



*Accelerated Literacy
Practitioners' Association Australia*

ALPAA Text Notes

The Lost Button

From: Lobel, Arnold. (1992). *Frog and Toad are Friends*. Harper Trophy US Edition ISBN 0064440206

Teaching notes

**for use with the Accelerated Literacy teaching routine,
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ALPAA**

These notes have been developed by AL practitioners and are offered in good faith for other AL teachers to use as a resource for their own classroom teaching.

Notes on this site presume that the people who use them have some training in the Accelerated Literacy teaching method. This knowledge could include professional development such as the Accelerated Literacy Intensive or state or territory school based training.

More detailed notes as well as Accelerated Literacy Practitioner Guides are available on the National Digital Learning Resources Network (NDLRN) http://www.ndlrn.edu.au/using_digital_resources/accessing_resources/accessing_resources.html. The notes on this website are detailed and provide additional information on how to teach Accelerated Literacy. Reading at least some of these notes will provide a background to the notes that follow on the ALPAA site.

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A Lost Button

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Synopsis of the story

Frog and Toad are very good friends who enjoy many adventures together. Some of their adventures are related in the book *Frog and Toad are Friends*. The story, *A Lost Button*, describes an incident where Toad lost a button from his jacket while he and Frog were out walking. Toad was terribly upset and so Frog offered to retrace their steps and find the lost button. Unfortunately, although there seemed to be several lost buttons lying around, none of them were the button from Toad's jacket. Toad lost his temper and stamped off home only to find his lost button was on the floor inside his front door! Toad was then very ashamed of his behaviour and to make up for it, he used the extra buttons they had found to make a surprise for Frog.

Themes

The main theme of this short narrative is friendship and the way friends behave towards each other. Frog didn't hesitate to help Toad look for his lost button despite Toad's bad temper. Other animals also helped out where they could. When Toad realised how unreasonable he had been he was sorry and made amends.

Why use this story?

- *A Lost Button* is a short narrative that would be suitable for teaching Year 1 – 2 about the narrative structure of orientation, complication, resolution.
- Parts of the text repeat (e.g. They walked...), thus reducing the cognitive overload that results from decoding unknown words.
- There is a repeating sequence of events where Frog, a sparrow and a raccoon all find a button that turns out to be different in one detail from the lost button (colour, number of holes, size, shape, and thickness). Each time it appears that Toad's button has been found there is another complication.
- Characters interact and show emotion through their speech.
- The language is descriptive and uses noun groups to build mental images.
- Note also that Toad compares each button found with his lost button, e.g. "That button is thin. My button was thick." Then, "That button is thin," becomes "the thin button".

Study passage

The text of the whole story is included here. Teachers can choose to teach less of the text for younger students but all students should always have access to and enjoy the whole story. Verbs have been underlined in the first Orientation-Complication-Resolution sequence.

Structure of the passage

Orientation:

(This orientation includes the names of the two main characters, what they were doing, and the setting for the story.)

Toad and Frog went for a long walk.
They walked across a large meadow.
They walked in the woods.
They walked along the river.
At last they went back home to Frog's house.

Complication:

'Oh drat!' said Toad.
'Not only do my feet hurt,
but I have lost one of the buttons on my jacket"

Resolution:

'Don't worry,' said Frog.
"We will go back to all the places where we walked.
We will soon find your button".

[This start to the story then leads to a series of attempts to find the lost button. Several buttons are found but each has one feature that disqualifies it from being Toad's lost button. There is a repeating pattern here that, when pointed out, should make the text more predictable for young readers. At the end of each section, when the most recently found button is rejected, Toad puts that rejected button into his pocket. Readers do not discover the significance of these buttons until the final resolution.

Button 1: Wrong colour

Reorientation:

They walked back to the large meadow.
They began to look for the button in the tall grass.

"Here is your button!" cried Frog.

Complication:

“That is not my button”, said Toad.
“That button is black.
My button was white.”

Foreshadowing:

Toad put the black button in his pocket.

Button 2: Wrong number of holes**Reorientation:**

A sparrow flew down.
“Excuse me,” said the sparrow.
Did you lose a button?
I found one.”

Complication:

“That is not my button,” said Toad.
That button has two holes.
My button had four holes.”

Foreshadowing:

Toad put the button in his pocket.

Reorientation:

They went back to the woods
and looked on the dark paths.
“Here is your button!” cried Frog.

Complication:

“That is not my button”, said Toad.
“That button is small.
My button was big.”

Foreshadowing:

Toad put the small button in his pocket.

Button 3: Wrong shape**Reorientation:**

A raccoon came out from behind a tree.
“I heard that you were looking for a button,” he said.
“Here is one that I just found.”

Complication:

“That is not my button”, wailed Toad
“That button is square.
My button was round.”

Foreshadowing:

Toad put the square button in his pocket.

Button 4: Wrong thickness**Reorientation:**

Frog and Toad went back to the river.
They looked for the button in the mud.
“Here is your button!” cried Frog.

Complication:

“That is not my button”, shouted Toad.
“That button is thin.
My button was thick.”

Foreshadowing:

Toad put the thin button in his pocket.

Reaction or intensifying of the complication:

He was very angry.
He jumped up and down and screamed.
“The whole world is covered with buttons,
and not one of them is mine!”

Final resolution:

Toad ran home and slammed the door. There, on the floor, he saw his white, four-holed, round, thick button.
“Oh,” said Toad.
“It was here all the time.
What a lot of trouble I have made for Frog.”

Consequences:

Toad took all of the buttons out of his pocket.
He took his sewing box down from the shelf.
Toad sewed the buttons all over his jacket.

The next day Toad gave his jacket to Frog.
Frog thought that it was beautiful.
He put it on and jumped for joy.
None of the buttons fell off.
Toad had sewed them on very well.

Specific language features and/or writing techniques

This type of narrative for younger children involves a problem (Toad lost a button from his jacket) the solution for which takes time to reach (four wrong buttons were found before the right button was discovered). It is representative of many similar books for young children.

The text is divided into segments that are similar in structure and in the words used. This writing technique can be used to write a class book.

The overall narrative lends itself to joint constructed writing of class books about lost objects that are difficult to find and match exactly.

The use of speech in the text to describe the characters' action, reactions and feelings is another useful teaching point. Toad's annoyance at all the buttons being wrong builds up through speech, e.g., said, wailed, shouted. So although he uses the same words, "That is not my button," how he says those words becomes important.

The foreshadowing or hinting at Toad's use of the buttons to decorate his coat for Frog is another language feature to note. Each time he rejects a button he puts it in his pocket. This action is not explained until the end of the narrative.

Links to other curriculum areas

The story offers opportunities for maths activities most strongly, e.g. sorting and classifying objects for qualities they have or don't have.

Its theme of friendship also allows discussion about how Toad lost his temper and was hurtful in what he said, but that he realised that he had caused trouble for Frog and he made up for it. He didn't simply apologise but went to a great deal of effort to make Frog a special coat.

More detailed analysis of part of the text

Teaching sequence lessons would be developed from a detailed grammatical analysis of the text. Just part of the whole story is dealt with here as a guide to some language features available in *A Lost Button*. Note that verbs have been underlined.

Structural Organization of text	Why language choices are made in this text
<p>Orientation: Toad and Frog <u>went</u> for a long walk.</p>	<p>Orientation: characters and their activity The two characters are introduced by name. Their names also identify the type of animal they are. It is also obvious from the accompanying illustrations that they are personified and represented as men and we know from the title of the collections of stories that they are friends.</p> <p>We then find what they were doing. Note that they went for a long walk. Significantly, a long walk allows time for things to happen. It is also tiring and could explain to some extent why Toad became irritated later.</p>
<p>They <u>walked</u> across a large meadow. They <u>walked</u> in the woods. They <u>walked</u> along the river. At last they <u>went back</u> home to Frog's house.</p>	<p>Details of the setting for the story and the sequence of the locations they visited on their long walk. They visit four locations which later relate to the number of buttons found.</p> <p>A large meadow adds to the image of a long walk.</p> <p>At last used in theme position in the final clause of the orientation adds to the implication of the two friends having been out for some time.</p>
<p>Complication: 'Oh drat!' <u>said</u> Toad. 'Not only <u>do</u> my feet <u>hurt</u>, but I <u>have lost</u> one of the buttons on my jacket"</p>	<p>Complication: The long walk, the large meadow and the number of places visited result in a frustrated outburst from Toad starting with "Oh, drat!"</p> <p>He then goes on to detail why he was upset. The "Not only ... but ..." structure of his reaction in speech gives two reasons. His feet hurt. He had lost one of the buttons on his jacket. There were two reasons given but only one becomes the focus of the tale.</p>
<p>Possible Resolution: 'Don't <u>worry</u>,' <u>said</u> Frog. "We <u>will go</u> back to all the places where we <u>walked</u>. We <u>will</u> soon <u>find</u> your button".</p>	<p>Possible Resolution: Frog's reaction is to comfort Toad with, "Don't worry," as a good friend would do. He then expands on this admonition with a course of action that should lead to the recovery of the button. He adds "We will soon find your button," as encouragement to Toad who has sore feet. He implies that they will find the button quickly. This opening to <i>A Lost Button</i> then provides us with images of the friends out walking, details of the course of their long walk, Toad's distress at being tired and losing his button, Frog's friendly comfort and a plan of action to rectify the problem.</p>

Teaching sequence

Details of how to implement the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence can be found on the website, <http://nalp.edu.au/resources/support-materials.html>

The following notes are some suggestions only and presume familiarity and experience with teaching Accelerated Literacy.

Literate Orientation

Low order literate orientation

The purpose of the low order literate orientation in this example is to provide an overview of the events in the story and their significance. A discussion of the illustrations can assist this process.

The illustrations help identify the characters and their appearance. For example, Toad is yellow and Frog is green. They are wearing jackets and trousers and so are obviously not actual animals. They also provide some idea of the sizes of Frog and Toad when they are pictured next to the sparrow and racoon. They could assist teachers to describe the settings for the story and illustrate Toad being very angry then remorseful when he discovers the button on his floor at home. They also show Toad sewing the buttons on his jacket. In fact there are more buttons illustrated than are described in the wording of the story. Perhaps Toad had a collection of buttons at home in his sewing basket. The illustrations also demonstrate how happy Frog was to receive the jacket.

The theme of friendship is reinforced through the illustrations.

High order literate orientation

Use the text analysis to frame the direction of questions and the discussion about the wording of the text. The text analysis above is meant as a guide and teachers would continue to analyse the rest of the text. For year 1 students teachers might choose to teach part of the story but for year 2, the whole story would be appropriate.

Decide upon a focus or direction for each lesson that can be used to aid students' understanding of the way the author of this text (Arnold Lobel) has done his job as well as providing and developing a deep understanding of the meaning of the text.

A focus for early lessons would be who the characters are, what they were doing and why.

Then, look at where they ended their walk, at Frog's house, and how if they had ended at Toad's house they may have found the button immediately.

Find the words that describe Toad's reactions to the walk. The author tells readers what Toad said. It is through his speech that we find out his feelings and reactions.

Note that Frog offers a solution to finding the lost button, not the tiredness.

The rest of the story methodically revisits each place visited on the first walk. At each location they find one or sometimes two buttons. A sparrow and racoon also hear about the lost button and help out. Unfortunately each button that is found is wrong in one respect. Each time a wrong button is discovered, Toad reacts in speech with gradually increasing annoyance.

Also discuss how each time a button is found Toad puts it in his pocket. He could have just dropped it back on the ground but he kept it. There is no explanation for this behaviour at the time.

Look for the words that show how he became more and more frustrated to the point where he threw a tantrum by jumping up and down and screaming. Point out that if the author hadn't described such a severe reaction to not finding the correct button, then the embarrassment of finding his button just inside his front door would not have been so great. Despite the tantrum, Frog isn't described as being upset. It is Toad that realised he caused trouble for Frog.

Look at the information contained in the wording of the resolution of the narrative. It could have ended with Toad realising what a lot of trouble he had caused Frog. By including a description of how Toad sewed the buttons on his coat and gave it to Frog readers realise how much their friendship meant to each of them. Frog wasn't upset by Toad's behaviour and Toad made up for it when he realised how troublesome he had been.

Because Toad put the buttons in his pocket before he found his own button readers know that he didn't mean to sew them on his coat at the time he found each button. Why did he do it then? It was an action that prepared readers for what came later, so it was part of the author's overall writing strategy to point it out. However at the time Toad may only have been being tidy or perhaps he liked to collect buttons..

Transformations

Teachers would choose segments of the text for Transformations for specific reasons related to the goals for their teaching sequence.

Transformations activities could include:

Cutting the whole text into segments of meaning. Have students work together to reconstruct and read the whole text. This exercise could include the illustrations. Make the structure of the story very clear to students.

Use separate events in the story to examine how the author constructed the introduction to the story (orientation, complication, resolution). Look at the information included as well as the type of words used that show that Frog and Toad walked for a long way.

Use the transformations to show how Frog and Toad expressed their feelings and reactions in speech. This activity would include finding how words like, said, shouted, scream intensify an image of Toad's frustration.

Use transformations to show how the author added extra information to show how Toad made up for his bad temper by giving Frog his coat with the found buttons sewn on it.

Look for examples of the author's wording that show the friendship shared by Frog and Toad.

Writing

In the course of the teaching sequence the teacher will have made students aware of a basic structure for the story that in a simplified way could include:

Orientation (who the friends were, what they were doing and where)

Complication (something was lost)

Resolution (a decision to revisit the places they had been to search)

First place and what was found

Reaction

Foreshadowing

Second place and what was found

Reaction

Foreshadowing

Third place and what was found

Reaction

Foreshadowing

Resolution (the thing is found and what happened)

(Note that this plan is a suggestion and teachers may devise a structure that they find easier to use.)

Procedure

This structure then becomes a plan for the joint construction of a class text. The teacher and class would need to work out which friends were engaging in

a joint activity. The friends could be people or animals. The activity could be playing a game or going out somewhere.

Next think of an object that could be easily lost by one of the characters. It could be a hat, an article of clothing or some other thing the character valued.

Decide on the search, what was found at each place, what was wrong with each one then decide on the unexpected place the object was finally found.

Discuss one character's reactions.

Finally decide on how the character makes up for his/her reactions.

Work jointly on the construction of the class book at early year levels. The suggestions above are a brief outline only. Obviously the teacher will need to think through possible scenarios before starting the activity.