



Finally Home

by Cortney Cino, illustrated by Tim Deberd
Whimspire Books for Kids; 2025



Educator Guide with Activities

ALIGNED WITH COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)

WHIMSPIRE BOOKS
— ✦ *For Kids* ✦ —

BOOK SUMMARY

Alongside her brother and mother, Sara awaits the return of her father from his tour of duty. The young narrator is excited and expresses impatience at having to wait to reunite with her father. A variety of activities and festivities lead to warm hugs and jubilation as Daddy is finally home.

A heartwarming story for ages 4-8, *Finally Home* captures the feelings of love and excitement that families feel when reuniting after time apart.

Below are suggestions for each step in the read-aloud experience.

979-8-9889251-8-7 - Paperback (12.99)

979-8-9889251-6-3 - Hardcover (18.99)

979-8-9889251-9-4 - eBook (5.99)

Trim - 10 x 10 inches, 32 pages

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Available wherever books are sold



BEFORE READING

Suggestions for building background knowledge and interest in the story


 Introduce the book: Show the cover.

 What do you notice?

- Draw attention to the details in the foreground as well as the background. Note Dad's uniform.
- Ask: Where do you think they are (what is the **setting**)? Who do you think has arrived? How do the characters feel? How do you know?

 Read the title, *Finally Home*.

- Why do books have **titles**? (Titles give **clues** to what the book is about. It makes us curious about **what happens** in the story. Often it gives **important information**.)
- Who do you think is *Finally Home*?

 Point out the creators' names on the cover. Explain that these identify the author and the illustrator of the book.

- What does an author do?
- What does an illustrator do?

 Turn to the title page. Study the illustration.

- What is the character doing? (Crossing dates off on the calendar.)
- Have you ever done this? Discuss.
- Thinking back to the cover of the book, what do you think the character might be waiting for?
- What do you wonder? (Begin a list.)
- What do you think might happen in this story? (List on chart paper or whiteboard.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K-2.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-2.1,5,6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K-2.1,4,6



WHILE READING

Suggestions for delving into the story



Read the first spread.

- What do you notice about the first sentence in the story? (They are red.) Why do you think they are a different, bright color? (To signal something important.)
- What do you think the family is preparing for?
- Have you ever waited for someone to arrive? Discuss the circumstances.
- What are some other ways the family in the story might prepare?



Read the second spread.

- What did we find out on this page? (The characters' names are Sara and Lucas.)
- Who is the **narrator**, the one telling the story? (Sara.)
- Since Sara is the **narrator**, we see what is happening and find things out from her **point of view**. What is an example?
- How does Sara feel? (Excited.)
- What words does the author use to show us how Sara feels? (Twirls in dress, jumps in the truck.)
- How does the illustrator show us how the family feels? (Actions, facial expressions, color choices.)
- Why do you think the words "**It's time!**" are in red? (To signal heightened excitement and anticipation.) Recall that the first words in the story are also in red.



Read the next spread.

- What is a base? (As used in this story: a protected area or place from which the operations of a military unit or branch take place)
- How is Sara feeling as they wait in line? (Nervous and impatient.)



WHILE READING (CONT.)

- Why do you think she is nervous?
- What does it mean to be impatient?
- Have you ever felt impatient? Discuss.
- What does Sara do to keep busy while they wait in the long line. (Counts the cars in line, plays I Spy.)
- What else could Sara and Lucas do to pass the time while they wait to enter the base?
- Sara describes feeling like “butterflies flutter” in her belly. How would you describe what it feels like when you are feeling nervous or excited?



Read the next two spreads. (*Families are waiting for the arrival of their loved ones.*)

- What are the families doing?
- How are the families feeling? How do you know?
- What are clues to the feelings of anticipation and celebration in those who are waiting?
- What do you notice about the signs that Sara looks at?
- Why does Momma hands Sara ear plugs? (The planes are about to arrive, and the sound will be loud.)



Read the next three spreads.

- How do you think Sara and Lucas are feeling as the airplanes come into view and circle to land?
- What do you notice about the words describing the planes in the air? (They mimic the action.)
- What do you think will happen next?



WHILE READING (CONT.)



Read the next two spreads.

- How do we know how Sara is feeling as she waits? (She wants to run, but stays put; the butterflies in her belly are fluttering faster.)
- What word would you use to describe how Sara is feeling? (Impatient, excited, nervous.)
- Do you think it is hard for Sara to make her feet stay put? Have you ever felt like this? Discuss.
- What do we learn on this page? (This is not the first time their father has returned from deployment.)



Read to the end of the story.

- How do you think members of the families are feeling? How do you know?
- Earlier in the story, Sara mentions her bracelet. What do we find out here? (Sara's dad is wearing a bracelet she made for him.)
- When she reunites with her dad, Sara notices he is wearing the bracelet she made for him. How do you think that makes Sara feel? How do you think her dad felt when he received the bracelet from Sara? Discuss.
- What do you think will happen next?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K-2.1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10






CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI. K-1.4,5,7; 2.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K-2. 1,2,4, 6



AFTER READING

Suggestions for follow-up

-  Read the author's military dedication in the back of the book. Discuss.
-  Return to the story and review the words in red. Discuss why those words are highlighted.
-  Review unfamiliar words learned in this story: (military) base, hangar, impatient, taxi, cockpit, glass canopies. Review pages in the story to help with meaning.
-  Return to the chart paper/whiteboard lists generated Before Reading. Discuss what we wondered, what we read, and what we know now.
-  In this story, we find out what's happening from Sara's **point of view**. Discuss how each member of the family's point of view might be a little different.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K-2.1,2,3,6,7,9,10
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI. K-2.1,3,4,5, 6.7,8,10
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K-2. 1,2,3,4,6



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES & CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



Have children create posters to welcome someone visiting or returning home.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: ART, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



Craft bracelets like the one that Sara made for her dad and herself to gift to someone special.



Team-time: On the back of the book, we learn that this story highlights a military tradition. Break into teams to learn more about the traditions and procedures that are common for those returning from active duty. Prior to beginning the research, brainstorm as a whole group to generate a list of where to search and what to look for or seek to find out. Consider discussing vocabulary, such as veteran, military base, and deployment to aid in research.

Share findings with the class.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:
SCIENCE, RESEARCH SKILLS, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-2.1,3,4,7,10
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W. K-2.1,2,3,6,7,8
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K-2. 1,2,3,4,5,6



WRITING EXERCISES



In the style of the words on the page about the soaring planes, write a few sentences to show what you are describing. Use as many senses as you can, just as the author has done in the story.

Here are a few ideas of what you might describe. You can also use your own idea!

- A puppy playing in a park
- A fly buzzing around a bowl of fruit
- A snowflake fluttering through the air above an ice-skating rink
- A car zooming around a bend in the road

Draw a picture to accompany the sentences. Display around the room.



Write about a time when you were waiting for someone to arrive . Give details that describe how you were feeling.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W. K-2. 1,2,3,8

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) addressed by the discussion questions and activity sheets in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the CCSS, visit corestandards.org.

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Finally Home



Directions: Number the statements below in the order in which they happen in the story.

- _____ *Daddy is finally home.*
- _____ *My speedy feet nearly knock Daddy over.*
- _____ *Today is finally the day.*
- _____ *At the hangar, Lucas and I play with our friends while we wait.*
- _____ *Momma is wearing the smile that Daddy loves.*
- _____ *The planes line up like the tiny models on Daddy's desk.*
- _____ *The loudspeaker crackles. It's time!*
- _____ *Lucas and I work on the poster.*

Finally Home

Whose Point of View?

Directions: Draw a line from the **characters** on the left to their **point of view statements** on the right.



I cannot wait to come home today.

We are getting the house ready before it's time!

Butterflies are fluttering in my belly.

I want to clean the truck to show Dad how much I missed him.

I can't stop smiling as we wait in line.

My daughter's bracelet is so special to me.

It's hard to be patient and make my feet stay put.

We are so happy he is finally home.