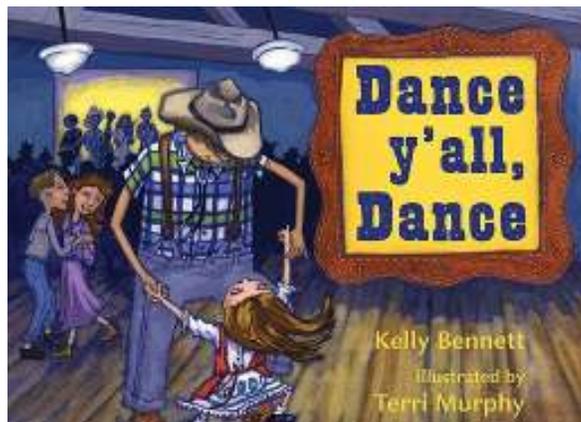


A Teacher's Activity Guide for
Dance, Y'all, Dance

Written by Kelly Bennett



Published by Bright Sky Press

Illustrated by Terri Murphy

Teacher's Guide written by Debbie Gonzales

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Forward

Dance, Y'all, Dance is a lively, energetic, and entertaining picture book. The prose is poignant and playful. The intriguing illustrations beg to be studied at length. In short, I found it a delight to write a Teacher Guide for such a charming book.

The activities in this guide have been designed to complement *Dance, Y'all, Dance* in such a way that the child will need to review the pages while working with the activities. So, get your scissors and glue ready, y'all, and keep that book nearby, ya' hear?

The guide begins with a character analysis of a dog named Buck, whose presence ties the entire plotline of this great story together. A word game follows, one that is based on terms found in the historic Author's Note. Next is a rhyming game with words pulled directly from the text. After an insightful conversation with author Kelly Bennett we go boot scootin' by creating a Dance Hall Diorama!

Teachers, have fun with this book. Encourage your young reader to experience the prose's rhythmic rhyme, the captivating illustrations, all the while thoroughly enjoying the charm of *Dance, Y'all, Dance*.

I certainly have.

Yee Haw!

Debbie Gonzales

Author/Educator/Boot Scooter

Character Analysis: Buck the Dog

1. We first see Buck in a truck with his family on his way to the Horseshoe Dance Hall.
 - a. Study his expression.
 - b. How do you think he is feeling?
 - c. How do you think the people in the truck with Buck are feeling?
 - d. Why?
 - e. Have you ever felt like Buck before? When?

2. Next, we see Buck tied to a rail outside the Horseshoe Dance Hall. See how he is leaning forward, straining the rope?
 - a. Study his expression.
 - b. How is Buck feeling at this time in the story?
 - c. How do you know that he is feeling this way?
 - d. Can you relate to Buck's feelings? Have you ever wanted to go somewhere and weren't allowed to do so?

3. On the page featuring Ida Belle and Clint dancing, we can see Buck poking his nose through the open window.
 - a. Study his expression.
 - b. Why is Buck peering through the window?
 - c. What does Buck see?
 - d. What do you see?
 - e. What does Buck want?
 - f. How did Buck get untied?

4. The next page features Buck inside the Horseshoe Dance Hall near the band peering around a wall.
 - a. Study his expression.
 - b. Why is he hiding?
 - c. What does he see?
 - d. What do you see?
 - e. If his owners see him in the Horseshoe Dance Hall, will he get in trouble? Why or why not?
 - f. What is Buck feeling right now?

5. Buck is now hiding under the stage with Harlen and Beau.
 - a. Study his expression.
 - b. Why do you think that one paw is resting on his forehead? What does this pose tell us about how he is feeling right now?
 - c. What does Buck think about the teasing trick that Harlen and Beau are doing?
 - d. What do you think about Harlen's and Beau's teasing trick?

6. Buck waits with Curt while the girls talk on the telephone.
 - a. Study Buck's expression. Study Curt's expression.
 - b. Do you think Buck knows how Curt feels?
 - c. How does Curt feel?
 - d. How do you know?
 - e. Is Buck being a friend to Curt?
 - f. How do friends help each other in times like this?

7. In the last picture, at the end of the book, Buck seems to be leaping off the stage and running toward Grams.
 - a. Study his expression.
 - b. Why is Buck in such a hurry?
 - c. Did Buck have a good time at the Horseshow Dance Hall?
 - d. Did he enjoy being with all those happy, dancing people?
 - e. Would you have had a good time at the Horseshoe Dance Hall with Buck and all those happy, dancing people?

8. Compare the excited picture of Buck at the beginning of the book and the leaping picture of Buck at the end of the book.
 - a. Study both expressions.
 - b. Are there ways that Buck's feelings are the same in these moments? Different?
 - c. How so?
 - d. He seems to be excited in both instances, doesn't he? What made him excited at the beginning of the book? What made him excited at the end of the book?
 - e. Can you relate to his excited feelings? How so?

Rhyming Dominology

- Print the cards on pages 16 to 18 on card stock and laminate, if desired. Or, print on printer paper and allow the child to tape or glue matches together on a large piece of poster board.
- Cut out all cards.
- Shuffle cards.
- Begin with the card labeled with the Texas Star!
- Find the matches for all rhyming words. Lay the matches beside one another in domino form.
- Refer to the text in *Dance, Y'all, Dance* to verify rhyming matches.
- The final card is designated with a happy face!

wink

surprise

Pistachio

Flo

eyes

aglow

radio

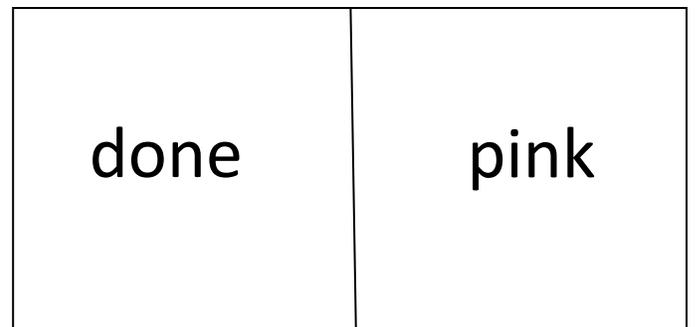
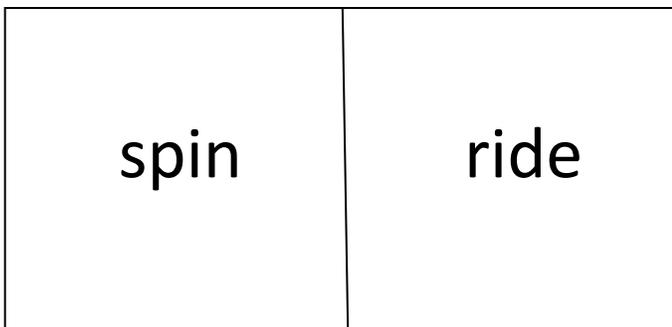
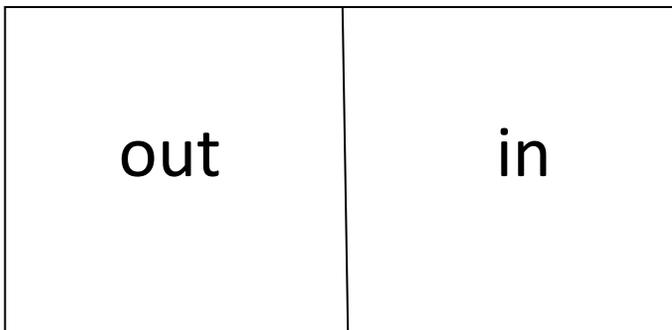
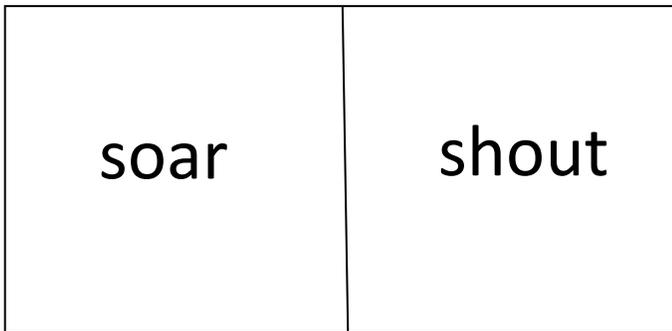
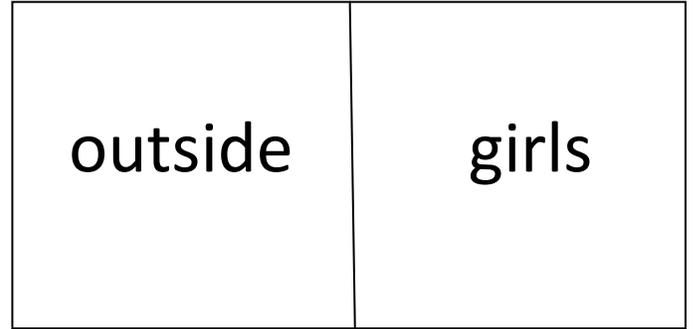
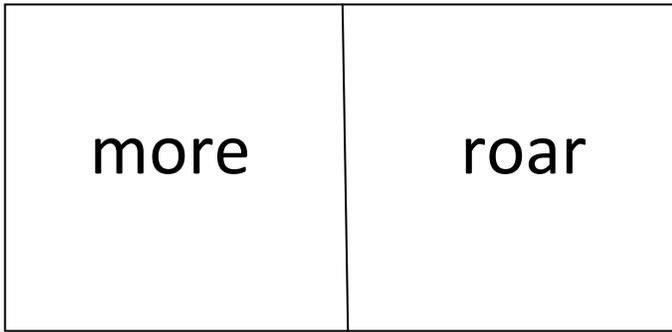
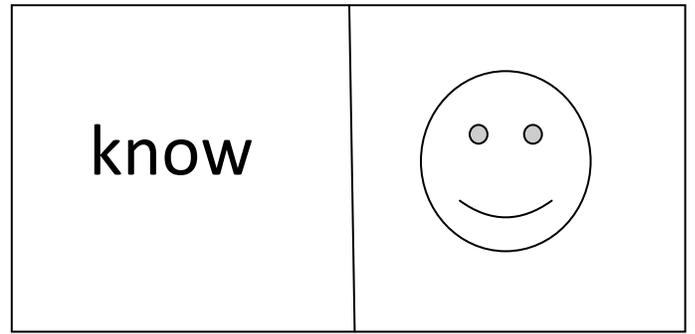
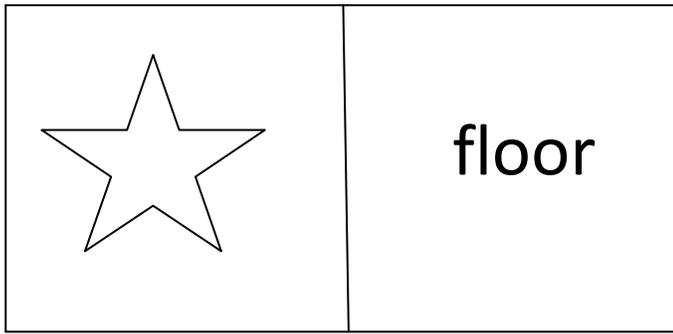
feet

show

go

sweet

hand



band

night

right

gum

glum

Buck

truck

today

away

girl

twirl

skiddle

fiddle

pop

stop

hall

Y'all

alone

telephone

Beau

A Conversation with Author Kelly Bennett

Kelly Goldman Bennett writes books for children – both fiction and non-fiction. She had been writing professionally since 1986. Her work has also appeared in national magazines and newspapers.

At the moment, Kelly is obsessed with creating picture books. “Picture books are like icebergs,” she notes, “so much of what goes on goes unseen. And revising picture book text is a lot like carving an ice sculpture.”

“I start with a big, messy jumble of words, pages of words, a block of words and just start chipping away. When I am finished, I hope what’s left is as pure and simply stated as I can write it.”



While she’s chipping away, Kelly imagines pictures to go with her words – but she never shares them. Instead she strives to leave lots of space in her stories for the illustrator to fill with art.

What inspired this fun story about a Saturday night romp?

As a family activity, my husband Curtis, and children, Max and Alexis, (along with their two friends) took Country Swing dance lessons. For eight weeks we danced circle around each other. You can imagine how much fun it was – and the sore toes we got from trying to do moves like “the pretzel.” While I was writing the book I played country music non-stop and made Curtis Texas Two-Step me around the house while I recited the story, so I could be sure to get the rhythm right.

How do you know an idea is worth working on?

A good story idea makes me tingle. It’s like an electric current zips through me. It gets me asking questions. If I want to find out more about something – especially how a story turns out – I know readers will, too. When a story idea zaps me, I check the library and book sellers first to see if other books on the same topic are already out there. If the story I am imagining has already been published, I have to consider whether or not the world “needs” another book on the same topic.

Sometimes the answer is “No, silly, read those other books.” Sometimes a story idea just won’t let me go. It niggles me saying, “Tell me! Write my story, Kelly! You need to write this!”

Each of us has our own voice, our own way of looking at things. The key is to infuse our stories with our unique personalities and viewpoints. It means digging deeper, exploring different characters and new ways of looking at a topic, which isn’t always easy. But, if I can find a way to make a story idea fresh and exciting to me, then it’s worth working on.

What types of revision do you do?

Each of my stories goes through many, many, many, many revisions – at least 10 to 20 per picture book. And I’m talking about true revision: rewriting scenes, adding and deleting characters, moving lines around – not just fixing spelling errors and punctuation.

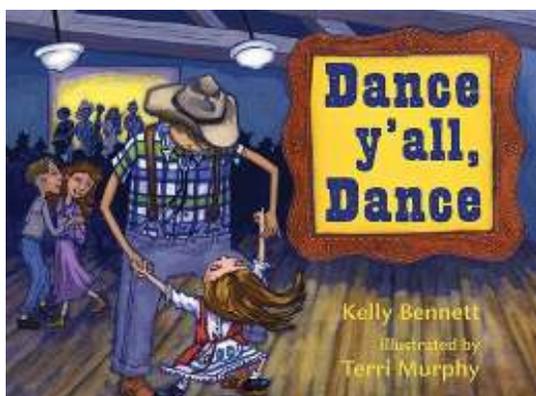
I begin with lists: lists of words, lists of characters, lists of possible scenes. This fills me with ideas. Next, I sit down and write. I write the complete story, from beginning to end. The next few times, I’ll work on story structure. Making sure the story makes sense. That it has a beginning, a middle, and a great ending. I can’t move ahead with the story until I love the ending.

Once the story feels good, I begin cutting words. They say that writers “have to tell themselves the story first,” which means writing much more than needs to be in the story. The manuscript for a picture book, like *Dance, Y’all, Dance*, may have only 400 words in the end, but an early version had more than 1200 words. I examine every word, and delete every single one that isn’t needed. I revise with illustrations in mid. I cut out descriptions, adjectives, everything I think will be “told” in the pictures.

The almost-last revision is especially fun. I “dummy” my story. I print my story and cut it into scenes and lines which I tape into a book of blank pages. I am not good at drawing, but I do draw little line sketches to go with each page. Then, finally, even after the story is going to be published and the illustrator is working on the art, I make more revisions with my editor – and sometimes more, after the copyeditor goes through and double-triple-quadruple checks spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

What can your fans look forward to next?

Spring 2010 is a celebration of Fathers! Two picture books featuring fathers and kids will be in bookstores: *Dad and Pop* (Candlewick Press) and *Your Daddy is Just Like You* (G.P. Putnam & Sons).



Answers to Boot Scootin' Lingo

- *Sweetheart Surprise*
- *Texas Two-Step*
- *Western Swing*
- *Pretzel*
- *Side Travel*
- *Wild West Shuffle*
- *Conversation*
- *Pistachio*
- *Country and Western*
- *Dance Y'all Dance*

Dance Hall Diorama

Materials:

- The book *Dance, Ya'll, Dance*
- A sizeable box of some kind (e.g., a shoe box, a shirt box, a large gift box, etc.)
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Tape
- Construction paper
- Computer paper
- A pencil
- Markers, crayons, or tempera paint
- Dancer cut-outs
- Some good ol' Country and Western background music

Procedure:

- Open one end of your Dance Hall Diorama by cutting down the side corners of one of the wide sides of your box. Study the illustrations in the book. See the big horseshoe arch welcoming the dancers? Can you create something welcoming like that with construction paper, scissors, markers, tape, and glue?
- Decorate the inside of the dance hall. Look at the illustrations in the book. Where will you put the stage? Windows? What sorts of things are hanging on the walls inside? Set a festive mood with your decorations.
- Now...crank up the music! Let's get ready for the folks to arrive!
- Cut out the dancers printed on the next page. Be careful to make sure you leave a tab at their feet. Crease the tab back under the cut-out's feet. Curve the tab just a little before taping it to the dance hall floor. By doing this you make sure that the cut-out will stand up.
- With the computer paper and pencil, to add more dancers and musicians to the dance floor trace anything you'd like in the book. Or, better yet, draw some boot scooters of your own. Why not draw yourself? Put you and few friends on the dance floor. Kick up your heels and have some fun!

Note: Author Kelly Bennett and illustrator Terri Murphy would LOVE to see your Dance Hall Diorama! Why don't you take a digital picture and send it them via email. You can contact Kelly at www.kellybennett.com and Terri at www.terrimurphyart.com. Yee Haw!!!!

