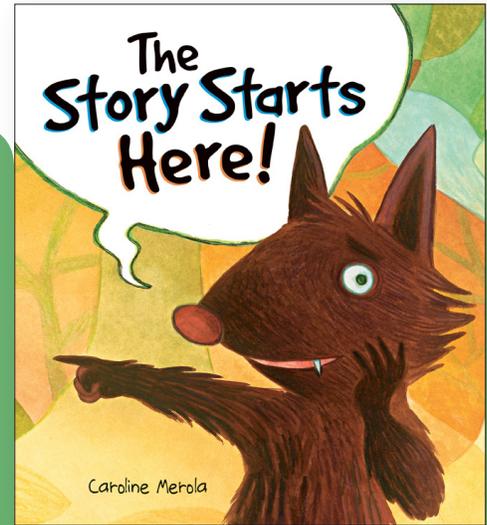


# The Story Starts Here!

BY CAROLINE MEROLA

Target grades: Kindergarten, 1, 2  
Reading levels: Fountas & Pinnell: J  
Lexile® Measure: AD 60L  
Reading Recovery: 17  
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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Little Wolf insists on doing things his way, including starting the book from the back cover. Little Wolf stubbornly wants to wear his pants on his head and eat his dessert first — while standing instead of sitting. But his stubbornness backfires when he escapes out of his window and then encounters a “monster” who chases him through the woods. Little Wolf soon realizes that other people can be topsy-turvy, too, and that sometimes the joke is on you.

## PRE-READING IDEA: MAKING PREDICTIONS

Encourage students to make predictions based on the cover of the book before reading the story. Show the students the cover of the book and ask them, “Why would a character want to start the book at the back instead of the front?” Read the text on the front cover and ask students, “What can happen when you insist on doing things your way?” After discussing the students’ predictions, read the story together.

## THEMES

While the text and illustrations appear simple, the themes address common experiences in the lives of young children: exploration and play behavior, asserting independence, and the need for boundaries for safety and security. The author addresses these themes using humor and portrays a playful father-son relationship, which exists in spite of Little Wolf’s stubbornness. Ask students to think about a time when their parents helped them learn a difficult lesson, just as Little Wolf’s father helps him.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do the illustrations help convey the author’s meaning? How do the text bubbles help the reader understand that the book is written entirely in dialog?
2. How do Little Wolf’s parents respond to his stubbornness? Why doesn’t Little Wolf obey?
3. What happens when Little Wolf climbs out of his bedroom window?

Correlates to Common Core  
Standards (CCSS) Speaking and  
Listening: **SL.K.6**, **SL.1.6**, and **SL.2.6**.

Language: **L.K.1**, **L.1.1**, and **L.2.1**.

Correlates to Common Core  
Standards (CCSS) Speaking and Listening:  
**SL.K.1**, **SL.1.1**, and **SL.2.1**; **SL.K.2**, **SL.1.2**,  
and **SL.2.2**; **SL.K.3**, **SL.1.3**, and **SL.2.3**.

Reading Literature: **RL.K.1**, **RL.1.1**,  
and **RL.2.1**; **RL.K.6**, **RL.1.6**, and **RL.2.6**.

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4. When Little Wolf sees all of his friends running, what is he afraid of? What does Little Wolf think will happen to him?
5. How does Little Wolf's father turn the tables on Little Wolf? What is Little Wolf's reaction to his father's trick?
6. What is the author's purpose in making readers turn the book forward, backward, and upside down?

## WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. After reading and discussing the book, ask students to think of the elements that make a good story, including characters, setting, conflict, and resolution. Discuss with students the story elements in *The Story Starts Here!*. Next, ask students to write about why they either liked or didn't like the book and to explain why. Students should include ideas about the story elements in their answer. Then, ask students to volunteer to read their writing to the class.
2. Give students a white sheet of paper and ask them to write or draw the sequence of events in the order they occurred in the story. Then ask them to use the paper as a springboard to think like Papa Wolf and retell the story to a partner from Papa Wolf's point of view. What would Papa Wolf say about Little Wolf's behavior? Why did he show Little Wolf he was topsy-turvy? Post students' writing and/or drawings in the classroom.
3. Ask students to write a narrative about a time they disobeyed their parents or another caregiver. Have students relate the events in the order that they occurred; the narrative should have a beginning, middle, and end. Ask students to include their reaction to the incident and how their loved one(s) responded. Students can share their writing with the class.
4. In *The Story Starts Here!*, Little Wolf lets his wishes and feelings guide his behavior throughout the story. As a class, brainstorm words that describe Little Wolf at various points in the story (stubborn, playful, inventive, angry, frightened, etc.) and discuss why those words apply. Then, have students select one of the words and write why that word describes Little Wolf. To extend learning, have students create a Little Wolf stick puppet and use the puppets to share their characterization of Little Wolf with the class.

Teaching guide prepared by Susan Geye, Coordinator of Library Services, Everman Independent School District, Everman, Texas.

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Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: **L.K.1, L.1.1,** and **L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2,** and **L.2.2.**

Writing: **W.K.1, W.1.1,** and **W.2.1.**

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: **L.K.1, L.1.1,** and **L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2,** and **L.2.2.**

Writing: **W.K.1, W.1.1,** and **W.2.1.**

Correlates to Common Core Standards (CCSS) Language: **L.K.1, L.1.1,** and **L.2.1; L.K.2, L.1.2,** and **L.2.2.**

Writing: **W.1.3,** and **W.2.3.**