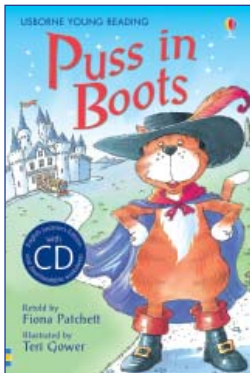


## Puss in Boots • Teacher's notes



**Author:** based on the story by Charles Perrault

**Reader level:** Upper Intermediate

**Word count:** 1326

**Lexile level:** 620L

**Text type:** Fairy tale

### About the story

A poor miller has three sons. When he dies, the two elder brothers take their father's mill and donkey, leaving Tom, the youngest, with only a cat. Just as Tom is bemoaning his luck, the cat speaks, asking for a bag and a pair of boots. Astonished, Tom gives Puss a cloak and hat as well. Puss uses the bag to snare rabbits and partridges, which he takes as a gift to the King from his master, "the Duke of Carabas".

One day, knowing that the King and his daughter will be driving past, Puss tells Tom to hide his clothes and jump in a river. Puss then tells the King that his master has been attacked by robbers, and the King sends for new clothes for Tom and invites him to drive with them. Meanwhile, Puss persuades workers in nearby fields to tell the King that the land belongs to the Duke, instead of their real owner, a fierce ogre. When he reaches the ogre's castle, Puss tricks him into changing into a lion and then a mouse – which Puss catches and kills. The King reaches the castle and is amazed to discover that it, too, belongs to the Duke. He offers Tom his daughter's hand in marriage, and everyone including Puss lives happily ever after.

### About the author

Charles Perrault was born in Paris 1628, and had a long career as a Government minister and private secretary. When he lost his post at the age of 67, he dedicated himself to writing. His "Tales of Mother Goose" were published in 1697. They included such classics as Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Puss in Boots, and were an instant success, inspiring numerous other collections. Perrault died in 1703. His tales were popular with French communities in Germany, and several were later retold by the Brothers Grimm.

### Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words in the story.

p3	Puss miller left [meaning as a legacy]	p9	floppy strutted stretched	p16	generous freezing puzzled	p26	mincemeat refuse produces	p35	boastfully
p4	tabby cat blink grabbed	p10	foolish bouncing quivering	p17	trusted rescue coach	p27	harvest reaping snarled	p38	leaped gobbled clattering
p5	impressed grumbled	p11	delighted marched	p18	guards dreadful	p29	horrified threat	p39	flung splendid amazement
p6	lap gloomy purr	p12	throne gift duke	p20	snapped handsome bent	p30	threatened magnificent fierce	p41	banqueting feast crammed
p7	astonished tricks	p13	corn partridges chuckled	p21	gaspd insisted rumbled	p31	ogre greeted trick	p45	trifles bride
p8	leather shiny cloak	p14	wonder drawstring	p22	raced mowing chop	p32	creature terrified growling	p46	chase

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## Key phrases

p3	all he had in the world	p25	Sure enough	p43	to get along [very] well [indeed]
p12	Your Royal Highness	p26	to play along	p44	could not keep his thoughts to himself
p12	How amazing!	p31	happened to be		
p13	wide open	p32	See for yourself!		
p22	I have some errands to run	p40	to take a look around		
p24	[...] didn't dare [do something]	p41	his mouth started to water		

## Before reading

Try to find a large leather bag and some smart boots to bring into the classroom and show to your students, or look for pictures. Say that you're going to read a story about a clever cat. He can make his master rich with just these items and some quick thinking. Does anyone know the story? You may want to brainstorm different words for cat [kitty cat, pussy cat, puss]. Now show your students the book's cover. Can they think of some words to describe the cat in the picture? [e.g. elegant, well-dressed, confident.]

## Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

## During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

- |     |   |     |  |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| p4  | What is a mill used for? Why is the donkey useful? [For carrying sacks of grain and milled flour] | p25 | What do you think Puss is doing now?   |
| p7  | Why do you think Puss hasn't talked before?   | p26 | Why is Tom happy to play along?  |
| p12 | Who is the Duke of Carabas? Does he really exist?   | p33 | What words would you use to describe Puss's actions? [e.g. brave, clever, inspired, daring, risky, dishonest]              |
| p14 | What would the king do with a rabbit and two partridges?  | p35 | How does Puss persuade the ogre to change into a mouse? Do you think the trick would work if he suggested the mouse first? |
| p18 | What must Tom be thinking at this point?  | p43 | Why does the king think Tom would make a perfect prince?   |
| p20 | What was wrong with the clothes Tom was wearing before?   | p46 | How do you think the brothers feel?  |

## After reading

You could chart on the board Tom's journey from poor miller's son to prince. Ask the students to call out what happened next. You might end up with something like this:

*Tom = poor miller's son → inherits Puss → jumps in the river → gets new clothes → goes for a ride with Princess Arabella → takes over the ogre's castle → marries Princess Arabella → becomes a prince*

Then chart the journey from Puss's point of view. What did he do at each stage?

Spend some time talking through the issues behind the story. What would the king think if he knew the truth? Would it matter that Tom was a poor miller's son, given that he now has a castle and lots of land? Would Arabella mind? What is it that she likes about Tom – his fine new clothes, wealth or who he is as a person? What would have happened to Tom if Puss had been an ordinary cat? Do you think it's possible to change your fortune and your future just by clever thinking?