

# World Read Aloud Day

## with Na'ibali

Join Na'ibali and the Princess of Africa, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, in passing on the power of stories. Read our special story, *Neo and the big, wide world*, to children you know on this World Read Aloud Day, 24 February 2016.



### 8 benefits of reading aloud

Reading aloud to your children:

- shows them that you value books and reading.
- gives you things to talk about together.
- builds a bond between you.
- allows them to experience reading as a satisfying activity.
- motivates them to learn to read for themselves and then to keep reading.
- shows them how we read and how books work.
- lets them enjoy stories that are beyond their current reading ability.
- develops their vocabulary and language abilities.

### How to get involved

Go to [www.nalibali.org](http://www.nalibali.org) or [www.nalibali.mobi](http://www.nalibali.mobi) to sign up your family, reading club or school and help make this the biggest World Read Aloud Day event in South Africa!

### 5 World Read Aloud Day activities

1. Read the story, *Neo and the big, wide world*, on pages 2 and 3 to your children and others. Practise reading it aloud a few times before you read it to the children and remember to put lots of expression into your voice as you read. With very young children, you might wish to show them the pictures as you retell the story more simply in your own words.
2. Encourage your children to interpret the story by asking them to draw or paint a picture of their favourite part.
3. Together imagine and recreate a scene from the story using items in your environment. Make a life-sized version of the scene, or create a miniature scene in a shoebox.
4. Share your favourite story from your childhood with your children, just like Gogo did in our story.
5. Have fun playing Story-in-a-Circle in groups. Let everyone sit in a circle. Then ask a few people to volunteer to stand in the centre of the circle. The people sitting in the circle create a group story by each adding one or two sentences to the story as it goes around and around. The people standing in the middle of the circle, act out the story as it develops.



# Neo and the big, wide world

Story by Vianne Venter

Illustrations by Rico

Neo looked out the window of his room at the grey view of the grey street with all the wet, grey people hurrying through the grey, pouring rain. He couldn't go outside, and he had already read all his books to Mbali.

Just then, Gogo came in with her hair all twiggy from the wind outside. She was holding something. Neo could see that it was flattish, and square-ish, and very colourful ... and it could open up – just like a treasure box!

"This was my favourite book when I was as young as you," Gogo told Neo. "It was my door to the big, wide world."

Then, she opened the book.

On the first page was a picture of a magical place, far away from the grey, grey day. The veld was green and gold and brown, with a great, big, blue sky above, and a warm, yellow sun, baking down.

"Wow! Is that real?" Neo gasped.

Gogo smiled. "Don't you know? All stories are real, if you believe in them," she said. Then she pointed to the place on the page where a little boy, just about Neo's size, was walking across the veld.

As Gogo read, Neo closed his eyes and slipped away, over the hills ... across the great, brown earth ... off into the big, wide world.

He heard the voices of the veld.

"Come out! Come out!" sang a little bird.

"It's a beautiful day!" chirped the cicadas.

"Come away, come and play," whispered the wind in the long grass.

Neo remembered about the grey, pouring rain, and wondered if he should be out here.



But in a story, you can do anything. There was no rain here. So, Neo set off across the veld.

The first thing he saw was tall and brown with a strong, wooden body. It had long, brown arms that reached up to the sky, and a big, twiggy head of leafy-green hair that swayed in the warm breeze.

"Hello," said Neo, his eyes wide. "What are you?"

"I am a tree. I can see all the way across the great, gold plains. Come up, and look with me." The tree reached out, and Neo climbed up.



From up in the branches, Neo could see to the very edge of the world. And there was so much *somewhere* out there, that it almost scared him to think of it.

But the tree held him safe, and whispered, "Go and explore. Don't be afraid. It's a wonderful, big, wide world out there."

So, Neo climbed down and went on his way across the veld.

Soon, he came across a mound of hard sand with little holes, like tiny doorways. He could hear a million busy voices inside, and the patter of six million tiny feet running about.

Sparking children's potential through  
storytelling and reading.



"Hello! Who are you?" Neo called into one of the doorways.

"Hello!" a tiny voice answered. "We are ants. We tell the stories of the world in here. Do you want to hear some?"

Neo loved stories, so he sat down and listened. The ants told their stories of the veld and the forest, and of the mountains and the cities beyond.

"So many stories?" Neo asked.

"There are as many stories as there are stars in the sky," the ants answered.

Neo waved goodbye, and went on his way across the veld.

Eventually, Neo came to a lot of water that rushed through the valley from morning till night.

Neo stepped in to cool his hot legs.

The water splashed at his feet and giggled, "I am a river. I roam from the mountains to the sea. Come, follow me. I'll take you home."

Neo thought how good that would be. So, he followed the river across the valley and between the mountains. Together, they wandered through the afternoon and almost into night, until at last, Neo reached a hilltop.

From there, he could see a little town, washed clean by the rains and gleaming in the light of the setting sun.



Then the river gurgled gently, "Go on, go home. There are people who love you there, waiting to share stories with you."

Neo went down, through the town. He saw the busy streets that rushed through the town, just like rivers. He saw houses, warm in the evening light. Inside them, people were busy, just like tiny ants.

At last, Neo peered through a window where an old gogo, with strong arms and twiggy hair like the branches of a big tree, closed a book and bent to kiss her little boy goodnight.



Neo thought about the veld and the tree and the ants and the river. And as he watched the gogo, a rainbow lit up the little house in colours so bright it looked like a picture in a storybook. Neo thought of his great adventure inside the pages of Gogo's favourite storybook, and he thought of her and Mbali and home.

So, Neo slipped through the book, into his warm bed, in his cosy room, in his little house.

And that is why, whenever the world seems too grey, and his room seems too small, Neo opens a book. He steps through a door between the pages, and goes off into the big, wide world.

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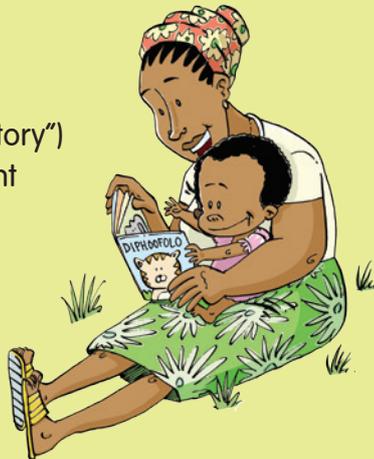
## ✂ Make a badge!

1. Cut along the red dotted line to cut out the badge.
2. Colour in the picture.
3. Cut a circle the same size as the badge from some thin cardboard, for example, a cereal box.
4. Use glue to paste the badge onto the cardboard.
5. Use sticky tape or masking tape to attach a safety pin to the back of the badge. Or make a hole at the top and thread some wool or string through it so that you can hang it around your neck.
6. Enjoy wearing your badge as you read and listen to stories on World Read Aloud Day.

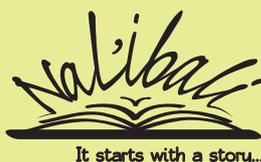
Send us pictures of your children with their World Read Aloud Day badges. Email them to [info@nalibali.org](mailto:info@nalibali.org) or post them on Facebook!

## About Nal'ibali

Nal'ibali (isiXhosa for "here's the story") is a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign to spark children's potential through storytelling and reading. Children who are immersed in great and well-told stories – in languages they understand – become inspired and are motivated to learn to read for themselves. Such personally rewarding learning is a recipe for successful literacy development.



Nal'ibali was founded and is informed by PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa). Through sustained mentoring and collaboration with communities, reading clubs, literacy organisations and volunteers of all ages, as well as a vibrant media campaign supported by media partner, Times Media, Nal'ibali is helping to root a culture of literacy into the fabric of everyday life in South Africa.



Sign up to read aloud and you could win one of four Bargain Books book hampers! Find out more at [www.nalibali.org](http://www.nalibali.org) and [www.nalibali.mobi](http://www.nalibali.mobi).

For more details, visit [www.nalibali.org](http://www.nalibali.org), [www.nalibali.mobi](http://www.nalibali.mobi) or email [info@nalibali.org](mailto:info@nalibali.org).

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