



Red, White & Boom

by Schyrlet Cameron and Kathy Brown
Illustrations by Javier Duarte

Book at a glance: Red, White and Boom follows Billy Ray and his cousins, Maizee Mae and Kora Jo, as they celebrate the 4th of July on their grandparents' farm at the end of Chicken Bristle Road.

The day includes homemade ice cream, music, family traditions, and a fireworks finale that goes hilariously wrong—ending with an important, kid-friendly safety message.

Suggested Grade Levels: PreK–2 (read-aloud) Grades 2–3

(independent/partner reading)

Themes & Big Ideas

- Family traditions and multi-generational relationships
- Rural/farm life and community celebrations
- Cause and effect (plans don't always go as expected)
- Humor in storytelling
- Fireworks and holiday safety

Learning Objectives

- Retell key events in order.
- Identify characters, setting, problem, and solution.
- Describe how characters' actions cause events to happen.
- Learn and explain basic fireworks safety rules.
- Connect the story to their own family traditions.



Vocabulary (with Kid-Friendly Meanings)

- celebration: a special time when people gather to have fun
- tradition: something a family does again and again
- pasture: a grassy field where animals eat
- finale: the last part of a show
- fuse: the string you light to start fireworks
- supervision: when an adult watches to keep you safe
- spark: a tiny bright flash of light
- supersonic: super fast (faster than sound)

Before Reading

1) Picture Walk & Predictions

- What do you notice about the farm setting?
- What do you think “Boom” might mean in the title?
- What could go wrong with fireworks?

2) Quick Write / Turn-and-Talk

Prompt: “A tradition my family has is...”

(Students can draw + label for younger grades.)

During Reading



Comprehension Stop Points (Teacher Prompts)

- Page 1–5: Who is Billy Ray visiting? What is he doing to help?
- Pages 6–9: What do the cousins do together? What does this show about their relationship?
- Pages 10–15: How does the farm change as more people arrive?
- Pages 16–21: What is the plan? What starts to go wrong?
- Pages 22–27: How do people and animals react? What does Grandpa say? What does Grandma say?
- Page 28 + Safety Rules: What lesson does the story teach?

Character & Setting Chart (Whole Group)

1. Characters: Billy Ray, Maizee Mae, Kora Jo, Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle Arnold, Old Tom, Betsy, chickens/roosters
2. Setting: grandparents' farm on Chicken Bristle Road; pond, pasture, milk barn, chicken house, porch

After Reading

1) Retell: Beginning–Middle–End

- Beginning: arriving, helping, ice cream, games
- Middle: fireworks show begins
- End: skyrocket goes wild; porch lights up; safety rules

2) Discussion Questions

- What makes the grandparents' farm feel special?
- Which part of the celebration felt most like a tradition?
- Why do you think Uncle Arnold wanted a big finale?
- How did the rocket's behavior change the story?
- What did Grandpa and Grandma teach Uncle Arnold (and the kids)?
- How can we enjoy celebrations while staying safe?

Cross-Curricular Activities

ELA

A) Cause-and-Effect Chain (Grades 1–3)

- Uncle Arnold lights the fuse → the rocket turns → it follows him → animals scatter → it explodes on the porch.

B) Narrative Writing: “A Celebration to Remember”

- Students write (or dictate) a short story about a family celebration.
- Include: who, where, tradition/food, something surprising, ending lesson.

C) Dialogue & Voice Study Grandpa’s and Grandma’s lines:

- “Stop horsing around, Arnold!”
- “Fireworks are not toys!” Students write one new line each character could say that matches their voice.

Social Studies

- Community & Holidays (K–2)
- What is Independence Day?
- How do communities celebrate differently (parades, picnics, fireworks, concerts)?
- Traditions Around the U.S. Students interview a family member about a holiday tradition and share one detail with the class.

Science / Safety

- Fireworks Safety Poster (All grades) In small groups, students create posters using Grandpa’s rules.
- Include pictures, short phrases, and “safe alternatives” (glow sticks, bubbles, confetti poppers).

Art

- Red, White and Blue Starburst Art: Use paint, chalk, or paper collage to create “firework” starbursts. Add a caption: “Beautiful from a safe distance.”

Math

- Celebration Planning (Grades 1–3): Create a simple “party plan” word problem: If 3 cousins each get 2 scoops of ice cream, how many scoops total? If 12 guests arrive and 4 more come later, how many guests?

Home School Connection

Send-home prompt:

- “Ask your child to tell you Grandpa’s Fireworks Rules. Which rule do you think is most important and why?”

Assessment Ideas

- Oral retell checklist (characters, setting, problem, solution)
- Cause-and-effect organizer
- Safety poster rubric (includes 3+ rules, clear visuals, readable text)
- Writing sample: beginning/middle/end with one “lesson learned”

Differentiation & Supports

- Provide sentence frames: “First... Next... Then... Finally...”
- Use picture cards for key events (wagon, ice cream, fireworks, barn, porch).
- Allow drawing + labeling instead of full writing.
- Extension: students write a “Fireworks Safety Pledge” and sign it.

Extension: Dramatic Read-Aloud

- Assign roles (Narrator, Billy Ray, Grandma, Grandpa, Uncle Arnold).
- Re-read the fireworks scene with expressive voices and safe, classroom-friendly sound effects (claps, shakers).

Other Books by the Same Authors

