Begin Reading with CAT the CAT

Grow with Mo! Mo Willems is the award-winning author-and-illustrator of groundbreaking books beloved by kids, parents, teachers, and librarians. Now, kids can begin reading with Mo at an even earlier age! Especially for the youngest of children, the Cat the Cat books introduce early learning concepts through vibrant art, simple text, and repetition. Before kids are ready for Pigeon or Knuffle Bunny, introduce them to Cat the Cat and her world of friendship and fun.

The importance of reading daily to babies and young children cannot be overemphasized, and Mo Willems’ Cat the Cat series is the perfect beginning for new readers. Literacy begins at birth, and studies show that newborns and infants who are read to have a head start in life, gaining an earlier understanding of language and sounds.

The stories about Cat the Cat and her animal friends promote listening proficiency, vocabulary skills, attention span development, memory development, and the process of learning information through illustrations, while also stimulating the senses and strengthening the bond between parent and child. The books teach young listeners the importance of friendship, encouragement, exploration, and imagination. Most significantly, with their adorable, relatable characters and ever-present humor, the Cat the Cat stories instill a love of books and learning. Begin reading with Cat the Cat, and grow with Mo!
Cat the Cat is a spunky feline who stars in her own series of picture books written especially for the very youngest readers. Cat the Cat is friendly, energetic, inquisitive, and caring, and she sure likes her friends. You will too! Cat the Cat loves to welcome young readers into her world, where a surprise is waiting in every book. Come on in!

Meet MO WILLEMS

Mo Willems likes writing and drawing funny books, such as the Caldecott Honor Books Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!, Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale, and Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity. He also had fun creating favorites like Leonardo, the Terrible Monster and the Elephant and Piggie series, which won two Geisel Awards. Before making books, Mo wrote and animated for Sesame Street, where he won six Emmy Awards and made lots of friends. Learn more about Mo at www.mowillems.com.
Before Reading

Cat the Cat has lots of friends, but there’s always room for more! Building new friendships is an essential part of child development. Before sharing Cat the Cat, Who Is That? with young listeners, talk with them about the value of friendship, what it means to be a good friend, and the importance of having old friends and making new ones.

Who Is That?
Help children learn to identify their peers with this naming activity. Call on one child in the group at a time and point to another child and ask, “Who is that?” Keep calling on different children until everyone has had a chance both to answer the question and to be named. Parents can do this activity at home by using photographs of family members and family friends.

What Is That?
As an extension of the previous activity, help children learn to identify objects that they commonly use. Play the same game described above, but instead of pointing to people, point to objects in the room and ask, “What is that?” Continue this activity over a period of time, adding new objects and reviewing ones that children have learned already.

Liking Friends
What does Cat the Cat like about her friends? Encourage children to use their imaginations to come up with one or more qualities that Cat the Cat likes about Mouse the Mouse, Duck the Duck, Fish the Fish, and her new mystery friend. What qualities do children like about their friends and family members?

Saying Hello
As you read the book aloud, have children listen for the different ways that the animal friends say hello to one another. What other words or phrases can children use to greet their friends? Have children try greeting their friends the way Cat the Cat does. Then ask children to make up their own greetings and try them out on one another.
Before Reading

Cat the Cat cheers on her friends as they fly. Supporting and encouraging peers is an important skill for young children to learn. Before reading Let's Say Hi to Friends Who Fly!, discuss with children how they feel when a friend or family member cheers for them. How can children support others and help their friends experience those same sorts of feelings?

Playground Story Time

The setting for this book is a playground, so why not enjoy an outdoor story time? Start reading at the swing set, move on to the sandbox, climb over the monkey bars, proceed to the seesaw, and finally end up at the spring animals, all the while having children listen to you read the corresponding sections of the story at each location. Parents can also bring the book along during their trips to the playground so that they can read with their children in addition to playing.

Animal Friends

Identify the animals introduced in the first two Cat the Cat books: bat, bee, bird, cat, duck, fish, mouse, and rhinoceros. Show children photos of these eight animals and help them identify how they look in real life. Can children recognize these same animals at the zoo, in the wild, in movies, on television, and in other picture books?

Taking Flight

Explore movement through this activity. Bee the Bee buzzes through the air, while Bird the Bird flaps, Bat the Bat flutters, and Rhino the Rhino zooms. Have children imitate one of these four characters at a time, as they practice buzzing, flapping, fluttering, and zooming around the room. How is each type of movement different from the others?

More Friends Who Fly

Reach beyond the story by having children identify other things, both living and manmade, that fly. What animals can fly, besides a bee, a bird, and a bat? Can a rhinoceros really fly? Rhino the Rhino zooms through the air with the aid of a plane. What other manmade flying objects can children name?