

Once the book is completed, you have all the words and punctuation marks needed to do Sentence Builders for each sentence in *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. Distribute all the cards to all the children, giving several words to some children if necessary. Go back to the beginning of the book and have the class read the sentence chorally as the children who have cards with words or punctuation marks in that sentence come to the front of the room and build that sentence. Children love being the words and making the sentences. Equally important, since they become the words, they are interacting with the text to learn left-to-right sequence and the difference between a word and a sentence.

After doing this sentence-building activity as a class, put the book and the cards in a center so that your children can manipulate the words and re-create the text.

### \* **Children Learn Some Words as They Engage in Shared Reading**

Imagine that you have read and reread *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* or any of the many favorite predictable books with your students. You have written the words on cards and let the children match the words to sentences in the book and build the sentences. You have done the Sentence Builder activity several different times, allowing different children to be different words. Children are going to learn some of the words. Many children will learn the concrete words that name the animals, such as **bear**, **bird**, and **duck**. They might also learn some of the color words, such as **brown**, **red**, and **yellow**. Because words are repeated in all the sentences, some children will learn some of the abstract connecting words, such as **what**, **do**, **you**, **see**, **I**, and **at**.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, children from literate homes have often experienced 1,000 hours of reading and writing before coming to school. Many of the books read to young children are predictable books that they insist on having read over and over and from which they learn some of the words. Shared reading simulates this experience and gives everyone the opportunity to encounter what reading feels like, to understand print concepts, and to learn to read some words.

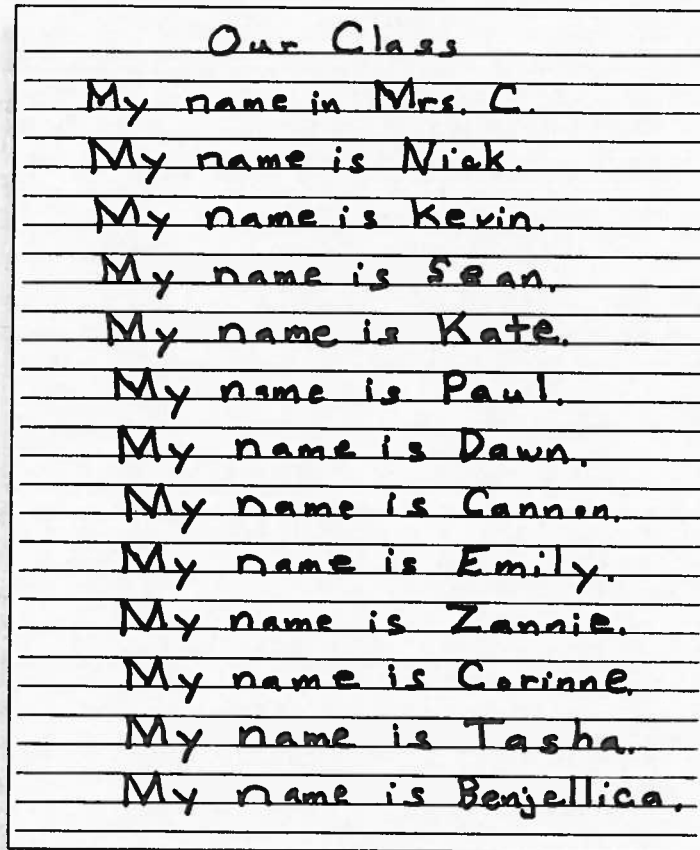


## *Predictable Charts*

Just as children enjoy reading predictable books together, they also like to write and read predictable charts. A predictable chart is created by the teacher and children. What makes it predictable is that all the sentences begin with the same stem. Each child's response completes the sentence. The first predictable chart made in Mrs. C's classroom simply included the names of all the class members.

The teacher always begins the chart, modeling the sentence pattern she wants children to use.

My name is Mrs. C.

**figure 1.1** The first predictable chart made in Mrs. C's classroom

Next, the teacher calls on each child to tell his or her name. The teacher writes each sentence on the chart and leads all the children to all read each sentence. Once the chart is written, each child comes and reads his or her sentence pointing to each word as the word is read.

For the second predictable chart, Mrs. C chose to focus on colors.

After a discussion of favorite colors, Mrs. C began a chart on Colors by saying and writing the first sentence. She put her name in parentheses after the sentence so that everyone would know it was her sentence.

I like green. (Mrs. C)

Next she called on Kevin to tell his favorite color.

I like red. (Kevin)

Maria and Sean were called next.

I like pink. (Maria)

I like red. (Sean)

**figure 1.2** The Colors predictable chart

Colors
I like green. (Mrs. C.)
I like red. (Kevin)
I like pink. (Maria)
I like red. (Sean)
I like blue. (David C.)
I like white. (Tyler)
I like purple. (David M.)
I like yellow. (Jake)
I like yellow. (Patrice)
I like red. (Sophie)
I like orange. (Kelly)
I like black. (Terry)

As Thanksgiving approached, Mrs. C and her children made a chart telling what they were thankful for.

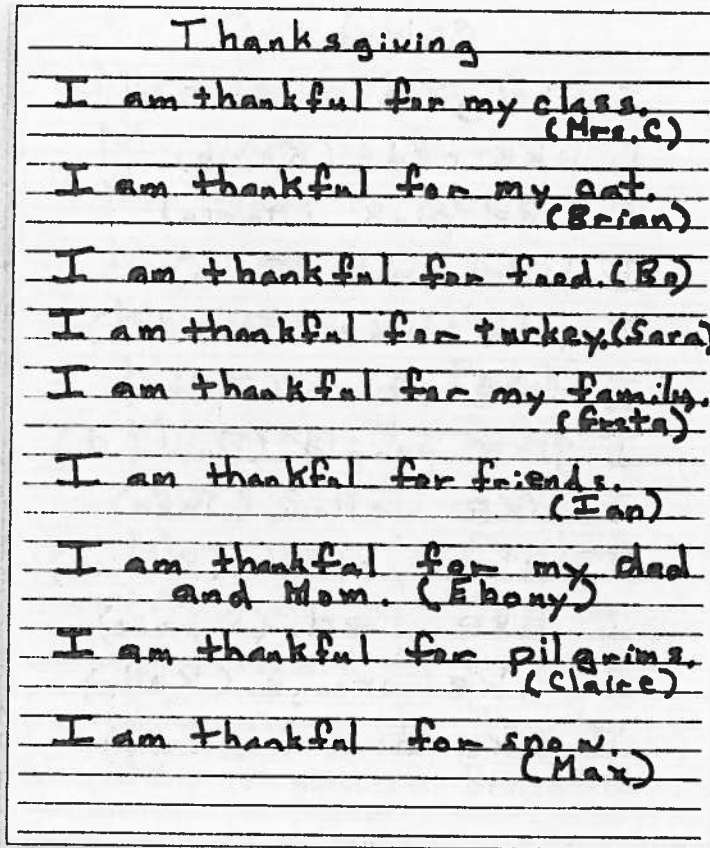
In Mrs. C's classroom, there are many children who have limited early reading experiences and several English language learners. She does a new chart each week and uses the chart to teach print concepts, to teach concrete and function words, and to be sure every child knows what reading and writing are for and is developing the confidence to become a reader and a writer. Here is how the predictable chart activities proceed in a typical week.

**Monday** Half the class meets with Mrs. C, and she begins the chart with their sentences. After each sentence is written, all the children read that sentence as the child whose sentence it is points to the words.

**Tuesday** The other half of the class meets with Mrs. C. Their sentences are added to the chart and read by all the students.

**Wednesday** On Wednesday, the whole class gathers and chorally reads the whole chart. Next the teacher asks children to come up to the chart and point out

figure 1.3 The Thanksgiving predictable chart



anything they notice. The children notice a variety of things depending on what they know about letters, sounds, words, and reading. These may include:

“All sentences begin with I Like.”

“Pink and purple begin with the same letter.”

“Kevin’s and Kelly’s names start with a capital K.”

“I is at the beginning of every sentence!”

“I is always a capital (or big) letter.”

“Benjellica has the longest name.”

“Bo has the shortest name.”

“All sentences have this [pointing to all the periods] at the end.”

When the children have “noticed” all kinds of important concepts about print and words on the chart, Mrs. C tells them that she needs their help to make the word cards needed to create all the sentences on the chart. Mrs. C leads the class to read the first sentence on the chart:

I am thankful for my class. (Mrs. C)

The children tell her what the words are and she writes these words on index cards.

**figure 1.4** Words in the first sentence written on index cards

I am thankful for my class. Mrs. C

Together, they read the second sentence:

I am thankful for my cat. (Brian)

The class decides that two new words are needed to create Brian's sentence. The teacher writes these on index cards. To make Brian's sentence, the class decides that they need to remove the word *class* and Mrs. C's name and replace these with the word *cat* and Brian's name. Brian does the honors.

**figure 1.5** Brian's sentence with the words written on index cards

I am thankful for my cat. (Brian)

The lesson proceeds more quickly as the children realize that cards need to be created just for the last words and each student's name. Cards are created and the child whose sentence is being made replaces the words from the previous sentence to create the new sentence.

**figure 1.6** Ebony's sentence

I am thankful for my mom and  
dad. (Ebony)

**Thursday** The word cards made on the previous day are used to do a sentence builder activity similar to that described for *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. The word cards are distributed to all the children. Each child gets his or her own name and one or two other cards. The class reads each sentence, and children who

figure 1.7 Some pages from the class book on Colors

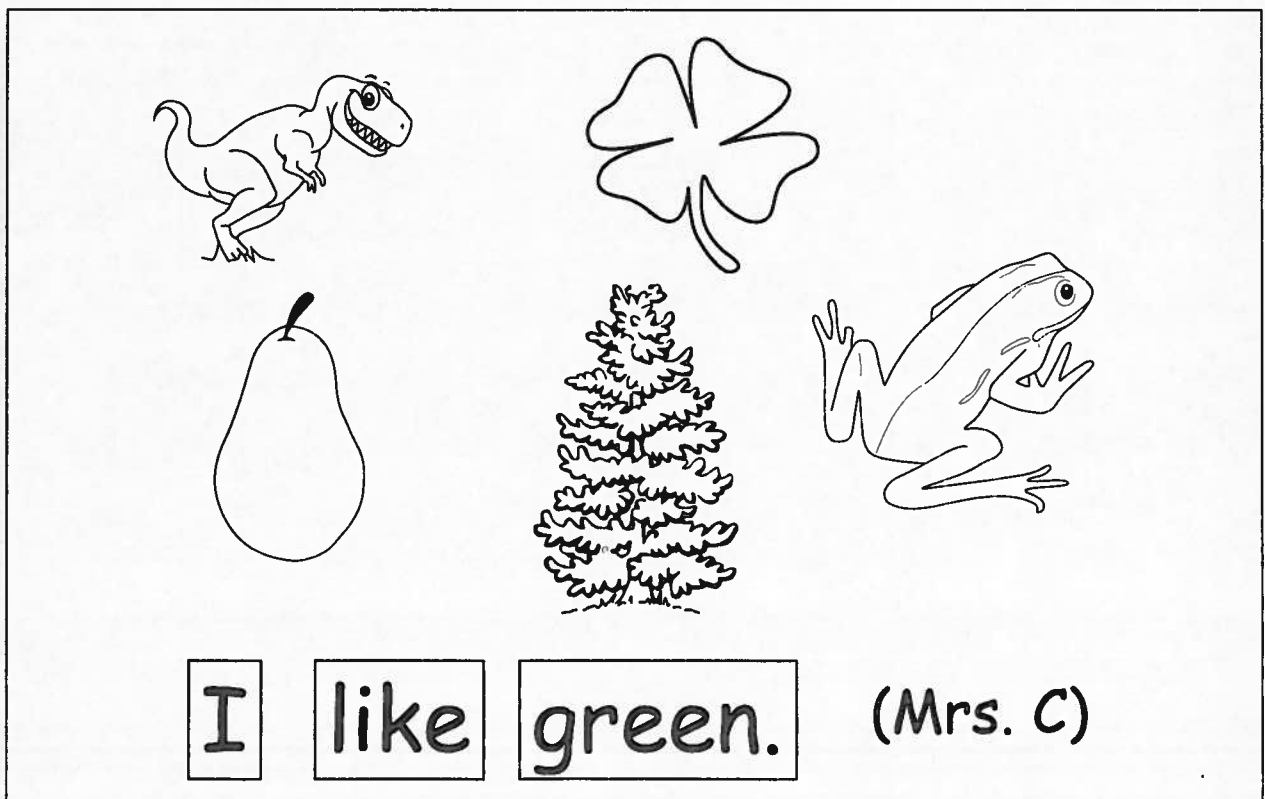
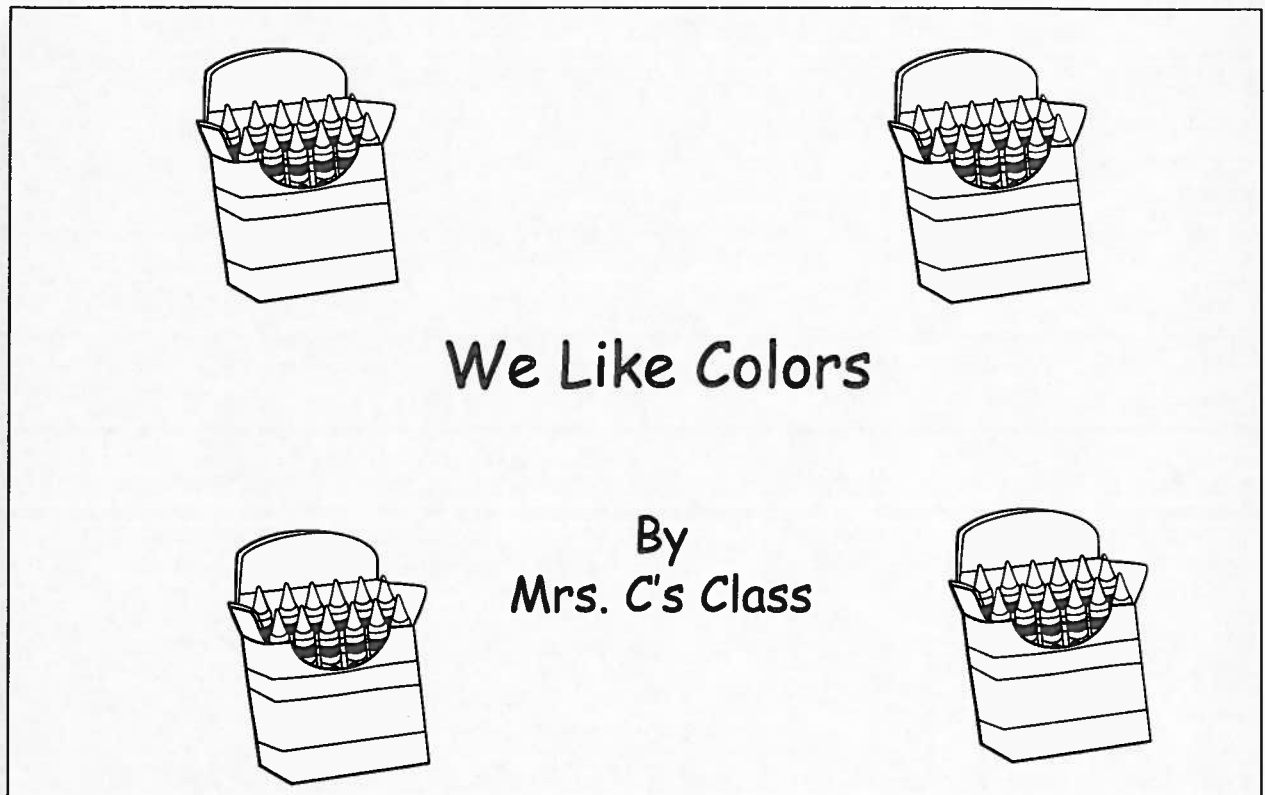
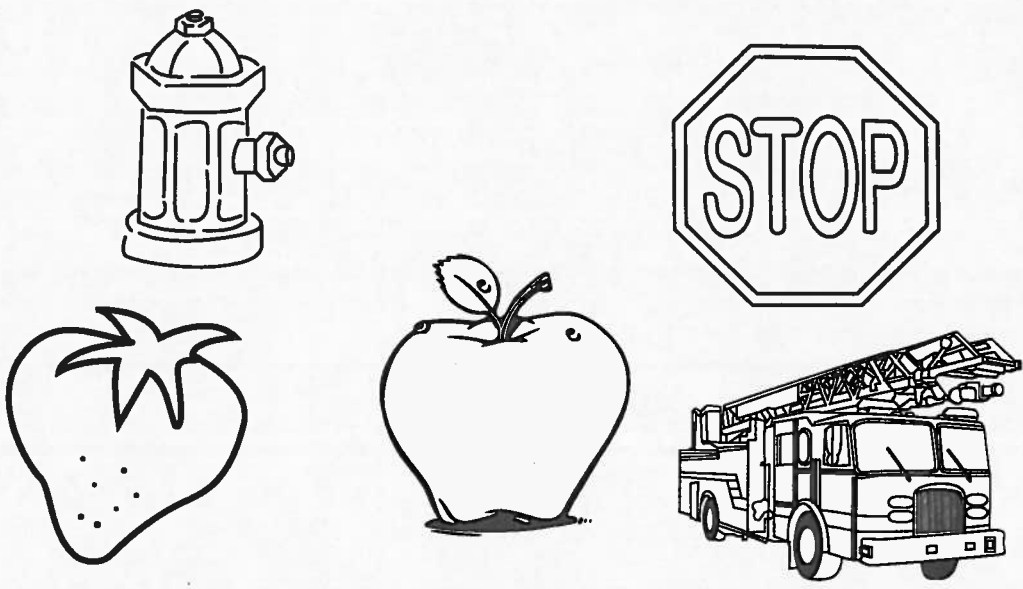
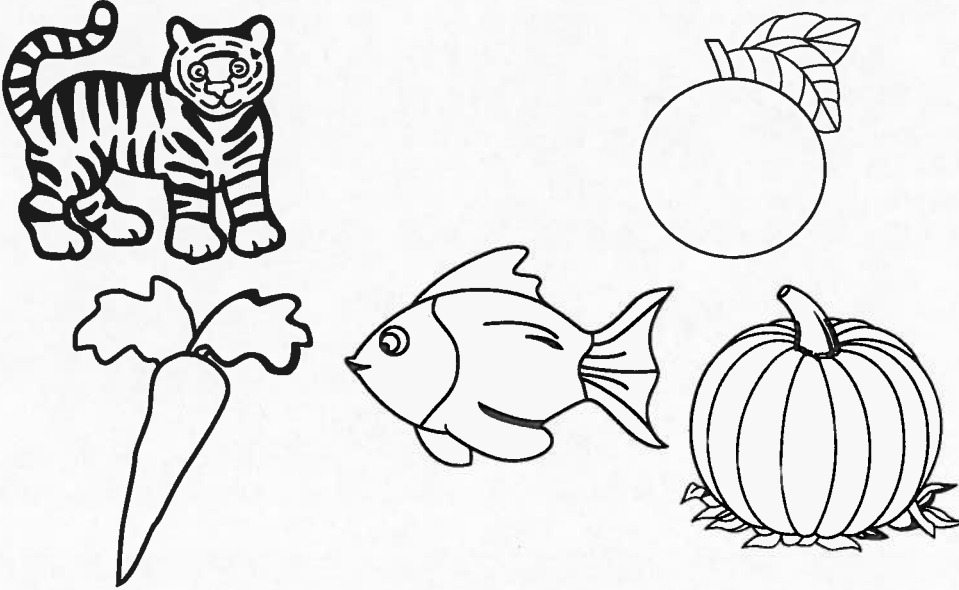


figure 1.7 continued



I like red. (Kevin)



I like orange. (Kelly)

have the words in that sentence come up and arrange themselves to build the sentences. For this chart, the children with the words *I, am, thankful, and for stay* in place and other words join them to form the sentences. (When the sentences of the children holding the cards that are in every sentence are being built, these children get to choose a “sub” to hold their card while they go to the end of the sentence so they can hold up their name.)

**Friday** On Friday, the whole class participates in making a class book based on the predictable chart. To prepare for Friday’s lesson, Mrs. C copies each child’s sentence on a sentence strip. Each child cuts his or her sentence into words and pastes these words in the correct order on the bottom of a large piece of drawing paper. Then the child illustrates the page. (Although usually the children draw the illustration, for the class book on colors Mrs. C used a free clip art site to let children find pictures of objects beginning with the chosen color. The children printed these out and cut and pasted them on their pages.) When completed, the class books are put in the “Reading Center.” By Thanksgiving, the children will have made 10 class books. These are perennial favorites for independent reading time. The children never tire of reading about themselves and their friends!

### \* **Children Learn Print Functions, Print Concepts, and Words from Their Predictable Charts**

Just as children learn print functions, print concepts, and words from the shared reading of predictable text, they also develop these early reading concepts as they participate in making the predictable charts and class books. They learn that reading and writing are for telling about yourself and learning about your classmates. They track print from left to right and proceed in that order as they build the sentences and when they paste them on their page of the class book.

All children learn some words from the charts and books. Most children learn to read their names and the names of many of their classmates, which are written at the end of every sentence. They learn some concrete words—**cat**, **football**, and **pizza**, for example—as they write and read about their favorite animals, sports, and foods. Children who come to school with many of the early reading concepts in place often learn the abstract connecting words—such as *for*, *like*, and *is*—that are repeated again and again on the charts. Predictable charts provide many opportunities to learn both interesting, concrete words and high-frequency abstract words.



Just as children from literacy-oriented homes read before they can read by pretend-reading a memorized book, they write before they can write! Their writing is usually not readable by anyone besides themselves, and sometimes they



**sixth edition**

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# *Phonics They Use*

## *Words for Reading and Writing*

**Patricia M. Cunningham**

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