

Tommy Tales

Book 1: The School Lunch Room

The books are written to a second or third grade reading level, but pre-kindergarten to first graders will also love having the stories read to them.

If possible, make enough copies of the book for each member of the class or group. Download and copy the pages in advance, and the students can put the pages together and tape or staple them together. Before starting the reading, have each student color the cover of the book in any way they choose. While coloring, initiate a discussion on what the title could mean.

At some point towards the beginning of the month that you read *The School Lunch Room*, share with the class that this book is just the first in a series and that this story is just the beginning of a much longer one.

As you are beginning your planning for the year, depend on the Learning Page and this delightful serial story to add variety and fun to your reading routines. One new book a month, and all accompanying teachers materials and **Fun Sheets** supplement your other classroom activities and curricula.

One way to plan reading these books and tracking your students' progress is to make a large wall chart. List the titles and dates of beginning and ending each book across the chart, and the students' names in the down column.

The School Lunch Room 9-2

John Smith
Maggie Jones
Susie Peters
Tim Moreno
Maria Estes

Opening Lesson

Introduce the book by showing the cover and saying the title clearly. You could also write it on the board. Read the first two pages of the story, then briefly discuss the following questions.

1. What can you tell about Taffy? How do you think he got his name?
2. What is one of Taffy's tricks?
3. Why do people keep pets? [companionship, playmate, protection, helping]

Beginning Readers

There are many opportunities in the book for early readers to practice vocabulary. For example, ask them to point out the things on this page that begin with the "b" sound: boy, ball, box, bird. Write the words on the board and then ask students to name other words that begin with the same sound. Write those words in a column under the original words. You may also extend this further by having them copy the words on their paper or in a blank book (A "B" book with one object per page; see page 6, Tommy's Journal) and then drawing the objects next to the words.

How to Make the Book

Download and print the eight 2-page spreads of *The School Lunch Room* from the **Learning Page** site. Notice that they are not numbered as consecutive reading spreads, but are set up so that you can put them together to produce a real book.

TIP If you have access to a multi-function copy machine, you may be able to copy one side of the four sheets and then the other side by reinserting the paper into the machine. Because of the differences in each copier's capabilities, you will need to figure this process out on your own.

2

Thomas A. Tomkins is in third grade.

His friends call him Tommy.

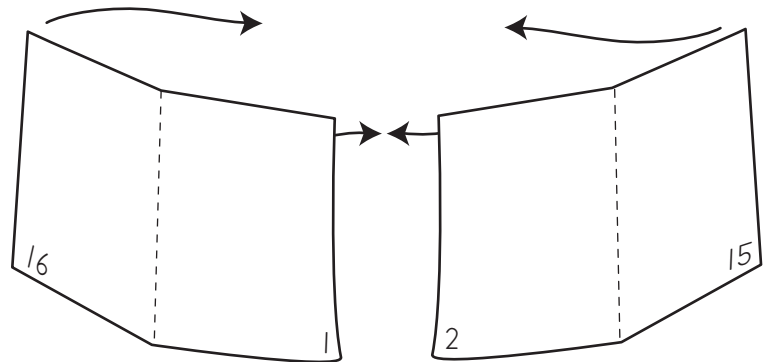
Tommy has a dog. His name is Taffy.

Taffy finds things and brings them to Tommy.

Taffy found a hat and gave it to Tommy.

Taffy found a box and gave it to Tommy,

Taffy found a ball and gave it to Tommy.



1. Start with the 2-page spreads numbered 16–1 and 2–15.

One day, Tommy was playing with his friend Lucy.

Taffy ran to them. He had found a TV remote control.

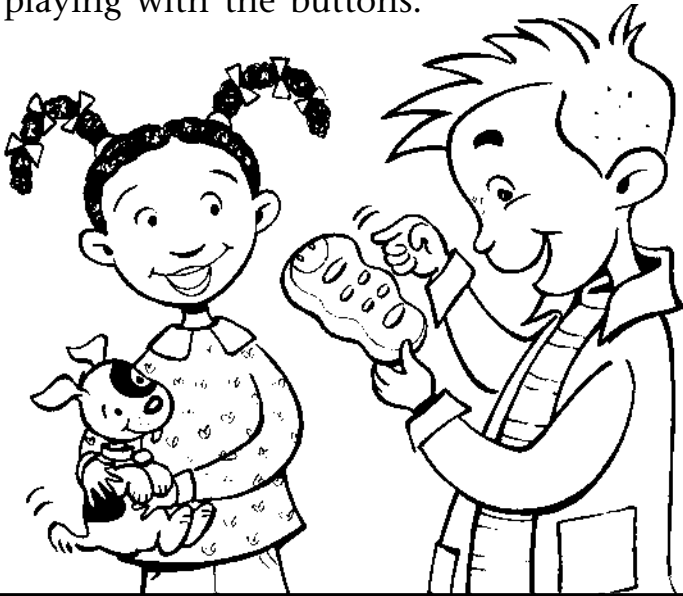
It was not an ordinary remote control.

It was purple with red stripes.

"Where did you find this clicker?" asked Tommy.

Taffy just wagged his tail.

Tommy took the clicker and started playing with the buttons.



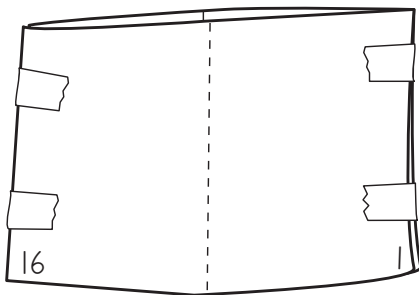
Words to Watch

1. **ordinary:** if the remote control is "not ordinary," what is it? What are some other words that mean the same as *ordinary* and some that mean the opposite of *ordinary*? (synonyms and antonyms)
2. **remote:** most students will be familiar with the remote control, but talk specifically about the word *remote* and some of its other meanings. Have a student volunteer look it up and read the various definitions; after each one, ask students to write a sentence using that meaning of the word.

Reading Guide

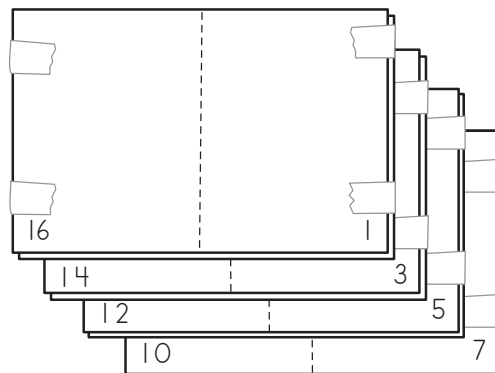
You may structure the reading time for this story in many ways.

1. You could read it aloud, all the way through, with the entire class on the rug during your regular story time. You could then review the story spread by spread and begin implementing the various objectives and **Fun Sheets**.
2. After reading aloud the first two pages, you could stop and begin questioning for comprehension and work on some of the **Fun Sheets**. Proceed to the second two pages, etc.
3. After reading all the way through, go around the class or group and have each student read a page, noting any difficult words to work on later.

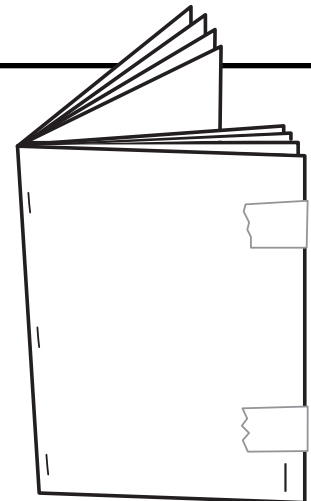


2. Place them back-to-back and tape or staple the edges to keep them even.

3. Do the same with spreads
14–3 back-to-back with 4–13;
12–5 back-to-back with 6–11;
10–7 back-to-back with 8–9.



4. Stack the pages with pages numbered 1, 3, 5, 7 facing up and to your right.



5. Fold the entire stack in half, and fasten with staples or other fasteners, and you will have an individual reader.

Literary Language: Alliteration

As you read these two pages, and then the rest of the story, notice ways that the writer gets our attention and gets the story across to the readers. For example, on page 2, notice the three lines beginning with:

Taffy found a . . .

What does this tell us about Taffy?
About Tommy?

The device at work here is called *alliteration*: the repetition of the initial consonant sound.

Taffy Tommy

Taffy Tommy

Taffy Tommy

Look for other examples of alliteration and repetition in this and other books you are reading. Poetry is full of examples of this and other literary devices. Find some examples appropriate to your class's level, including traditional songs and nursery rhymes.

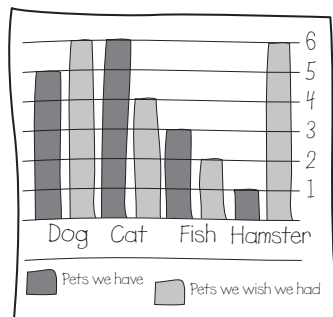
Example:

Little Boy Blue come blow your horn

Math Connection

How many students have pets? Write the animal names followed by the number of students who have each animal as a pet. Look at the numbers and decide which is the most common pet.

Make a chart showing the numbers you have collected. Then translate the figures as a bar graph. An extension could be to vote on which pet students like best or which pet they wish they had. Show students how to compare the numbers in the same graph.



Ask questions such as:

How many students have cats?

Which animal got the least amount of votes as the pet they wish they had?

Which animal(s) got the most votes?

Suddenly, the clicker made a loud screeching noise.

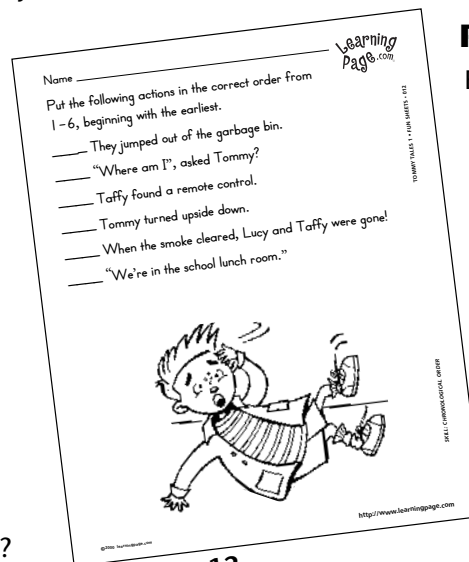
There was a flash of blue light and thick smoke.

When the smoke cleared, Lucy and Taffy were gone!



Pictures Tell a Story

Bring in newspaper comic pages as inspiration, and demonstrate how to construct a comic strip with multiple panels and balloons showing dialogue. Have students draw a picture in comic strip style showing a sequence of events in this story. See **Fun Sheet 12** for a practice in sequencing events.



Fun Sheet 12

Tommy was very surprised.

He stood still for a moment
with his mouth open.

He blinked his eyes and shouted,
"Where are you, Lucy?"

"Come here, Taffy!"



He looked for them behind
the bushes.

He looked for them under the bench.

He looked for them on top of the wall.

He could not find them anywhere.

Word In Context

The first line on this page tells us that Tommy was "surprised." Reading this paragraph again, ask "How else do we know that he is surprised?"

Examples:

He stood still

His mouth was open

He blinked his eyes

He shouted

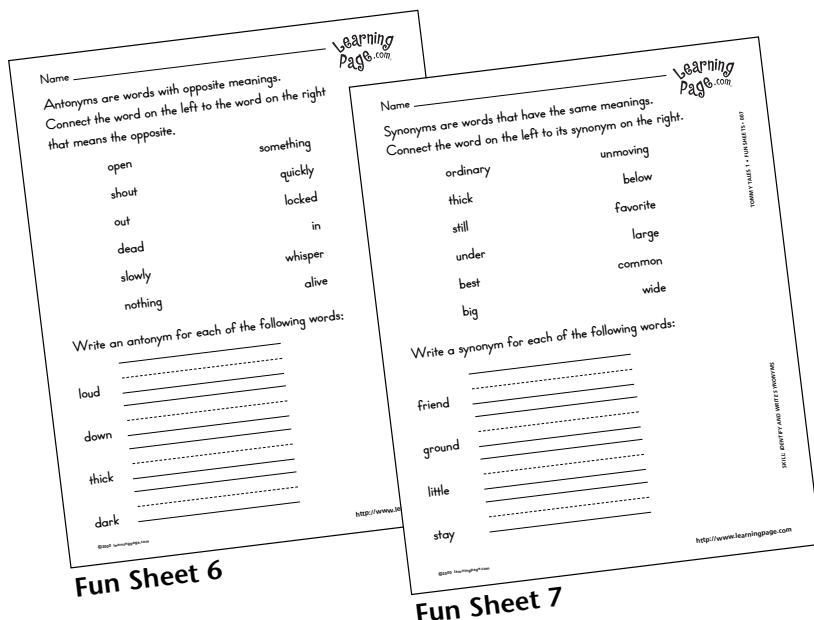
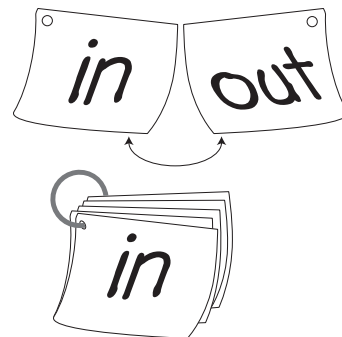
Note the use of the punctuation mark here, the exclamation point [!]. After talking about how different words contribute to the strong feelings Tommy had, prompt them to state the purpose of the exclamation point [adds emphasis to the strong feelings expressed.] Read the first paragraph again, using a calm quite voice, and then again with a surprised and scared voice to emphasize the exclamation point.

Ask for volunteers to think of some sentences that would take an exclamation point at the end, and then to recite them with feeling!

Synonyms and Antonyms

These two pages offer lots of words for practicing words that are alike in meaning and opposite in meaning. Use **Fun Sheets 6** and **7** for practice using synonyms and antonyms.

Over the course of the school year as you use the books in the Ewe Series, create a set of flash cards for synonyms, and another for antonyms. A word would appear on one side of the card, and its companion word (synonyms or antonym) on the other. Have these cards in a location (reading, word skill, or library center) always accessible to students. Reviewing these words by reading silently and writing will reinforce writing skills later on.



Remote Control Devices

Most students are familiar with remote control devices for their televisions. Besides the buttons mentioned in the story ("forward," "play," and "replay") what other buttons are often on remote controls? Have students draw and color a picture of this special remote control or what they imagine their magic remote control would look like.

About the "Clicker"

Ask students: "What is a clicker?" It should be fairly clear that this is Tommy's name for the remote control. "Why do you think he called it that?"

Possible answers:

remote control is too hard to say

remote control is too long

it makes a sound like "click" when he pushed the buttons

it "clicks" things on and off

You could suggest that "clicker" is a nickname for the remote control. Like Tommy is nickname, or short name, for Thomas. Does anyone in the class have a "nickname"?

List of popular nicknames:

Tommy — Thomas

Bob — Robert

Bill — William

Sam — Samantha

Sandi — Sandra

Cuca — Ruth

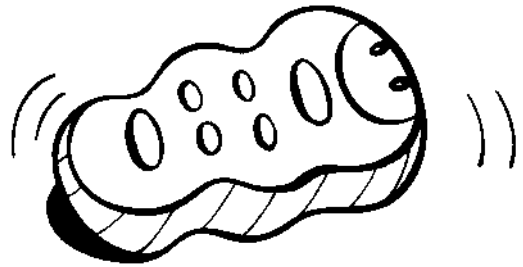
Jimmy — Santiago

Literary Language: Dialogue

Notice that in the first paragraph on this page, Tommy is talking to himself, so his words are actually his thoughts. This tells the reader even more about the character.

6

"I think I made them disappear with the clicker," he said to himself. He tried pressing the buttons on the clicker to get his friends back. Nothing happened. Perhaps the batteries are dead, he thought. But there was no place for batteries.



He studied the numbers and words on the buttons of the clicker.

One read "forward." He pressed it.

Nothing happened.

Another read "back." He pressed it.

Nothing happened.

"Perhaps I should point the clicker at myself and press," he thought.

Tommy's Journal

Have students create a handmade book with blank pages like the one in **Learning Page Lesson Plans, Dinosaurs, Grade 1–2**; use it as a daily journal to record the adventures of Tommy from his (the *first* person) point of view. They need to pretend they are Tommy and use the *I*, *we*, *us*, or *our* forms. Write in the journals on a weekly basis as the class reads the story and uses the **Fun Sheets**.

Handmade books can also be used for Alphabet books, word books, record books, books to take home, and for writing and drawing practice.



He turned the clicker around and pressed "replay."

Suddenly, the clicker made a loud screeching noise.

There was a flash of blue light and thick smoke.

He felt himself leave the ground.

He turned upside down.

Everything went black.

Literary Language:

Point of View

Discuss with students how to determine the point of view, or vantage point, of a story.

First person: the sentences will begin with *I*, *we*, *my*, and all the verbs will be in the first person. This point of view is personal, subjective, authentic and the feelings and thoughts will be of the person telling the story.

Third person: from the position of an outsider watching the action and reporting what he or she observes. This point of view is impersonal, detached, an objective. The sentences will begin with words *like he, she, it, and they*. The "person" telling the story is often called the narrator.

Who is telling *The School Lunch Room*? Ask the class and then ask them how they know. Review the words in the sentences that tell us that the story is told from the third person.

Extension:

When writing in their journals about the day's activities or reading, have students switch their point of view from the first to the third. Their writing will take on a different tone and their thinking about events and feelings will be expanded.

If each student has his or her own copy of *The School Lunch Room*, set aside time to color the line drawings that illustrate the book. Be sure to go over the details and descriptive words that the author uses to help describe the story. **Fun Sheet 10** reviews the colors mentioned and gives practice writing the color words.

They can put their names on the book and keep them in a box or folder to keep them until the next installment arrives.

Fun Sheet 10

Name _____

Some words describe people, places, or things, and help us imagine the story. Words that describe are called *adjectives*.

Some adjectives tell about colors. Find these colors in the story. Write the color, then what that color describes.

purple _____

red _____

blue _____

black _____

©2000 Learning Page, Inc. <http://www.learningpage.com>

Changing Point of View

Have students read these two pages silently. Ask: "What is the point of view of the person telling the story?" (Third person) This is also sometimes called the "voice." "How do we know?" (Tommy fell. . . , he slowly. . . , he saw. . . , he heard. . . , they looked. . . , they tried. . . ; these are observations from a third person not of the characters themselves.)

After students list some of the ways they know that the story is written in the third person voice, ask them to imagine that Tommy is telling the story from *his* point of view. Give the students time to reread these two pages, and suggest that they circle with a pencil the words that might change. Then have volunteers reread the pages as if Tommy is telling the story.

Example:

I fell to the ground with a bump, opened my eyes and looked around. I saw Lucy smiling at me and I heard Taffy barking. "Where am I?" I asked them.

Pictures Tell a Story

What do the illustrations tell us about the story that is not mentioned in the text? Have students look closely at the illustration on this page, and share aloud things they have learned about Taffy, Tommy, and Lucy not mentioned in the text.

Examples:

Tommy dropped the clicker.

Tommy saw stars.

Tommy was wearing a striped shirt.

Lucy was standing with her hands on her hips.

8

Tommy fell to the ground with a bump.

He slowly opened his eyes.

He looked around.

He saw Lucy smiling at him.

He heard Taffy barking at him.

"Where am I?" asked Tommy.



"We're in the school lunch room," answered Lucy. "But I don't know how we got here," she said. Tommy told her that the magic clicker sent them there.

"We shouldn't be here on a Saturday," said Tommy. "We'll be in big trouble if someone finds us."

They looked for a way to get out.
They tried the doors. They were locked.
They tried the windows.
They were locked too.
"What can we do?" cried Lucy.
"We can't stay here until Monday."



Comprehension Check

Why will they be in trouble?

What day is it?

Why does Lucy say, "We can't stay here until Monday"?

What does it mean that she "cried"?

Literary Language: Dialogue

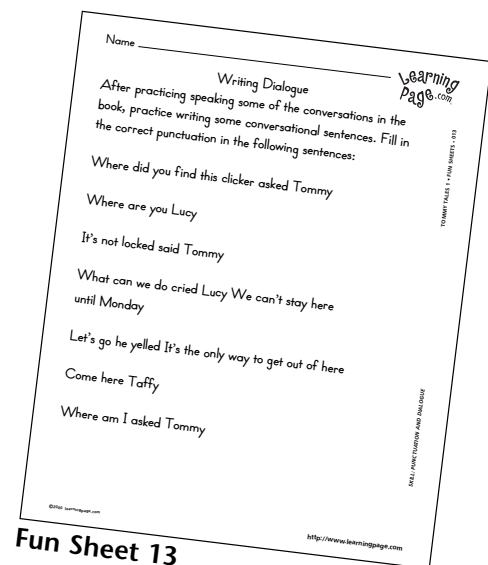
Have student volunteers take the parts of Tommy and Lucy (and Taffy) and practice the dialogue on page 9 and 10. Remind them to pretend they are in the same situation and to imagine how they would feel if they were in this predicament.

Literary Language: Dialogue

Ask students how they can tell that the characters in a story are speaking to one another. What is the clue?

Dialogue is usually set off from the text by quotation marks. [" "] The text inside the quotation marks are the actual words of the character. Also, following the closing quotation marks will be the name of the character speaking, with the word *said*, or a word that means the way a person is speaking such as "shouted," "cried," "answered," etc.

Use **Fun Sheet 13** for more practice punctuating dialogue.



Fun Sheet 13

Pictures Tell a Story

Ask the students to pretend that they are the illustrator and want to share the story with a younger sister, brother, or friend who can't read yet.

Taking cues from the story, ask them to draw a picture of a school lunch room and all the details they can think of to add. Examples: the counter, the window where you would get your food, menu on the wall, tables, trays, napkins, lunchboxes, milk containers.

Predicting Outcome

- What did Tommy and Lucy think was behind the door?
- Do you think that they should go inside?
- What do you think will happen if they go through the door?
- What could they have done if Taffy had not found the door?
- Why do you think Taffy was so interested in the door?

Extension

On the first reading of *The School Lunch Room*, ask students to pretend the story ends here on page 10, they must finish it, and they can do it any way they like. Brainstorm some options: the security guard finds them, they find a phone and call for help, or they spend the weekend there eating and telling stories. Students will probably imagine some more unexpected resolutions of this predicament!

Students may either write their endings or draw a picture to show what happens. When they are finished, have each share his or her work with the class.

10

"We will not be hungry," said Tommy.

"We're in the lunch room.

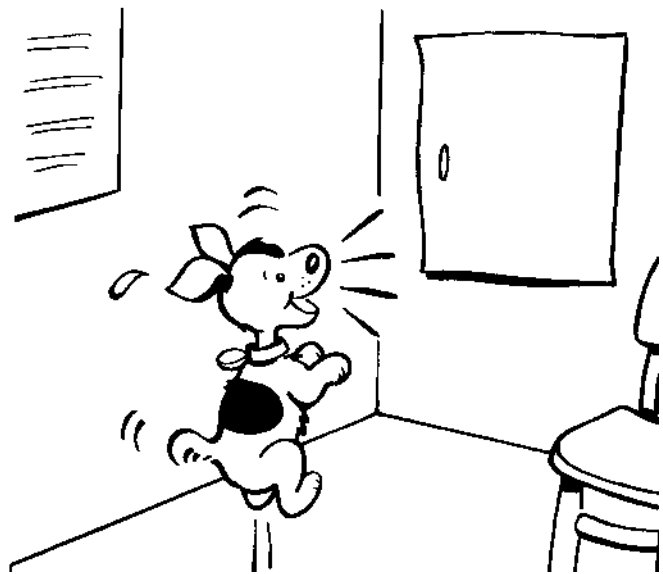
There must be lots of food here."

Taffy started barking loudly.

He found a little door in the corner of the room.

"It's not locked," said Tommy.

He opened the door.



They looked in, but it was as dark as night.

"Shall we try crawling in there?"
asked Lucy.

Tommy picked up Taffy.

"Let's go," he yelled. "It's the only way to get out of here."



Literary Language: Figurative Language

Writers often use special expressions to "paint pictures" of their ideas. Have you ever heard someone say something is "as easy as pie" or that someone is "thin as a reed"? Ask students if they can think of any other sayings like these. ("fit as a fiddle," "as white as a ghost")

When a descriptive phrase uses the word *like* or *as* to compare two things, it is called a *simile*. Examples of similes:

cool as a cucumber

busy as a bee

cute as a button

Ask students to find the simile on this page, and to explain what it means to them. Then have them brainstorm other similes they are familiar with.

When a phrase describes things without using *like* or *as*, in which one thing is said directly to *be* the other, the phrase is called a *metaphor*. Examples of metaphors:

he is a bear in the morning

the dog was foxy

the snow was a white blanket

What are some other ways the author could have described this space?

It was as black as coal.

It was pitch black.

There was no light there.

You could not see a thing in there.

Time Goes By

Words that tell the reader when things happened in time:

One day	He studied
Taffy ran	slowly
suddenly	faster
for a moment	At last
He blinked	after five minutes
He looked	

Using the Past Tense

When a story is told as if it happened in the past, most of or all of the verbs (action words) in the story will be in the past tense, with -ed added.

Ask students to find all the words on these two pages that end with -ed. Then have them read the same sentence as if it were happening now, in the present tense. Point out that not all verbs will have the -ed added; irregular verbs like *to have*, *to be*, etc. pose a different set of problems.

Examples:

Tommy and Lucy go through the door.

They squeeze in.

Lucy follows.

Learning Page Fun Sheets

Throughout the month between the introduction of new titles in the series, use the **Learning Page Fun Sheets** to expand and enlarge on the teaching opportunities of the story.

There are **Fun Sheets** questioning comprehension, sequencing tasks, a crossword puzzle, a word scramble, and matching word columns. There are lists of words used in the story to teach and strengthen vowel sounds, spelling, consonant blends, synonyms and antonyms, nouns, and contractions.

There are also **Fun Sheets** to practice the various literary language methods writers use. Use these **Fun Sheets** as needed to keep interest in the story and reinforce other curriculum areas.

There are several **Fun Sheets** with questioning strategies to aid students' understanding of *The School Lunch Room*. **Fun Sheet 1** and **2** will get you started on assessing your students' comprehension of the story.

12

Tommy and Taffy went through the door. They squeezed in. Lucy followed closely behind. Suddenly, they were sliding down. It was like going down the playground slide, but faster.



Fun Sheet 1

Name _____

Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. What is the first name of the boy?
Tom Thomas Tomkins Taffy

2. What is the last name of the boy?
Thomas Tommy Taffy Tomkins

3. What do the boy's friends call him?
Taffy Tommy Tomkins Toby

4. What is the name of the dog?
Toby Taffy Tom Tummy

5. Which of these things did the dog find?
box bat fox doll hat ball rat

6. The boy is in which grade?
Grade 2 Grade 3 Grade 1 Kindergarten

Fun Sheet 2

Name _____

Read the story and circle the correct answers.

1. What is the name of Tommy's friend?
Lady Lucy Larry

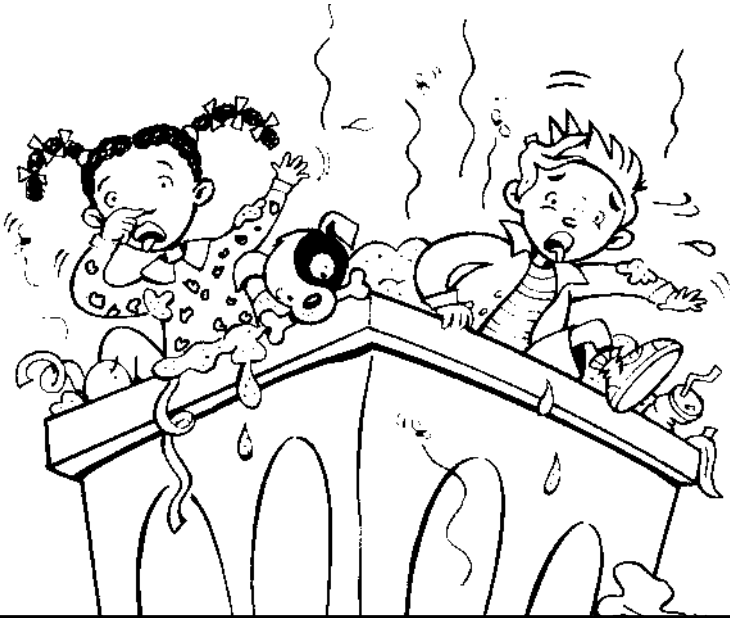
2. What is the TV remote control that Taffy found?
blue stripes purple with red stripes purple with blue stripes

3. What is Tommy's name for the remote control?
clicker clonker clinker

4. Where did Tommy and Taffy disappear? Write your answer

At last, they reached the bottom.
 They landed in something soft
 and squishy.
 It was also stinky and smelly.
 They looked around.
 They were in a big garbage bin.
 They were sitting in piles of smelly
 old food.

"Yuck, this is horrible,
 let's get out of here," shouted Lucy.



Sight Words

These words are the shorter, connecting and simpler words that should be familiar to students who can read at this level. A poster of these words on the wall near the reading center will make it easy to refer to if students are still unfamiliar with them.

I	he	it	his	the	to
but	no	at	and	a	an
with	this	for	up	in	of

Descriptive Words

As students read, ask them to call out the words that describe something you can see:

flash of blue light
 thick smoke
 his mouth open
 blinked his eyes
 behind the bushes
 under the bench
 sliding down

something you can hear:

loud screeching noise
 fell to the ground with a bump
 Taffy barking loudly

something you can smell:

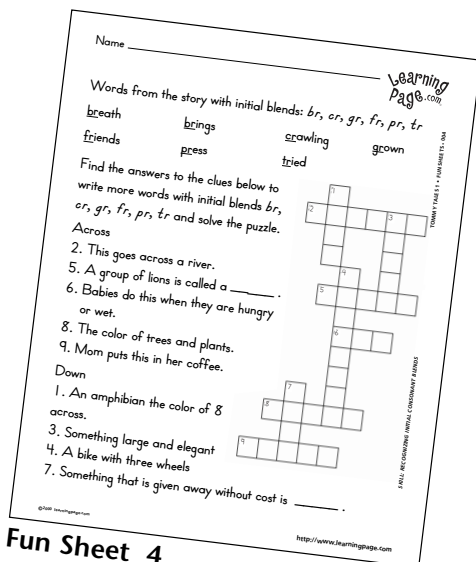
stinky garbage
 smelly food

Descriptive Writing

Pick a topic; have students write a descriptive paragraph using words that describe how something looks, sounds, or smells.

Possible topics:

Lunch at the pizza parlor.
 Sitting in my mother's garden.
 A picnic at the beach.
 A walk in the forest.



Character Development

Using **Fun Sheet 14** as a guide, have students spend time exploring the characters presented so far in the book. Ask questions:

Who is the main character?

Who is (are) the secondary characters?

What do we know about these characters (recall from reading and looking at pictures)? What do we want to know?

What do the characters have in common, that is, what is the same about them?

What is different about the characters?

Learning Page.com

Character Analysis

The School Lunch Room is the first of a series of books telling a continuing story. Write what you know so far about the following characters, from the reading and the illustrations:

Tommy Taffy Lucy

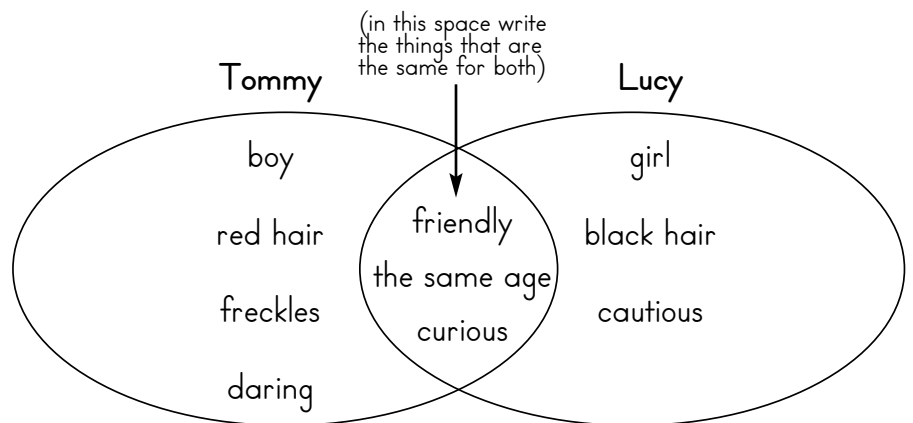
Andy Kim Mom

Fun Sheet 14

Comparing and Contrasting

Explain to students that when we look at things in common, we are comparing. And when we look at differences, we are contrasting.

To compare and contrast what we know about Tommy and Lucy, create a Venn diagram like the one here.



They jumped out of the garbage bin and ran out of the school gates.

After five minutes, they stopped to catch their breath.

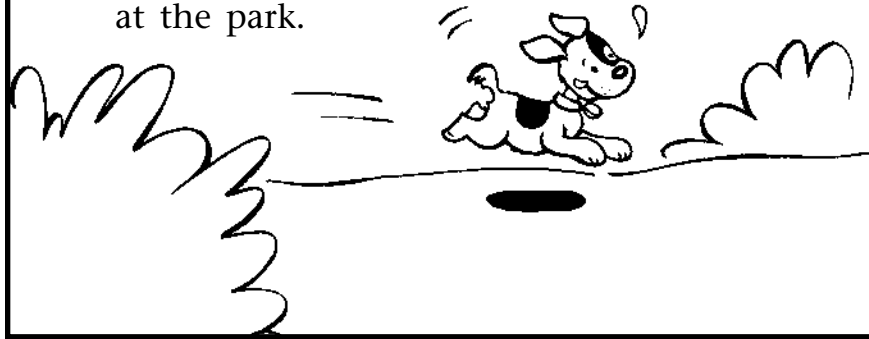
“What are you going to do with the magic clicker?

I think it makes trouble,” said Lucy.

“I don’t know,” said Tommy. “We can’t tell any grown ups about it. They will take it away from us.”

They decided to tell only their best friends.

They would tell them the next day, at the park.



"I'll show Andy and Kim what the clicker can do. I may even send them to the school lunch room," laughed Tommy.

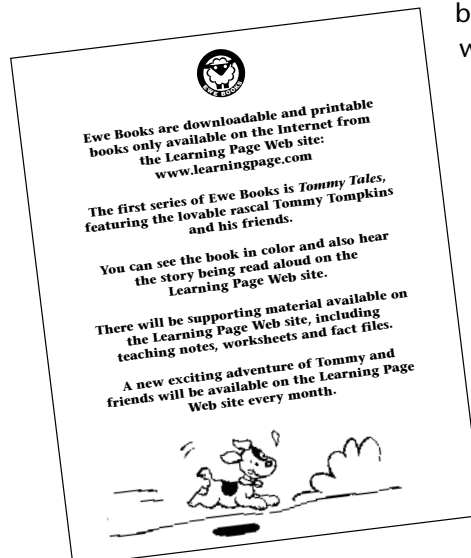
They said "Good-bye" and both ran home.

"What will I tell Mom about my stinky clothes?" he thought.
As he ran, he safely hid the magic clicker in his pocket.



Write a Letter to Tommy

After reading the story, have students write a letter to Tommy. Leave the content up to the students, but be sure to have them follow a traditional letter-writing form, with the date, salutation line, closing, and their name.



Relationships

Understanding the relationships of the characters as revealed in the story helps readers understand why those characters act, feel, and think in certain ways. What do we know about Tommy's relationship with his dog?

With Lucy?

With grown-ups?

With Andy and Kim?

With his mother?

Summarize

Ask students to pretend they are book reviewers for the school newspaper and to write a short (two paragraphs) description of the story.

Predict

Remind students that this is the first book in a series, and that there will be a new one each month.

Ask them to predict what will happen next, based on what they learned in this story. Their writing could be the first paragraph of the next installment, complete with illustration.

Conclusion

Ask students for their feelings and thoughts about this story. Stimulate enthusiasm and anticipation for the next story. When the work with *The School Lunch Room* is completed, keep all the books together in a storage box to be used again in the next school year or with the next group.

