Eeyore Has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents
by A. A. Milne

for primary and early elementary grades

Great Books 75th Anniversary Unit
About This Unit

We’re celebrating 75 years of discussion-centered learning, including many thousands of student discussions led by teachers, classroom volunteers, and parents across the country and around the world. Please enjoy this present from us—a classic A.A. Milne story that appeared in our first offering for K–1 students, the 1990 Read-Aloud series. Refreshed with new questions and creative response options, these lesson plans are perfect for sharing the joy of inquiry with K–1 or early elementary students.

About Shared Inquiry

The suggested activities provided below are based on the Shared Inquiry sequence of activities that includes multiple readings of a text and collaborative discussion of open-ended questions. These are labeled below as Sessions, so that your students are working with the story over at least 4-5 separate days. We recommend that you read the text aloud to students, having them follow along as you project the text, or you may print it for older students. There are also some printable activity pages for students after the text. Depending on the age and attention span of your students, you will probably want to pause during the reading to get their questions and reactions. If needed, divide the sessions to meet the students’ attention spans.

Short Videos on Shared Inquiry

To learn the basics about leading and participating in Shared Inquiry discussion, watch these helpful videos:

- An Overview of Shared Inquiry for Teachers
- Shared Inquiry Overview
- Shared Inquiry Guidelines
- Shared Inquiry Dos and Don’ts

About Junior Great Books

The Junior Great Books® program combines high-quality literature; student-centered discussion; and activities that support reading comprehension, critical thinking, speaking and listening, writing, and social emotional learning. Junior Great Books provides outstanding classroom materials and inspiring professional development. We help students succeed by getting the most out of reading and interacting with their teachers and classmates, while providing instruction and support in Shared Inquiry™ to teachers. Junior Great Books programs provide a research-based sequence of activities with every selection that prepares students for discussion and extends their thinking and learning. To learn more about Junior Great Books, visit us at www.greatbooks.org.

About the Great Books Foundation

Founded in 1947, the Great Books Foundation is an independent, nonprofit educational organization that creates reading and discussion programs for students and adults with the conviction that literacy and critical thinking help form reflective and well-informed citizens. For more about us, visit www.greatbooks.org.
Eeyore Has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents

A. A. Milne

Session 1

Prereading/Text Opener

- **Student Learning Objective**: To activate and build background knowledge related to a text.
- **Key Shared Inquiry Concept**: Thinking about what we already know helps us prepare to read.

Prereading Questions

What makes birthdays exciting?
How can friends help someone celebrate a birthday?

World of the Story

Explain to students that the “Winnie-the-Pooh” stories were written by the English author A. A. Milne almost 100 years ago (the first stories were published in 1926). In these stories, Pooh and his friends live in the Hundred Acre Wood and are friends with a boy named Christopher Robin. You may wish to ask students if they have read or seen other Pooh stories.

First Reading with Sharing Questions

Students follow along as the text is read aloud. Students then ask questions about the text while the teacher records their questions. If you wish, you can stop occasionally during the reading to ask students if they have questions.

- **Student Learning Objective**: To ask questions about a text.
- **Key Shared Inquiry Concepts**: Reading a text once is just the first step in understanding it; asking questions about a text helps us understand it better.

Ask students “What did you wonder about?” when you pause and after the first reading. Choose a few questions to discuss, focusing on those that clarify facts and definitions (see Working with Words below). Ask students to choose a question they would like to explore further, and help them write or draw it on page 8.

Optional Anytime Activities (after the first reading)

Drawing Activity

Any time after the first reading of the story, have students draw in response to the following prompt: Draw a picture of the party Eeyore is describing to Pooh on page 15.

“Look at all the presents I have had.”
He waved a foot from side to side.
“Look at the birthday cake. Candles and pink sugar.”

Use the student activity on page 9.
Optional Anytime Activities, continued

Working with Words
Share definitions and briefly talk about the following target words. (Page numbers refer to the first time the word appears in the story.)

- pathetic (p. 11)  miserable (p. 16)
- gloomily (p. 12)  properly (p. 17)
- gaiety (p. 12)  suddenly (p. 22)

Session 2
Second Reading
Students listen or read along as the text is reread, engaging in activities that help them explore the text more deeply, such as making notes using a specific prompt and comparing those notes with other students. The teacher also asks follow-up questions to help the students explain their thinking.

- **Student Learning Objective**: To reread a text purposefully in order to gain a deeper understanding.
- **Key Shared Inquiry Concept**: Rereading helps us discover new things about a text.

“Eeyore has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents” is a long text for younger readers. It would benefit students during the second reading to stop periodically and think about the story. There are two options for this:

1. **Ask the questions in the margin as you read**. These can be found on pages 14, 17, 19, 24, and 26. Use a light touch when asking and discussing the questions during the second reading.
2. **Choral Reading**: Students read aloud the highlighted phrases as if they were Pooh. Invite students to try different tones of voice.

Session 3
Shared Inquiry Discussion
Students explore the text’s meaning in depth by discussing several interpretive questions. They write, draw, or think of their own idea about the text, then discuss and develop their ideas while the teacher uses follow-up questions to facilitate the conversation.

- **Student Learning Objective**: To engage in a discussion by sharing ideas about a text, supporting those ideas with evidence, and listening and responding to other students’ ideas.
- **Key Shared Inquiry Concept**: Discussing a text helps us form our own ideas about its meaning while thoughtfully considering the ideas of others.
Students discuss the open-ended questions below one at a time, based on your sense of their questions and interests. Use follow-up questions to explore their ideas. For texts this long and with younger learners, it is effective to ask the questions in chronological order as they come up in the text.

- Why does Eeyore wait so long to tell Pooh it’s his birthday?
- Why does Pooh decide he must get a present for Eeyore right away?
- Why does Pooh think it is important to get Owl to write “A Happy Birthday” on the pot?
- Why is it important to Pooh and Piglet that they help Eeyore celebrate his birthday?
- When Piglet wishes Eeyore “many happy returns of the day,” why does Eeyore ask “Me having a real birthday?”
- Why is Eeyore “happy as could be” with the pot and the balloon?

**Session 4**

**Extension Activities (optional)**

The following activities offer ways to extend your students’ thinking about the story, make connections with other texts, and involve students’ families.

**Written Response**

Students extend and elaborate on their ideas about the text they discussed by writing.

- **Student Learning Objective:** We can continue connecting to and sharing our ideas about stories by writing.
- **Key Shared Inquiry Concept:** Writing about a text helps readers extend, explain, and share their ideas about the text.

Using the activity page (p. 10), have students respond to the prompt: A present I would give Eeyore is _________________ because . . .
Making Connections Activities

Related Junior Great Books stories

Many Junior Great Books stories will help students further explore the theme of Friendship and Community, including “City Mouse and Country Mouse” (Junior Great Books Series 1), the first three stories in Junior Great Books Series 2, and “The Banza” in Junior Great Books Series 3, to name just a few.

After reading two or more related stories, encourage students to collaborate and list various ways that characters in each story showed they were friends. Ask them to discuss an evaluative question such as “What makes someone a good friend?” using evidence from their own experiences, as well as the texts they have read. Encourage them to explain why those qualities are important. If reading Junior Great Books Series 2, Book One, use the Friendship theme introduction questions and activity page.

Related Poetry

“Put Something In” by Shel Silverstein (access the poem here)

Share
Ask students to share a word that makes them smile when they say it out loud.
• Do they smile at anyone else’s word?
• How does smiling help us connect to others?

Listen
Play read-aloud of the poem: “Put Something In”

Share
Have students share what they found most funny about the poem. Ask:
• Why was that funny to you?

Encourage them to agree and add other examples of parts that were funny or more reasons why parts were funny.

Reread
“Put Something In” by Shel Silverstein

Move
Use the first line to demonstrate how to clap/tap for each syllable to hear the rhythm of the poem. Then have students tap along with the reading. Repeat, as you wish.
Discuss
• Why does the poem suggest that we “Put something silly in the world?”
• How does being silly sometimes help a person feel better?
• How does being silly help us be friendly to each other?

Connect
If you’ve been reading other texts about Friendship and Community:
• What helps a group of people become friends?
• Why might it help a group to do something together, like have a party?
• What would be good about each person adding something, like a poem or a gift?

Create
Using students’ ideas and notes of what they have shared earlier, make up a shared poem. For example:
• Draw a . . .
• Write a . . .
• Sing a . . .
• Whistle . . .
• Do a . . . (2 lines)
• Put something silly in the (add place) that ain’t been there before.

Illustrate
Ask students how they would illustrate the shared poem. Students can draw their ideas and either share them or talk about them

At-Home
Ask family members to share examples of gifts they have given or received.
• Were any of them silly?
• Was it more fun to give or receive a gift?

Encourage families to share and discuss ways they are part of a community.
• What connects them?
• How do members of a community help one another?

Full Resource Links for This Unit
Here are full links to all of the resources shared in this document.
• Short Videos on Shared Inquiry: https://www.greatbooks.org/emu/short-introductory-videos-on-shared-inquiry/
• “Put Something In” printed poem: https://allpoetry.com/Put-Something-In
• Read-aloud of “Put Something In”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mGR82MTfKc
What did you wonder about?

My question:
What does Eeyore imagine a birthday party will look like when he describes one to Pooh on page 15?
A present I would give Eeyore is ____________

because . . .
Eeyore, the old grey Donkey, stood by the side of the stream, and looked at himself in the water.

“Pathetic,” he said. “That’s what it is. Pathetic.”

He turned and walked slowly down the stream for twenty yards, splashed across it, and walked slowly back on the other side. Then he looked at himself in the water again.

“As I thought,” he said. “No better from this side. But nobody minds. Nobody cares. Pathetic, that’s what it is.”
There was a crackling noise in the bracken behind him, and out came Pooh.

“Good morning, Eeyore,” said Pooh.

“Good morning, Pooh Bear,”
said Eeyore gloomily. “If it is a good morning,” he said. “Which I doubt,” said he.

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“Nothing, Pooh Bear, nothing.
We can’t all, and some of us don’t. That’s all
there is to it.”

“Can’t all what?” said Pooh, rubbing his nose.

“Gaiety. Song-and-dance. Here we go round the mulberry bush.”

“Oh!” said Pooh. He thought for a long time, and then asked, “What mulberry bush is that?”

“Bon-hommy,” went on Eeyore gloomily. “French word meaning bonhommy,” he explained. “I’m not complaining, but There It Is.”
Pooh sat down on a large stone, and tried to think this out. It sounded to him like a riddle, and he was never much good at riddles, being a Bear of Very Little Brain. So he sang *Cottleston Pie* instead:

*Cottleston, Cottleston,*
*Cottleston Pie,*
A fly can’t bird, but a bird can fly.
Ask me a riddle and I reply:
“*Cottleston, Cottleston,*
*Cottleston Pie.”*

That was the first verse. When he had finished it, Eeyore didn’t actually say that he didn’t like it, so Pooh very kindly sang the second verse to him:
Eeyore still said nothing at all, so Pooh hummed the third verse quietly to himself:

Cottleston, Cottleston,  
Cottleston Pie,  
Why does a chicken, I don’t know why.  
Ask me a riddle and I reply:  
“Cottleston, Cottleston,  
Cottleston Pie.”


“I am,” said Pooh.
“Some can,” said Eeyore.
“Why, what’s the matter?”
“Is anything the matter?”
“You seem so sad, Eeyore.”
“Sad? Why should I be sad?
It’s my birthday. The happiest day of
the year.”

“Your birthday?” said Pooh in
great surprise.

“Of course it is. Can’t you see?
Look at all the presents I have had.”
He waved a foot from side to side.

“Look at the birthday cake. Candles and
pink sugar.”

Pooh looked—first to the right and
then to the left.

“Presents?” said Pooh. “Birthday cake?”
said Pooh. “Where?”
“Can’t you see them?”
“No,” said Pooh.
“Neither can I,” said Eeyore.
“Joke,” he explained. “Ha ha!”
Pooh scratched his head, being a little puzzled by all this.
“But is it really your birthday?” he asked.
“It is.”
“Oh! Well, many happy returns of the day, Eeyore.”
“And many happy returns to you, Pooh Bear.”
“But it isn’t my birthday.”
“No, it’s mine.”
“But you said ‘Many happy returns’—”
“Well, why not? You don’t always want to be miserable on my birthday, do you?”
“Oh, I see,” said Pooh.
“It’s bad enough,” said Eeyore, almost breaking down, “being miserable myself, what with no presents and no cake and no candles, and no proper notice taken of me at all, but if everybody else is going to be miserable too—”

This was too much for Pooh. “Stay there!” he called to Eeyore, as he turned and hurried back home as quick as he could; for he felt that he must get poor Eeyore a present of some sort at once, and he could always think of a proper one afterwards.
Outside his house he found Piglet, jumping up and down trying to reach the knocker.

“Hallo, Piglet,” he said.
“Hallo, Pooh,” said Piglet.
“What are you trying to do?”
“I was trying to reach the knocker,” said Piglet. “I just came round—”
“Let me do it for you,” said Pooh kindly. So he reached up and knocked at the door. “I have just seen Eeyore,” he began, “and poor Eeyore is in a Very Sad Condition, because it’s his birthday, and nobody has taken any notice of it, and he’s very Gloomy—you know what Eeyore is—and there he was, and—What a long time whoever lives here is answering this door.” And he knocked again.
“But Pooh,” said Piglet, “it’s your own house!”

“Oh!” said Pooh. “So it is,” he said.

“Well, let’s go in.”

So in they went. The first thing Pooh did was to go to the cupboard to see if he had quite a small jar of honey left; and he had, so he took it down.

“I’m giving this to Eeyore,” he explained, “as a present. What are you going to give?”

“Couldn’t I give it too?” said Piglet.

“From both of us?”

“No,” said Pooh. “That would not be a good plan.”
“All right, then, I’ll give him a balloon. I’ve got one left from my party. I’ll go and get it now, shall I?”

“That, Piglet, is a very good idea. It is just what Eeyore wants to cheer him up. Nobody can be uncheered with a balloon.”

So off Piglet trotted; and in the other direction went Pooh, with his jar of honey.
It was a warm day; and he had a long way to go. He hadn’t gone more than half-way when a sort of funny feeling began to creep all over him. It began at the tip of his nose and trickled all through him and out at the soles of his feet. It was just as if somebody inside him were saying, “Now then, Pooh, time for a little something.”

“Dear, dear,” said Pooh, “I didn’t know it was as late as that.” So he sat down and took the top off his jar of honey. “Lucky I brought this with me,” he thought. “Many a bear going out on a warm day like this would never have thought of bringing a little something with him.” And he began to eat.
“Now let me see,” he thought, as he took his last lick of the inside of the jar, “where was I going? Ah, yes, Eeyore.” He got up slowly.

And then, suddenly, he remembered. He had eaten Eeyore’s birthday present!


For a little while he couldn’t think of anything. Then he thought: “Well, it’s a very nice pot, even if there’s no honey in it, and if I washed it clean, and got somebody to write ‘A Happy Birthday’ on it, Eeyore could keep things in it, which might be Useful.” So, as he was just passing the Hundred Acre Wood, he went inside to call on Owl, who lived there.
“Good morning, Owl,” he said.
“Good morning, Pooh,” said Owl.
“Many happy returns of Eeyore’s birthday,” said Pooh.
“Oh, is that what it is?”
“What are you giving him, Owl?”
“What are you giving him, Pooh?”
“I’m giving him a Useful Pot to Keep Things In, and I wanted to ask you—”
“Is this it?” said Owl, taking it out of Pooh’s paw.
“Yes, and I wanted to ask you—”
“Somebody has been keeping honey in it,” said Owl.
“You can keep anything in it,” said Pooh earnestly. “It’s Very Useful like that. And I wanted to ask you—”
“You ought to write ‘A Happy Birthday’ on it.”

“That was what I wanted to ask you,” said Pooh. “Because my spelling is Wobbly. It’s good spelling but it Wobbles, and the letters get in the wrong places. Would you write ‘A Happy Birthday’ on it for me?”

“It’s a nice pot,” said Owl, looking at it all round.

“Couldn’t I give it too? From both of us?”

“No,” said Pooh, “That would not be a good plan. Now I’ll just wash it first, and then you can write on it.”
Well, he washed the pot out, and dried it, while Owl licked the end of his pencil, and wondered how to spell “birthday.”

“Can you read, Pooh?” he asked, a little anxiously. “There’s a notice about knocking and ringing outside my door, which Christopher Robin wrote. Could you read it?”

“Christopher Robin told me what it said, and then I could.”

“Well, I’ll tell you what this says, and then you’ll be able to.”

So Owl wrote . . . and this is what he wrote:

HIPY PAPY BTHUTHDTH
THUTHDA BTHUTHDY
Pooh looked on admiringly.
“I’m just saying ‘A Happy Birthday,’” said Owl carelessly.
“It’s a nice long one,” said Pooh, very much impressed by it.
“Well, actually, of course, I’m saying ‘A Very Happy Birthday with love from Pooh.’ Naturally it takes a good deal of pencil to say a long thing like that.”
“Oh, I see,” said Pooh.
While all this was happening, Piglet had gone back to his own house to get Eeyore’s balloon. He held it very tightly against himself, so that it shouldn’t blow away, and he ran as fast as he could so as to get to Eeyore before Pooh did; for he thought that he would like to be the first one to give a present, just as if he had thought of it without being told by anybody. And running along, and thinking how pleased Eeyore would be, he didn’t look where he was going . . . and suddenly he put his foot in a rabbit hole, and fell down flat on his face.

**BANG!!!???????!!!**
Piglet lay there, wondering what had happened. At first he thought that the whole world had blown up; and then he thought that perhaps only the Forest part of it had; and then he thought that perhaps only he had, and he was now alone in the moon or somewhere, and would never see Christopher Robin or Pooh or Eeyore again. And then he thought, “Well, even if I’m in the moon, I needn’t be face downwards all the time,” so he got cautiously up and looked about him.

He was still in the Forest!

“Well, that’s funny,” he thought. “I wonder what that bang was. I couldn’t have made such a noise just falling down. And where’s my balloon? And what’s that small piece of damp rag doing?”
It was the balloon!

“Oh, dear!” said Piglet. “Oh, dear, oh, dearie, dearie, dear! Well, it’s too late now. I can’t go back, and I haven’t another balloon, and perhaps Eeyore doesn’t like balloons so very much.”

So he trotted on, rather sadly now, and down he came to the side of the stream where Eeyore was, and called out to him.

“Good morning, Eeyore,” shouted Piglet.

“Good morning, Little Piglet,” said Eeyore. “If it is a good morning,” he said. “Which I doubt,” said he. “Not that it matters,” he said.

“Many happy returns of the day,” said Piglet, having now got closer.
Eeyore stopped looking at himself in the stream, and turned to stare at Piglet.
“Just say that again,” he said.
“Many hap—”
“Wait a moment.”

Balancing on three legs, he began to bring his fourth leg very cautiously up to his ear. “I did this yesterday,” he explained, as he fell down for the third time. “It’s quite easy. It’s so as I can hear better . . . . There, that’s done it! Now then, what were you saying?” He pushed his ear forward with his hoof.

“Many happy returns of the day,” said Piglet again.
“Meaning me?”
“Of course, Eeyore.”
“My birthday?”
“Yes.”
“Me having a real birthday?”
“Yes, Eeyore, and I’ve brought you a present.”
Eeyore took down his right hoof from his right ear, turned round, and with great difficulty put up his left hoof.
“I must have that in the other ear,” he said. “Now then.”
“A present,” said Piglet very loudly. “Meaning me again?”
“Yes.”
“My birthday still?”
“Of course, Eeyore.”
“Me going on having a real birthday?”
“Yes, Eeyore, and I brought you a balloon.”
“Balloon?” said Eeyore. “You did say balloon? One of those big coloured things you blow up? Gaiety, song-and-dance, here we are and there we are?”
“Yes, but I’m afraid—I’m very sorry; Eeyore—but when I was running along to bring it you, I fell down.”

“Dear, dear, how unlucky! You ran too fast, I expect. You didn’t hurt yourself, Little Piglet?”

“No, but I—I—oh, Eeyore, I burst the balloon!”

There was a very long silence.

“My balloon?” said Eeyore at last.

Piglet nodded.

“My birthday balloon?”

“Yes, Eeyore,” said Piglet sniffling a little. “Here it is. With—with many happy returns of the day.” And he gave Eeyore the small piece of damp rag.
“Is this it?” said Eeyore, a little surprised.

Piglet nodded.

“My present?”

Piglet nodded again.

“The balloon?”

“Yes.”

“Thank you, Piglet,” said Eeyore. “You don’t mind my asking,” he went on, “but what colour was this balloon when it—when it was a balloon?”

“Red.”

“I just wondered. . . . Red,” he murmured to himself. “My favourite colour. . . . How big was it?”

“About as big as me.”

“I just wondered. . . . About as big as Piglet,” he said to himself sadly. “My favourite size. Well, well.”
Piglet felt very miserable, and didn’t know what to say. He was still opening his mouth to begin something, and then deciding that it wasn’t any good saying *that*, when he heard a shout from the other side of the river, and there was Pooh.

“Many happy returns of the day,” called out Pooh, forgetting that he had said it already.

“Thank you, Pooh, I’m having them,” said Eeyore gloomily.

“I’ve brought you a little present,” said Pooh excitedly.

“I’ve had it,” said Eeyore.

Pooh had now splashed across the stream to Eeyore, and Piglet was sitting a little way off, his head in his paws, snuffling to himself.
“It’s a Useful Pot,” said Pooh.

“Here it is. And it’s got ‘A Very Happy Birthday with love from Pooh’ written on it. That’s what all that writing is. And it’s for putting things in. There!”

When Eeyore saw the pot, he became quite excited.

“Why!” he said. “I believe my Balloon will just go into that Pot!”

“Oh, no, Eeyore,” said Pooh.

“Balloons are much too big to go into Pots. What you do with a balloon is, you hold the balloon—”

“Not mine,” said Eeyore proudly. “Look, Piglet!” And as Piglet looked sorrowfully round, Eeyore picked the balloon up with his teeth, and placed it carefully in the pot; picked it out and put it on the ground; and then picked it up again and put it carefully back.
“So it does!” said Pooh. “It goes in!”
“So it does!” said Piglet. “And it comes out!”

“Doesn’t it?” said Eeyore. “It goes in and out like anything.”
“I’m very glad,” said Pooh happily, “that I thought of giving you a Useful Pot to put things in.”
“I’m very glad,” said Piglet happily, “that I thought of giving you Something to put in a Useful Pot.”

But Eeyore wasn’t listening. He was taking the balloon out, and putting it back again, as happy as could be. . . .
“And didn’t I give him anything?” asked Christopher Robin sadly.

“Of course you did,” I said.

“You gave him—don’t you remember—a little—a little—”

“I gave him a box of paints to paint things with.”

“That was it.”

“Why didn’t I give it to him in the morning?”

“You were so busy getting his party ready for him. He had a cake with icing on the top, and three candles, and his name in pink sugar, and—”

“Yes, I remember,” said Christopher Robin.
Junior Great Books Series K–3

Series K

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