

Maintain a Happy and Caring Learning Community All Year Long



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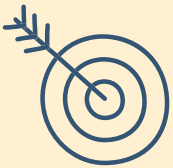
Share and Care

Book Title: *The Last Stand* (Eady, 2024)

About the Book: On Saturdays, Little Earl and Papa work together to harvest, gather, and collect fresh food to sell at their farmstand—the only one still open for business. They banter with their regular customers and deliver goods to those who can’t make it to the farmstand. One Saturday, Papa isn’t able to help Little Earl, but he’s determined to keep the stand running.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Characters who display kindness
- Themes that highlight the power of community



Learning Targets:

- I notice how characters’ mindsets and actions affect people around them.
- I think about how my mindset and actions affect people around me.
- I look for ways to spread kindness.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- The illustrations in this book were created by an author–illustrator team who are also brothers. To craft their illustrations, they use hand-cut foam stamps and then add color using a digital device.
- Which details of this cover illustration are the most interesting to you? Share any predictions you have about the characters and/or setting based on the key details. [If you have a hardcover version, show the case cover underneath the book jacket that is cleverly designed to look just like the farm-stand sign in the book.]

Set a Purpose: We are predicting from studying the cover illustration that this book is about a boy, his grandfather, and a farm stand. You can confirm or revise those predictions once we start reading while also pondering the meaning of the title *The Last Stand*.

During Reading

- *Papa has the last stand* page: Think back to the title of the book *The Last Stand*. Use the clues in the text and illustrations to infer what has happened to the four other farm stands.
- *Ms. Rosa sorts out her usual* page: I’m inferring Ms. Rosa must be a regular customer because she has a “usual” order. She says that Earl is moving like a *cootah*. Cootah is a word in the Gullah language meaning turtle. Now that you know the meaning, what is she saying about Earl?
- *On Saturdays, we harvest, Papa and I. But this Saturday, Papa’s too tired* page: Remember what Ms. Rosa said about Papa; why do suppose he’s slowing down and getting tired? How do you predict the boy will get the peppers, plums, pumpkins, and eggs to the

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farm stand?

- *On Saturdays, we harvest, but Papa's still too tired* page: Riding Granny's bike with all of the food didn't work out so well. What do you suppose the boy might try next? Why do you think he's so determined to keep the farm stand open? Swap ideas with a classmate.
- *On Saturdays, we'd harvest, Papa and I* page: Notice the food they're eating. Think back to what happened on the last few pages. Where did their meal come from? [It came from their regular customers.] What makes each dish special? [Each customer made Papa something from their favorite farm stand foods.]

After Reading

- Point out a detail you noticed on the last page of this book to help you infer what happened. [The sign changed from Earl's to Little Earl's. The boy is more grown up. Granny is there but not Papa. There is a new stand open for business.]
- Why do you think this story is called *The Last Stand*?



Extend the Experience

- Write and/or draw about one kind act that occurred in the story.
- In this story, the boy and his Papa supported the community by providing fresh food and the community came together to support Earl when he wasn't able to work at the farm stand. Let's make a list of ways you can support people in our community.

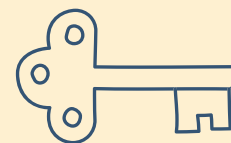
Similar Titles

All Kinds of Special (Sauer, 2023)

About the Book: Mia and her mom move into their new home with a yard and a mango tree. Mia is thrilled to eat their first mango, but soon there are too many mangos. When Mia's mom asks her to come up with an idea, Mia decides they should share the mangos with their neighbors. What happens next is *All Kinds of Special*. [Find a read-aloud experience for this book in *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds*.]

Lolo's Sari-Sari Store (Lee, 2023)

About the Book: A girl shares fond memories of her time spent in the Philippines working alongside her Lolo (grandfather) at his sari-sari store, a shop with a variety of goods, similar to a convenience store. As they fulfill the needs of their neighbors, Lolo imparts his wisdom. He encourages her, through words and actions, to give back to the community, be a listening ear, make others happy, notice what people need, and share what she can. Now living with her mother in the United States, the girl struggles to feel the same sense of belonging. Guided by the example of her grandfather, she seeks out people to assist and befriend.



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- arrived: to have reached a certain place
- harvest: gather things that are ready to eat or use
- steady: strong and balanced



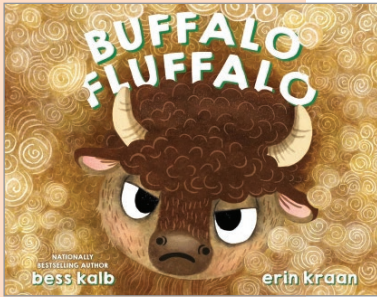
Upper Elementary Extension:

Ask students to research and share a kid-friendly recipe that calls for pumpkins, plums, eggs, and/or peppers. It could be a family favorite or something they find online. Compile recipes into *The Last Stand* recipe book.



Focus on Foundational Skills

**Phonological Awareness, Skillful Decoding,
Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension Monitoring**



Learning Targets:

- I wonder about words.
- I notice the difference among similar words.
- I use key details to help me predict and infer.

Compare and Contrast Words

Book Title: *Buffalo Fluffalo* (Kalb, 2024)

About the Book: Don't mess with Buffalo Fluffalo. He's surly and "tuffalo." He lets any animal who approaches him know it with this repeated refrain: "I'm the Buffalo Fluffalo—I heave and I huffalo. Leave me alone because I've had enuffalo!" When a storm blows in, Buffalo Fluffalo loses his "puffalo," learns a valuable lesson, and gains some new friends.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Texts that include word play
- Books where readers have to differentiate between real and made-up words



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- Why do you suppose this character's name is *Buffalo Fluffalo*? Look at Buffalo Fluffalo's facial expression. Tell your neighbor a word you would use to describe his mood. [If you have the hardcover version, peek underneath the book jacket to reveal the case cover. Compare and contrast the two illustrations.]
- Erin Kraan's illustrations are unique because she hand carves wooden images of each character and uses digital tools to color and combine the images into the scenes you'll see in this book.

Set a Purpose: One of the words in this title is a real word and the other is a word that the author, Bess Kalb, made up. Which word is real? Compare the two words. How are they the same? What's different? We'll continue to notice and compare words as we learn more about *Buffalo Fluffalo*.

During Reading

- *"Ram!" he mooed in a manner so tuffalo* page: Help me reread the part Buffalo Fluffalo keeps repeating. Use what you've learned about him so far to imagine how his voice would sound. Are there any made-up words in these repeated lines? [huffalo, enuffalo]
- *A prairie dog passed by mean Mr. Poofily* page: Predict what you think Buffalo Fluffalo is going to say to the prairie dog. Are you noticing any patterns that make it easier to predict?
- *Then a squawky old crow perched on Fluffalo's horn* page: I'm going to flip back to the first page of the story. Compare the sky on the first page to the sky on this page. Talk with a partner about the differences and predict what might happen next.
- *Then, with one final thundery, blunder blupp* page: Oh, my! Do you hear any made-up words on this page? [blupp, spluffalo] Can you imagine what Buffalo Fluffalo will look like when he's soaking wet?

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- *And all the creatures, from the bats to the bugs* page: What lesson did Buffalo Fluffalo learn from his animal friends? Do you think Buffalo Fluffalo might change the way he talks to the other animals? Trade opinions with a friend.

After Reading

- Did you enjoy the way this story sounded as I read it aloud? Bess Kalb carefully combined real and made-up words to keep the rhythm and rhyme going from the beginning to the end of the story. Do you think this book was easy to write? Why or why not?
- Buffalo Fluffalo's repeated refrain was so fun to recite, let's reread it a few more times. Get ready to say it in your best grumpy buffalo voice!



Extend the Experience

- [Divide your class into pairs or trios. Give each group a rhyming word pair and a whiteboard or blank sheet of paper.] Get ready for the *Buffalo Fluffalo* challenge! Brainstorm and write down as many words as you can think of that rhyme with these two words from the story. Your words can be real or made-up.

Rhyming Word Pairs from *Buffalo Fluffalo*

shade-made	help-yelp	horn-scorn	smile-while	crow-know
shout-out	BLARK-dark	blupp-up	beak-pipsqueak	see-wee
snakes-lakes	me-be	fluff-huff	bugs-hugs	ends-friends

- The story in the book ended with Buffalo Fluffalo snuggling his friends. Draw a picture and/or write about what you think the animals will do together the next day.

Similar Titles

MINE! (Fleming, 2023)

About the Book: A single red apple dangles from the “tip-tippy top” of a tall, tall tree. One by one, animals come along and spot the tasty treat, each one imagining it is theirs. Then, the wind blows the apple down, a scuffle ensues, and the apple rolls right into the hands of an opossum who kindly shares the apple with its resident worm. Candace Fleming’s expertly crafted repetitive pattern, playful language, and repetition of the word “MINE!” make this book ripe for reading aloud and reader’s theater. [Find a read-aloud experience for this book in *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds*.]

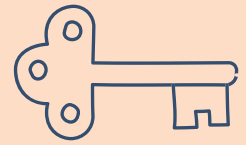
Oh, No! (Fleming, 2012)

About the Book: When a frog, mouse, loris, sun bear, and monkey fall into a hole, the tiger is ready to pounce. Then, elephant comes along, saves the animals, and tiger falls into the hole. Will the animals help him out? “Oh no!” This book has many similarities to *MINE!* by Candace Fleming, making them a well-suited pair for comparing and contrasting.



How Words Get
Added to the
Dictionary

<https://qrs.ly/jbfn8pu>



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- miffed: feeling upset or grumpy that something didn’t go the way you wanted
- snarled: talked in an angry, growly voice
- surly: not friendly and sometimes rude



Upper Elementary Extension:

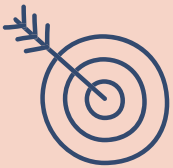
Watch and discuss the Owlkids video about how words get added to the dictionary via QR code.

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Strengthen Listening Comprehension



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Learning Targets:

- I identify the characters, setting, problem, and solutions in a story.
- I use what I learned to infer the theme or big ideas.

Use Story Elements to Predict and Infer

Book Title: *How This Book Got Red* (Greanias, 2023)

About the Book: Red, a red panda, and Gee, a giant panda, are reading a book called *Pandas Everywhere*. By the end of the book, Red is fuming because there is no mention of red pandas. To solve the problem, Red sets out to write her own red panda book. When she's faced with writer's block, the two go for a walk. Red shows Gee that they live in a giant panda-obsessed world and, feeling "like the smallest speck of dust," she tosses her unfinished book into a trash can. Fortunately, it is discovered by a group of red pandas (and one giant panda) who implore her to finish it.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Straightforward plots with clearly identifiable story elements
- Opportunities to predict and infer



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- What do you think the pandas on the cover might be saying, thinking, or feeling? Turn and trade ideas with a partner.
- Back Cover Blurb: We can predict these two pandas are going to be the characters in the book. Let's read the back cover blurb to discover the problem.

Set a Purpose: We know that Red is going to do something about the fact that there aren't any panda books about red pandas. Can you predict what Red might do? You can confirm or revise your predictions as we read *How This Book Got Red*.

During Reading

- *They took the book to the tree house* page: I'm going to tell you what I'm thinking as I read these pages: I notice in the book they're reading that there are only black and white pandas. I put that together with Red's facial expression (and the tornado above her head). I infer that she is angry because there aren't any pandas that look like her. Let's discuss the clues I used to make that inference.
- *HOW COULD A BOOK ABOUT PANDAS TOTALLY LEAVE OUT RED PANDAS* page: What does Red learn about the author of *Pandas Everywhere*? [The book was written by a giant black and white panda.] Why do you suppose this makes a difference?
- *There were all kinds of books about all kinds of giant pandas* page: What is Gee starting to realize? [That Red is right and there aren't any books about red pandas.] Why do you think it took him so long to realize this? [Perhaps because he is a black and white panda.]

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- *Gee gave his friend a nudge* page: Use what you’ve learned so far to predict what might happen next.
- *They put the book where everyone could see it* page: Why do you think they chose to put the book in a free library?

After Reading

- Compare the details in the *There would be something perfect* page to *Except everywhere they went, Red noticed how red pandas were missing from everything* page. What differences do you notice?
- Why do you think Margaret Chui Greanias wrote this book?



Extend the Experience

- Infer the theme or big idea of this story. On a blank sheet of paper or sticky note, write and/or draw what you learned from reading this story. Once you’re finished, we’ll share and discuss our new understandings.
- The endpapers include a few facts about red pandas. Invite interested students to do a micro-inquiry to find out more and share with the class in a way that makes sense to them.

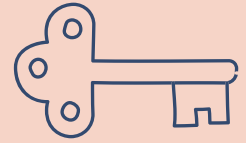
Similar Titles

● *Down the Hole* (Slater, 2023)

About the Book: A hungry, scarf-wearing fox sits outside Rabbit’s burrow trying to coax him out of the hole. Meanwhile, below the ground, the bunnies have hatched a plan to avoid becoming Fox’s next meal. Readers will be rooting for the bunnies as they observe their underground antics. Will their idea work? Readers will have to infer Fox’s fate. [Find a read-aloud experience in *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds*.]

● *Lucky Duck* (Pizzoli, 2024)

About the Book: Susan the duck is feeling unlucky. The nonrefundable roller skates she ordered are too big. Luckily, a wolf appears at her door with a prize—a giant cooking pot. As the day continues, whenever Susan encounters more bad luck, the wolf brings another “prize” like onions, celery, and carrots. You can predict where this story is heading, but an unexpected and humorous turn of events culminates in a satisfying ending. Readers will enjoy keeping track of the little yellow bug’s antics. *Lucky Duck* pairs perfectly with *My Lucky Day* (Kasza, 2003).



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- nudge: gentle push or reminder
- spied: found or spotted something
- wailed: made a sound like a cry



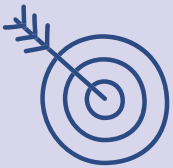
Upper Elementary Extension:

Dig deeper into the theme of this story. Discuss why representation matters, where students might encounter stereotypes and inequalities, and how to advocate for representation in their school and community.

Build Content Knowledge: Blend Literacy With STEAM



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Learning Targets:

- I use details in the text and illustrations to better understand the main idea.
- I notice how scientists investigate and use tools.
- I talk, write, or draw about my new learning.

Investigate

Book Title: *The Ocean Gardener* (Anganuzzi, 2023)

About the Book: Ayla loves her island home and its precious coral reef. When she and her marine biologist mother discover the coral is fading due to rising temperatures, they work together to rescue and regrow the coral, creating their own ocean garden. As they plan and carry out their investigation, they carefully gather data. In the back-matter, readers meet the inspiration for the story: Chloé Pozas, a marine biologist who has set up coral nurseries on islands in the Seychelles, the setting for the story.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Highlights the investigative practices of scientists
- Features scientists who study living things



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- Imagine you were swimming next to the girl on this cover. How would you feel? What might you see around you? Let's read the back cover blurb to learn more about this story.
- Back Cover Blurb: This blurb gave us a preview of the characters, setting, and problem in this story. How might knowing these story elements help you as we read?

Set a Purpose: A gardener takes care of the plants in a garden. What might an ocean gardener do? Let's dive into this book to find out!

During Reading

- *Hugging the island was a vast turquoise ribbon—the coral reef* page: A coral reef is a place in the ocean where lots of tiny animals called corals live together. As corals grow, they build giant underwater structures that become homes and hiding spots for sea creatures.
- *But the farther out Ayla swam, the more she realized something was different* page: Talk with a neighbor about the problems Ayla and her mom are noticing in the coral reef. [The corals are pale, the fish are going away, the days are too hot.]
- *They got to work the next day* page: Use clues from the text and illustrations to infer how they are going to help the coral reef. Name the ways they are keeping track during their investigation. [Writing down details, noting the water temperature.]
- *Ayla and her mom swam out to the shallows* page: Why do you suppose, as scientists, they have to log and photograph everything they are doing?
- *Ayla visited her garden every day* page: What is Ayla doing as she tends her ocean garden? [Taking notes.] Did the coral come back quickly? How do you know?

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After Reading

- Share something you learned about being a marine biologist. What kinds of tools did they use as they did their investigation?
- How is the setting of this story the same as or different from where we go to school? Compare and contrast the physical environment, weather, plants and animals, and so on.

**Extend the Experience**

- Let's learn about the real marine biologist who inspired this story by reading the backmatter. We'll also find out more about growing coral in nurseries.
- If you were a scientist, what would you study? Research to find out what that type of scientist is called and use these sentence stems to teach us about what you learned: If I were a scientist, I would study _____. I would be called a _____.

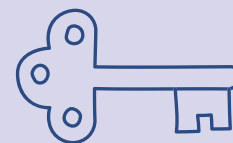
Similar Titles

- ***The Girl Who Built an Ocean: An Artist, an Argonaut, and the True Story of the World's First Aquarium* (Keating, 2022)**

About the Book: From an early age, Jeanne enjoyed creating things with her hands. She fashioned “wearable works of art” first in Paris and later in Sicily. It was Sicily that she fell in love with the sea and its creatures while observing, collecting, and sketching them. But there was a problem—the animals ran away too quickly. So Jeanne designed a solution: a small aquarium to house and study them. Her story highlights the science and engineering practices of curiosity, investigation, and innovation.

- ***Night Owl Night* (Richmond, 2023)**

About the Book: We learn from Sova that her mama is a scientist who studies birds. Each October, Mama heads to a Massachusetts wildlife sanctuary at night to investigate owl migration. When Sova is finally old enough, she joins Mama to learn more about the waiting, work, and rewards of tracking migrating owls. Backmatter includes QR codes that lead readers to the owl calls mentioned in the text along with a note from the author about Saw-Whet owl banding.

**Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:**

- **flocked:** moved together in a big group
- **thrive:** to grow strong and healthy
- **vibrant:** bursting with bright colors

**Upper Elementary Extension:**

This story is set in Seychelles. Use Google Earth and other resources to locate and learn a little bit about the islands. Share your findings by creating a travel guide.

Inspire Writers!



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Relive Memories

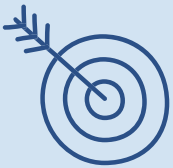
Book Title: *The Blue Pickup* (Tripplett, 2024)

About the Book: This delightful story highlights the power of resourcefulness and preserving cherished memories. Set in Jamaica and narrated from the perspective of Ju-Girl, we step into the story as Ju-Girl and Grandad spend joyful hours working side-by-side fixing cars. During their Ting break, Grandad recounts memories of the many deliveries he made over the years in the Blue Pickup. Ju-Girl nudges Grandad to restore the Blue Pickup, reminding him of “the importance of taking care of old and forgotten things.”

Grandad then surprises Ju-Girl with a gift that reflects their shared memories. Debut author Natasha Tripplett writes in the author’s note that she’s restored and now drives her grandfather’s old blue pickup truck.

To find a book like this one, look for the following:

- Books that feature family relationships
- Stories that celebrate memories



Learning Targets:

- I notice how characters share their memories.
- I think about why storytelling is important.
- I tell stories that are important to me.



Comprehension Conversation

Before Reading

Notice the Cover Illustration

- Looking at the cover is a smart way to get your brain ready to read a story. You can make predictions about the characters, setting, and more. Share what you notice and predict.
- I see a detail that might be important: The truck has a Jamaican flag hanging from the rearview mirror. Let me show where Jamaica is on a map.
- Do you notice anything interesting about the back cover? [It’s the back of the truck, and the barcode is the license plate!]

Set a Purpose: Wow! You’ve noticed so many important details. Let’s jump in *The Blue Pickup* and go for a ride. As we find out why this truck is so important, we’ll also learn about and from these two characters.

During Reading

- *I help him fix radiators, switch out batteries, and even change a car’s oil* page: The girl is organizing a *socket wrench set*. A socket wrench set is a metal tool that has two parts. The girl is playing with the different-sized metal tubes or sockets that fit on a handle called a wrench. You put the right-sized socket on the wrench and use it to tighten or loosen nuts or bolts that hold things together. What is she doing with it?
- *Grandad and I head to his old Blue Pickup* page: If Grandad is going to tell her stories about the Blue Pickup “from before the paint was chipped and the seats were worn,” when did those stories happen?

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- *Grandad points to a house across the way* page: How did Grandad share his memories with Ju-Girl? [He told her stories.] Why is storytelling important?
- *We drive down an old windy road* page: What lesson did Grandad learn from Ju-Girl? [to take care of old and forgotten things]
- *Grandad greets Mr. Hanson* page: Think back to the lesson Grandad learned from Ju-Girl. Why is this gift so special? [It was Grandad's first socket wrench set and Mr. Hanson fixed it up for her, just like Grandad fixed up the Blue Pickup.]

After Reading

- I want to read you part of the author's note. [If pressed for time, just read the second paragraph.] Where do you think Natasha Tripplett got the idea for this story? [From her own memories and experiences.] That's what authors do!
- Would you recommend this story to a friend? Why or why not?



Extend the Experience

- Is there an item or object like the Blue Pickup that brings back special memories? Write and/or draw a short story to tell us about that memory.
- On a sticky note, write down three adjectives you would use to describe the Blue Pickup. Challenge yourself to use words other than *old*, *blue*, and *dirty*.

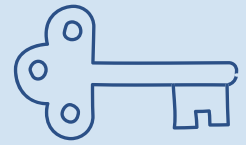
Similar Titles

● *Big Papa and the Time Machine* (Bernstrom, 2020)

About the Book: When a boy is reluctant to go to school, his grandfather takes him back in time to hear family stories and learn some important life lessons. [Find book experiences for this book in *Shake Up Shared Reading*.]

● *A Letter for Bob* (Rogers, 2023)

About the Book: From the day Katie's family bring Bob home from the car dealership, the reliable car absorbs their spills and ferries them near and far. In this love letter to a family vehicle, Katie shares memories of Bob at the Wichita Annual Dance, after the too much fry bread at Indian Hills Powwow, on vacations to Grand Teton and Yellowstone, and to visit Aka:h (Grandma) in the Smoky Mountains. When baby Jenna is born and the family needs a bigger car, Katie says So:ti:c?a (thank you) and good-bye to their dependable companion. [Find a read-aloud experience for this book in *More Ramped-Up Read Alouds*.]



Key Vocabulary and Kid-Friendly Definitions:

- examine: to look at something closely
- importance: when something is special or important
- remind: to help someone remember to do something



Upper Elementary Extension:

Discuss why students think the author chose to capitalize the Blue Pickup throughout the story. Ask questions like, "Do you think the Blue Pickup is a character in this story? What do you suppose the Blue Pickup symbolizes?"