For students reading at **Literacy Level C/4**, including:
• English-language learners
• Students reading below grade level
• Kindergarten and first grade emergent readers

Objectives at a Glance

COMPREHENSION
Students will:
• Identify characters and setting
• Make inferences
• Monitor their reading by reading aloud to clarify
• Utilize text and graphic features
• Summarize the story
• Answer text-dependent questions
• Respond to the book

GENRE STUDY
Students will:
• Recognize the characteristics of realistic fiction
• Determine the story's message

VOCABULARY
Students will:
• Recognize high-frequency words
• Develop robust (Tier Two) oral vocabulary
• Develop academic content (Tier Three) vocabulary

LANGUAGE
Students will:
• Recognize the sentence structures *We can have* _____ and *We cannot have* _____
• Use singular and plural nouns

PHONEMIC AWARENESS
Students will:
• Listen for short /a/

PHONICS
Students will:
• Use first-letter cues to solve words
• Recognize short **"a"** in words

FLUENCY
Students will:
• Read question marks

CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT
Students will:
• Locate the first letter of a word

WRITING
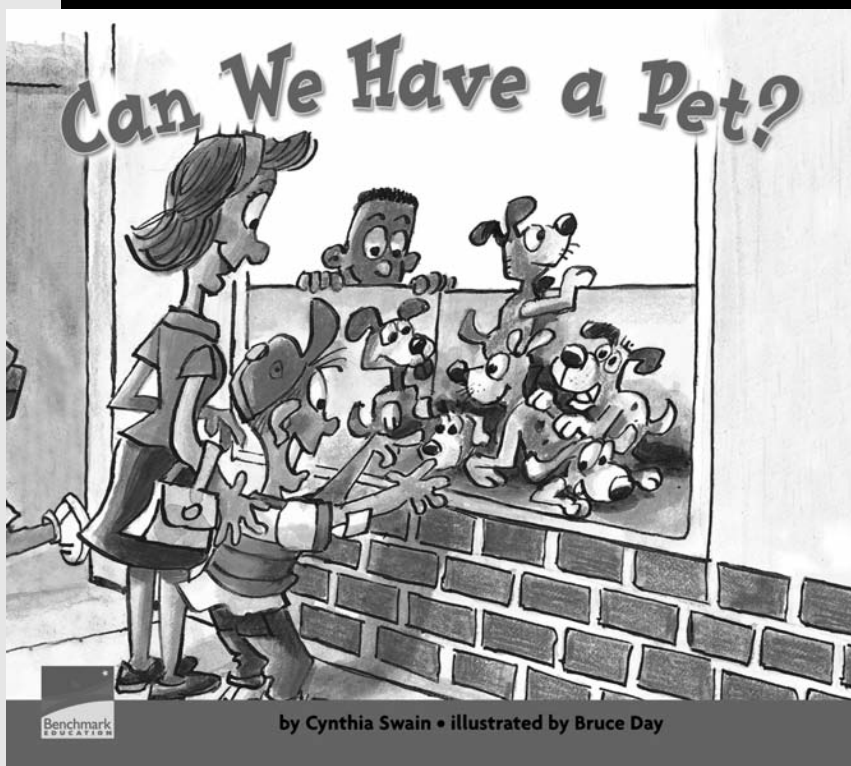Students will:
• Write to a picture prompt

Can We Have a Pet?

THEME: Sort and Classify
• Sorting at the Park (Level C/4)
• **Can We Have a Pet? (Level C/4)**
• You Can Sort Boats (Level E/8)
• Sorting at the Nature Center (Level E/8)

GENRE/SUMMARY:

This story is realistic fiction. When Mom says Tim can have a pet with no fur, Tim makes a chart to help decide what pet to get.

by Cynthia Swain • illustrated by Bruce Day

Related Resources

The following Benchmark Education Company resources support the skills and strategies taught in this lesson.

Early Explorers Partner

- *Sorting at the Park* (Nonfiction, Level C/4)

Emergent Comprehension Strategy Poster

- Make inferences

Text-Dependent Comprehension Resources

- *Can We Have a Pet?* Comprehension Question Card
- Power Tool Flip Chart for Teachers
- Student Bookmark

Assessment

- *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook*
- Grade K *Comprehension Strategy Assessment Book*

Make Connections and Build Background

- **Use Art** Give each student a pencil and piece of paper. **Say:** *We will read a book called* Can We Have a Pet? *The boy in the story wants to have a pet. I will draw a picture of a pet.* Sketch a simple drawing of a common pet, such as a cat or fish. Show your drawing to the group and name the pet you drew. Then invite each student to sketch a picture of a pet to share with the group.

- **Use a Graphic Organizer** Draw a T-chart on the board with the headings **Fur** and **No Fur**. Read the headings aloud. If possible, show students something furry and invite them to touch the fur. **Say:** *We drew pictures of some pets. Some of the pets we drew have fur. Some of the pets we drew have no fur.* Ask students to help you list the pets in the correct column of the T-chart. Then read each pet name and ask students to echo-read.

Fur	No Fur
cat	fish
rabbit	snake

Introduce the Book

- **Preview the Cover and Title Page** Give each student a copy of the book. Point to the front. **Say:** *This story is about a boy who wants a pet. His mom says he can have a pet with no fur.* Read the title and author and ask students to echo-read. Invite them to tell what they see in the illustration. **Say:** *This is the book's cover.* Repeat the process with the title page. **Say:** *The cover and title page get us ready to read the book.* Using the think-aloud strategy, model how to make predictions about the book based on the cover and title page information. **Say:** *The title mentions a pet. I think the people in the picture will get a pet.* Allow time for students to share their own predictions about the story.

- **Introduce Characters and Setting** **Say:** *The people in the story are called characters.* Ask students to turn to pages 2 and 3, and point to each character as you read the matching name. Repeat the process, inviting students to echo-read. Then **say:** *The setting is where the story takes place. What is the setting of this story?* Help students use the illustrations to determine that the story takes place outside a pet store and in the family's home.

- **Preview Illustrations and Vocabulary** Revisit the illustrations on the cover and title page. **Say:** *The pictures in fiction books are called illustrations. Illustrations help us understand the words in the books.* Take students on a picture walk. Emphasize the words **chart**, **fur**, **pet**, **fish**, **dog**, **cat**, and **bird** as you talk about the illustrations and what is happening in the story. Make sure students can pronounce each vocabulary word.

- **Locate High-Frequency Words to Monitor Meaning** Ask students to turn to page 4 and locate the word **said**. Ask them to frame the word and check it by running their finger under the word in a left-to-right motion. Then ask students to locate the word **said** on page 6. **Say:** *Said is an important word. Use the word said to help you while you read.*

- **Preview Sentence Structures** For students who need additional support, write "We can have _____" on the board. Read the sentence structure aloud and ask students to repeat it several times. **Say:** *The words We can have are in the book. Page 4 has a sentence with the words We can have.* Model how to frame the sentence between two fingers. Then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. Invite students to turn to page 8. **Ask:** *Can you frame a sentence with the words We can have?* Assist as needed, and then read the sentence aloud and ask students to echo-read. Finally, repeat the process with *We cannot have _____* on pages 6, 10, and 14.

- **Use Graphophonic Cues** **Say:** *Another word in this book is dogs. Say the word dogs. What letter do you expect to see at the beginning?* (Allow time for students to respond, assisting as needed.) *Find the word dogs on page 6.* Once students locate the word, repeat the process with **cats** on page 8. **Say:** *Use first-letter sounds to help you when you read.*

- **Scaffold Spanish-Language Speakers** Say the word **no**. **Ask:** *Does no sound like a word you know in Spanish?* (Allow time for students to respond.) *The English word no sounds like the Spanish word no. No and no mean the same thing. No and no look the same, too.* Write the word **no** on the board and ask students to locate it on page 4 in the book. Invite students with other first languages to share their cognates.

Set a Purpose for Reading

- Direct students' attention to the pets chart. **Say:** *Now it's time to whisper-read the book. Read to find out what kind of pet Tim can get.*

Observe and Prompt Reading Strategies

- After the supportive introduction, students should be able to read all or most of the book on their own. Observe students as they read. Take note of the graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues they use to make sense of the text and self-correct. Prompt individual students who have difficulty problem-solving independently, but be careful not to prompt English-language learners too quickly. They may need more time to process the text as they rely on their first language for comprehension.

Strategic Reading Prompts

Cue Source	Prompt	Example	Page
Graphophonic	Look at the first letter.	well	12
Syntactic	Think about the sentence structure.	We cannot have a cat.	8
Semantic	Check the picture.	birds	12

Use the Graphic Organizer to Summarize

• Ask students to think about their reading. **Say:** *Look at our T-chart. Which pets did Tim ask Mom about?* Put a √ beside the words students call out, and then **ask:** *Do we need to add any pets from the story to the chart?* Add the new words and put a √ beside them. Then choral-read the checkmarked words and ask students to use the graphic organizer to tell the story to a partner.

Fur	No Fur
cat ✓	fish ✓
rabbit	snake
dogs ✓	bird ✓

Genre Study

• **Say:** *This story is realistic fiction. You could meet people like Tim and Mom in real life. The things Tim and Mom do could really happen. What are some ways the story is realistic?* Guide students to mention story events such as wanting a pet, talking about a pet, and making a chart.

• **Say:** *Realistic fiction stories have themes. A theme is like a message from the author. I notice in* Can We Have a Pet? *that Tim talks to his mom about the best pet for their family. Does talking things over work out well for Tim and Mom? Why or why not?* (Allow time for students to discuss how Tim and Mom reach an agreement.) *The theme for* Can We Have a Pet? *could be "Talk things over before making an important decision." The author uses the characters to send readers a message. The author is telling us to talk things over before making important decisions, too.*

Reading Strategy Mini-Lesson: Read Aloud to Clarify

• **Reflect** Ask students to think about the parts of the story that were hard for them to understand. **Ask:** *What did you do to help yourself understand what you read?*

• **Model** **Say:** *I always want to understand what I read. Sometimes I'm not sure about a certain part. I go back and read that part aloud. This helps me figure out if something is wrong. I will turn back to page 6. The first time I read page 6, I was confused. Did Mom say Tim could have a dog? Then I read it aloud:* Mom said, *"Yes, dogs have fur. We cannot have a dog." I better understand the words when I listen to them. Mom says "yes," dogs have fur, but "no", Tim cannot have a dog. That makes sense. After I read the page aloud, I'm ready to keep whisper-reading.*

• **Guide** Ask students to turn to page 12. **Ask:** *Does Mom say Tim can have a bird?* (Allow time for students to respond.) *How can we check? Can we read the page aloud? Let's read the page aloud together. Then we will be sure we understand what Mom says about getting a bird.* Read the page aloud together and briefly discuss how this clarifies or confirms students' understanding.

• **Apply** Invite each student to turn to a tricky page. Then ask students to tell a partner about the page. Afterward, they should read the page aloud to make sure they understand it. Observe students as they read aloud to clarify, providing assistance if needed. See the *Early Explorers Overview & Assessment Handbook* to assess students' understanding of the **read aloud to clarify** monitor-reading strategy. Then **say:** *You can read aloud anytime you need to. Remember to go back and read aloud to help you understand.*

Answer Text-Dependent Questions

• **Explain** Remind students that they can answer questions about books they have read. **Say:** *We answer different kinds of questions in different ways. I will help you learn how to answer each kind.* Tell students today they will practice answering *Look Closer!* questions. **Say:** *The answer to a* Look Closer! *question is in the book. You have to look in more than one place, though. You find the different parts of the answer. Then you put the parts together to answer the question.*

- **Model** Use the first *Look Closer!* question on the Comprehension Question Card. **Say:** *I will show you how I answer a* Look Closer! *question. I will read the question to figure out what to do. The question says: "Tim cannot have a dog or cat because . . ." This question asks me to tell why something happened, or identify a cause and effect. I know because the question has the cue word **because**. Now I need to look for other important information in the question. These words tell me what to look for in the book. What information do you think will help me?* (Allow student responses.) *Yes, I need to know what kinds of animals Tim can have. I also need to look for information about a **dog** and a **cat**. Now I will look back in the book. Page 4 says: "We can have a pet with no fur." Page 6 says: "dogs have fur." Page 10 says: "cats have fur." Now I know Tim cannot have a dog or cat because they have fur. Putting this information together answers the question. The answer makes sense.*

- **Guide** Ask students to answer the other questions on the Comprehension Question Card. Use the Power Tool Flip Chart and Student Bookmark to provide additional modeling as needed. Remind students to ask themselves: *What is the question asking? How can I find the answer? Does my answer make sense? How do I know?*

Build Comprehension: Make Inferences

- **Explain** Create an overhead transparency of the "Can We Have a Pet?" graphic organizer on page 8 or draw it on the chalkboard. **Say:** *An author can't tell us every single thing in a story. We need to figure out some things on our own. We use the author's words for clues. We use the story illustrations for clues, too. Figuring something out using one or two clues is called **making an inference**. Good readers make inferences as they read. Making inferences helps us get more out of the story.*

- **Model** **Say:** *Let's make an inference in* Can We Have a Pet? *On page 4, Mom says Tim can have a pet with no fur. Mom pictures herself sneezing when she is near a dog in the illustration. I will write these clues in the first box on the graphic organizer. Now I need to use the clues to make*

an inference. *I can infer that Mom is allergic to furry pets. That is why the family cannot have a pet with fur. I will write this idea in the **Inference** box on the graphic organizer.*

- **Guide** **Say:** *Now let's make an inference about Tim. What do Tim and Mom talk about on page 6? What do you see in the illustration on page 7?* (Allow time for students to respond, assisting if needed.) *Yes, Tim and Mom talk about whether dogs have fur. Then Tim makes a chart about animals with fur. What can we figure out from these clues?* (Again allow time for students to respond.) *Yes, we can infer that Tim will use the chart to help choose the best pet. We will add this idea to the graphic organizer as well.*

- **Apply** Ask students to work with a partner to make another inference in the story. Remind them that they need to use word and illustration clues to figure out something the author doesn't say. After each partnership shares, record their ideas on the graphic organizer. Finally, read the completed graphic organizer aloud and invite students to echo-read.

Teacher Tip Use Benchmark Education Company's K–2 Emergent Comprehension Strategy Poster Set to provide additional instruction in making inferences. Use BEC's *Comprehension Strategy Assessment* books to assess students' ability to make inferences in other brief, grade-level texts.

Home Connection

- Give students the take-home version of *Can We Have a Pet?* to read to family members. Encourage students to work with a friend or family member to draw a picture of a pet they have or would like to have. Invite them to bring their drawings to share with the group.

Reader Response

Invite students to respond to the book in a way that is meaningful to them. Model and use think-alouds as needed to scaffold students before they try the activities on their own.
• Talk with a partner. What other pets could Tim have? What pet would you want?
• Tell what might happen next in the story.
• Use the illustrations in the book to retell the story to a partner.
• Draw a picture of an animal that can be a pet. Then write about it.
• Think about the story's theme. Write about a time you talked things over with someone.
• Write about a connection you made to the story.

Write to a Picture Prompt

• **Write a Personal Narrative** Tell students they will think about their own experiences with pets. Then they will write about the experience. **Say:** *I like the pictures in this book. Some of the pictures make me think of my own experiences. The picture on page 5 reminds me of an experience:* I went to the animal shelter. I saw dogs that need homes. Someday I hope to get one of the dogs as a pet. *Does this picture make you think about an experience?* Allow time for students to respond. **Ask:** *Which picture do you like best? What experience does the picture make you think about?* Allow time for students to respond, prompting further if needed. **Say:** *You've used a picture to remember an experience. Now write about your experience. After you are finished, read your narrative to a partner.*

Concepts About Print

• **Locate the First Letter of a Word** Turn to page 4. **Say:** *A sentence is made of words. Our eyes look for the first letter of each word. The first letter shows our eyes that we have a new word to read. I will point to the first letter of each word.* (Do so.) *Now I will count the first letters.* (Point to the first letter of each word as you count aloud.) *How many words are in the sentence? Yes, the sentence has seven words. We see seven first letters, so we have seven words to read.*

Phonemic Awareness: Listen for short /a/

• Tell students you will read a sentence from *Can We Have a Pet?* Ask them to listen for words that have the short /a/ sound: *"We cannot have a cat"* (page 10). Reread the sentence if needed so students can identify the words **cannot**, **have**, and **cat**.

• **Say:** *I will say some animal names. Some have the short /a/ sound, like* **cat***, and some do not. Please listen carefully. Meow like a cat if you hear a word that has the short /a/ sound:* **bat**, **snake**, **mouse**, **rat**, **rabbit**, **kitten**.

Phonics: Short "a"

• Ask students to locate the word **cat** on page 10. Write **cat** on the board and underline the **"a"** in the middle. **Say:** *I see the letter* **"a"** *in the word* **cat***. I hear the /a/ sound in the word* **cat***.* Slowly draw your finger under the word as you blend the sounds. Then ask students to do the same in their books. Repeat the process with **can** on page 4 and **at** on page 14.

• Ask students to brainstorm words with the short /a/ sound. Make a list on the board. Then read each word, inviting students to echo-read.

- **Say:** *I will say make up some rhymes. You may call out a word from the list to help me finish each rhyme. I will underline the **"a"** in the word. Then you will know you guessed correctly.* Use simple rhymes such as:
  I bought a towel and a rag
  And put them in a shopping _____. (**bag**)
  Say hello to my new cat
  And give his head a little _____. (**pat**)
  Mr. See likes eggs and ham.
  Mrs. See likes toast and _____. (**jam**)

Vocabulary

- **Academic Content Vocabulary** Review the story with students and record words that apply to choosing a pet: **chart**, **fish**, **fur**, **pet**, **dog**, **cat**, and **bird**. Invite students to create their own charts that include several of the words and a picture of each.

- **Robust Oral Vocabulary Say:** *In the story, Tim and Mom **discuss** the kind of pet they should get. **Discuss** means to talk with others. Say the word with me: **discuss**. Here are some things people **discuss**: Kids **discuss** what they did at school with their parents. Teachers **discuss** their lessons with other teachers. A boy or girl might **discuss** a favorite movie with a friend. Workers **discuss** their jobs with one another. Now, tell about something you **discuss** with someone. Try to use the word **discuss** when you tell about it. You could start by saying, "I **discuss** _____ with _____."* (Allow time for each student to respond, assisting if needed.) *What is the word we've been talking about? Yes—**discuss**. Let's try to use the word **discuss** many times today. We can use the word at school and at home.*

Language Development: Singular and Plural Nouns

- **Model** Invite students to choral-read page 6 with you. Write the words **dog** and **dogs** on the board, and circle the letter **"s"** in dogs. *Say: Sometimes authors write about one thing, such as a **dog**. Other times authors write about more than one thing, such as **dogs**. The word **dogs** means more than one **dog**. We make the word **dogs** by putting the letter **"s"** at the end of the word **dog**.* Repeat the process with the words **cat** and **cats** on page 10. Then **say:** *I can talk about one thing and*

more than one thing, too. I can put the letter **"s"** at the end of a word to mean more than one.* Point out classroom objects to support the concepts of singular and plural, such as:
  *I have one **pencil**. Now I have three **pencils**.*
  *I gave Jan one **book**. Then I gave Jan two **books**.*
  *I look out one **window**. Our room has four **windows**.*

- **Guide** Choral-read page 12 with the students. **Ask:** *What word on this page means one animal?* (**bird**) *What word means more than one animal?* (**birds**) *How can you tell?* Write the words **bird** and **birds** on index cards. Use each word in an oral sentence and invite students to point to the matching card.

- **Apply** Write the words **hat**, **bag**, and **pan** on the board. Read the words aloud and ask students to echo-read. Ask student volunteers to make the words mean more than one by adding the letter **"s"** to each one. Then invite student pairs to make up sentences using the new words.

Fluency: Read Question Marks

- **Say:** *Sometimes characters in stories ask questions. We recognize a question by the question mark at the end. Our voices sound different when we ask something. Our voices move to a higher pitch at the end of the question. Good readers say the end of a question in a higher pitch, too. Saying the end of a question in a higher pitch shows that the character is asking something. It also helps the listeners understand that the character is asking something.*

- Ask students to turn to page 4. First, read Tim's question in a flat voice. Hold your hand level while you read it. Discuss how this makes the question sound. Then read the question again, moving your hand upward at the end as you move your voice to a higher pitch. Ask students to echo-read and move their hands along with yours.

- Invite students to take turns rereading *Can We Have a Pet?* with a partner. Remind them to move their voices to a higher pitch at the end of each question.

Can We Have a Pet?

Make Inferences

First Clues:

First Inference:

Second Clues:

Second Inference:

Third Clues:

Third Inference: