TEACHER: OK, here's the next book that you're going to read for me. This is a story about a boy called Ben...who was asked to look after a friend's canary. Have you... Do you have a pet?

STUDENT: Uh, yes.

TEACHER: What's your pet?

STUDENT: A dog. And I used to have a cat, but we gave it away, 'cause my mum...was allergic.

TEACHER: OK. So...

STUDENT: But we can still go and visit whenever we want.

TEACHER: So, you've let the cat stay at someone's place that you know? Is that right?

STUDENT: Yep.

TEACHER: OK. And now you've got a dog? OK. And do you look after that dog sometimes?

STUDENT: Um, yeah, and I play with it a lot.

TEACHER: Terrific.

STUDENT: And Mummy and Daddy do.

TEACHER: They do some looking after too? OK. Well, in...I want you to have a look at the title. Read the title for me.

STUDENT: Come Back, Pip!

TEACHER: Well...if this is about somebody looking after something, another person's pet, what do you think this might be about? What else might happen in this story?

STUDENT: Maybe the pet gets lost?

TEACHER: And what makes you think that?

STUDENT: Because he's saying, "Come back," and he's running away.

TEACHER: Maybe. Well, let's have a read and see if that's what happens. Open up the book.

STUDENT:

"Mrs Sands live...lived next door

to Ben and his family.

"One day, Mrs Sands

had to go away for a week.

"She asked Ben and his mother

to take care of her and...

"..ca...cannery."

TEACHER: Good try. 'Canary'. "To take care of her canary". Do you know what a canary is?

STUDENT: No.

TEACHER: Have a look at the front cover again.

STUDENT: Maybe it's like a...a bird?

TEACHER: Maybe it is. Open up that page again. And can you see Mrs Sands? What's she got?

STUDENT: A bird.

TEACHER: So, what do you think a canary might be?

STUDENT: A bird. A type of bird.

TEACHER: A type of bird. Keep going.

STUDENT:

"The canary was called Pip.

"'Please take good care of Pip,'

said Mrs Sands,

"as she put the cage and birdseed

on the table.

"'I love him very much.'

"'We will put the cage up high,'

said Mum.

"'And I will put the cat outside

when we feed Pip,' said Ben."

TEACHER: Oh, that's interesting. He says he'll put the cage...the cat outside when he feeds Pip.Why do you think he might do that?

STUDENT: Um, because then when he opens the door, then the cat could jump in and then eat him.

TEACHER: Do cats do that?

STUDENT: Yep.

TEACHER: Maybe they might. He might do that. So, that was a good thing he did, wasn't it, thinking of that? OK, keep going.

STUDENT:

"One morning, when Ben...

"..went to look at Pip,

the cage was empty.

"Pip had gone.

"'I must have left the cage door

open when I fed him last night,'

"said Ben.

"He felt very bad about it.

"What would Mrs Sandy...say?

"Ben started to look for Pip.

"First, he looked

all around the kitchen.

"But Pip was nowhere to be seen.

"Ben ran to look in the other rooms.

"'I hope Pip is still inside,'

he said to himself.

"'I will have to find him.'

"Ben looked behind things and

under things and on top of things.

"He still couldn't find Pip

anywhere.

"Then he saw the cat.

"She was sitting on a chair,

licking her paws.

"'Oh, no!' said Ben

to Socks the cat.

"'You bad, bad cat!

Mrs Sands will be so upset!'

"Ben was nearly crying."

TEACHER: What do you think Ben was thinking then?

STUDENT: He'll be in big trouble by her.

TEACHER: Why?

STUDENT: Because she loved him very much.

TEACHER: And what do you think Ben was thinking about the cat?

STUDENT: Um, he ate him.

TEACHER: Mmm. Keep reading. See... Let's find out.

STUDENT:

"Just then, Ben heard a whistle.

"'I think that could be Pip!'

he said.

"'I wonder where he is.'

"Then Ben heard another whistle,

and another.

"The whistles were coming

from the bathroom.

"There was Pip.

"He was sitting by the window

in the sun.

"'The cat didn't eat you after all!'

said Ben.

"He shut the bathroom door

and ran to get the cage.

"He put some more birdseed in it.

"Pip was still by the window

when Ben came back.

"He put the cage down and he...

he just outside the door to watch.

"And Pip was hungry. He flew down

and hopped into the cage.

"Ben crept over

and shut the little door.

"He was very glad that

Pip was safe inside the cage."

TEACHER: Why do you think he was VERY glad that Pip was safe?

STUDENT: 'Cause he wouldn't be in trouble?

TEACHER: Tell me more.

STUDENT: - And...And.....um...

TEACHER: Do you think he was thinking a little bit about his cat too?

STUDENT: Mmm.

TEACHER: Would it have been awful if the cat HAD eaten Pip?

STUDENT: - Mmm.

TEACHER: It would have been, wouldn't it? And he was glad the cat didn't eat Pip. And VERY glad that Pip was safe.