



Billie B. Brown: The Extra-special Helper

By Sally Rippin, Illustrated by Aki Fukuoka

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Engage with the characters.
- Explore the concept of responsibility and the positive and negative things it entails.
- Develop letter-writing skills.
- Identify and discuss a range of emotions and how they are conveyed.
- Consider the qualities and actions that epitomize a good friend.

About the Story:

Billie and her class are off on a field trip to the zoo. Billie is especially excited because she has been chosen to be Ms. Walton's extra-special helper. Billie really wants to do a good job, but she soon learns that having such an important responsibility is not as easy or as enjoyable as she thought! However, when Billie gets lost, she wishes for an extra-special helper of her own.

Before You Read the Story:

Read the title of the story to the group. Now invite students to discuss the picture above the title and ask: What extra-special job might Billie have in this story?

Now turn to the back cover and read the blurb aloud. Ask: What would an extra-special helper do on a field trip to the zoo?

Questions and Activities:

Chapter One

- How does Billie feel about being an extra-special helper? Is there any job that you have done that has made you feel this proud?
- Billie usually sits with her best friend, Jack. Why wasn't she sitting with Jack on the bus?
- What is Billie's first task as Ms. Walton's extra-special helper?
- When Billie asks the boys to stop being so noisy, Benny and Sam look at Jack. Why do you think they do this?

Activity: In this story, the "B" in Billie B. Brown stands for Bossy. Take the first letter of your middle name and give yourself a new middle name. Write it down along with a short explanation about why you have chosen this new name.

Chapter Two

- Look at the illustration on page 14. How do you think Jack feels about Billie's instruction about the clipboards? Why do you think he feels this way?
- What makes Billie feel a teensy bit jealous? Have you ever felt jealous? Write about a time when you have felt this way.
- "Billie scrunches up her forehead." What does this tell you about Billy's feelings? What makes her feel this way?



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Activity: Billie's job as Ms. Walton's extra-special helper makes her feel very important. Can you describe something you have done that has made you feel very important?

Chapter Three

- What does Billie notice at the monkey enclosure? What does she think about this?
- Billie almost forgets to do her very important job. What distracts Billie?
- "Billie feels all jumbled up inside." What does this mean and why do you think that Billie feels this way?

Activity: Silly, happy, jumbled up, cross – these are some of the feelings that Billie and Jack feel during this part of the story. Write down each feeling and write a short sentence about a time you have felt this way.

Chapter Four

- Billie has been left behind! How did Billie become lost?
- Just when Billie feels that she is going to cry, a face appears. Who does the face belong to?
- When Jack finds Billie he says, "Come on. You're holding everyone up!" This makes Billie blush. Why?
- Earlier in the story, Jack called Billie bossy and acted very cross with her. How does he feel now? Does he really think that Billie is bossy?
- "I think I need my own extra-special helper." Why does Billie think this?

Activity: Best friends help each other when they get stuck. What are some other things best friends do for each other? List your ideas. Now write a letter to one of your best friends thanking them for some of the important things they do for you.

Teacher Tips adapted from Hardie Grant Egmont.