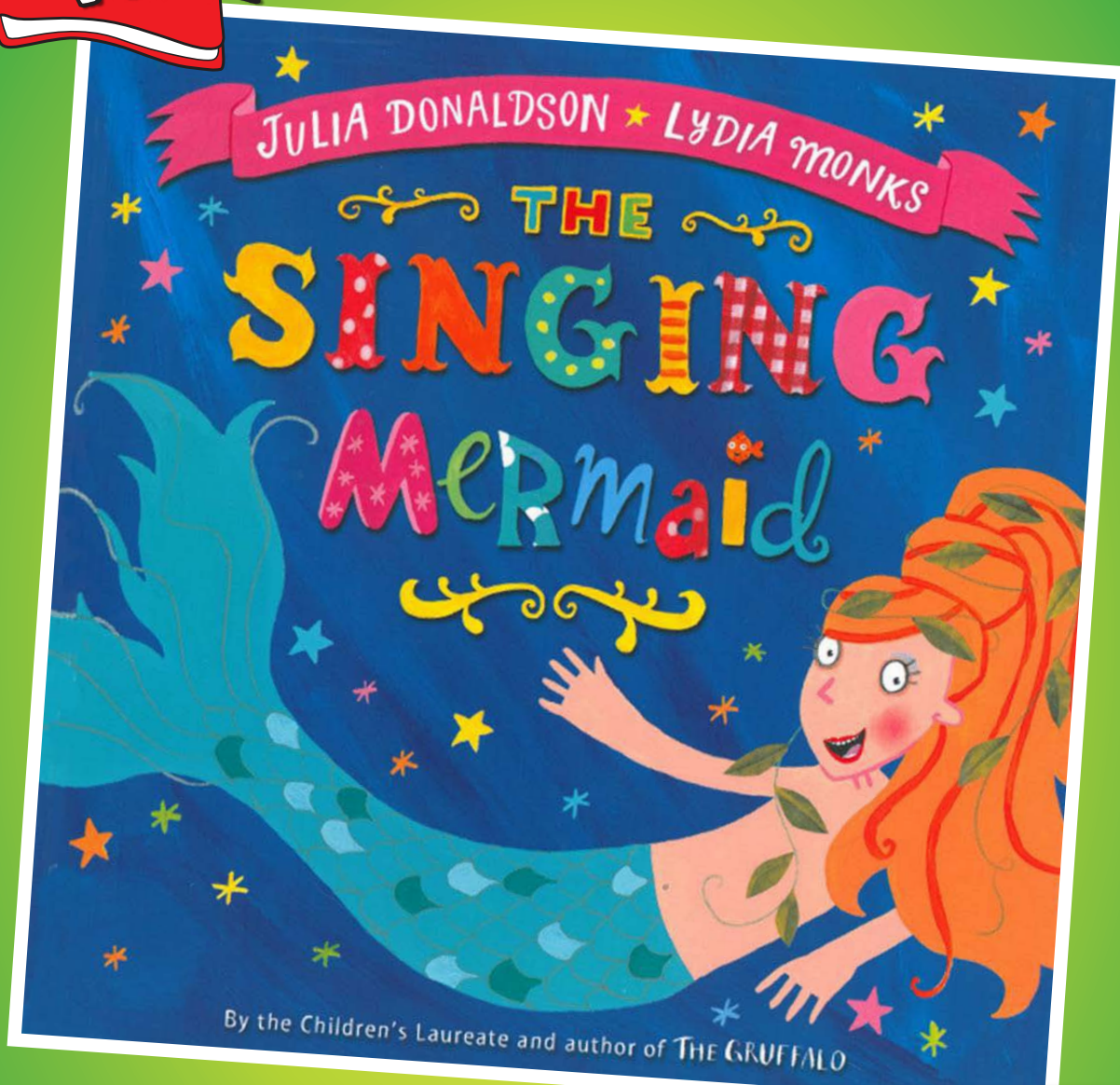
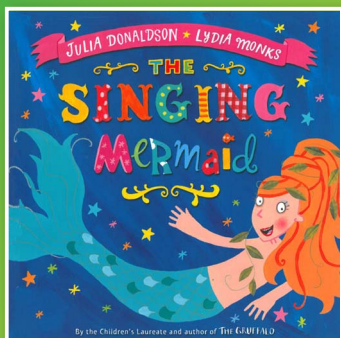


# Book Talk



**AGES 2+**

**Engage and inspire your  
pupils with a Book Talk!**



Look out for this book  
at your Book Fair!

AGES 2+

Price	£5.99 / €7.40
Case	Welcome to Reading
Author	Julia Donaldson
Illustrator	Lydia Monks
Publisher	Macmillan Books

## Using this book in your classroom

### Themes

This entertaining rhyming story is about the power of **music**, **friendship** and **problem-solving**.

### Summary

The Singing Mermaid loves her life in the sea near Silversands, where she sings for the birds and sea creatures. But one day a cunning circus-owner called Sam Sly hears her wonderful singing, and persuades her to join his circus. The mermaid's voice is so beautiful that she attracts big crowds. But life with the circus is hard, and she soon longs to return to Silversands and freedom.

One day her friend the seagull finds her, but how can he help her escape when she only has a tail and can't walk on land? Fortunately, her friend Annie the acrobat has an idea ... she teaches the mermaid to walk on her hands! So when the seagull steals the key to the caravan where Sam Sly has locked the mermaid up, it's no problem for her to walk on her hands all the way back to Silversands.

### Did you know?

- Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks have worked together on several best-selling picture books, including *The Princess and the Wizard*, *Sharing a Shell*, and *What the Ladybird Heard*.
- Julia Donaldson started as a songwriter, and she says that she finds rhyming stories are often easier to write than non-rhyming ones!



## The Story Session

### 1. Introducing the book

- Show the front cover to the children. What kind of character do the children think the mermaid will be? Does she look happy? Share their predictions about what might happen in the story.
- Then read the back cover blurb aloud. Does this give the children more clues about the story? Have they changed their mind about what might happen in the story now that they have read the blurb?
- Read the first two pages of the story, and talk about the mermaid's life in the sea at Silversands. Ask whether they think the mermaid likes living there, and why they think that. Encourage them to look for clues in the pictures as well as in the words.

### 2. Reading the story

- Read the rest of the story aloud to the children, emphasising the rhythm and rhyme. Read it through once without pausing, so that they can enjoy the story without interruption. Then read it once again, pausing sometimes at the end of a line, and challenge the children to see if they can supply the rhyming word.
- At the end of the story, ask: "Who do you think is the villain of the story? What does Sam Sly do that is wrong?" Ask the children what they think Sam should have done, when he realised that the mermaid wasn't happy in his circus. Why do the children think Sam didn't want to set the mermaid free?
- How easy do the children think it would be to walk a mile on their hands? Do they think the mermaid was brave to try it?
- Which characters in the story do the children think were the best friends to the mermaid and why?

### 3. Follow-up

- Read the story again and encourage the children to join in as much as they can. If they enjoy this, you could work on a group performance of the story for an assembly.
- Encourage the children to work in small groups to make up their own song for the Singing Mermaid to sing. Can they use percussion instruments to give it a whooshing, swishing sound like the waves crashing on the shore?
- *The Gruffalo* website ([www.gruffalo.com](http://www.gruffalo.com)) contains lots of games and activities, songs and information about Julia Donaldson and her books.

## YOU TELL US

- Did you use these notes to have a Book Talk in class? • Were the notes helpful?
- Are there any changes you'd like to see to make them more useful?

We'd like to hear your comments! Please email us at:  
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