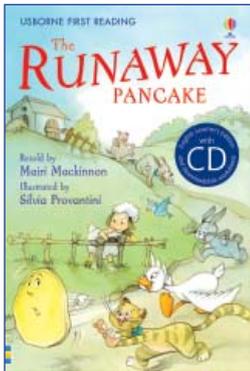


The Runaway Pancake • Teacher's notes



Author: Traditional, retold by Mairi Mackinnon

Reader level: Intermediate

Word count: 601

Lexile level: 420L

Text type: Folk tale

About the story

A woman with seven hungry children decides to make pancakes for the family's breakfast. However, the first pancake escapes being eaten by jumping out of the frying pan and rolling out of the door. The family give chase, but they can't catch up. As it rolls along the road, the pancake attracts the attention of a dog, a rabbit, a duck, a cat, a goat and a fox, escaping each until it reaches a pigpen at the edge of the forest. The pig also wants to eat the pancake, but instead of chasing it, pretends to be deaf so that the pancake shouts louder and louder and comes closer and closer – until the crafty pig can snap it up and eat it.

The story is most likely Russian or Scandinavian in origin, and was first written down in Norway in the mid nineteenth century. In Russia, the pancake is a kind of doughy cake called Kolobok. There are versions recorded at around the same time in Germany, England and Scotland, and in America the story very probably inspired *The Gingerbread Man*, published in 1875.

About the author

Mairi Mackinnon has lived in Scotland, France, Italy and Spain, and worked as a teacher, translator, musician, bookseller, nanny, cook and bus driver before settling down in London, where she has written over forty books for children. She has three children of her own, five or six violins, a beautiful old piano and a house full of other people's books. She likes cooking, and her pancakes have been known to escape from the frying pan but never make it out of the door.

Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

runaway	p13 chasing
pancake	p18 stream
p4 starving	p22 farmyard
p6 poured	p26 meadow
mix	p30 bushes
tossed	p32 kite
p7 rolled	p34 landed
p8 cried [meaning "shouted"]	edge
p9 called [meaning "shouted"]	forest
p10 snoozing	pen
kennel	p39 gasped
p11 barked	p45 fence
taste	p46 swallowed
	gulp

Key phrases

p4	I could eat...
p24	Catch me if you can
p32	to hitch a ride
p36	What's the hurry?
p43	right there
p46	to snap [something] up



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Before reading

Bring a packet of flour, a few eggs, a small carton of milk and a frying pan into the classroom. (Alternatively, find images or draw pictures on the board.) Show the ingredients to the class and ask what they might be used for. If the students need a clue, produce the frying pan. If they're still not sure, act out tossing a pancake. See if the students know what pancakes are (in some places they are called crêpes), and if they like eating them. Do they like any particular toppings or fillings – sugar and lemon, honey, cheese, ham, chocolate, ice cream?

Ask the class when people usually eat pancakes. You could mention that traditionally they were eaten on the Tuesday before the beginning of Lent, when people had to eat plainer food until Easter, and were a way of finishing up eggs and butter. Do students know why people toss pancakes? [To cook both sides evenly.] Have they ever tried making pancakes themselves?

Show students the book's cover. What's strange about this pancake? Do they know what "runaway" means? Why do they think the pancake is running away?

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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|------|--|---------|---|
| p2-3 | What different foods can you see in the picture? | p17 | How do you think the pancake is feeling now? |
| p4 | Does anyone in the class have six brothers and sisters? What do you think it's like, cooking for seven children every day? | p23 | Can you see the mouse? Why is it hiding? |
| p7 | Do pancakes often flip out of the pan? Do they often roll out of the door? | p29 | Who do you think is most likely to catch the pancake? |
| p10 | Is the bird doing anything unusual? | p36 | How is the pig acting differently to all the others? |
| p13 | How do you think the pancake is feeling? Do you think pancakes normally have feelings? | pp39-40 | What is the pig doing? |
| | | p44 | Do you think the pig really can't hear the pancake? |
| | | p47 | How does everyone else feel now? |

After reading

Ask the class if they liked the story. What would they do if they saw a pancake rolling by?

What do they think the family did next? What about the mother? (She looks as though she might hit the pig with the frying pan!)

On the worksheet you'll find a recipe for pancakes. If you have cooking facilities, you may like to try this. Alternatively, you could bring in some pre-cooked pancakes (try and warm them through before you serve them). Bring in some fillings too (banana, honey, sugar, lemon, chocolate spread, jam, etc.) and invite students to fill, roll up and eat their own pancakes.

