

Horton Hears a Who, by Dr. Seuss

Introduce yourself. What is your reaction to the book?

March 2 is National Read Across America Day. The day was established by the National Education Association (NEA) in 1998 to help get kids excited about reading. The day occurs each year on the birthday children's book author Dr. Seuss. On National Read Across America Day, students, teachers, parents, and community members around the nation come together to read books and celebrate the joy of reading.

Theodor Seuss Geisel was an American children's author, political cartoonist, illustrator, poet, animator, and filmmaker. He is known for his work writing and illustrating more than 60 books under the pen name Dr. Seuss. His work includes many of the most popular children's books of all time, selling over 600 million copies and being translated into more than 20 languages by the time of his death in 1991.

Re-read the book with your group.

sour - can mean bad-tempered or grumpy (as in sourpuss - a grumpy person; always frowning).

or bust: or collapse from the effort; - used in phrases expressing determination to do something;
EX: Oregon or bust, meaning "We will get to Oregon or die trying."

safe and sound: free from danger or injury; "the children were found safe and sound"

clear as a bell: Pure as the sound of a bell; also, readily understood. For example, Did you understand the message I left you? Yes, it was clear as a bell.

vigor and vim: (This expression is always said "vim and vigor" - Dr. Seuss changed the order so it would rhyme.) energy; enthusiasm

hullabaloo: A loud noise or a condition of noisy confusion

shirk: to avoid doing something that you are supposed to do

ruckus: a noisy argument, fight, etc.

twerp: someone who is stupid or annoying

Discussion questions:

What lesson might a child hear in this story?

As an adult, do you understand the story differently than a child would understand it?

What are some of the main ideas or themes in the story? Give examples.

This book was first published in 1954. Is the message still relevant today?

How would you describe Horton's personality and character?

Can you think of a time when you were young or small or vulnerable and someone protected you or you protected someone who was vulnerable?

We have a saying, "Seeing is believing." It means that if you see something yourself, you will believe it to exist or be true, especially if it is extremely unusual or unexpected.

EX: I never thought Mark would get out of bed before lunchtime on a Saturday, but seeing is believing!

How could this saying apply to the story?

Dr. Seuss said in an interview that the part of the story when the little boy stands up and says, "Yop!" is about voting. Every vote is important. The United States usually has low participation in elections. What about your home country? Do you agree that it is important for everyone to vote? Are you eligible to vote in the United States? Have you voted here?

What is your opinion of the illustrations? Do you have a favorite?