



A Bee in Your Ear

Frieda Wishinsky

illustrated by Louise-Andrée Laliberté

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About the Book

Kate's never won anything ever, but she's determined to win the school spelling bee. The only problem is her best friend Jake wants to win too, and so does bossy Violet. Can Kate prevail over Violet, stay friends with Jake and still win the contest?

About the Author

Frieda Wishinsky is the author of over forty trade and educational books. Her books have earned critical acclaim in magazines and newspapers around the world and have been translated into many languages, including French, Dutch, Danish, Spanish, Korean and Catalan. *Each One Special* was nominated for a 1999 Governor General's Award for text, and *Jennifer Jones Won't Leave Me Alone* won the 2004/5 UK Stockport, Portsmouth and Sheffield Children's Picture Book Awards. *Please, Louise!* (Groundwood Books) is nominated for the 2008 TD Literature Award and is the winner of the 2008 Marilyn Baille Picture Book Award.

About the Writing

Frieda never won anything in school till the vocabulary contest in grade eight. She was inspired to write *A Bee in Your Ear* when she remembered how determined she was to win that contest and then did! The idea for the title came to her when she remembered that her son had once actually gotten a “bee in his ear.” She says, “Boy, did that hurt!”

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections**Prereading Ideas**

Is it more important to win a contest or play fair? Why?

What if you won a contest and your friend lost. How would you feel? What would you say and do? What if your friend won and you lost? How would you handle these situations?

Many people find spelling hard. Do you have any ways that you remember spelling words? Share them with your class.

Classroom Discussion Questions

How do you feel if a friend lets you down? What can you do about it?

What could you do if you got angry with a friend and later felt sorry about it? How can you work it out?

What does the expression “winning isn’t everything” mean? Do you think it’s true? Why or why not? Is there anything more important than winning?

Suggested Activities

Write down five homonyms that you think are difficult to remember. Think of an interesting way to remember what each one means and how it’s spelled. Have a friend test you to see if your way to remember works.

Kate and Jake “acted out” some spelling words to help them remember. With a partner, act out some hard spelling words and share your “skit” with the class.

Kate suggests that Jake and she write an “Excuse” book with lots of crazy excuses. Make up an excuse book and share your book with the class.

Kate and Jake use *mnemonics* to remember spelling words. Mnemonic devices are a technique often used by students to aid in recall. A mnemonic is simply a way to remember information. For example, you might associate a term you need to remember with a common item that you are very familiar with. The best mnemonics are those that utilize positive imagery, humor or novelty. You might come up with a rhyme, song or joke to help remember a specific segment of information. Use a mnemonic technique to remember three difficult spelling words.

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

A Noodle Up Your Nose (Orca Echoes)

A Frog in My Throat (Orca Echoes)

Dimples Delight (Orca Echoes)

Give Maggie a Chance (Fitzhenry and Whiteside) by Frieda Wishinsky, a picturebook about school, stage fright and reading

See a list of all the spelling ideas on the Teaching Ideas website:
www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/contents08writingspelling.htm

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Dimples Delight

Each One Special

A Frog in My Throat

Just Call Me Joe

A Noodle Up Your Nose

Awards and Reviews

Please, Louise!—*Quill & Quire* Best Picture Book, Blue Spruce short list, TD Literature Award nominee 2008

A Noodle Up Your Nose—Canadian Toy Council Great Book, Willow Award nominee

Just Call Me Joe—CLA Book of the Year nominee, Red Cedar nominee

Each One Special—Governor General's Award nominee, OLA Best Bets, CCBC Our Choice starred selection, SYRCA Shining Willow Award nominee

“Wishinsky and Laliberté’s work provides young children with the opportunity to experience their school and family lives from the distance of literature. Children, parents, and other influential adults may use this book as a springboard to reflect on their relationships and behaviors. Stress management is necessary at all ages. The younger one learns it, the easier life will be. Highly Recommended.” —*CM Magazine*

“In this beginning chapter book, Kate’s anxiety over a school spelling bee leads her to snap at her pal Jake. Worried that she has lost his friendship and stung by her bullying classmate Violet’s mean remarks, Kate endures an unhappy time before she realizes that she can count on Jake in more ways than she had suspected. Most children will feel right at home in the elementary-school setting realistically depicted here, from classroom routine to playground dynamics. The bully’s motivation is suggested in such a way that, in the end, readers may even sympathize a little with Violet. Fourteen expressive pencil drawings illustrate the 13 short chapters. A down-to-earth school story for young readers.” —*Booklist*