
Martha Speaks

Author/Illustrator:
Susan Meddaugh

Target vocabulary:
talk

Repeated storyline:
**A talking dog is
a surprise!**

Lexile score: 420

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Materials

- Anticipatory set item (e.g., alphabet soup, a stuffed dog, a cell phone or old telephone to dial 9-1-1)
- **Students Materials**, pages X-X
- Highlighter
- Post-it® flags
- Materials for highlighting title and author/illustrator (see page X)
- Repeated storyline stickers: *A talking dog is a surprise!*

Optional Materials

- AAC device preprogrammed with response options: *talk*, *turn the page*, *A talking dog is a surprise!* *surprise* (optional)
- Pointer/light pointer
- Eyegaze board
- Materials for fluffing pages (see page X)

Prepare the Book

1. Number the pages. Page 1 starts, “The day Helen gave Martha dog her alphabet soup,”
2. Prepare what might be needed to help students turn the pages (see page X).
3. Underline or outline the title and the author/illustrator (see page X).
4. Use a Post-it flag to mark page 7 as the text-pointing page.
5. Use a highlighter to mark the vocabulary word *talk* where it occurs on pages 4, 11, and 19.
6. Stick the repeated storyline stickers, *A talking dog is a surprise!* on pages 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 29, and 30.
7. You might opt to “overwrite” the words *Shut Up!* on page 18 with the words *Be Quiet!* Tape a sheet of paper on page 18 and rewrite the text.



Tips

- There are a few vocabulary words in this story that students may not be familiar with. When possible, to enrich the students' vocabulary, remember to add (insert while reading) a synonym—a familiar word or words—when reading vocabulary that may be unfamiliar. Examples:

page 1

... Helen gave Martha dog her alphabet soup—*letters soup*, . . .

page 2

... something unusual—*something* strange—happened.

page 3

That evening—*that night*—Martha spoke.

page 5

... a regular part of Martha's diet—*Martha's food*, . . .

page 8

... more than pizza was being delivered—*being brought to their house!*

page 9

Family and friends were amazed—*surprised*.

- You will find many activities on the web for adding to this story reading. Simply search for *Martha Speaks* activities.



Lesson

1. Engage the students with the anticipatory set.

Hold up the stuffed dog (or the can of alphabet soup, (telephone, etc.)). Tie the object to the story. Explain you will read a story about a dog, named Martha, that talks.

Introduce students to the word *talk*. Explain that the words *talk* and *speak* mean the same thing. Show students the picture/text for talk in the Student Materials and say, **Our vocabulary word today is talk. This is a picture showing a person talking and this is the word talk** (point to the text). **Say talk. Touch the picture of the person talking. Touch the word talk.**

Encourage students to touch the picture for talk while you describe what it means to talk (e.g., People talk to each other to tell them something, to tell each other how they feel, some people talk with a device, some talk with words, some talk using sign language). Make reference to information about talking that the students might be familiar with.



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2. Read the title.

Show students the cover of the book. Give each student an opportunity to point to/say the title.

3. Read the author/illustrator's name.

Give each student an opportunity to say/point to the author's/illustrator's name.

4. Model opening the book.

Pass the book (upside down if desired) to one student as an opportunity to open it (1) without being told, or (2) with a prompt if necessary.

5. Ask a prediction question.

Say, **What do you think the story will be about?** Give each student an opportunity to answer the prediction question orally or using the Student Materials. Write their responses on notes to remember their predictions.



*Read the story in its entirety. While reading, sweep your finger under the text moving left-to-right, and line-by-line or word-by-word, depending on the skill level of your students. Give students an opportunity to anticipate turning the page without being told. Pause after reading a page to give students an opportunity to say to turn the page or ask for help to turn the page. You can prompt students by asking, **What can we do to keep our story going?***

6. Read the repeated storyline.

After reading the story once, go back and read it again. Give students an opportunity to anticipate the repeated storyline on pages 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 29, and 30. When reading the repeated storyline, pause before the storyline *A talking dog is a surprise!* and wait to have students say it. If no response, model saying the repeated storyline for them and give them an opportunity to imitate you.

If a student cannot say the entire repeated storyline, say the first part of the storyline, and have the student say the last word, **A talking dog is a _____!** Have each student complete the sentence orally, by using an AAC device programmed with the word *family*, or by pointing to the picture/text of surprise in the Student Materials.





7. Identify the vocabulary.

Also when reading a page with the word *talk* highlighted, have each student point to/say the vocabulary word on the page. Point to the word talk and say, **This is the word talk. Say talk. What word? Talk. Yes, this is the word talk.** Give each student an opportunity to point to/say the word talk. Remind the children of it means to talk is and point to the picture/text for talk in the Student Materials.

8. Point to text while reading.

When reaching page 7, read and model pointing to the line of text:

They taught Martha how to use
the phone.

But this was a mistake.

Give each student an opportunity to point to the text on the text-pointing page while you read it. Say, **Read with me.** Have each student point to the text going from left-to-right and top-to-bottom while you read it.

Use the Student Materials page for students who need larger text for pointing.

9. Have students indicate to turn the page.

Continue to read the story. Throughout the reading, give students an opportunity to anticipate turning the page without being told. Also pause after reading a page to give students an opportunity to turn the page or ask for help to turn the page. Prompt students by asking, **“How can I keep the story going?”**

10. Ask comprehension questions.

At the end of the story reading, close the book and look at the cover. Ask, **What was our story about?** Have each student respond orally or by using the Student Materials. Prompt each student to respond. Compare student responses to their earlier predictions.

Then, ask at least one other comprehension question of each student. Choose a literal or inferential question and return to the page(s) with the related information. Ask the question immediately after reading the sentence(s) with the answer in it.

(Remember that the answers to literal questions are given in the story but the answers to inferential questions go beyond what is given.)

Have students respond orally or by pointing to responses in the Student Materials. Support students' comprehension using scaffolding questions as needed.



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		Type of Question	
Question	Page #	Literal	Inferential
What kind of animal was Martha?	1	X	
What did Martha do that other dogs cannot do?	3	X	
What made Martha speak?	1-3		X
How often did Martha eat alphabet soup?	5		X
When Martha's family told her to be quiet how did she feel?	19		X
What did Martha do when she saw the burglar?	25	X	

11. Review vocabulary.

Review the vocabulary word *talk*. Say, **Today you learned a new word. Your new word was talk.** Point to each picture of talk in the Student Materials while you say, **This is a picture of talk, and this is talk, and this is talk.** Point to the word talk and say, **And this is the word talk. Say talk. Now, you point to talk.** Give each student an opportunity to point the all three pictures of talk and the word talk.

Turn to the next pages in the Student Materials, which show talk and three other illustrations. Say, **I wonder if I can trick you. Point to the picture of talk.** Give each student an opportunity to point to the picture of talk, turning the pages as you ask.

