

# Our Dragon

AUTHOR

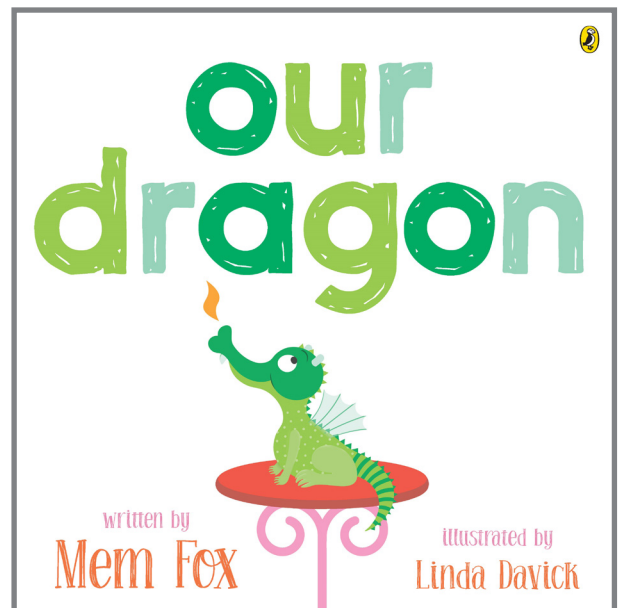
**MEM FOX**

ILLUSTRATOR

**LINDA DAVICK**

SCIS: 5444886

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## SYNOPSIS

Two parents love their brand-new, baby dragon. But he is always breathing fire, especially when he is hungry or tired. Dragon tries not to set any more fires, but things get out of hand when he accidentally coughs up a flame while playing. What can his parents do?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mem Fox is the author of many loved and celebrated picture books, including *Possum Magic* which became the bestselling children's book in Australia. Her more recent books include the perennial favourite *Where is the Green Sheep?* (with Judy Horacek) and *Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes* (with Helen Oxenbury). Mem lives in Adelaide.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Linda Davick is the celebrated illustrator of *What Riley Wore* by Elana K. Arnold, *We Love You, Rosie!* by Cynthia Rylant, and her own *I Love You, Nose!*, *I Love You, Toes!* and *Say Hello!* She lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## STUDY NOTES

### WRITING STYLE

- Discuss the language in the book that helps build a sense of the story and its major themes? eg. These stanzas that are split over two spreads:
 

And his favourite thing—  
how I wish it weren't true—

is breathing out fire  
wherever he goes . . .
- Explain about rhyme, then point out the rhyming words to the children on a few spreads. What are some other words that might rhyme?
  - Ask the children to think up a simple rhyme and share it with the class. You could write a group class poem!
- Discuss the illustrations in the context of the story and how they complement the words and the language to help tell the story. Consider:
  - colour palette
  - facial expressions

- the role of the illustration elements
- how the illustrations create the build-up of the action.
- Draw a baby dragon.

### WHILE READING

- What does the beautiful cover of this book tell us about the story to follow? Who do you think the dragon belongs to?
- Read the blurb on the back and look at the illustration. Do these things tell us it will be a gentle story about family or does it suggest something different? Why?
- Firstly, read the book together, without stopping for questions or to talk about the text. Then, read the book a second time and, with this reading, stop at the front endpapers before you begin the reading. Ask the children why the front endpapers might be bright orange? Now flip to the back endpapers, which are pink. Ask the children to remember that because you'll ask them about it at the end. (ie. Why are they a different colour? How does the orange make them feel and how does the pink make them feel?)
- After reading through a second time, ask the children to describe the dragon's expression on each spread—how do they think he's feeling each time and why? Have they ever felt like that?
- In Spread 3 ('is breathing out fire . . .'), what are some reasons you can see here why playing with fire is dangerous. (Burning shoe; spilling hot drink; breaking vase; frightening mum.)
- Look at Spread 4. ('He doesn't say sorry.') What was dragon eating? Can you identify some of the fruit?
- In Spread 9, ('But clearly despairing . . .') can you see anything in this illustration that tells us about what's happened earlier in the story?
- On the last single page, what things are special about dragon's cot?
- Revisit the question mentioned earlier about why the children think the artist chose to make the final endpapers pink, rather than orange like those at the front.

### AFTER READING

- What does the dragon remind you of?
- How did this story make you feel?
- Did the way that you felt change as the story went on—and particularly when it finished?
- Have you read other stories by Mem Fox? Is this similar or different?