



# Rocket Cards

Use with:

**Elmer**

By David McKee



1. Pick a Rocket Card to focus on today.



2. Watch the matching video on the Language Launchpad You Tube channel.



**Rocket Card**  
Use with 'Elmer'



## Get ready

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**When?** Before reading

Find a **special place**, which is comfortable and free from distractions such as TV or phones.



Pick a **time** when you and your child are **calm**, but **alert**.



Watch the '[Find a special place](#)' video

Watch the '[Introduce story time](#)' video



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## Respond positively



**When?** Whilst reading

Ask your child for their **opinions** and **ideas**. Here are some possible questions you could ask:

***“Which elephant do you like best?”*** (On the last page.)

***“What do you think will happen next?”*** (On the page where Elmer is shaking the berries from the tree.)

Remember, opinions and ideas aren't right or wrong. **Respond positively** to your child's input and **praise** them for **trying**:

*“Good idea, shall we turn the page and find out?”*

*“Great thinking”*

*“I think so too”*

*“I like the way you thought carefully about it. My favourite is...”*



Watch the '**Respond positively**' video



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## Pause often



**When?** Whilst reading

As you read the story, **pause often** to give your child a chance to join in.

You could:

- **Stop speaking at the end of a sentence or page** and stay quiet for a few moments to give your child a chance to strike up conversation.
- **Point to a picture and make a comment** (e.g. "That's funny") and then **wait** to see if your child responds, or comments in a similar way.
- **Stop part way through a sentence**, and allow your child to **finish** it (e.g. on the page where Elmer is described, you could start by saying "Elmer was yellow and \_\_\_" and then pause to see if your child will tell you the rest of the colours.

**Don't worry** if your child doesn't take these opportunities just yet. It's important to **keep pausing** though, to keep giving them the chance to join in when they are ready.



Watch the '**Pause often**' video



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## Ask questions



**When?** Whilst reading

**Ask these questions** while on the appropriate page (you don't need to say the words in brackets).

Focus on the questions that are **suitable for your child**. You can miss out ones that you think are not appropriate. They get more difficult as you go down the page. **Remember to think of your own questions too.**

***What can you see?*** (On any page.)

***What is happening?*** (On any page.)

***Find me an elephant that is... fat/thin/young/old*** (On the first page.)

***Why does Elmer want to look like the other elephants?***

***What do the elephants think about Elmer's colours?***

***Do you think Elmer was joking when he turned himself grey?***



Watch the **'Ask questions'** video



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## Retell the story together



**When?** After reading the story at least once

- Download the Elmer story cards from the website.

Support your child to put the story cards in order and use them to help tell the story again.

**Encourage** your child to **be the storyteller** by asking them questions, giving sentence starters and language demonstrations. **We've given you some ideas** for how to support your child. Please use your own ideas too.

Remember! **Pause regularly** to allow them to give their ideas, and **respond positively** to what they say and do.

**Try to focus on these three main events:**

**1. Elmer is sad because he is different.**

Unfinished sentence: "Oh dear, Elmer feels \_\_\_"

**2. Elmer tries to be the same as the other elephants.**

Question: "What does he do?"

**3. Elmer and the other elephants realise being different is a good thing.**

Unfinished sentence: "Every year the elephants \_\_\_"

Question: "What is special about Elmer?" (this question could be answered many ways, there's no right or wrong.)



**Watch the 'Retell – Elmer' video**



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## Focus on important words from the story



**When?** After reading the story

Pick out a **word** from the story and **play a game or have a discussion** to **help your child understand** the word. Here are some of our ideas, but don't forget to **pick out your own words** and add your own ideas.

Make sure you **repeat** the word lots of times in different sentences.

### Ideas for learning the words:

**Except:** Line up some toys that are all the same in some way, except for one (e.g. 4 trains and a car, 5 pink toys and one yellow). Or, download our 'except' board from the website.

**Recognise:** Take some photos (either printed or on a device) of people your child knows. Cover parts of the photo (e.g. with small pieces of paper, or drawing over it) and see if your child can recognise who it is. See our 'Elmer – recognise game' video for further explanation.

**Decorate:** Talk about the word and how it can be used different ways (e.g. decorate a room, decorate a cake, decorate a card). Choose an activity where your child can decorate something (e.g. cakes), or download our decorate the elephant template from the website.

**Other words/phrases** you could pick to focus on: patchwork, celebrate, herd, joke, serious, ordinary.



Watch the '**Focus on important words**' video