animals?

Write the words below the images.



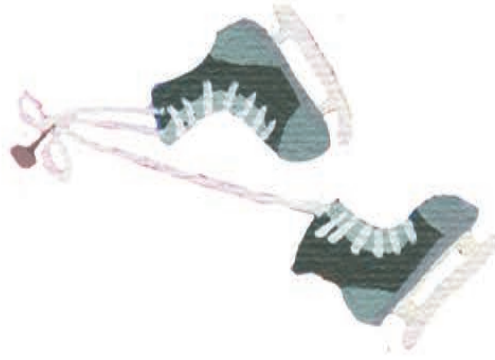
What are these toys?

Write the words below the images.



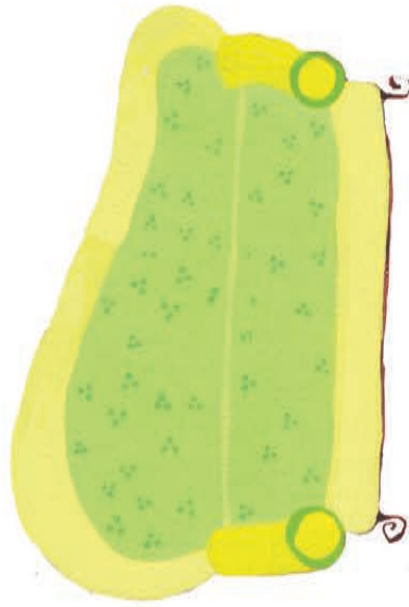
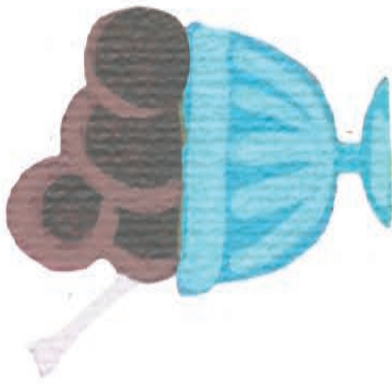
What are these objects?

Write the words below the images.



What are these objects?

Write the words below the images.



Fostering Empathy

Looking through the book, we can see that Gabby's facial expression changes according to the situation she is in. Notice that even her flower reacts to situations.

Show a picture of Gabby to the class and ask students what emotion Gabby is likely feeling, based on her facial expression.

For instance, using this image:



Teacher: "We agree that Gabby seems a bit frightened. How could we help her?"

Student: "We could invite Gabby to play a game with us."

Student: "We could ask her why she's scared."

Student: "We could tell Gabby that we want to be her friend."

Student: "We could help her separate the cat and the bird."

Extensions for this activity:

- Draw Gabby as happy, sad, angry, surprised and silly.
- Write a short story from Gabby's point of view when she is feeling either happy, sad or angry. How is your story different because of Gabby's mood?
- Write about the last time you were feeling happy, sad, angry, surprised or silly.
- Create a dance that is happy, angry or sad.
- Draw Gabby's flower to show it as happy, sad, angry, surprised or silly.

Learning outcome:

- **Empathy.** Recognizing another person's emotions based on their facial expressions and coming to understand, through interacting with them, how someone else may be feeling.

Your Very Own “Gabby” Letters

On the following page are outlined letters. Have children colour and then cut out the letters. (We have included extras of some high-use letters like E, S and R.) Have children drop them on the table or floor, like Gabby, and form words.

Keep them in an envelope to use again and again.



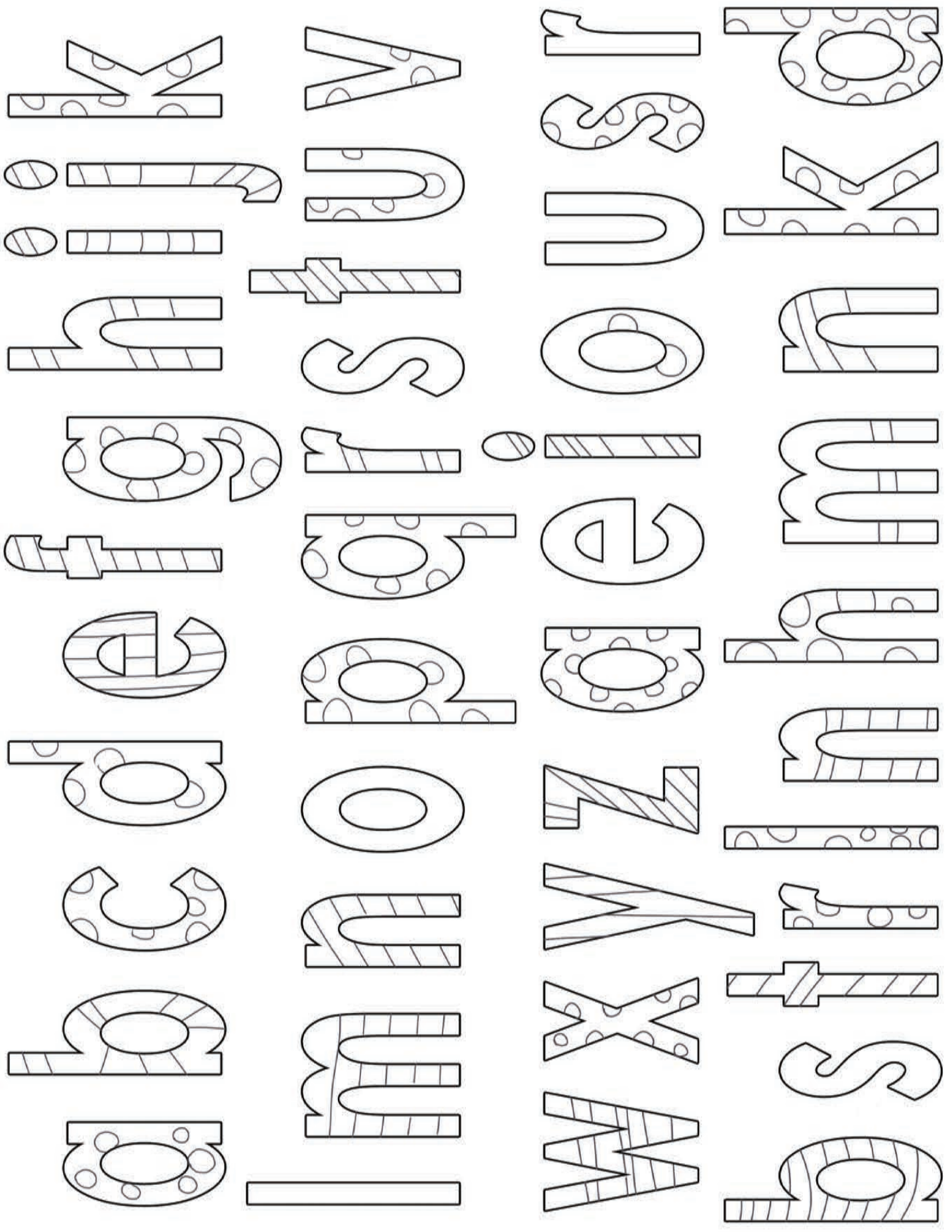
Extensions for this activity:

- Have students add to the letter set by creating their own outlined letters.
- Use Scrabble tiles or Bananagram letters to create words.
- “Concentration” game: Take 10 pairs of letters. Place each pair of letters face down in a random order.
- Taking turns, one person turns over one letter. Then she has to find the matching pair. If she finds two letters that match, she keeps them and gets to go again. If the letters don’t match, it’s the next person’s turn. The one with the most pairs wins.
- Select five letters at random. Make up a silly sentence using the letters to start each word. For instance: E F S N T might be “Even Fancy Snakes Never Talk.” To make the game easier, let the player add connecting words like “to” and “not” as bonus words. Also, some players may find it easier if they write their words down rather than say them out loud.

Learning outcome:

- **Text-to-real-life connections.** Students learn that letters create words, and words/sentences have a connection to real-life objects and concepts.





Outdoor Letters

Make some letters on the ground outside by:

- Writing them in chalk on the pavement;
- Scratching them into the dirt with a stick; or
- Printing them on pieces of paper on the ground.

Make the letters nice and big and scatter them all around.

When the teacher says “Go!” (or rings a bell) the children run to a letter and stand on it or beside it. When the teacher points to a child, she says a word starting with the letter she is near.

Extensions for this activity:

- Play music while the activity is going on.
- Children name three words starting with the letter.
- Children create a sentence with words starting with that letter.
- For younger children, the teacher says a letter and the students run to it.
- When children reach the letter, they “create” that letter shape using their bodies.
- If the child is able to think of a word starting with that letter, he or she gets to do five jumping jacks. (Exercise as a reward!)

Learning outcome:

- **Letter recognition.** Recognizing letters and the sounds they make.



Write a Story

On the following page is an image.

Look at the elements in the image. For instance, bananas, man, Write a story, inspired by the image and/or the elements in the image, that involves Gabby walking up to the scene. What happens next? What does Gabby say? What does the man say?

Make sure that your story has a beginning, a middle and an end. Your story's beginning may have taken place before the action in the image, and its ending may happen after the action in the image. Or, your entire story may be about what is happening in the image now. Or, the image may play a small role in your story, but may in some way inspire your writing.

If you need more room, continue your story on the back or on another page.



Write a story inspired by this image.

Extensions for this activity:

Inspired by the image, write:

- A story in a specific genre: humour, mystery, picture book, one-act stage play.
- A song.
- A poem.
- A cartoon strip.
- A haiku.

Look at the image and list:

- All of the nouns you see in the image. (Banana, man)
- All of the verbs you see in the image. (Picking, bending, walking)
- All of the colours you see in the image.
- Questions you may have about the image. (What is the man's name? Why is he picking the bananas? What will he do with the bananas?)

For younger grades:

- Photocopy the image and have students add colour to the image.
- Draw an illustration to accompany your story.
- In groups of three, act out your stories.

Learning outcome:

- **Critical thinking about an image.** Connecting the image to real-life. Extending your thinking about an image. Imaginative thinking. Writing. Creative expression.



Postcards

Explain to students what a postcard is and how it's used, including the areas where you can and cannot write (for instance, only the address goes in the address area).

Pretend that Gabby is on vacation. What can she write about to her best friend, Roy? It could be activities she's done, things she's seen or people she's met. What has been the highlight of her vacation?

If you need more room, continue your postcard on another piece of paper.

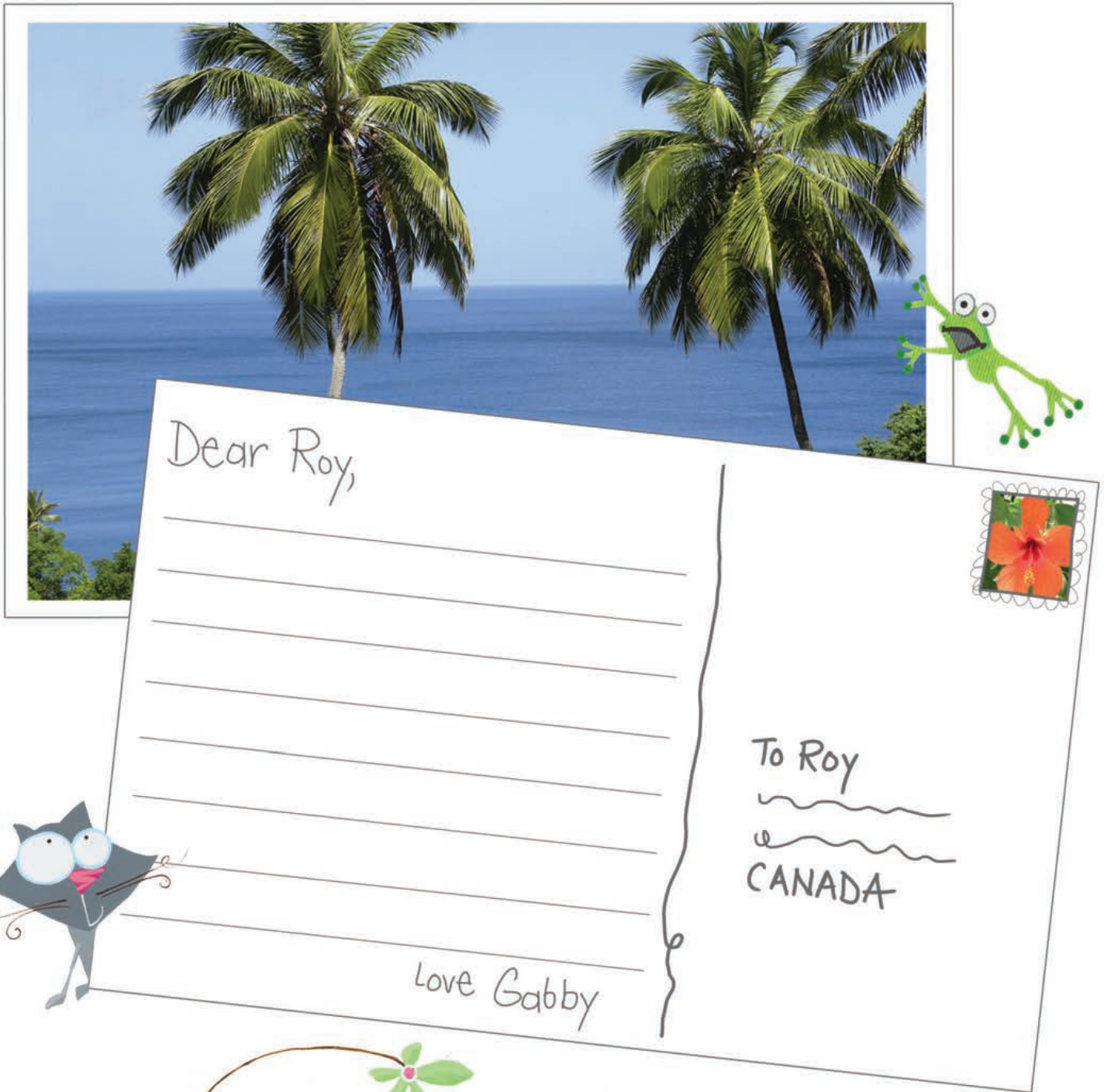
Extensions for this activity:

- Classroom discussions:
 - What image might be on a postcard from England, France, Canada, Africa, Australia?
 - How would Gabby's postcard be different if she was writing to her parents, a friend, her teacher or librarian?
- Make a classroom mailbox using a shoebox (or similar container). Have the students write postcards to each other and then "mail" them. Assign one person to be the "postal carrier" and distribute the mail.
- Real mail: Have students actually mail a real postcard to their family at their own home. (That way, the activity continues when they receive their own postcard.)
- Pen pals: This activity can be a great introduction to finding and corresponding with a pen pal in another country.
- Create your own postcard with your own picture on the front.

Learning outcome:

- **Writing for a purpose.** Learning how to write to increase connection and communication; understanding how our postal system works.





WRITE A POSTCARD

It's Gabby's first trip away from home and she's writing a postcard to her friend Roy in Canada.
Help Gabby tell Roy what she has been seeing and doing!

Gabby's Letter Game

The game board on the next page can be glued to a piece of cardboard.

How to Play:

- This is a two- or three-player game. Use a button or small pebble as your marker. Use a coin instead of dice: heads is 1 and tails is 2.
- Start at Gabby. Taking turns, toss the coin and move your marker along the board, the number of spaces indicated by the coin. When you land on a letter, say three words that start with that letter—as fast as you can!
- For instance, if you land on J you could say: “Jump, Jolly, Japan!”
- BONUS: If you can use all of the words in a silly sentence (The jolly girl jumped like a frog in Japan) you can move one more space.
- The first one to reach Gabby's book wins.



Learning outcome:

- **Letter recognition.** Connecting letter sounds to words; creating sentences. Also, “taking turns” playing a game.





Start here

Gabby's LETTER GAME

Help Gabby get the letters back into her book!

HOW TO PLAY

1. Use a button or a pebble as a marker
 2. Flip a coin to move. If it lands on "heads" move your marker 1 space. For "tails" move it 2 spaces. (Take turns with a friend)
 3. When you land on a letter, say 3 words that start with that letter. Say them as fast as you can! For instance, if you land on F you might say, "Frog, Funny, Flippers!"
 4. **BONUS:** if you can use all of those words in a sentence, you get to move one more space.
- WINNING:** The first person to get to the book wins.

Interview with a Star!

Author Joyce Grant is also a freelance journalist. She “interviewed” Gabby to find out more about her.

Gabby is the main character in Joyce Grant’s new children’s picture book (illustrated by Jan Dolby and published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside). She recently agreed to chat with Joyce Grant about the new venture.

JG: Gabby—may I call you that?—it’s so wonderful to talk to you in person. After all, you’ve been in my head for so long.

G: My full name is Gabriella, but almost no one calls me that so please do call me Gabby. And yes, it’s great to finally be out of there—it was a bit cramped.

JG: Well, there’s lots of other stuff in there and I won’t apologize for that.

G: Streetcars? Chefs?

JG: Right. Sorry about that. They’re from a couple of other books I’m working on. They’ll be gone soon—I hope. But let’s talk about your book. You’re the star! Are you excited?

G: It is exciting! I was especially thrilled when our editor, Christie, suggested naming the book after me. I can’t wait to see my name on the cover.

JG: And your picture, too! Would it surprise you to know that your name was nearly Sarah?

G: What?!

JG: Well, when I first wrote the book it was called, “Sarah Makes Friends,” after a girl I know. And then Christie and Cathy (from the publisher) met with me for a coffee at Starbucks and we discussed other names. You were also nearly Fanny!

G: I’m speechless. I’m so clearly “Gabby.”

JG: Yes, I agree. And part of the reason for that is that Gabby is kind of a quirky name. Would you say you are quirky?

G: People call me that, certainly. I think they mean that I sometimes look at things a little differently. And I do agree with that.



JG: Can you give us an example?

G: It’s mostly about letters and words. For instance, you’re wearing a T-shirt. So I’m asking, “What does the T stand for? Is it ‘Tea shirt’—like one you’d wear while you’re drinking tea? (It would account for that stain, Joyce.) Or is it a Tee-shirt like you’d wear on a golf course? I mean, what’s the T for?”

JG: Well that certainly is a unique perspective. Oh, here’s our appetizer.

G: Alphabet soup—my favourite! Letters you can eat. How perfect is that?

JG: Yes, stop playing with it, though. You’re getting it all over the...

G: See, if you put these letters together...

JG: Gabby, you’re splashing soup everywhere!

G: ...just need another L for G-a-b-r-i-e-l-l-a...

JG: Gabby, can we please talk about something else? I just love your signature red hair. It's so "you."

G: Thank you. And I don't even have a stylist. I just get up in the morning and stick it in ribbons... really I just let it do whatever it wants. In fact, that's my attitude towards life in general. Go with the flow.

JG: It certainly seems to work for you.

G: Yes. How else could I get two warring species to become friends?

JG: Now, Gabby, don't spoil the ending for people!

G: Hey, it's not every day a kid helps to thwart thousands of years of evolution.

JG: "Thwart"? You do love words, don't you?

G: Speaking of words, can I have some of your soup? I'm almost out of letters, here!

JG: Gabby, I think this interview is just about over, don't you? Is there anything you'd like to say in conclusion?

G: Well, just buy my book, please.

JG: Well, it's your book and it's my book and Jan's book and Fitzhenry & Whiteside's book. In any case, this seems like a good note to end on. Thank you very much, Gabby.

G: Thank you. And you just ended a sentence with a preposition, Joyce.

JG: On which to end, then. Gabby—stop splashing!

G: G'bye!

JG: G'bye!

Kid Reporter

Put students in pairs and give one student a card with a profession or special skill on it. For instance: "Soccer star," "Singer," "Author," "Tightrope walker," "Chef."

The other student interviews the "star," asking them questions like:

- Why did you become a tightrope walker?
- What special skill do you have to have, to be a good tightrope walker?
- What's the most exciting thing you've ever done as a tightrope walker?
- What's the silliest thing that has happened to you as a tightrope walker?

Learning outcome:

- Listening skills, questioning/empathy skills, putting facts in a logical sequence, writing.

Extensions for this activity:

- Students write up their own questions before the interview.
- Students write down the answers to their questions.
- The interviewer can write up a short news story profiling their guest.
- Change roles: The "interviewer" becomes the "star" and vice-versa.
- Incorporate performance arts by having students act out their skill.
- Rather than assigning skills, have students use their own, real-life skills.
- The student with the skill doesn't show it to the interviewer; he or she has to figure out, using questions, what the skill is.



Happy Reading!