

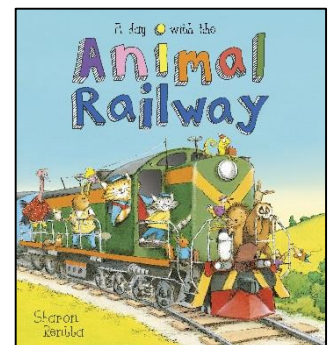


A Day at the Animal Railway

Written and illustrated by Sharon Rentta

1 – Introducing the book

- To introduce this story, start by asking children if they have ever been on a train. What kind of train was it? Where did you go? How long did the journey take? What did you think about travelling by train? Did you enjoy the experience?
- On the first page of the story, it explains that Dexter and his grandpa love all different types of trains. Have a look at pictures of some famous trains, from Stephenson's Rocket, to the Flying Scotsman and the Japanese Shinkansen (bullet train). Explore how the different trains are powered and the different speeds they travel at – 126 miles per hour for the Mallard (the fastest steam locomotive) and 198.8 miles per hour for the Shinkansen, powered by electricity. How does this compare to the speed that cars drive at?
- Dexter likes spotting things out of the train window as they whizz past. Find out what he sees on page 3. Involve children in a memory game, where children sit in a circle and have to repeat what everyone else before them has said they have seen from their imagined train window, before adding their own item on to the list. Can they remember everything that has gone before?



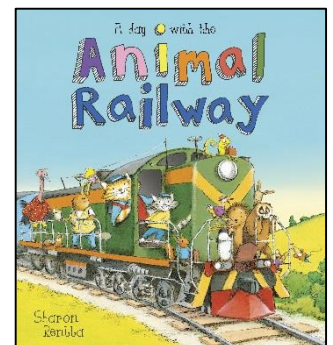


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2 – All aboard!

- This story provides lots of inspiration for a train station-themed role play area. You could set up a simple departures board to a range of destinations with simple o'clock times. Can children move the hands of a play clock to indicate it's time to leave? Simple timetables could also be mocked up, with children asked to find out what time the train leaves for a particular destination. How many stops with there be?
- On page 6, Dexter learns about the different ways that people should and should not behave on board a train. Children could design posters to illustrate the 'rules of the railway' and display these in their departures lounge.
- Children could make a big train for their role play area from chairs and cardboard boxes. They could make their own tickets for the ticket collector to check and punch them with a hold punch.
- The opportunity to buy tickets provides lots of opportunities for simple calculations. What will be the cost of two singles? Or a family ticket? Children can choose the appropriate play money to pay for their tickets.



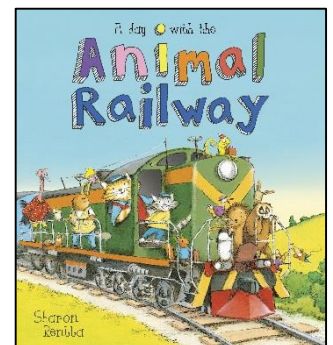


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3 – Let's make tracks

- Fix a large sheet of paper inside a tuff-tray with different colour blobs of paint all around the outer edge. Children could use toy trains to 'draw' with the paint and make their own tracks. Alternatively, give children felt tips to draw out their own train tracks on a large piece of paper, and add details such as bridges, points, signal boxes, tunnels and stations. They can then drive toy trains around their rail network.
- Have a range of 2-D paper shapes, and ask children to create a train from the shapes. Can they name all the different shapes they have used? Similarly, they could use a range of objects such as blocks or cotton reels to print a train picture.
- Stick labels onto different carriages of a magnetic toy train or pieces of train track with different phonemes. Can children join the carriages/tracks together to make simple words? In the same way, you could have pictures of train carriages with numbers on for children to sequence, or invite them to calculate the overall value of a train of carriages.





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3 – Let's make tracks

- As a warm-up for P.E. try playing trains. Pretend you are the signalman and devise a signal which tells children when to go (move forward), stop, change direction etc. You could tell children to join up their 'carriages' to form a train of a particular length or to uncouple again.
- At the end of the story, Dexter's grandpa saves the day and they end up at the seaside. Children could write a simple postcard home describing their adventure.

