The Aussie Adventures of Alex & Zara

The Farm Holiday

Reading Support and Resources



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Introduction

The purpose of any book is to inform or to entertain. Sometimes you get lucky and a book does both.

We hope you enjoy your time within the world of Alex and Zara, learning about their adventures and discovering the fun and the wonder of world that words can build.

This Reading Support and Resources booklet is to provide some additional information or tips and may enhance your reading experience.

Reading Time

The secret to reading time is time.

It takes time to read a book, to enjoy each page, image and verse and to engage with the child/ren as you go.

Involve the child/ren through out the story, ask the child/ren what they think is going to happen, what is happening or has happened and what they think or feel about the issue or situation.

Be patient and listen to what the child has to say. They have the answers, they have the questions but they may not have the words to articulate their message. Stop and let them tell you in their own time and in their own words. You may be suprised with what these little people think and say.

This eBook is designed to provide you with background material and additional information to the story line.

With a little bit of insight and practice, so much more enjoyment that can be "squeezed" from each book.

Reading the Book

The Book Cover

Ask the child/ren what they think about the cover. Ask them to try to predict the story line from what they see on the cover.

What do they think 'adventures' mean?

Describe Alex.
Describe Zara.

How old do they think Alex is and why have they chosen that age?
How old do they think Zara is and why?

Ask questions about the colours used on the cover.

Discuss the difference between an author and an illustrator.

Each Page

The following section gives some questions for each of the pages. There may also be some background information that can help you gain a "bigger' picture of what is happening.

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Where is Alex?
Can you describe his Surroundings?



Where is Zara?
Can you describe her Surroundings?



Where do you think their parents are ?
Where do you think they work?

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What room are they in?
Who looks excited about going to the farm?
How does he show this?



What can you see here?
What's your favourite flower?



Who greets the family?
Does he look happy?
What is he wearing?

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Describe Grandpa.
What does Grandpa do?
(Eddie is Steve's father)



Describe Grandma.
Where does your Grandma live?
(Rose is Steve's mother)



Name 1 thing in the bedroom.
What do you like about your bedroom?

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Describe your own kitchen.
Does grandma have a microwave?



What can you see in the barn?
Have you been in a barn before?
(The barn is used for storing old equipment)



What animals do you see?
What is your favourite animal?
(Eddie and Rose have a small mixed farm - a little bit of everything)

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What fruit and veggies do you see?
Do you have a veggie garden?
(Our farmer friends have advised that many of the fruit and veggies are fruiting in the wrong season. You may wish to talk about only getting veggies at certain times of the year)



Describe your own bedroom.
Do you have your own bedroom?



How do the children feel when their parents leave?
What makes you feel sad?
(Steve and Kate have dropped the children off for the summer holidays. They go to work)

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Who is Sally?
Do you have a dog?



Does this look like your clothesline?
Describe the differences.



Why is there a snake in the picture?
Are all snakes green?
(Grandma is bitten by a snake. We included this not to frighten the child/ren but to make them aware that snakes are a very real part of the Australian bush and country life.)

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What happened?
What do you do if someone is bitten by a snake?
(The medical advice of how to treat a snake bite has evolved over time. Please make sure you and the child/ren know the latest technique)



What do you see in the picture?
Where is Grandma going?



Where do they go after the snake bite?
Where is Sally?
(Sally is in the truck)



Dr Jane - what do you think she says or does?
Have you been to a doctor's surgery before?



How do the children help Grandma?
Have you been sick in bed before?
(A couple of days have passed, and Grandma has been well looked after)



Where is Grandma now?
What is on the kitchen table?

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Who is helping in the garden?
What are they doing?



How many eggs do Alex and Zara collect?
What do you do with eggs?



What can you see here?
Where is Alex & Zara?
What is a windmill?

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What can you see?
What do they do with the horse?



Describe what you think happens in a dairy.
Have you ever seen a cow?



What food do they have to eat for the celebration?
What is your favourite food?



Why are they so tired?
Is sleep important?



What do they hear?
What news could it be?
Good or bad?
(The call is from Kate. They will visit the farm shortly but their work requires them to stay much longer than they thought. Can the children stay for the school year?)



Guess what news Grandma has.
What is Zara feeling?
(Grandma is trying to put a good spin on the bad news. Not everybody is happy)



Who arrives?
What do they bring?
(Mum and dad have arrived - a surprise visit)



What's happening now?
What job does Kate and Steve do?
(Kate and Steve are archaelogists and they have made a very important discovery. A subsequent book will be about Alex and Zara visiting the archaelogical site)



What is the family discussing?
Why are they sitting under a tree?
(Family time to explain to Alex and Zara that they need to stay of the farm and go to school)

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Do you like saying goodbye?
Have you been on an airplane?
(We decided not to have any people in this image - just an empty departure lounge; everybody has left)



What is Alex saying to Zara?
How do they feel?
(The story will continue with Alex and Zara discovering the farm, the surrounding envirnoment, the local town and lots of different people. It will be an interesting year)

After Reading the Book

When the book is finished, take the time to review the book with the child/ren. Talk about what happened, and what they think or feel about it.

Again ask questions and get the child/ren to talk -

- What do they notice about the words in the story?
- Rhyming and Four lines prose
- Why do you think the author has chosen to write in verses to tell the story of Alex & Zara?
- What is your favourite part of the story?
- Who has been to a farm?

Possible Activities

- Give the farm a name
- Tell us about your adventures whilst on the farm.
- Write a sentence / story about their own adventure on a farm.
- Who are the main characters in the book?
- What role do they play in the book? eg: Rose is their Grandma.
- Draw a picture of your favourite part of the story.

Song Lyrics

Old MacDonald

Old MacDonald had a farm Ee i ee i o
And on his farm he had some cows Ee i ee i oh
With a moo-moo here And a moo-moo there
Here a moo, there a moo Everywhere a moo-moo
Old MacDonald had a farm Ee i ee i o
Old MacDonald had a farm Ee i ee i o

And on his farm he had some chicks Ee i ee i o
With a cluck-cluck here And a cluck-cluck there
Here a cluck, there a cluck Everywhere a cluck-cluck
Old MacDonald had a farm Ee i ee i o
Old MacDonald had a farm Ee i ee i o

And on his farm he had some pigs Ee i ee i o
With an oink-oink here And an oink-oink there
Here an oink, there an oink Everywhere an oink-oink
Old MacDonald had a farm Ee i ee i o

Source: LyricFind
Songwriters: George Noriega / Joel Someillan / Traditional

Bingo

Change the names of the animals/people in the song to those in the book- eg. “There was a farmer had a dog and Sally was its name O. S-A-L-L-Y, S-A-L-LY, S-A-L-L-Y and Sally was its Name-O”.

Continue with Molly the cow then Henry the horse

Example of this song and you can hear the tune at - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hWcv6fGe9w

Games

There are a number of games that that are relevant and applicable to the farm theme - too many to list them all. However, we have selected "Duck, Duck, Goose" which is always popular.

'Duck, Duck Goose'

The children form a circle sitting crossed legged on the ground.

One child is chosen to stand up and go around behind the children sitting, to tap them on the shoulder choosing to say Duck or goose.

Typically the child will say "Duck". However, when the child says 'Goose', (usually after 4 or 5 children), the child tapped on the shoulder gets up and runs after the initial child who runs around the circle trying to get to the 2nd child's space.

Whoever gets to the space first is the winner and the other child starts the game again by walking around behind the others repeating the "Duck or Goose".

Glossary

Absence	A description list is perfect for defining terms.
Ancient	Very old
Adventure	exciting and probably risky effort
Aroma	A nice smell, usually from cooking
Attic	Room upstairs, above the rest of the house
Bales	Bundles of dried grass, hay or straw
Beware	Look out for something bad or dangerous
Chore	Jobs or task that need to be done around the house
Complain	Express strong dissatisfaction about something
Curds and whey	Parts of the milk - Often used for cheesemaking
Discover	See for the first time
Dalmatian	Type of dog with black and white spots
Eagerly	With excitement
Eases her mind	Relaxes
Exhaustion	Extremely tired
family huddle	Family get together in a circle and hug
Galore	A lot
Generator	A machine that makes electricity
Gentle deeds	Showing manners
Grow and thrive	Increase in size and to prosper - be successful
Halt	Stop immediately
Jolt	Abrupt /violent movement: a sudden impact
Kind	Nice, helpful to other people
Memories	Remembering the past
Nimble	Quick and light in movement
Nurturing	Very caring; help to grow

Glossary (cont.)

Plight	A dangerous or difficult situation
Pride	A feeling of deep pleasure
Quilt	Fabric squares sewed together
Rare	Unusual
Sawdust	Left over from woodwork; shavings dust
Siblings	Brother and sister
Slithering	Sliding, slipping.
Spell	Words believed to have magical force
Steady pace	Walks evenly
Strive	Works hard to achieve something
Tastes divine	Tastes very good
Tomboy	Girl acting like a boy
Trail	A path through a countryside or mountain
Tweet	a post made on Twitter (now X)
Windmill	Pumps water from the ground, operated by the wind