

## ***Horton Hatches the Egg***

*Dr. Seuss*

*Random House, Inc., New York, 1940/1968.*



## **Read Aloud**

Since the virtues and values in this narrative poem are timeless and ageless, the book is appropriate for students from kindergarten through 5th grade. The kindergartners will enjoy the rhyme and whimsical images Dr. Seuss so ably conjures. The 4th and 5th graders will enjoy the rich character description involving personal virtues of persistence and patience.

### **Themes**

Courage to face fears and adversity

Taking care of those in need

Being honest and keeping ones promises

Sticking to a plan of action until the end: “An elephant’s faithful one hundred per cent.” Invite discussion on personal experiences with the above universal themes—all of which build character.

*Horton Hatches the Egg* can be read in twelve minutes for enjoyment while emphasizing the rhyming patterns and words pertaining to character building. There are several quotes from various story parts which may be isolated and discussed relative to the themes:

*Courage to face fears and adversity:*

Natural disasters: “And he sat all that night through a terrible storm.”

Peer Conflicts: “They taunted. They teased him.”

Fear of the hunters “Did he run? He did not!”

*Taking care of those in need:*

Horton was “gentle and kind;” “so faithful, so kind.”

“Carefully, tenderly, gently he crept up the trunk to the nest where the little egg slept.”  
“I’ll stay on this egg and I won’t let it freeze.”

*Being honest and keeping ones promises:*

“I meant what I said and I said what I meant. An elephant’s faithful 100 percent.”

*Sticking to a plan of action until the end:*

“No matter WHAT happens this egg must be tended!”  
“From an egg that he’d sat on for fifty-one weeks!”

Children will become aware of figurative language where literal interpretation is not enough:

“held his head high and he threw out his chest”  
“my word!”  
“face white as chalk!”  
“bobbing around like a cork”  
“folks flocked to see...”  
“he turned with a start!”  
“I give you my word”  
“heavy heart”

## Narrative

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### Episodic Structure

*Multiple Episodes.* Since the setting changes from jungle to a circus and back again, there are multiple episodes in this story.

There is also a “story within a story:” Mayzie and her escapades within Horton’s ordeals.

This aspect makes the structure complex.

There are six Initiating Events which signal five episodes and each one causes Horton to have an internal response (feeling). In some instances he puts forth a plan of action.

- 1) Mayzie asks him to watch the egg. (*feels responsible and decides he must sit on the egg*)
- 2) Peers tease him. (*feels hurt, but plans to continue sitting on the egg even though he is laughed at*)
- 3) Hunters (poachers) threaten his life. (*feels fear, but decides to put up a brave front*)

- 4) Greedy hunters sell him to the circus. (*feels sadness in response to the trip and the jeering*)
- 5) Mayzie demanded the egg back. (*feels a sad, heavy heart*)
- 6) The elephant-egg hatches! (*feels surprise and joy*)

The above six initiating events all have a different feeling associated with them. Give children an initiating event and ask them to state Horton's feeling and also to use body language to act out the feeling.

**Character Descriptions:** Mayzie and Horton (hunters and Horton's peers).

Personality characteristics are a prominent part of the character descriptions:

*Horton's persistence, patience, dedication*  
*Mayzie's laziness, cold-heartedness*

**Story Grammar Marker:** See map at right.

Although there are many kick-offs and two perspectives (Horton/Mayzie), we are mapping this very simply.

**Character:** Horton. (Mayzie is another character with a perspective.)

**Setting:** Horton is in the United States. He starts out in a forest.

**Initiating Event:** Mayzie asks him to sit on her unhatched egg temporarily.

**Internal Response:** He has mixed feelings: Caring for the unhatched egg Distress, because Mayzie is like she is

**Plan:** To sit on the egg no matter what until it hatches

**Attempt:** He sits on the egg through storms, hunters, capture etc...

**Direct Consequence:** The egg hatches, largely because of him.

**Resolution:** He would love to keep the winged elephant.

COMPLETE EPISODE	SGM Writing Helper Form		STUDENT									
	<b>MAIN CHARACTER: Who is your story about?</b> Horton											
	<b>SETTING: Where does your story take place?</b> Horton is in the United States. He starts out in a forest.											
	<b>INITIATING EVENT: What happened to the character to cause him/her to do something?</b> Mayzie asks him to sit on her unhatched egg temporarily.											
	<b>INTERNAL RESPONSE (response to the kick off): What are the character's feelings about what happened? (emotions, goals, desires, intentions or thoughts)</b> He has mixed feelings: Caring for the unhatched egg; Distress, because Mayzie is like she is.											
	<b>PLAN: What will the character do? Think about the kick off and the internal response.</b> To sit on the egg no matter what until it hatches											
	<b>ATTEMPT: How does the character solve the problem?</b> He sits on the egg through storms, hunters, capture etc...											
	<b>ATTEMPT:</b> _____											
	<b>ATTEMPT:</b> _____											
	<b>ATTEMPT:</b> _____											
	<b>ATTEMPT:</b> _____											
<b>DIRECT CONSEQUENCE: What happened as a result of the action? Is there a complication in the plan?</b> The egg hatches, largely because of him.												
<b>RESOLUTION: How does the character feel about the consequence?</b> He would love to keep the winged elephant.												
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## High Point Analysis

High Point Analysis indicates there are actually two perspectives/stories going on at the same time. The author ties them together at the end of the book. All six aspects of High Point Analysis are present.

- 1) *Introducer*: The attention grabber is when Horton confirms to Mayzie:  
“You want a vacation. Go fly off and take it. I’ll sit on your egg and I’ll try not to break it. I’ll stay and be faithful. I mean what I say.”

“Toodle-oo! Sang out Mayzie and fluttered away.”

The above quote serves as an overview of the story and thus is the Introducer.

- 2) *Orientation*: The background and changing setting pictorial information is provided throughout the book but especially in the text of the first three pages. Mayzie’s nest and her wishes, as well as Horton’s character/setting description and his apparent lack of something to keep him busy, orient the reader to the character’s thinking and initial setting.

- 3) *Complicating Action*: This would be the initiating event or problem that leads to marked changes in feelings.

Although storms, seasonal weather changes, and laughing peers, create complications, Horton’s response is to continue to sit on the nest come what may. The Complicating Action of most import, affecting the outcome of the story, is when the hunters come.

“He heard the men’s footsteps!  
He turned with a start!  
Three rifles were aiming  
Right straight at his heart!”

- 4) *Evaluation*: The emotional comment is made via illustrations showing fear, fortitude, shock, sad, physical seasickness, shock and more sadness. The text communicates emotions such as: “much to Horton’s surprise;” “with Horton so sad that he practically cried.”

- 5) *Resolution*: The fact that the egg hatched as a mini-elephant-bird, not a Mayzie-bird, resolves Horton’s ongoing complications related to his promise to sit on the egg. The egg is hatched! He has kept his promise! Also, the picture of his release and Mayzie’s angry expression demonstrates that by being unfaithful and uncaring, Mayzie had a lesson to learn.

- 6) *Coda*: The close of the story: “And they sent him home happy, one hundred per cent!”

Horton’s unwanted travels come to an end and his friends welcome him into the present, at home and happy.

## Literary Language Style

*Conjunctions:* if, since, what, before, where, 'cause, so, but, for

*Mental State and Linguistic Verbs:* think, thinks, decided, know, knew, hope, forget, wanted, wished

*Elaborated Noun Phrases:*

noisiest ear-splitting squeaks  
wild alive scratching  
their three guns  
hot, noisy tent  
old good-for-nothing bird  
red and white shell

*Adverbs:* carefully, tenderly, gently, softly, scarcely

## Phonological Awareness

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Of course, the rhyming couplets are delightful in this narrative poem.

Many children can complete the couplets for a fun, phonological awareness activity.

The activity may be expanded by asking children to add more rhyming words to the two couplet words:

"I'll stay and be faithful. I mean what I say."

"Toodle-oo!" sang out Mayzie and fluttered away."

*Say, away, day, stay, play, pray, lay, spray etc...*

Additionally, onset and rime manipulations may be appropriate:

Say: "day."

Take away the /d/, and replace it with /p/. Talk about the speech helpers used for (/d/: teeth and tongue) as opposed to (/p/: lips which pop open).

## Sentence Level

*Repeating sentences and counting the words in the sentence:*

Since the following sentences are repeated throughout the poem, they would be ideal to use for repetition and for word counts. For the simple sentence repetition use "I meant what I said." For more complexities, first finish that sentence and then continue with the second sentence.

*"I meant what I said and I said what I meant.*

*An elephant's faithful one hundred percent!"*

## Word Level

*Counting Words:* I meant what I said. (5)

I meant what I said and I said what I meant. (11)

An elephant's faithful one hundred percent! (6)

## Syllable Level

### *A Sampling of One Syllable Words*

back	beach	best	bird	break	can	chest
come	crack	crept	egg	find	first	fly
free	glee	gone	hate	just	kind	know
must	need	nest	off	passed	play	prop
reach	rest	sense	sit	slept	small	smiled
start	stay	storm	strange	things	tree	wings
work						

When analyzing the book for one syllable words, it was evident that blends were used freely. If working with blends is an objective, many of the above words could be used in a game format.

Say: "free"

Say it again without the /r/. (*fee*)

Does anyone know what a "fee" is?

Continue with examples such as: play/pay; nest/net; break/rake; prop/pop; must/mut.

Of course, these are all real words and may be defined and the phonological awareness activity may be expanded by asking for lists of words rhyming with the given pairs:

Example: *nest, best, lest, pest, quest, west.*

*net, bet, pet, let, met, set, wet.*

### *A Sampling of Two Syllable words*

The following six two syllable words are made up of two real words and because of that, they may be easier to segment:

faithful	footsteps	inside	something
sunshine			

### *Other Two Syllable Words*

absurd    before    bumping    ended    forget    gathered    grumbled  
hatching    Horton    hundred    little    lonely    murmured    never  
percent    rumbled    scratching    shouted    sitting    surprise    taunted  
thumping    winter

### *A Sampling of Three Syllable Words*

amazing    anything    carefully    continued    decided    elephant    run-a-way  
tenderly    terrible    vacation    wonderful

The cities and states named in the book would make a great themed syllable counting lesson.

*Two Syllables:* Boston, Ohio, Dayton, St. Paul, Kansas

*Three Syllables:* Wichita, Dakota, Weehawken, Washington, Chicago

*Four Syllables:* Kalamazoo, Minnesota

## **Phoneme Level**

*Onset/Rime:* “Listen to this slow way of saying a word, then you say it fast.”  
(All onsets are blends.)

st-ay (*stay*) (onset is a blend, rime has a long vowel).

gl-ee (*glee*) (onset is a blend, rime has a long vowel).

st-art (*start*) (onset is a blend, rime has an “r” controlled vowel).

Since blends appear in many of the rimes of words in this book, the rime could be isolated and the concept of a blend in a rime could be introduced—if students are ready for the concept, of course.

*Examples:* j-ust, k-ind, sl-ept.

The vowel would be segmented from the ending blend:

*Examples:* just = u-st; kind = i-nd; slept = e-pt.

Each of the blends in the rimes could be pronounced and segmented from the vowel. Discussion about the speech helpers necessary for each phoneme of the blend could be a part of the activity.

*Example:* /p/ and /t/ are easier to differentiate than are /n/ and /d/ because of the speech helpers involved:

/p/ lips pop open upon articulation; no voicing is evident.

/t/ teeth and tongue tip tapping the teeth; no voicing is evident.

/n/ teeth and tongue tip pressed to the teeth; resonance through nose.

/d/ teeth and tongue tip tapping the teeth; voicing is evident.

## Expository Text Features

**Deletion:** Demonstrate how a word from the story can be used in a deletion task and show how the meaning changes.

Listen to this word: “crack.”

Say “crack.”

Crack is a *noun*, a name of something.

A crack is an indentation that divides the section of a sidewalk.

Crack is also a *verb*, it is something a person can do.

A person can crack an egg open.

Take the blend off of the word “crack.” What is left? (/ack/)

Put a /p/ in front of /ack/.

What is the new word? (*pack*). Pack is a *noun* if we are talking about a

“backpack.” Pack is a *verb* if we are talking about “packing a suitcase.”

Take the /p/ off of the word “pack.”

Replace the /p/ with a sound that you use your teeth and the tongue tapping on the teeth. (/t/). The new word is “tack.”

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**Expository Text items are found in this picture book story. Listing and Sequencing are the easiest of the Expository Text Structures to conceptualize. Included are Descriptive, List, Sequence, Cause/Effect and Compare/Contrast examples using maps from the ThemeMaker and Research Writer®. (See maps on following page.)**

**List** five states that Horton was taken to when he was a part of the circus:

*Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Minnesota.*

Of course, students needed to know that Boston is in Massachusetts and Kalamazoo is in Michigan. Difficulty of the activity can be adjusted this way.

**Sequence** four of the complications that Horton faced in the story:

*First*, there was a terrible storm.

*Then*, there were seasonal weather changes.

*After that*, other animals made fun of him.

*Finally*, the hunters came.

**Cause/Effect:** Look at the sequence of four complications that Horton faced in the story:

Each one is the cause of a feeling that Horton had.

That feeling is the effect of the cause.

*The storm caused Horton to feel upset and wet.*

*The seasonal weather changes caused Horton to feel alone, sad, and, of course, cold.*



# Classroom Conference Sheet — **Expository**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid #ccc; text-align: center;"><b>DESCRIPTIVE</b></div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Horton</b></p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>YOUR PLAN</b>  Describe a topic. Focus on the character or the setting.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid #ccc; text-align: center;"><b>LIST</b></div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>States</b> <b>he visited</b></p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Massachusetts</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Michigan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Illinois, Ohio</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota</p> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>YOUR PLAN</b>  List things related to topic.</p> </div>
<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid #ccc; text-align: center;"><b>CAUSE/EFFECT</b></div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>The Storm</b></p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>YOUR PLAN</b>  Explain the reason why something happened.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid #ccc; text-align: center;"><b>PROBLEM/SOLUTION</b></div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>_____</p> <hr style="width: 100%;"/> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>YOUR PLAN</b>  State a problem and offer a plan to solve it.</p> </div>
<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid #ccc; text-align: center;"><b>COMPARE and CONTRAST</b></div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Horton</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Same</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Mayzie</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p><b>They are both animals.</b></p> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Elephant: trunk, body shape, ears, tail</b></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Different</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Bird: wings and a red color on the tail</b></p> </div> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>YOUR PLAN</b>  Show how two or more components, or ideas, are the same and/or different.</p> </div>	

## Rare Words

*When the animals made fun of him, Horton felt embarrassed and lonely.*

**Compare/Contrast:** The elephant-bird could be compared and then contrasted with Horton and Mayzie.

Horton: *trunk, body shape, ears, tail*

Mayzie: *wings and a red color on the tail*

*Example of a sentence:* The elephant-bird is the same as Horton because it has a trunk, ears, body shape and tail of an elephant. It is different from Horton because it has wings and a colored tail, like Mayzie.

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There are 1425 words in the book as written by the author. 15% are rare words.

We applied the Wepman-Hass list of most common words in 6-year-olds' vocabularies as a measure of lexical richness and found that there were 211 rare words not listed on the Wepman-Hass List. These rare words are:

absurd, aim, alive, amazing, apart, ashore, autumn, beg, best, beyond, board, bob, bored, brand., break, built, bump, burst, carefully, cart, catch, cents, chalk, cheered, chest, circus, cloud, continue, cork, crack, crept, dawdle, drag, drop, dug, egg, elephant, enjoy, faithful, faithful, far, farther, feathers, feet, fellow, flag, flock, flutter, fly, fly, folks, footsteps, forget, free, freeze, front, gasp, gather, gentle, gently, glee, goodness, gracious, grumble, guns, happen, happens, hatch, hatching, hate, heart, heavy, hello, hope, hundred, hung, hunter, hurry, icicles, immense, insist, instant, jungle, kinks, land, laugh, laugh, lazy, leaves blew, leg, lightning, lonely, lurch, matter, meant, mine, miss, murmur, need, nest, noisiest, noisy, ocean, pass, peek, percent, perch, pieces, please, poor, pour, practically, prop, puller, rang, rather, reach, reach, rifles, roll, rope, round, rumble, runaway, sang, sang, scarce, scratch, scream, seasick, sense, shell, ship, shoot, shout, shout, show, sigh, silly, since, sir, sleet, small, smile, sneaking, sneeze, snow, soft, soft, sold, south, speak, splash, split, spray, springtime, sputtered, spy, squeak, stare wide, stared, start, still, stole, storm, straight, strange, strong, sunshine, sure, surprise, swoop, taunt, tease, tend, tenderly, tent, terrible, terrible, thousand, threw, thump, thunder, ton, toss, town, trouble, troubles anew, trunk, trunk, turn, unhappy, vacation, wagon, warm, week, week, weigh, wet, whizz, whole, wing, winter, wish, wonderful, wonderful, yell

*Obviously, this book is lexically rich.*

## Cultural Aspects

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Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel), from Springfield, Massachusetts, has influenced children's literature for over fifty years. The rhyming format of most of his children's picture books is vital as a linguistic forerunner of phonological awareness. The topics, among them: faithfulness, honesty, kindness, generosity and a sense of duty, are prime character qualities we wish to instill in our children