



# A House

By Kevin Henkes



## About the Book

Henkes uses clean lines and a pastel palette to explore the features of a home and how the world outside changes it from day to day. He invites young children to look closely and engage with the illustrations, asking questions and encouraging them to reflect on when a house becomes a home.

## Discussion Questions

- ★ Read each page aloud and pause so the children can study each illustration.
- ★ On each page, ask the question that the author poses in the story, and have the children consider their own home as well when answering. For example, what color is the door of the house in this story? What color is the door of your home?
- ★ Do you see birds and other animals near your home?
- ★ How does the time change in this story?
- ★ How does the weather change during this story?
- ★ What happens when the people and the pets arrive?
- ★ Why does the author begin this story with “A house,” but end the story with “A home”? What does he mean?

## Extension Activities

**Get in the Act.** Have the children draw a picture of a house on a large piece of paper to create a setting or background for a puppet show. Children can draw the outside of their house (or an imaginary house) like Henkes did or choose to make a cutaway drawing which reveals the inside of their home. Then have the children create puppets of their family members. Simple puppets can be created by having the children draw each family member on paper or posterboard, cut the drawings out, and then glue a craft stick to the back of each one. When the puppets are completed, have the children tape their background to a wall or desk, and then use their puppets to act out stories about their family and their home. Children can portray true events or make up stories about their families. Have the children practice their family puppet shows and then perform them for one another.

**Build It.** Discuss the house in this story, and how many different types of homes exist. Have the children build a model of either their own house, or of their “dream house.” They can use blocks, craft sticks, Legos, or other building material. As an alternate or accompanying activity, have the children draw a “blueprint” of the house, including many details and labeling them to show exactly what the house looks like and what it features.

**For Every Season.** Discuss the seasons with the children and how their home changes as the seasons change. For example, in autumn, colorful leaves might fall near their home, and in the winter, their home might be covered with snow. In the spring, flowers may bloom, and in summer, grass might grow tall in their yard. Give the children a piece of paper and have them fold it twice and then unfold it to create four panels. Then have the children create a four-paneled picture or painting showing what their home looks like in each season.

**Pet Project.** Ask the children to describe the pets in this story. Ask if they have pets of their own at their home, and then ask them to imagine what pet they would choose if they were able to have any pet. Have the children make a colorful drawing of their favorite pet and cut it out. Collect the drawings and affix them to a poster or mural paper to create a “pet store.” The children can then take turns visiting the class pet store and “shopping” for the pet of their dreams. For older children, add sticky note price tags and have the children “pay” for their pet using pretend money.

