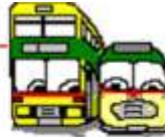


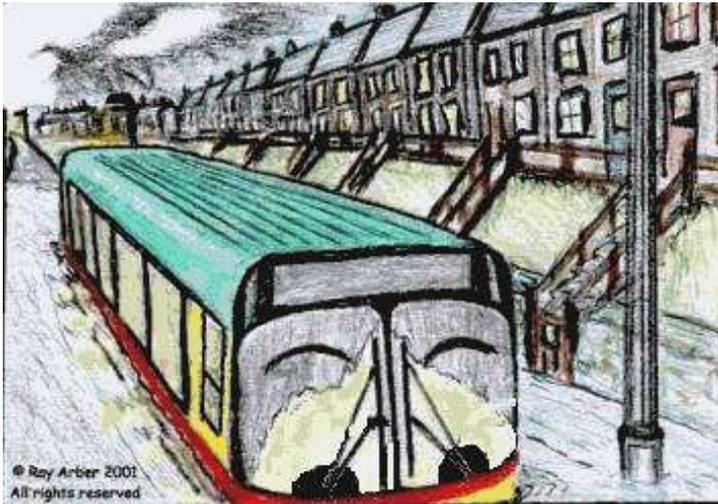
The Buses of Sunnydown Garage



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Dennis goes swimming

Dennis goes swimming.



Do you believe a bus can swim?

Geoff tells a tale about the day he went swimming.

Dennis is determined to show Geoff that he can swim as well so that they can be friends.

However, things do not go as Dennis plans and it appears Geoff may not have been telling the whole truth!



Say "hello" to Dennis.

Dennis is new to the Sunnydown Garage and hopes he will soon be very busy.

He is trying very hard to make friends with all the other Sunnydown buses, including Grumpy Geoff.



This is Grumpy Geoff.

Geoff has been at the Sunnydown Garage for a long time and he is getting old.

Geoff does not like mornings and he is often in a bad mood especially when he is having a busy day.

Grumpy Geoff sends clouds of black smoke into the air when he is in a bad mood, which makes everyone cough.



Dennis is trying very hard to make friends with Geoff, but for some reason Geoff does not seem to like him.

Whenever they meet, Dennis always says a cheerful "Hello," but Geoff just roars away, leaving Dennis coughing in a cloud of black smoke.

"I only want to be his friend," Dennis splutters afterwards.

Do you think Geoff is being very nice to Dennis?



Geoff does not really want to be horrible to Dennis, but he thinks that he will not be needed now that Dennis is around.

"Dennis will be better than me at everything and I will have to leave the garage," Geoff mutters to himself.

Geoff and Dennis do not know that something is going to happen very soon which will help them get along better.



The next day was a rainy day with lots of thunder and lightning. Geoff had been very busy and now he was very cold and very wet. That had put him into a bad mood yet again.

The rain reminded Geoff about the accident he recently had with a police car. That had also happened when it was raining and he was in a bad mood.

All the buses in the garage knew about this accident except for Dennis, and Geoff was going to make sure he did not find out about it.



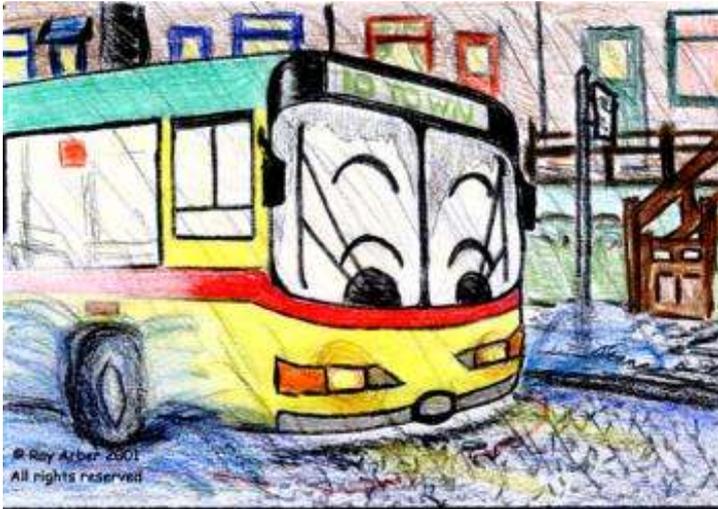
That evening Dennis was feeling a little bit scared. Rain was pounding on the roof of the garage and thunder boomed outside. The other buses decided to help Dennis by telling him about the many adventures they had all had.

Geoff was worried that Dennis would hear the story of his accident with the police car. To stop that happening Geoff started talking about the day of the Sunnydown flood.

"All the buses got stuck, except for me because I can swim," he boasted.

Dennis's eyes opened wide as he listened to Geoff's tale.

Do you think Dennis should believe Geoff's story?



The next morning it was still raining as hard as ever with thunder so loud it rattled the garage roof.

There were deep, cold puddles of rainwater everywhere.

Dennis had never seen so much rain and he was very excited as he started work.

"I hope I am going to be very busy today making sure my passengers all arrive dry and warm," he thought to himself.



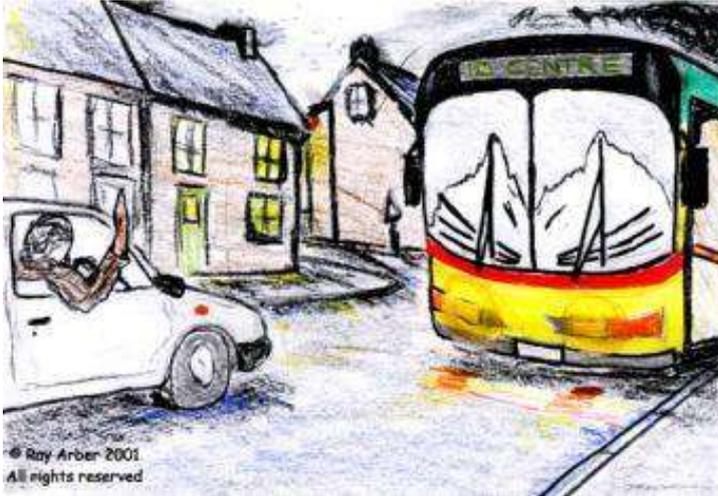
After Dennis had left the garage, Alice the double-decker bus told Geoff off.

"That story you told last night was not true," she said.

"You never went swimming at all – you were just stuck in a very large puddle! Dennis only wants to be your friend but you are not at all nice to him," she snapped before driving away.

Geoff was left behind feeling very miserable.

Do you think Alice was right to tell off Geoff?



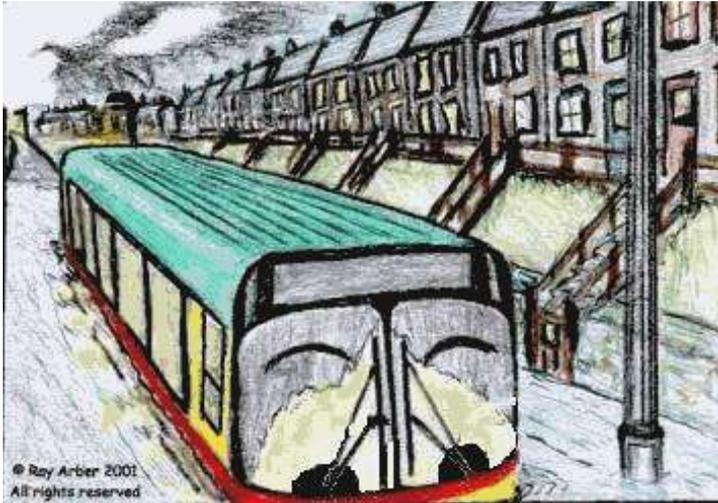
Dennis was still very excited as he drove through the rain.

"Perhaps Geoff will be able to teach me to swim and then we could be friends," he thought as he splashed through yet another large puddle.

However, Dennis did not like lightning and every time there was a flash, he squeezed his eyes tightly shut. This meant he did not see a car driver urgently waving to him.

An extra loud clap of thunder also meant he did not hear the car driver shout, "STOP, the road ahead is flooded!"

Do you like thunder and lightning?



When Dennis finally opened his eyes, the road had disappeared and all he could see was dark water.

'SPLOOSH!' He drove straight into it, and the water was very cold.

"Look, I can swim," he gasped.

However, the water was very deep and soon his passengers had to stand on their seats to stop their feet from getting wet.

Before long, Dennis's busy bus engine spluttered and he came to a shuddering halt.



It was not long before Dennis's heaters and lights stopped working as well. His passengers soon began to feel very cold and damp.

They all had to wait a very long time before the fire service rescued them.

None of the passengers was at all impressed with Dennis's attempt at swimming.



Dennis waited even longer before Big Jim, the garage tow truck, finally arrived to pull him out of the water. He had been very busy rescuing some of the other buses.

Big Jim was laughing as he towed Dennis back to the garage.

"I remember the same thing happening to Geoff at the same place," he chuckled and then told Dennis the true story of what had happened to Geoff.

Dennis just could not believe his ears. "I thought Geoff could swim," he spluttered.



That evening a very cold Dennis was almost asleep underneath Geoff's favourite garage heater. Geoff pulled up alongside him.

All the other buses were very quiet as they waited to hear what Grumpy Geoff might say.

"Big Jim tells me you swam further today than I ever did," he said. "Well done!" and smiled for the first time since Dennis arrived at the garage.

That night Geoff told Dennis lots more of his adventure stories. All of them were true, including the story about his accident with the police car.

"I don't think I will try to copy that!" Dennis laughed.



Geoff and Dennis are now friends and always flash their headlights to say "hello" whenever they meet.

As for 'not being needed', well Geoff remained as busy and, I have to say, as grumpy as ever. Although having Dennis around does also mean that Geoff is able to rest in the garage more often.

He is very pleased about that I can tell you!

What does this story teach us?

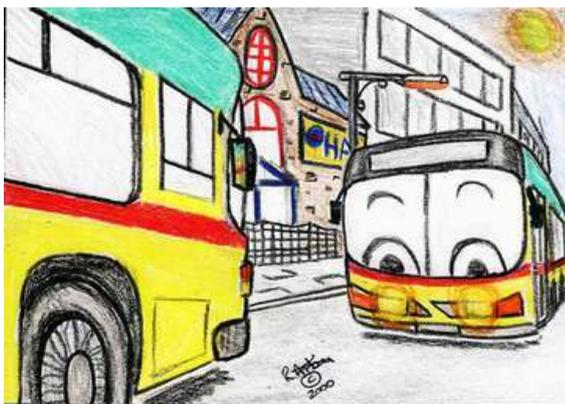
Making new friends.



In this story, a new bus arrives at the Sunnydown Garage. He does not know anyone and tries to make friends with all the other buses as quickly as he can. However, not all the buses want to be his friend straight away - can you think why that might be?

It is always hard when you are new and do not have any friends. You may have moved house or joined a new school or class and need to try to fit in with everyone else. Some people find that very easy to do, and others find it harder to become part of a new group.

You must remember that it can also be hard for those already in the group and some may even feel that you will take away their friends.



Letter sounds.

Some words in this story have similar groups of letters that make different sounds.

The groups of letters to look for are US.

You will see these letters in the word BUS, where the two letters together sound like 'us', and BUSY where the two letters together sound like 'iz'.

Try saying these two words and look out for them in the story.

Use your phonics grid to help you with any other words in the story that you do not know.

Use these pictures to write your own story.



Title picture



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5

Additional notes for parents, carers or teachers.

Themes to explore in the story



There are a number of things to be explored in this story around making new friends. It can be hard for young children to fit into new groups, especially if they are shy or lack confidence. Throughout their time at school, children will have to make new friends when they move to a new year group and class or move to a school.

However, the story also explores how existing members of a group may feel when somebody new arrives. Often, they can also feel insecure and threatened and behaviour may appear aggressive.

Discuss this and see if you have any real examples you can use.