Guess What I’m Doing!

A Picture Book for Children published on the occasion of the International Literacy Year
A love affair with books often begins early in our lives. Before we are able to read, we are read it. Book, we quickly learn, are an adventure, an invitation to escape from our neighbourhood and visit far away places, climb mountains, cross rivers, explore jungles and meet exciting people. The ability to read grows gradually and naturally from a love affair with books.

It is my hope that this beautiful book produced by ACCU (Asian Cultural Centre for UNESCO) in co-operation with UNESCO on the occasion of International Literacy Year, will enchant a million children. If it does, it will have well served the purposes of the year, for there is no argument for literacy stronger or more enduring than the love of reading. In particular, I hope this book will be reproduced, with the assistance of ACCU and others, in many countries and many languages and especially in those in which few, if any, books for children exist. Books are a joy no child should be denied.

Federico Mayor
UNESCO Director-General
Hello! My name is Kallo. My village is in the great, Grassy plains called savannah. My father makes pottery. I love to help him with his work. Can you find me in the picture? And can you guess what I’m doing?
Yes, I am making clay animals.  
A lot of wild animals and birds live  
Out in the savannah beyond our village.  
I watch them and make my own animals  
Out of clay.

Now look at the picture on your right.  
Some of my favourite animals are hiding in it.  
There are as many as my age -  
Ten! Can you name them all?
Saif in Arab States

I am Saif. I live in a small oasis in the desert. Our family owns a large flock of camels and sheep. My sister and I look after our sheep. We take them to places where they can eat and drink, and watch out for wolves, foxes, snakes and scorpions. When our work is done, we go to the big tent. Guess what we do there!
We learn how to read and write!
The tent is the only school in our oasis.

Now, when I started for the tent, a flock of sheep blocked my way.
My sister had already arrived.
She is waving to me.
Can you show me how to get through this maze of sheep?
Radha in Southern Asia

I am Radha. I live in a village high in the mountains.
Today we have an outdoor class under the shade of a big banyan tree.
Our teacher wrote a riddle on the blackboard.
She said anyone who got the answer could come to the front and draw a picture of it.

The riddle goes:
A bird am I and a male,
On my head I wear a crown,
And coins galore adorn my tail.

Can you guess what it is?
This is the picture I have drawn.
The answer was a peacock!

Here are some of the riddles our teacher has asked.
How many can you answer right?

1. What is it that dies, when it drinks water? *Fire*
2. What goes up to the sky without wings or ladders? *Smoke*
3. What hasn’t done anything wrong, but is always beaten? *Drum*
4. What sits quietly in the corner, but flies everywhere in the world? *Stamp*
5. It’s your own, but others use it more than you do. What is it? *Your name*
6. What is bent over when full, and is straight when empty? *Rice plant*
7. What can you never hold with your right hand? *Your right hand*
8. Two small windows through which you can see the whole wide world. What are they? **(Eyes)**
9. It has no legs, but comes and goes. It has no tongue but speaks well. What is it? **(Letter)**
10. What is already born, but not yet born, and not yet born, but already born? **(Egg)**
11. Black seeds sown in the white field, there grows wisdom. What is it? **(Book)**
Masha in Eastern Europe
I am Masha. I live in a small village in the middle of a wood. It snows in winter where we live. It is cold, but we children love winter, when we can ski, skate and sled in the snow.
Today I put my doll on my sled and brought her to the village house. Guess what is happening there?
A puppet show! I liked it so much, that I told my mother all about it when I got home. Mother taught me how to make a simple finger puppet with just a piece of paper and a handkerchief.
See how simple it is!
Manee in South-East Asia
I am Manee. I live in a village surrounded by rice fields. My mother attends a literacy class in the evening. Today I came with her. Guess what we are doing?
We are playing a game called Sugoroku! It is fun to play, and you can learn a lot, too!

Here is a Sugoroku game you can play. Try it. All you need is dice or dominoes.

How to play Sugoroku:
1. You will need two or more persons to play. The one who gets to the goal first wins.
2. Each person plays his stone at the “Start”.
3. Each person rolls the dice in turn, and moves his stone as shown on the dice.
4. Each person should read aloud the sentence of the square and move his stone either forward or backward, if so directed. Where it says “Pause”, you will loose one turn.
5. The goal can be entered when the exact number appears on the dice.
Missed the bus again! He can’t read the clock or timetable.

Poor boy! He took the wrong road to the town.

Beware of tigers!

It’s disastrous if you can’t read! Go back to 2.

Yippee! Uncle gave me a book for my birthday.

GOAL

I am glad I can read!

I am glad I can write!

I can add and subtract, so I can help Dad in the shop.

Pause

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Reading is fun, but watch out!

A broken leg to the hospital.

But cats are more interested in fish than arithmetic!

I'll teach my cat arithmetic.

Good boy! Proceed to 8.

I can read! Listen, Mom, I'll read you a book.

Hee! Hee!

Hee!

Hospital

Hospital
My name is Ken. I live in a city. Today I am taking buses and trains all by myself for the first time to visit my aunt in the next city. Do you think I can make it?
I got off the bus at the right stop!
So far no problem. Now I must find
my way to my aunt’s house.
With this map she sent me, I am sure
I’ll be able to find it easily.
Daspina in the Pacific
I am Daspina. I live in a village on an island in the ocean. Tonight we are having our annual “singsong” in our village. People from the neighbouring villages have been invited to join us. Can you see me? We are singing about the ocean and all the wonderful things that live there.
Many different kinds of creatures make their home in the ocean.
Jose in Western Europe
My name is Jose.
I live in an old town with many orange orchards.
Today I walk to the fair in the Town Square.
Guess what I’m doing!
I am wondering what to buy. My little sister and brother have to stay at home with my parents. I want to bring them something nice. I have 200 pesetas that I have saved for the day. A candied apple costs 10. A cotton candy costs 25. A lollipop costs 5. A toy train costs 50. A rose costs 100. Nuts cost 15 for half a kilo. Oh what shall I take home from the fair for each person in the family?
Rosa in South America
My name is Rosa. I live in a village near a big river. Our mailman has just arrived on the boat. He has a letter from me! Could it be from Grandma?
Yes, it is! Guess what her letter is all about!
March 5, 1990

Dearest Rosa,

Your new cousin was born safe and sound on March 3. A healthy, handsome boy of 3.8 kilo! He has quite a strange voice. I think he is going to be a pop singer, when he grows up. Uncle Jose and Aunt Marie are very proud of him. I hope you can come and see him soon.

Love,

Grandma
March 9, 1990.

Dear Grandma,

Thank you so much for your letter. I got it this morning. Has the baby been named yet? Mom says he will be Jose after his father. But I think Julian is a far nicer name. If he should become a pop singer when he grows up, I think he should have a real nice name. Dad says we can all visit you next holiday.

Love

Rosa
I am Agana. I live in a village in the savannah. After supper, my friends and I often go to grandfather Adowa to hear him tell stories. I like to listen to stories, but I like to ask questions, too. Grandfather Adowa always answers our questions and explains things to us. We love him very much!
Like Grandfather Adowa, there are many people in the world who can tell stories and, like Agana, children everywhere love to listen to them. You can also read stories in books. Here is one that has been enjoyed by the Swahili people in Africa.

How the Cat came to live in the House

In olden times, cats did not live in houses with people, but only in wild forest and under bushes. Once there was a cat who became friends with a rabbit, because he thought the rabbit was very clever. But one day the rabbit argued with a gazelle, and was killed by the gazelle’s sharp horns. Seeing this the cat decided to go along with the gazelle. Before long, however, a leopard attacked the gazelle and killed him.

So the cat joined the leopard, but the two soon men a lion. The leopard and the lion fought and this time the lion won.

The poor cat took the lion as his new friend, and they spent pleasant days together wandering the forest.

Then one day they came upon a herd of elephants. The lion got into a fight with a bull elephant and was soon trampled to death.
The cat looked at the elephant and said to himself, “Now if such a big and strong creature becomes my friend, I will surely be safe. Nobody would dare harm me.”

However, the cat’s troubles were not yet over. Along came the hunter, who shot and killed the elephant with a poisoned arrow. The cat had never before seen a two-legged animal. He was very surprised, and did not know what to do. He thought for a while, then came to a decision. “If this creature has the power to kill a big elephant, I will make him my new friend. Then I will be safe to enjoy my life.”

So the cat followed the hunter to his home, where he crawled under the veranda and sat quietly. A little while later, he heard an argument begin inside, and a shrill voice rose above the hunter’s. Suddenly the hunter came rushing outside, right after him, a woman waving a big porridge spoon. “Oh, so that’s the way it is!” exclaimed the surprised cat. “Among all the living creatures, the strongest is the woman!”

From that time on up to this very day, cats have lived inside the house, where the woman is the strongest creature in the world.
Hello! My name is Susan. I live in a big city where people come from all over the world. Can you find me? Guess what I am going to do?
I am at a conference of the Children’s United Nations. We met, because -
- We want to find out about each other.
- We want to be able to read and write.
- And we want a better world for us all!