



Billie B. Brown: The Birthday Mix-up

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Illustrated by Aki Fukuoka

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Design their own birthday invitation.
- Write a list.
- Write a simple instructional text.
- Write a description of their ideal birthday breakfast.

About the Story:

It's almost Billie's birthday and her mom and dad have agreed to let her have a birthday party. With ten noisy friends invited and a list of party games to play, Billie counts the sleeps until her very special day. But while Billie can barely contain her excitement, she's also a little worried – what if nobody comes to her birthday party?

But when her birthday finally arrives, Billie's excitement overrides any worries she had about her friends forgetting her birthday. Instead, with minutes to go before her party begins, Billie puts on her special party dress and, together with her best friend, Jack, she waits outside for her guests to arrive. But as the minutes tick by, Billie's excitement turns to despair and her special day swiftly turns into the worst birthday ever. As a tearful Billie and her mom try to determine why no one has arrived, Jack suddenly recalls a detail on the party invitation that explains why her guests are so late. Billie's tears quickly turn to giggles and she goes on to enjoy the best party ever!

Before You Read the Story:

Read the title of the story. Invite students to predict what the birthday mix-up entails and list their ideas. Turn to the back cover and read the blurb aloud. Invite students to share the details of their last birthday party. Ask students to recall how they felt prior to people arriving at their party and whether or not they had any concerns about their special gathering.

Questions and Activities:

Chapter One

- How many friends is Billie allowed to invite to her party? How many friends does Billie want to invite and why won't Billie's parents agree to this?
- "Oh, dear. What a headache!" What causes Billie to think this?
- What important information is included on Billie's birthday invitation? Is there any additional information you would include?

Activity: Inform students that they will spend time planning for their next birthday party. Give students time to consider the kind of party they would like to host. Encourage students to share their ideas. Then show students a variety of birthday invitations and ask them to identify the key elements of an invitation. Using the templates for inspiration, have students design a birthday invitation for their next birthday and complete the invitation with the details of the planned party. Publish and display invitations.



Chapter Two

- Why did Billie's teacher ask if Billie ate jumping beans for breakfast?
- Billie has a list of games that she wants to play at her party. What is your favorite party game or activity?
- What is Billie most worried about happening on the day of her birthday party?

Activity: Refer students to page 17 and discuss the ideas that are on Billie's list of party games. Invite students to identify their favorite party games, listing all the ideas offered. Ask students to choose a game they are familiar with and create a simple set of instructions on how to play it. Model how to write an instructional text with a very familiar party game and leave on display for students to refer to. Publish and bind work and read aloud one game each day. Offer students the opportunity to play this game, take photos that are then printed and attached to the relevant instructional text.

Chapter Three

- What do Billie and Jack do on the morning of Billie's birthday party?
- What time is Billie's party supposed to begin?
- Where do Billie and Jack wait for the guests to arrive?

Activity: Refer students to pages 27-28 on which Billie sits down to her special birthday breakfast at Jack's house. Ask students to brainstorm and write a short description of the breakfast they would choose for their special birthday breakfast.

Chapter Four

- "This is the worst birthday ever." What causes Billie to think this?
- Why are Billie's friends all so late to her birthday party? How did this happen?
- Who realized that a mix-up was the reason for Billie's friends not arriving at her party on time?

Activity: Note the picture of Billie enjoying her birthday party on page 43 and conclude that indeed, Billie enjoyed the best party ever. Ask students to imagine that they are responsible for planning their next birthday party. Working to the title of "My Best Ever Birthday Party," students decide on their venue, cake, outfit, games, guests, music and food. After sharing their ideas with a partner, students should record their ideas using the simple sentence starter, "My best ever party would have ...". Each element of the party should have its own picture and sentence. Once complete, bind pictures within a cover designed by students and keep in the library corner. Some examples of responses might be: My best ever party would be held at the beach. At my best ever party, I would have a big chocolate cake with sprinkles and candles. At my best ever party, I would wear boots and my sparkly skirt.

Teacher Tips adapted from Hardie Grant Egmont.