

Hello, Dad!

by Diana Noonan

illustrated by Annabel Craighead

Overview

In this caption text, a child and her mother use a variety of means of communication to keep in touch with Dad while he is away. The family in this book is Asian. Rhythm and rhyme make this a suitable text to share as a poem. The high proportion of technical vocabulary means that it is better for the children to have read it as a shared text before using it for guided reading.

Curriculum link: technology

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words “a”, “it”, “on”, “the”
- the rhyming words “call” and “wall”
- the use of verbs to start the sentences on pages 2–7
- the comma and exclamation mark in the title
- the written messages in the illustrations
- the partially revealed message on the title page and on pages 6 and 7
- the Chinese script on page 2.

Setting the scene

How many ways can you think of to send a message? Encourage the children to think about the variety of technology that they can use. List the ideas, using the structure that is in the book, for example, “Email it”, “Post it.”

Talk about how you keep in touch when a family member or friend has to go away. The children may have had experience of sending messages to grandparents or to a classmate who has been sick. You could remind the children of the get well messages that the children sent Miss Pool in *Where Is Miss Pool?*

The first reading

This is an ideal book to use when the children have had some experience of writing letters. They will recognise the letter format in the illustrations on pages 2, 3, and 5 and know the convention of starting a letter with “Dear”.

Look at the cover. *What is the girl doing? Can you see who she is writing to?* The children may recognise the word “Dad” in the illustration and in the title. Help the children to read the title, drawing their attention to the comma and the exclamation mark. Practise reading the title expressively. *Where do you think her dad is?* Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Title page – *Can you guess what word the girl is painting?* (The title is a clue.)

You may need to support the children with the syntax of this book. Lead the children into the reading by asking *How could the girl get a message to her dad?*

She could ... As you listen to the children read, note their use of initial letter cues to decode the interest words.

Page 2 – Help the children read the letter to Dad at the bottom of the page. You could enlarge the text of the letter by copying it onto the whiteboard. Introduce the girl's name.

Page 4 – Note the change in the text pattern.

Page 5 – *How do you send a message using a computer?*

Page 7 – *What will they have to do before Dad gets home? How will they make sure that Dad sees the sign?*

Help the children to think beyond the text. *How can you tell that this story takes place on different days? Why didn't the girl just phone her father every day?*

Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Reread the book in unison to appreciate the rhyme and rhythm of the text.

Reread the written messages in the illustrations and discuss them. *What do you think Yilu did at school that was fun? What do you think the rest of Yilu's fax message might say?*

Locate the high-frequency word "it" in the text. Use the whiteboard to make new words by adding initial consonants.

Look at the similarity between "it" and "is". List other words that start with a short "i" sound.

Write the rhyming words "call" and "wall" on the whiteboard. *What is the same about these words? Can you tell me a word that rhymes? How would I write "ball"? Or "fall"? Write the words as a list so that the children can see the pattern. Have fun chanting the list together and picking out individual words. Which word is "tall"? How do you know?*

Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of sending messages. *What ways do you like to send messages?*

Suggestions for further activities

Make the text into a poem card. Illustrate it with cut-out pictures of the communication technology used.

Write letters to friends, family, or other class members and post them.

Send a fax to a child's parent at their home or workplace. Arrange it with them first so that you get a reply!

Send emails to another class or to the homes or workplaces of family members. Again, arrange replies!

Make a big "Welcome to our class" banner, or make a "Welcome back" banner for a child or teacher returning to school after a break.

Encourage the children to learn their own phone numbers and share their numbers with a buddy.

Role-play having a telephone conversation with a friend.