

That's What Bears Are For

Teachers' Guide

About the Story

*For many years Bear lived in an attic at the bottom of an old trunk, hoping someday someone would find him. Finally one day someone did. Alone and forgotten in a trunk in the attic, Bear misses the long ago days of hugs and cuddles. Then one day, to his delight, a little girl named Jenny finds him. Jenny's mother thinks that because Bear is so old, he is too special to be played with. She puts him high on a shelf in Jenny's bedroom with Jenny's other special toys. But Bear does not want to sit on a shelf. He wants to be hugged and cuddled in Jenny's arms. And so he sets out, a bear on a mission, determined to get close to Jenny. In the end, Bear achieves his goal and gets the hugs and cuddles he wants *because all bears, even very old bears, even bears as old as Bear is, love to be hugged more than anything in the world ... because that's what bears are for!**

About the Author

Marilyn Helmer was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, grew up in Montreal and now lives with her husband near Belwood, Ontario. She is the award-winning author of many books for children including picture books, early chapter books, novels, a Once-Upon-A-Time series of retold fairy tales and a series of riddle books. Her short stories, poetry and articles have appeared in children's magazines and anthologies in Canada and the United States. Marilyn's penchant for entering writing contests has resulted in success with adult fiction as well. You can visit her website at www.marilynhelmer.com.

Activities

For K/Grade 1

November 14, National Teddy Bear Day, is the perfect day to celebrate teddy bears. Children can bring their bears to school and have a teddy bear picnic. There are teddy bear songs such as *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, *The Bear Went Over the Mountain* and *The Bear Song*. *Five Little Bears* can be either sung or chanted. *Going on a Bear Hunt* is a group activity with repetitive chanting and actions. Videos and printable words can be found online, as well as a wide variety of teddy bear crafts for different age levels.

Pretend your teddy bear is going on a big adventure. Maybe he's going to the beach or to a sleepover or a birthday party. Write a story about what your teddy bear does there and draw a picture of him or her.

An **illustration** is the picture the artist draws or paints to go with the story. Illustrations are very important because they add life and colour to the characters and settings. Which is your favourite illustration in the book? Why is it your favourite?

Look at the illustrations on the reverse of the front cover and the page beside it. These two pages are called the **endpapers**. On the endpapers of “That’s What Bears Are For”, the illustrator, Sonia Nadeau, did spot illustrations of children with their special teddy bears. Draw a picture of yourself with your teddy bear or another special stuffed toy, like Sonia Nadeau did.

Look at the second and third pages of the story. These two facing pages are called a **spread**. Each page contains one-half of a larger picture. In this spread Jenny and her mother are in the attic together. List all the objects you see in the attic.

Do you like Jenny’s pajamas with the hearts on them? Do you have a favorite article of clothing you like to wear? Describe it to the class. Your class could have a My Favourite Clothes Day. On that day everyone could come to school dressed in something they particularly like to wear.

Name all the different colours you find in the book. What is your favourite colour?

How many different shapes can you find in the book? Look for a square, a circle, a star, a triangle, an oval and a heart.

Count the teddy bears on the two-page spread at the end of the story. How many are there? Give each of the teddy bears and the children a name.

Think about how the last four pages of the book wrap up the story.

Pretend your favourite teddy bear or toy got lost. What adjectives would you use to describe your lost toy to the people who are helping you look for it?

Ask adults like your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles to tell you about their favourite childhood toys.

For Grade 2/3

Were the other special toys on the shelf – the Spanish doll, the china giraffe and the Jack-in-the-Box – kind to Bear? Have a talk about being kind and how important it is.

There is a saying, “If you don’t succeed, try, try again.” Each time Bear jumps off the shelf, his goal is to get to Jenny. His first two attempts fail but he doesn’t give up. Maybe you have a goal like learning to ride a bicycle or skateboard, or play the piano or guitar or become a writer or an artist. Discuss ways you can achieve your goal and how important it is to keep on trying.

Opening an old trunk is like opening a present. You never know what you might find inside. Write a story about something interesting or unusual that you could find in an old trunk.

On the page where Momma is holding Bear beside Jenny's bed, there is a photograph in the background on Jenny's chest of drawers. Who do you think is in the photo? Bring a photo of yourself with someone else to school and tell the class about the photo, where it was taken and who is in it.

Open the book to one of the endpapers. Count the **children**, first by ones and then by twos (**even** numbers). Next count the **teddy bears** by ones and twos (**odd** numbers, starting at 1). Remember to add on the one extra bear. Explain why there are more children than teddy bears.

Write a letter to the author of "That's What Bears Are For" and tell her what you liked or didn't like about the story.

Puzzles & Riddles:

Scrambler: Unscramble the following words: rbea, tciat, sdecldu, placise, efrgifa, lfseh, wocln, zufyz. Answers: bear, attic, cuddles, special, giraffe, shelf, clown, fuzzy. The answers can be given at the end of the list of scrambled words so the children just have to match the scrambled word with the unscrambled one.

Word Search: Can you find the word BEAR hiding in these sentences?

Flowers can be arranged in pretty vases.
Little pigs like Babe are really cute.
Phoebe arrived late for school.
I don't like to be around smelly skunks.
The teacher will describe arithmetic to the class.

Answers:

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Little pigs like **Babe** are really cute.
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Riddles:

What does a teddy bear say when you give him a present? *Answer: "Thank you bear-y much!"*
What do you call a teddy bear's favourite seat? *Answer: A bear chair*
Why did the teddy bear catch a cold? *Answer: Because he played in the snow in bear feet.*
What kind of bedtime stories do teddy bears like to hear? *Answer: Furry tales*

What two things can a teddy bear never eat for breakfast? *Answer: Lunch and dinner*
Why couldn't the teddy bear eat his dinner? *Answer: Because he was stuffed.*
What do you get if you cross a teddy bear with a pig? *Answer: A teddy boar*
What do teddy bears do when it rains? *Answer: They get wet.*

Interesting Teddy Bear Facts:

Have you ever wondered where the teddy bear got its name? The name "teddy" comes from a famous American president, Theodore Roosevelt, whose nickname was Teddy. In 1902, President Roosevelt went bear hunting with a group of friends in Mississippi. When they finally tracked down a bear, President Roosevelt refused to shoot it, preferring to let the bear live. News of President Roosevelt's kind-heartedness spread throughout the country. Clifford Berryman, a well-known cartoonist, drew a cartoon showing President Roosevelt with the bear. When New York shop owner Morris Michtom saw the cartoon, he thought that cuddly stuffed bears would be the perfect toy to sell in his shop. He came up with a design for the toy bears and asked President Roosevelt if he could call them "Teddy's Bears" in honour of the bear Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt had rescued. The President gave his permission and so the first teddy bears were born. In time the "s" was dropped and the bears simply became known as teddy bears.

Teddy bears are popular all over the world and still outsell all other stuffed toy animals.

In 1984, the first teddy bear museum was opened in Hampshire, England.

There is a special name for people who collect stuffed toy bears. They are called "arctophiles", from the Greek words for "bear" and "lover".

At this point in time the smallest teddy bear ever made is only 4.5 mm tall and the largest is almost 2 metres tall.

The first story written about bears is the famous fairy tale "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". It was written by an author named Robert Southey in 1834.