

# We Play Rugby

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photographs by Anthony Russell

## Overview

The action-filled photographs and lively captions in this book capture the fun and effort involved in playing “small black” rugby. There is an audio version on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2005*.

## Suggested purposes

This book makes strong connections with children’s experiences of playing or watching rugby (or touch rugby) and supports the comprehension strategies of identifying main ideas and inferring. It provides opportunities to focus on recognising high-frequency words and attending to visual information, particularly initial consonants. This book could also be used as a shared text with a small group of emergent readers, to focus on basic aspects such as directionality and one-to-one matching.

## Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words “a”, “And”, “can”, “I”, “the”, “We”, “we”
- the “an” rime in the words “can” and “and”
- the repeated initial consonants “c” — “can”, “catch”; and “w” — “We”, “we”, “with”
- the subject-specific vocabulary — “catch”, “kick”, “make a tackle”, “pass”, “score a try”
- the changes between “I” and “We”
- the strong support provided by the photographs
- the variety of narrators
- the triumphant ending
- the ideas about playing in a team.

## Setting the scene

Have a rugby ball (and possibly boots or a jersey) to spark a discussion. *What are these? What do you know about rugby (or touch rugby)? What do people do when they play?* Write the rugby-related words up on a board to refer to during the reading. If necessary, clarify that both girls and boys can play. Use the phrase “make a tackle” rather than “tackle” — the tag-type tackle is an important safety aspect of “small black” rugby, and modelling the phrase here will support the children when they read page 5.

## The first reading

Invite the children to discuss what they can see on the cover. *What is the boy with the ball doing? Why are the children wearing different clothes?* Draw out the idea that two teams are playing. Ask the children to read the title. *Which word is “Rugby”? How do you know?* Read the names of the author and the photographer.

Title page — Listen to the children read the title again. *What is this boy going to do?*

Listen to the children read the text themselves, offering support as necessary.

Page 2 — *What is this boy telling us he can do? What happens in rugby after someone kicks the ball?*

Page 3 — Observe which children notice the change to “We” at the beginning of the sentence. *Why is the word “We” and not “I”?*

Page 4 — If necessary, model the decoding of “w—ith” (or “w—i—th”) on the whiteboard. The children may not be confident with the medial “i”, but they should be able to articulate the initial and final sounds. *What are the children in the white shirts trying to do?*

Page 5 — You may need to support the children with “make a tackle”. Use the notes on the inside front cover to explain what it means. You could link this to any experience the children have of tagging in touch rugby. Clarify that there are a variety of narrators. *What will the boy with the ball do now?*

Page 6 — *What can this boy do?* If the children say “throw” instead of “pass”, ask them to cross-check using the initial letter.

Page 7 — Clarify that there has been another change of narrator. *What can **this** boy do?*

Page 8 — *What are these children telling us they can do?* Observe how the children manage the addition of “And” to the sentence.

Encourage the children to infer: *Do you think the children like playing rugby? How do you know? What might the parents be saying?*

## Using the book for shared reading

Session One: Hold the book for the children rather than giving them individual copies. Engage them in lots of talk about the photographs and the rugby vocabulary, focusing on making connections to the children’s experiences. Read each page to the children, running your finger under the text.

Session Two (the next day): Give a copy of the book to each child. Have them read the text, focusing on reading the left-hand page first, locating the first word on each page, and pointing to each word as they read. Follow up with a focus on one or two high-frequency words.

## Ideas for revisiting the text

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text. Observe the strategies they use to manage the topic words and the changes in sentence structure.

Locate some of the high-frequency words in the text. *Find me the word “we”. Why is there a capital “W” for “We” on page 3? Find “can” on page 2. Can you find it on another page? Tell me the letters in the word. Can you write it without copying?*

Locate the words in the text that start with “c” or “w”. List other words that start with the same letter.

Reread the text, focusing on the topic vocabulary. Ask the children to articulate the strategies they used to read it. *Which word is “kick”? How do you know? Which word is “tackle”?*

Write the words “can” and “and” on the whiteboard. *What is the same about these words?* Have the children underline the “an” rime in each word. Talk about how they can use their knowledge of familiar rimes to help them when they are trying to read or write new words. Practise encoding some words that contain this rime, for example, “man”, “ant”, or “sand”.

Discuss the team aspect of playing sport. *Why does it say “we” on page 8 when there is only one person scoring a try?*

### Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audio version on the CD *Readalong 2005*.

Enlarge the photograph on page 8. Help the children to write speech bubbles for some of the players and spectators.

Use a digital camera to take photographs of the children playing a game in the playground. Help them write their own “I can ...” or “We can ...” captions.

Have the children write stories about their experiences of playing rugby — real or imagined!

Take a physical education lesson using rugby balls to reinforce the subject-specific vocabulary.

Have the children copy their favourite sentence from the text and draw themselves doing this action. Have them cut their sentence into separate words and reconstruct it.

Read *Happy Birthday* (Red) to reinforce decoding and recognition of the word “with”.

Generate words containing “an” or “and” using magnetic letters.