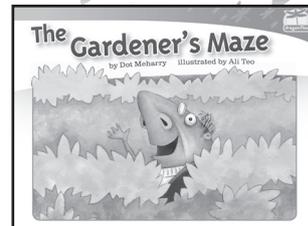


The Gardener's Maze

by Dot Meharry

illustrated by Ali Teo



Overview

In this humorous narrative, the gardener designs and builds a maze with help from a friendly hedgehog! This text is a follow-up to the Dragonflies emergent title *The Gardener* and a companion text to the early title *The Gardener and the Scarecrow*.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of setting a purpose for reading and following steps in a process. Variety in the sentence structures means that the students will need to attend to punctuation to develop phrasing and fluent reading.

Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the variety of initial consonant blends
- the "all" rime – *all, small, tall*
- the silent "e" – *made, make, maze*
- the -ed verb ending
- the irregular past-tense verbs – *came, got, grew, made, put, sat, saw, went*
- the variety of word endings – *garden, gardener, gardening, planting, plants*
- the possessive apostrophe in the title
- the use of repetition for effect
- the use of commas to support phrasing
- the variety of sentence beginnings – *at last ..., day after day ..., one wet day ..., the next day ...*
- the element of fantasy introduced by the cartoon style illustrations and the hedgehog companion
- the humorous ending

Setting the scene

Tell the students you have another book about the gardener for them to read. They will be familiar with him from *The Gardener*. Find out how much the students know about mazes. Show them a photograph or an example on paper and follow it together. Explain that mazes can also be made from plants or wood and that people go in them for fun. *Have you ever been in one?*

In this book, the gardener builds a maze. Let's read to find out how he does it.

The first reading

Look at the cover. Ask the students to read the title. *Why is the apostrophe there?* Read the names of the author and the illustrator.

Back cover – Read aloud the preview question. Lead a discussion to build the students' background knowledge.

Title page – *What is the gardener looking at?*

Page 2 – *Why isn't the gardener out in his garden? What's he doing?* Listen for phrasing and fluency as the students read this page. If necessary, draw their attention to the comma and reread the sentence together.

Listen to the students read the text to themselves, offering support as necessary.

Page 3 – Check that the students understand what a hedge is.

Page 4 – You may need to recall the previous discussion about mazes. *What is this maze made from?*

Page 5 – *Why is it important to make a plan?* Note that there are several designs.

Page 6 – The students will need to focus on the visual information to work out each word on the list. You may need to discuss what the pegs are for.

Page 7 – *What's the first thing you would do?*

Page 9 – *Why is he putting in the pegs?*

Page 10 – *Why would the rows need to be straight?*

Page 11 – If necessary, refer back to the list on page 6 for support.

Page 12 – Talk about the difference between hedge plants and hedges.

Page 13 – Note that the gardener is clipping the hedges to keep them tidy. Refer back to the picture of the maze on page 4.

Page 16 – *Who is the gardener crying out to?* Savour the humorous ending!

Encourage the students to think critically: *How could he have stopped himself from getting lost? Was it a good idea to make a maze?* Ask the students to help the gardener find his way out of the maze.

Ideas for revisiting the text (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Listen as the students reread the text to themselves, observing their attention to the print details and punctuation and their fluency and expression. If they're not fluent, give them more support by rereading the text with them, modelling expressive reading.
- Focus on any initial consonant blends that the students may have been unsure of. Locate examples in the text and make a list of other words that start the same way.
- Ask the students to find the words that have "all" in them on pages 11 and 13. Ask the students to create other words by substituting initial letters or consonant blends. Read the list together. Remind the students about the strategy of looking for the biggest familiar "chunk" when faced with unfamiliar words.
- List the verbs in the text that end with "ed". Read the list together. Compare these words with some of the irregular verbs. *Would "sitted" sound right?* Draw out the idea that "ed" endings don't work for all verbs and that it's helpful if the students call on their knowledge of oral language to support them in their reading.
- Focus on "made" and "tape". Identify the final "e". *The e's "job" is to make the vowel say its name.* Illustrate with "mad" and "made", "tap" and "tape".
- Focus on the "er" and "ing" endings in "gardener" and "gardening". Identify the root word. *What would the word be if we added "s" at the end? Or "ed"?* Repeat the activity with "plant".

- Revisit pages 2, 7, and 12. *How do you know when the gardener looked at this gardening book or went into his garden?* Make a list of the phrases that indicate time. Display them for the students to use in their own writing.
- Work through the book, focusing on the illustrations, especially the role of the hedgehog. *Could this story be true?* Ask the students to comment on the style of the illustrations.

Suggestions for further activities

- Read the other books about the gardener.
- Make a flow chart of the process of making a maze.
- Design a maze.
- Make a maze out of blocks, then give oral instructions to a partner to get through it.
- BLM word activity: generate other words using their knowledge of a rime
The students can think of eight words that rhyme with “all” and write them in the boxes.
- BLM comprehension activity: follow instructions in a text
The students can read the instructions. They can cut out the instructions and place them in order on a piece of paper.