

Snowball

Themes

A witty seasonal rhyme by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet, the bestselling creators of *Supertato* and *Barry the Fish with Fingers*. Making friends, being resilient, dealing with accidents and finding a silver lining are all explored in this heartwarming and reassuring story. The repetitive patterned rhyme is also great for reading aloud.

Did You Know?

Illustrator Sue Hendra used to sell doughnuts from a kiosk at Chessington Zoo – which we're sure inspired *Norman the Slug with a Silly Shell* – and this book!

Sue and her partner, Paul Linnet, have created lots of bestselling books together, including *Supertato*, *Cake*, *Barry the Fish with Fingers*, *Norman the Slug with the Silly Shell* and *Dave*. They also created the book and TV series *Wanda and the Alien*, which may or may not be about their own daughter Wanda.

They won a Scholastic Lollies award in 2016 for their picture book *I Need a Wee*.

Summary:

We all love to throw a snowball! But what's it like to BE a snowball? Well, grab your woolly hat and gloves: it's time to find out! Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet are telling a weird and wonderful story that brings a snowball to life. The snowball feels rather lonely, stuck at the top of a mountain. So he decides to visit the local town for a bit of fun. But on his way he trips, falls and starts to roll – and as he rolls, he picks up loads of other things! There's a line of washing, a sheep, a bear, an acrobat team and even the mayor. Uh-oh - this story is snowballing totally out of control!

Ideas for using this book in your classroom:

Read the story out loud to your pupils and stop before key rhyming words such as 'hat', 'glue' and 'zoo' to allow the children to guess the rhymes.

Ask the children to talk about how they might feel if they were alone, like Snowball. Is it sad to be lonely? Might it be beautiful at the top of his mountain? What's good and what's bad about being alone? What would they do if they were in a place where they didn't know anyone, and they wanted to make friends?

Play a game of 'rhyming swapsies'. Ask the children to substitute key rhyming words in the story with alternatives of their own. How silly can they make them?

Look at spread 11-12 and ask the children to recreate it THEIR way, with their own choice of rhymes and pictures. Depending on how much time you have available they could work in pairs or larger groups, coming up with rhymes together and with each child drawing one or more pictures.

Play a memory game! Near the end of the story Snowball crashes, and the items he has gathered up come out backwards. Can the children remember all the objects and put them in reverse order? If the children created their own version of this spread, they can use this to play the game. If that's too easy, mix the objects up and see if the children can remember the new order.

Ask the children to think about the end of the story. Did they like how it ended? What do they think will happen next? Look at the final image and explain how the pictures give clues about what might happen. How do the children interpret the very last image and the word 'oops!'?

Snowball's story looks as if it will end in disaster, but it has a happy ending after all. Discuss how the story might have been different if he hadn't tripped on the twig. Is it likely he would have made as many friends? You can use this as a springboard into a discussion about making mistakes. Have any of the children ever made a mistake that turned out well or badly? How do they feel about making mistakes? How do they think Snowball feels at different points in the story? Is he sad, or embarrassed, or frightened, or relieved?

You could talk about the necessity of making mistakes, and the difference between mistakes and taking silly risks. You can also talk about how mistakes affect other people and the necessity sometimes of saying sorry. Do the children think Snowball should have said sorry to the other characters at the end of the story, even though what happened was not really his fault?

Explore what Snowball is made of. The whole story works on the basis that snow picks things up as it rolls. You could combine the story with a simple science lesson about how ice crystals stick together, and talk about other materials with similar or different properties. The children could make cut-out paper snowflakes and mesh them together into a big display at the end of this session.