An anonymous valentine changes the life of a lonely man, turning him into a smiling friend, a laughing neighbor and a helpful member of the community. But there is an unexpected twist in the story, reminding us all we need to have special day to tell everyone that she or he is appreciated.

Written at a fourth grade reading level, this message is best conveyed by a read aloud to students 2nd through 6th grade. The illustrations are delightful; however, the story is contained most vividly within the carefully selected words. Be sure to use vocal inflections and pauses to capture Mr. Hatch’s dramatic mood changes.

Themes

- Loneliness
- The meaning of valentines
- Routines in our lives—advantages and disadvantages
- A little miracle—something unexplainable happened and changed everything
- One seemingly small event in our lives can profoundly change everything about us.

Story Grammar Marker®

This story has an embedded episode within the first one, with two kickoff events and a second plan and a second series of attempts with a final resolution.

Main Character: Mr. Hatch, a lonely man who did the same boring things everyday and never noticed anyone around him

Setting: the town where Mr. Hatch lives
Kick-Off: He gets a valentine package in the mail.

Internal Response: He is delighted to think that someone loves him and changes his personality immediately!

Plan: He wants to find out who sent it.

Attempts: He dresses up to be noticed.
   - He says hello to everyone.
   - He offers to help people.
   - He smiles and laughs often.
   - He has parties and plays music.
   - He has people over to his home; he bakes.

Direct Consequence: He has hundreds of friends and everyone likes him.

Resolution: He is happy and enjoying himself.

Second Kick-Off (Abbreviated Episode)
The mailman returns, telling Mr. Hatch that the package he delivered 3 months ago was a mistake. It belongs to someone else, but no one knows who. He needs to give back the empty heart-shaped candy box and the little white card that says someone loves you.

Character: Mr. Hatch

Setting: His house

Kick-Off: The mailman returns and asks for the candy box and card.

Internal Response: Mr. Hatch is very sad.

Direct Consequence: He returns to his old routines, not talking, not looking up, and not interacting with other people.

Third Kick-Off

Character: The Community

Setting: Mr. Hatch’s town

Kick-Off: All notice the sudden change in Mr. Hatch (old routines, not talking, not looking up, not interacting with people).

Internal Response: The community feels distressed. They remember how good Mr. Hatch was to them.

Plan: They want to show Mr. Hatch that they love him for being himself and that he will have those friends again.
Attempts: They decorate his home with valentines.
    They gave him a silver harmonica.
    They all gathered at his house.
    They made his a sign that says everybody loves Mr. Hatch.

Direct Consequence: They have made Mr. Hatch happy again.

Resolution: The community feels good.

Story Sparkle (Literate Language Style)

Conjunctions: yet, but, until, instead, though, nor, so, if

Elaborated Noun Phrases: his brick house, a fresh turkey wing, a little white card, some old aftershave, blue polka dots, his heart box, a nice fresh slice, the warm chocolate smell, a nice cold pitcher, a heart-shaped box, our back fence, a shining silver harmonica, the happy smiling people, with hand-painted letters, his old overalls

Mental State and Linguistic Verbs: remember, wondered, thought, worried, forgotten, recall, occurred, believe, keeps, recovered, bother, decided

Adverbs: whole, uneasy, sadly, usual, alone, early, always, nearly, very, hardly, certainly, never, too, anymore, until

Syllable Level

This book has the typical one- and two-syllable words found in stories at this age/grade level, however, it has a vastly larger number of three- and four-syllable words, plus two five-syllable words. These words provide the basis for the most effective syllable strategies from this book. Focus on dividing these words into their syllable parts and helping students to hear and repeat them by vocal stress patterns. The words are divided into these stress patterns below.

Activity: Teach students to listen for stress patterns in three-syllable words that you say aloud. Assist them to listen for the “loudest part” of the word. Identify that syllable as the first middle of last syllable. Use small plastic markers on a desk to represent the three syllables. Tap the marker that represents the loudest part—the stressed syllable. Ask the student to tap the marker for the stressed...
syllable. If students have difficulty hearing the stressed syllable, try saying the word with the stress on the wrong syllable such as “fac-TOR-y.” Keep in mind that some words can be pronounced more than one way. For example: “MAG-a-zine” or “mag-a-ZINE.” Words that may have more than one stress pattern are listed in more than one category.

Once students can hear the stress easily, say the words aloud and ask them to hold up 1, 2, or 3 fingers to show the syllable that is stressed.

Finally, write the words on small cards or compose a list of 10 from the book. Students should read them silently (or sub-vocally if needed) and underline the stressed syllable independently.

**Three Syllable Words**

**Stress on the first syllable:**

- afternoon
- every
- magazine
- packages
- usual
- aftershave
- factory
- melanie
- satiny
- valentine

- certainly
- grocery
- neighborhood
- saturday
- wonderful

- chocolates
- handkerchief
- nobody
- serious
- somebody

- dunwoody
- lemonade

**Stress on the second syllable:**

- another
- attention
- beginning
- delivered
- dunwoody
- forgotten
- insisted
- recovered
- remember
- remembered
- somebody

**Stress on the third syllable:**

- afternoon
- aftershave
- anymore
- handkerchief
- lemonade
- magazine

**Activity:** Once students are proficient in identifying three-syllable stress, then introduce the four-syllable words. This time present first, second, third, and fourth syllables in each word. Note that 5 of the 6 words have a root word with suffixes added; one is a compound word. Identify the root words in each one. Note how the root word is related to the stress pattern (second syllable of the root word except for “supervisor). This assists students to pronounce polysyllabic words. Many, but not all, polysyllabic words follow this rule.

The two five-syllable words are also listed below. Note that one is compound and one is not.

Mix 3-, 4-, and 5-syllable words together and ask students to read, identify the number of syllables, and the stressed syllable.
Four Syllable Words

Stress on the first syllable:
- everyone
- supervisor

Stress on the second syllable:
- admirer
- delivering
- harmonica
- mysterious

Five Syllable Words

- everybody (stress on first syllable)
- cafeteria (stress on third syllable)

Compound Words

Compound words are a characteristic of the English language. Many languages have very few words that are created by combining two nouns into a new word, some languages have none. Because compound words are so prevalent in English, students should be taught to recognize them quickly and decode the two words to support pronunciation and then seek the meaning. In the vast majority of cases the meaning is closely related to the two words. Sometimes it is not (e.g., hotdog).

Activity: Divide the following words into their two parts. Discuss the meaning of each word—and the meaning of the combined word. Find the compound word in the story and write a student-friendly definition for it from the context. For example “afternoon.” “After”—occurring later than another event. “Noon”—the middle of the day denoted by both hands of the clock pointing to the number 12. “Afternoon”—a time that occurs after 12 o’clock in daylight.

- aftershave
- backyard
- dustcloth
- dustpan
- everyone
- handkerchief
- himself
- indeed
- lunchtime
- neighborhood
- newsstand
- nobody
- shoelace
- sometimes

Write the two words of each compound word on separate cards. Turn the word cards face down on a table. Students pick up one card, read the word, and recall the compound word from the story. If they know another compound word using that word, they also receive credit.
The book is particularly rich in expository text features, allowing students to make a well supported transition from narrative to academic reading and writing. The four types of expository text embedded within this story are found below and mapped for you on page 58.

**Description:** Mr. Hatch’s appearance and demeanor, his home life, his work life, and the town he lived in. The description of the way his neighbors decorated his porch at the end of the story is clearly expository. It brings in all the things that make him happy!

**List:** What Mr. Hatch ate for lunch each day—a cheese and mustard sandwich, a cup of coffee and one prune.

**Sequence**...what he did each day. Walked to work at 6:30 am. Ate lunch by himself at noon. Made two stops on the way home to get a newspaper and to buy a turkey wing for dinner. Then he read the paper, took a shower and went to bed early. Every day was the same for Mr. Hatch.

**Cause and Effect:** Getting the mysterious valentine caused many different and wide-ranging effects that no one would have expected from Mr. Hatch. He began to talk to other people, he helped them with their problems; he brought his candy to work and shared it with everyone; he baked brownies for the neighbors and for the people at the factory; he had children and friends at his house; he played the harmonica; he smiled; he laughed. (All of these could also be a list of what he did after the package arrived—but it is stronger when viewed as an effect. It could be a list of effects from one cause.)

Also a discussion of the importance of those few words on the little white card that made him feel so special—“somebody loves you.” The effect of feelings by reading words—our reality changes. When he feels loved he begins to behave differently, then others behave differently towards him. Each action has a positive reaction—a cause and effect.

**Compare and Contrast:** Mr. Hatch before and after the package arrived.

Newsstand..................never looked at man ..................talks to him each day
Store............................buys a turkey wing each day..........buys a piece of ham
Clothes........................same dull clothes everyday...........blue polka dot tie!
After supper...............read the paper.............................make brownies!
Rare Words

Total number of words in the book is 1,629. The average number of words per page is 95. The book begins with two pages of limited text (61 and 54 words) and ends with two pages of limited text (98 and 36 words). This book has advanced vocabulary, so it is not necessary to determine the percent of rare words overall to estimate oral language comprehension. Students will need to learn many new words in this selection. Vocabulary development will be one of the primary advantages of using this book. For example, on the ninth page, with 155 words, there are 85 different words, and 35 of them (41%) are rare words. Thus each page will pose many opportunities to explicitly and systematically teach the pronunciations and meanings of new words.

At this level of oral language comprehension, interesting words are often the focal point. These are words that students may have heard before but are unsure of, or words that are far from the realm of experience (e.g., flung, fetched, occurred).

Interesting Words

These words are not commonly used in spoken language. They occur more often in reading. Discuss each one and generate a student friendly definition for it. Write the definitions on one index card and the word on another card. Ask students to hold up the word card when you read the definition. Later match the definitions with the words in a concentration game with all cards face down on the table.

bother          fetched          flung          fluttered          mysterious
occurred        recall            recovered        shock             supervisor

Mr. Hatch lives alone. He works alone, eats all his meals alone, and walks to and from work alone. The people in his small town like him and he likes them—but no one ever really SAYS they like him. It is not enough to just see, hear, watch, or observe others around you everyday—you need to communicate with them. We all need to exchange our thoughts and ideas to really enjoy life. The amazing valentine that SAID “somebody loves you” changed the small lonely culture of Mr. Hatch into something much better—he began to interact with everyone else in town! Just those simple words can make a difference—don’t forget to say “I really like you—I think you’re great!”
Describe a topic. Focus on the character or the setting.

List things related to topic.

Tell the order of steps.

Explain the reason why something happened.

Same

Different

State a problem and offer a plan to solve it.

Persuade or negotiate with others.

Show how two or more components, or ideas, are the same and/or different.

Mr. Hatch

Receiving the Valentine

Mr. Hatch to begin interacting with other people

Mr. Hatch Before

Mr. Hatch After

same dull clothes everyday

never looked at newspaper

buys a turkey wing each day

talks to him everyday

buys a piece of ham

gets a blue polka dot tie

made brownies

made brownies

read the paper

walked to work

Ate lunch

Made two stops on the way home

get newspaper and dinner

Read the paper

Took a shower

Went to bed

cheese and mustard sandwich

a cup of coffee

one prune.

Mr. Hatch’s Lunch

Mr. Hatch’s Day

Walked to work

Ate lunch

Made two stops on the way home

get newspaper and dinner

Read the paper

Took a shower

Went to bed

cheese and mustard sandwich

a cup of coffee

one prune.