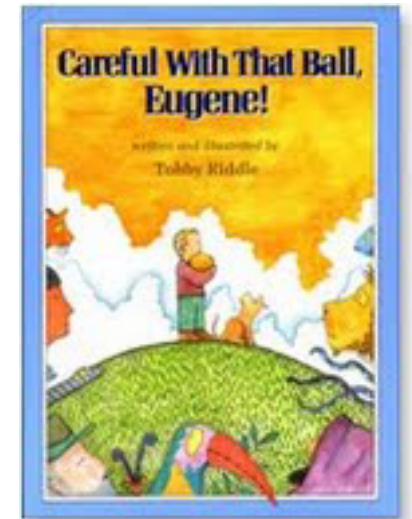


# It could have happened, but in fact it didn't.

This activity was inspired by "Careful with that Ball, Eugene" by Tohby Riddle OUP 1992 ISBN 0-19-279905-3, and produced by Judith Evans at Rushey Mead School in Leicester and Stuart Scott. We hope that it will inspire children to write copiously about disastrous scenarios that never happened. As you can see we have surfed the curriculum, but there are gaps we'd like you to fill. Please send your best sentences back to us to include in another version.

If you can't talk it through with others, you won't feel able to write about it confidently!



The webaddress for this activity is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/couldbutdidnt.pdf>

Last updated 6th June 2023

Collaborative Learning = Oracy in Curriculum Context

**makes challenging curriculum accessible.**

**improves social relations in the classroom.**

**provides scaffolding for exploratory talk.**

**Oracy in practice!**

**Oracy in context!**

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/couldbutdidnt.pdf>

If you can persuade students to do something simple and playful together they will later be better prepared to jointly attempt something more difficult and challenging.



**Basic principles behind our talk for learning activities:**  
**Oracy in curriculum contexts!**

Build on children's own prior knowledge.

Move from concrete to abstract.

Ensure everyone works with everyone else.

Extend social language towards curriculum language.

Provide motivating ways to go over the same knowledge more than once.

When the Year 6 teacher forgot the decimal point,	he could have ordered two million pencils,	but in fact the secretary checked it and corrected the order.
When Aidan took a flying leap at the high jump,	he could have gone into orbit,	but in fact he got stuck in a tree.

It could have happened, but in fact it didn't.

Instructions: Work in groups of 2 or 3. You have 21 cards. Can you sort them to make seven sentences like this one:

When Eugene kicked the ball hard,	it could have gone through the classroom window, landed in the water tray and splashed the teacher,	but in fact he missed it and his shoe fell off.
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Now have a go at making your own "could but didn't" sentences. How many can you make?

# It could have happened, but in fact it didn't sentence cards

When the 22 bus turned right instead of left,	it could have ended up at Land's End,	but in fact the passengers all complained and it turned round and went back the right way.
When the chef burned the potatoes,	he could have burned down the restaurant,	but in fact he just made a very bad smell.
When Bhavin dropped the map in the river,	it could have floated all the way down to the North Sea,	but in fact he used a twig to pull it out.
When Julius Caesar arrived in Britain in BCE 55,	he could have disliked the weather and gone back to Italy,	but in fact the Romans stayed for four hundred years.
When Mrs Agar's stick insects broke free,	they could have set up home in the school kitchen,	but in fact they sat quietly on the carpet and waited to be picked up.