

The Big Old Rambutan Tree

By Kathy Creamer

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The Stages of Learning to Read

Children learn to read by experiencing books and literacy from an early age. Reading stories and talking to your child provides them with the opportunity to sample and learn important pre-literacy skills such as speech sounds, words, concepts, images, stories, and exposure to print. This important learning typically evolves throughout their first five years of life.

With this strong foundation of learning and understanding in place, children begin to build their own independent reading skills. This next stage of learning supports children in exploring the relationships between letters and sounds, recognising the appearance of words that appear often in text (high-frequency words), and recognising familiar and common letter/sound combinations. This stage also sees children experimenting with new words they come across, they begin to “sound out” words and make meaning of them.

This book contains a variety of unfamiliar words that provide the opportunity for your child to practice their independent reading skills (if your child is in this stage of their literacy development). Phonics are the sounds the letters of the alphabet usually make when reading them, this supports readers in “sounding out” text in order to make sense of unfamiliar words. For example, words such as “Rambutan”, “Sumatran”, “wiffle” and “monsoon” are most likely not words that your child, or even yourself, come across often when you are reading. The word “centipede” also provides the opportunity to learn that the letter “c” does not always make the same sound when read. Sounding out these words is the first step in building new knowledge, however, more information may be needed to build meaning of these words. You can prompt or model to your child how to search for a word’s meaning with tools such as a dictionary, or an internet search for an image or place. There may also be clues to a word’s meaning within the text itself, e.g. “Rambutan” is often paired with the word “tree” or “fruit”, eluding to it being a type of plant and linking with the story’s illustrations.

Using Books to support Further Learning

Published by an Orangutan conservation group, this book invites its readers to consider the wellbeing of these animals and their environment through its illustrations and storyline. Depending on your child’s interests, you can use this as a “springboard” for further learning and understanding.

For example:

- ★ Your child may have a strong interest in animals, which you can support by researching some of the animals you see in this book, e.g. Orangutans, Tigers, Insects (that tricky to read “centipede”), and Birds.
- ★ Your child may be interested in learning about different countries and landscapes, searching for “Sumatran Rainforest” on the internet, or looking at Indonesia in an atlas or on a world globe, builds their understanding of the world beyond their immediate experiences.
- ★ Your child may have an interest in caring for the natural environment. This book may support conversation about the importance of caring for and protecting the world’s forests and animals, now and for the future.

