The Gingerbread Man

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An old woman lives here. An old woman and an old man. They don’t have any children.
The old woman’s in the kitchen. She’s making something. It’s a gingerbread man.

He has a head. He has arms and legs. He has two eyes, a nose, and a mouth.
The old woman is happy.
‘You’re a little boy,’ she says.
‘My little boy!’
‘In you go!’ says the old woman.
But soon the old woman hears a little voice. It’s coming from the oven. ‘Open the door!’ says the voice. ‘I want to come out!’ The old woman opens the oven door. And the gingerbread man jumps out. ‘Oh!’ says the old woman.
'Stop!' says the old woman. 'Come here!' But the gingerbread man doesn’t stop. He runs across the kitchen and out of the door.
‘Stop!’ shout the old man and the old woman. ‘Come here!’

But the gingerbread man doesn’t stop. He runs faster and he shouts: ‘Run, run! You can run. Yes, you can! But you can’t catch me. I’m the gingerbread man!’

You can’t catch me.
The little gingerbread man runs and runs. Soon he sees a cow.

‘Stop!’ says the cow. ‘Come here! I want to eat you.’

But the gingerbread man doesn’t stop. He runs faster. And now the cow runs after him.
‘I can run away from an old woman,’ says the gingerbread man. ‘I can run away from an old man. So I can run away from a cow!’

They all run after him. And the gingerbread man shouts: ‘Run, Run! You can run. Yes, you can! But you can’t catch me. I’m the gingerbread man!’
The little gingerbread man runs and runs. Soon he sees a horse.

‘Stop!’ says the horse. ‘Come here! I want to eat you.’

But the gingerbread man doesn’t stop. He runs faster. And now the horse runs after him.
‘I can run away from an old woman,’ says the gingerbread man. ‘I can run away from an old man and a cow. So I can run away from a horse. Yes, I can! You can’t catch me. I’m the gingerbread man!’
The gingerbread man runs and runs.
‘They can’t catch me!’ he says.
‘Nobody can catch me.’

Just then he sees a fox.
‘Stop!’ says the fox. ‘Come here!’

But the gingerbread man doesn’t stop.
He runs faster. And now the fox runs after him.
'I can run away from an old woman,' says the gingerbread man. ‘I can run away from an old man. I can run away from a cow and a horse. So I can run away from a fox!’

They all run after him and he shouts: ‘Run, run! You can run. Yes, you can! But you can’t catch me. I’m the gingerbread man!’

You can run. Yes, you can!
‘Stop!’ says the fox. ‘I don’t want to eat you. I want to talk to you. I want to be friends with you!’

But the gingerbread man doesn’t stop. He runs faster. And now the fox runs faster too.
The gingerbread man runs and runs. Soon he sees a river.

‘Oh no!’ he cries. ‘A river! I can’t swim!’

‘Listen,’ says the fox. ‘I can help you. I can swim across and you can sit on my tail.’
You are too big for my tail.

So the gingerbread man sits on the fox’s tail. And the fox begins to swim. But soon the fox says, ‘Listen! You are too big for my tail. Sit on my back.’

So the gingerbread man sits on the fox’s back.
But soon the fox says, ‘Listen! You’re too big for my back. Sit on my nose.’
So the gingerbread man sits on the fox’s nose.
The fox swims across the river and jumps out.
The fox throws the gingerbread man up. Up! Up! Up!

Then he opens his mouth and ... catches him!
‘Help!’ he says. ‘My legs! My legs!’
‘Help!’ he says. ‘My arms! My arms!’
Then the fox eats the gingerbread man’s head. Now the gingerbread man doesn’t say anything.
And that is the end. Yes, that is the end of the gingerbread man.
1 What do they say? Write the words.

1. You __can’t__ catch me.

2. I want to ______ you.

3. I want to ______ to you.

4. I can’t ______!

2 Put the words in the correct order.

1. The kitchen woman’s in old the.
   The old woman’s in the kitchen.

2. and little runs The gingerbread runs man.
   ___________________________

3. to with I be you want friends.
   ___________________________

4. river fox out across and The swims jumps the.
   ___________________________
3 Make sentences about the story.

1. The gingerbread man has two eyes, ...
2. The old woman opens the oven door ...
3. He runs away from ...
4. He sees a river ...
5. The fox says, ...
6. So the gingerbread man ...

4 Write the end of the story again, correcting the mistake in each sentence.

The horse swims across the river and jumps out. He throws the gingerbread man down. Then he catches him in his arms. He eats the old man’s legs and arms. Then he eats the gingerbread man’s mouth. That isn’t the end of the gingerbread man.

*The fox swims across the river and jumps out.*
across  across the river

arms

back

catch

cow

eyes

fox

head

hear

horse
jump
river
kitchen
run away
legs
shout
mouth
tail
nose
throw
oven
voice
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Storytelling Activities

Use these activities with your learners, for any story, to motivate them to listen and learn, and help them become aware of the sound and feel of English, and understand language points, while enjoying the story.

Activities before the story

- Ten key words
  1. Write about ten key words or short phrases on the board in the order in which they occur in the story. Don’t worry if there are a few words the children don’t know.
  2. Ask them if they can predict the story (they can use the present tense to do this).
  3. Then tell the story. The children see the key words on the board and compare their prediction with the story you tell.
  4. You can ask higher-level learners to work in groups and to write down each word in a sentence which explains it.

- Meaning from opposites
  1. It is often easier to teach two words that are opposite than one word by itself: big/small, rich/poor. This principle also applies to words which are not strictly opposites but represent concepts which are significantly different, for example love/hate. Draw or ask the children to draw contrasting pictures.

Activities during the story

- Jump up word card
  1. Give a child a card before the story. You can either give each child a different word, or give the same word to several of them.
  2. Ask them to jump up and sit down every time they hear their word as you tell the story.
  3. Variation: ask them to jump up whenever they hear a certain kind of word, for example a number, a colour or an animal. But make sure this is more like a game than a test.

- Stopping and asking
  1. During the story, stop and ask the children what they think is going to happen next. At beginner level they reply in their mother tongue, and at higher levels they can reply with short phrases or sentences in English.
Activities after the story

○ Restoring the text
  1. Prepare a text of the story, or part of it, on a photocopy or on the board. Omit, erase or white out some of the words. The number and type of words missing determine the difficulty of the task.
  2. Give out the gapped text or write it on the board.
  3. The class fill in the gaps, either as you retell the story or on their own, or in pairs.

○ Removing pictures
  1. Prepare a series of pictures which tell the story.
  2. Display all the pictures. Go through the story again, eliciting as much of it as possible from the children, using the pictures as a memory aid.
  3. The children close their eyes and you remove one picture.
  4. The children then open their eyes and tell you which picture is missing and which part of the story it represents.
  5. The children close their eyes again. You now remove another picture and they tell you which one is missing.
  6. Gradually remove all the pictures and see if they can retell the story from memory.

○ Writing letters
  1. Ask the children to write letters from one character to another. This can be part of a wider topic on learning on how to write letters.

These activities are from Wright, A (2008) Storytelling with Children Oxford University Press pp.31-61.