

Sharing books...

Hat Tricks

by **Satoshi Kitamura** (Sallywag Press, 2019)



Hat Tricks is a delightful story that will appeal to both toddlers and children in Reception year.

The book starts with an introduction to Hattie, a rabbit magician with a hat. Over the course of the book, we see Hattie put her magic to work as she pulls animals out of the hat. Each time, we are asked, 'What's in the hat?'

At first, the animals are small, but they become ever larger until the final one, an elephant, becomes stuck. The story ends with Hattie pulling from the hat a jungle, where the animals can find friends. It is a simple story, but there is a surprising amount to focus children's attention on.

A GOOD CHOICE

The suggested age range for this book is one to four years. Toddlers will enjoy seeing what will come out of the hat next, while older children will enjoy being able to access this book independently. The story may also suit children at the start of their reading journey, as the text is very simple and easy to remember.

It is also a book that can be recommended to families who do not have English as their home language if the children enjoyed it in the setting. The story is simple and easy to understand through the pictures, so parents can tell the story in their own language and help children to hear equivalent vocabulary.

SHARING THIS BOOK

This is a book that is full of surprises, and benefits from being shared several times with children. It is worth sharing with one or two children as it is likely that they will want to go through the story at their own speed.

On the first reading, children are

likely to focus on what is about to appear from Hattie's hat. While some animals will be familiar to children, others such as the octopus and moose may not be. On the second or third reading, it will be worth drawing children's attention to the different reactions of the cat and the squirrel when new animals appear from the hat.

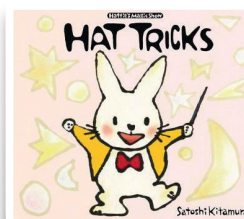
SUPPORTING LEARNING

Personal, social and emotional development

It is worth exploring the contrasting emotions of the cat and squirrel. The cat shows surprise, fear and caution, whereas the squirrel is interested, curious and friendly. As well as naming the emotions, you could discuss why the cat and squirrel react so differently. The story also shows how the animals come together to help the elephant out of the hat. You could talk to children about helping others.

Language development

This is a good book to encourage children to learn words relating to animals, but also to shape and size. As the plot is quite simple, children can also retell the story in reply to the prompt, 'What's happening now?' With some children, you might like to model using simple sentences with verbs or action words – for example, 'Hattie is pulling', 'the cat is hiding' or 'the squirrel is watching'.



ABOUT THIS SERIES

Over the course of this monthly series on sharing books with children, **Penny Tassoni** will look at a range of fiction and non-fiction titles, from rhyming books for babies to picture books that adults and children can explore together.



MORE INFORMATION

Hat Tricks – Hattie's Magic Show by Satoshi Kitamura is published by Sallywag Press, a new publisher of children's picture books set up last year by Sarah Pakenham, www.sallywagpress.com

Mathematics

There are many opportunities in this book to explore early maths. For example, you could:

- explore how the animals emerging from the hat become increasingly large
- go back and count how many animals Hattie pulls out of the hat and count the tentacles on the octopus
- draw children's attention to the pairs of animals in the jungle scene at the end.

You could also create an activity using a hat. Children could see how many different things they could fit into the hat. Or you could focus attention on the size of objects and see if they can sort the objects into two piles: things that fit and items that are too large to fit in the hat.

Understanding the world

It is helpful if children use technology as a means to find out more. The moose and the octopus feature rarely in children's books and so technology can be used to help children find out more about these animals.

Before going onto the internet, you could make a list of questions such as 'Do they live in the jungle?' and 'What do they eat?'. You could print out relevant pages and create a display with the children.

Small-world play

Towards the end of the book, we see that Hattie has produced a jungle for the animals to live in and to find friends. On this double page spread, we see that with the exception of the squirrel each animal is paired up with another, so you could provide the children with pairs of small-world animals or even create a Noah's ark.

Present the animals on some green fabric or turf and add in some leaves or foliage to create a mini-jungle. ■

