

'Elvis the Squirrel' by Tony Bradman and Ashley King

Ages 6-7

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What's it all about?

Cheeky, mischievous Elvis the squirrel is always up for an adventure, but his idea to steal bread from the bird table soon gets everyone in trouble! His best friend Chuck is carried off by Ronnie the raven, a mean, frightening bird who rules the woods. It looks like Elvis might have bitten off more than he can chew and he soon realises he can't save his friend alone.

When the local birds refuse to help naughty Elvis, who is always rude to them, Elvis must come up with a clever plan and convince the gang of garden birds to help him save his friend...

Can Elvis learn to apologise and work as a team or will Chuck become Ronnie's dinner?

A fun, engaging book full of laughs and bright, clever illustrations.

You may choose to focus on one type of reading question during a lesson, or a variety of VIPERS or you may even wish to use this guide as a starting point and then allow the children to come up with their own ideas and opinions and lines of enquiry!

Because the novel study guide is to be used to aid discussion between the adult and children, we feel there isn't a necessity for an answer booklet.

The guide provides questions and spaces for the children to record their ideas and answers but is not intended to be used as a test.

As there are many lovely pictures in this book it is important to invite the children to examine them carefully. You could encourage the children to use a magnifying glass or photocopy and enlarge a certain part of an image. Throughout the book, encourage the children to investigate:

- Page layout
- How the illustrations are framed
- The use of colour
- How the text is written – some words are in capitals and some are written at an angle, across the page
- The facial expressions of the characters

Chapters One and Two

Vocabulary	<p>What does 'scampering' mean? Is it the same as 'running'? (page 3)</p> <p>Why is 'too' written in italics? How should this be read? (page 5)</p> <p>How is a cackle similar to a laugh? How is it different? (page 8)</p>
Infer	<p>Look at page 3. What time of day do you think the story is set?</p> <p>How does Chuck feel about taking the bread? How do you know?</p> <p>Read page 9. Can you now infer why the garden has been so quiet up until this point?</p> <p>Read page 13 and think about how Elvis might be feeling when the birds refuse to help.</p> <p>Why doesn't the robin join in laughing at Elvis? (page 15)</p>
Predict	<p>Spend some time exploring the front cover and predict what could happen in the story.</p> <p>Read page 5. Predict why it might have gone quiet.</p> <p>Read page 7. Predict what might be causing the shadow.</p>
Explain	<p>Look at Elvis's hair. What do you notice? (page 3)</p> <p>Compare and contrast Elvis and Chuck. How are they similar? How are they different?</p> <p>Why does the robin interrupt the pigeon on page 11?</p> <p>Think of one word to describe Ronnie the Raven and explain your word choice.</p>
Retrieve	<p>What is Elvis planning on having for breakfast? (page 3)</p> <p>Chuck thinks they should check out the area before taking the bread. True or false? (page 6)</p> <p>What swoops down from the sky and grabs Chuck? (page 8)</p> <p>Where has Ronnie gone with Chuck? (page 11)</p>
Sequence	<p>Complete this sentence: At the beginning of Chapter 1, Elvis wants to eat the bread on the bird table, but...</p> <p>What happens before Chuck is grabbed by the bird?</p>

Chapters Three and Four

Vocabulary	<p>What does it mean if you are a 'bird-brain'? Does this saying have more than one meaning in the book's context? (page 16)</p> <p>What is the name of the piece of punctuation used at the end of page 19? What effect does it have?</p> <p>Look at how the word 'enormous' is presented on page 20. Why has it been written like this? How should it be read?</p> <p>Replace the words in bold with synonyms: Chuck whimpered when he saw Ronnie's wickedly sharp beak gleaming.</p> <p>Try saying Ronnie's words on page 22 – how can you show his character through your expression?</p>
Infer	<p>Why does Elvis 'quietly' climb the tree? (page 17)</p> <p>Look at Elvis's facial expression on pg 17 – what is he thinking?</p> <p>Why does Elvis feel ashamed? Does he deserve to feel bad? (pg 26)</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the end of page 19 and predict what will happen.</p> <p>Read page 23 and predict who will land beside Elvis.</p> <p>Predict what plan Elvis will come up with.</p>
Explain	<p>How does the illustration on p16 help us understand where the nest is?</p> <p>Why is Chuck huddled in a ball? (page 19)</p> <p>Imagine you are Elvis. Try and persuade the other birds to help you.</p> <p>It is Elvis's fault that Chuck has been kidnapped. Do you agree?</p>
Retrieve	<p>What does the sign on Ronnie's nest say? (page 18)</p> <p>What does Ronnie threaten to do if anyone tries to steal his dinner?</p> <p>The Robin says she will not help Elvis. True or false? (page 25)</p>
Sequence	<p>Complete these sentences using either 'After' or 'Before':</p> <p>..... the branch creaks, Ronnie spreads his wings and makes himself enormous.</p> <p>..... Elvis runs away, Ronnie threatens to rip him to pieces.</p>

Chapters Five and Six

Vocabulary	<p>Why is 'he' written in italics? How should this be read? (page 31)</p> <p>What does it mean if you stare at someone 'stonily'? (page 35)</p> <p>Define 'cunning' and use it in a sentence of your own (page 37).</p>										
Infer	<p>Look at the birds' body language and facial expressions on page 34. What might they be thinking and feeling?</p> <p>Why does Elvis want to be the one to catches Ronnie's eye? (pg 39)</p>										
Predict	<p>Read page 29. Predict what is causing the rumbling noise.</p> <p>Predict if Ronnie will return. What might he do to the animals?</p>										
Explain	<p>How does the illustration on page 30 make Ronnie seem imposing?</p> <p>Use the illustrations on pages 32 and 33 to explain what Elvis's plan is.</p> <p>How does the author make you want to read on at the end of Chapter 5? Is it effective?</p> <p>Can you be brave and scared at the same time? (page 38)</p> <p>Talk to a partner about the layout of the text and illustrations on pages 44 and 45. Is there anything interesting or funny?</p> <p>How has Elvis changed over the course of the story? What has he learnt?</p>										
Retrieve	<p>How does Ronnie know it's nearly dinner time? (page 30)</p> <p>The answer is 'washing line'. What might the question be? (page 33)</p> <p>What is Elvis's plan? (page 39)</p> <p>Complete this sentence: The magpie offers to share their bread because...(page 48)</p>										
Sequence	<p>Order these events from 1-5. One has been done for you:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td>After some advice from a friendly robin, Elvis apologises to the birds and enlists their help.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>It's breakfast time and squirrels Elvis and Chuck are planning on stealing some bread from the bird table.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Elvis and the birds work together to defeat Ronnie and send him plunging to the ground!</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Suddenly, Ronnie the Raven swoops down and kidnaps Chuck!</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Elvis tries to ask the other birds for help, but they aren't impressed with this thief!</td> </tr> </table>		After some advice from a friendly robin, Elvis apologises to the birds and enlists their help.	1	It's breakfast time and squirrels Elvis and Chuck are planning on stealing some bread from the bird table.		Elvis and the birds work together to defeat Ronnie and send him plunging to the ground!		Suddenly, Ronnie the Raven swoops down and kidnaps Chuck!		Elvis tries to ask the other birds for help, but they aren't impressed with this thief!
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Chapter Six

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