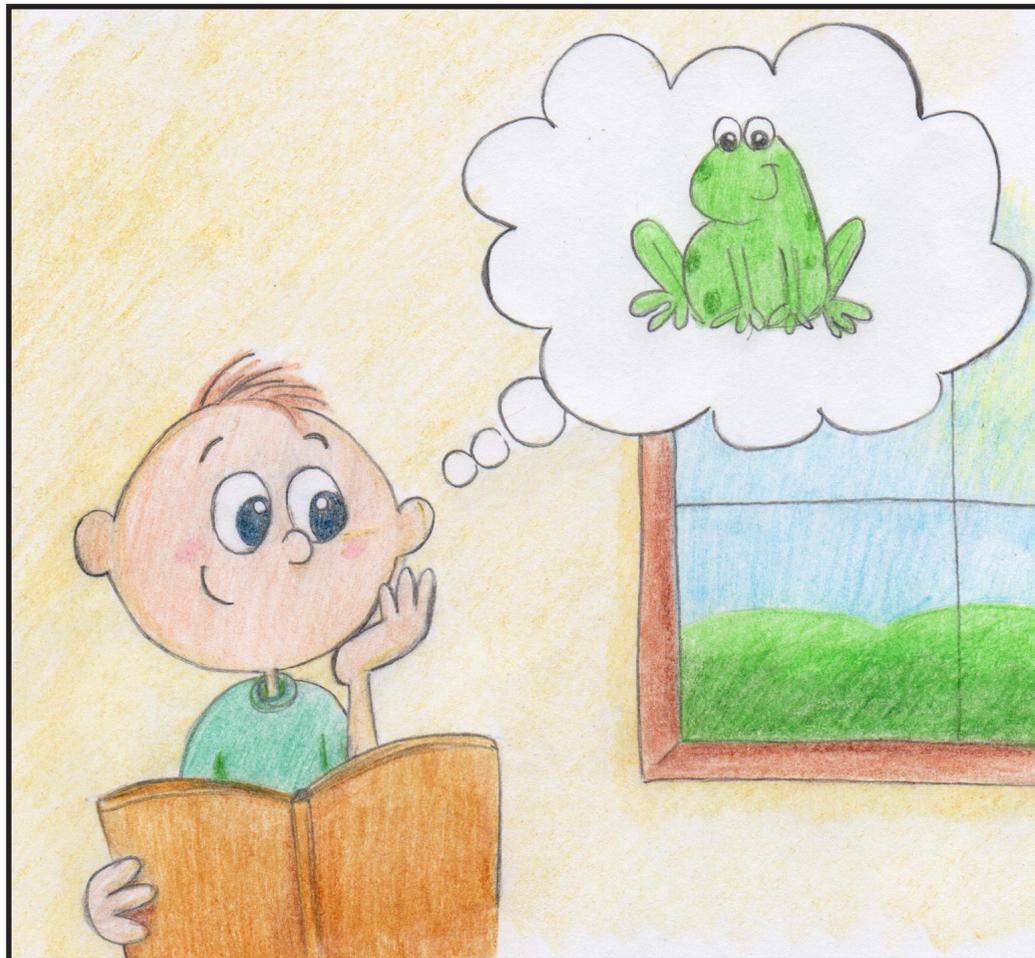


# OF JUMPING FROGS AND FUNNY THINGS

Tom flipped through his new language arts book. Seeing all the grammar rules and drills, he was worried.

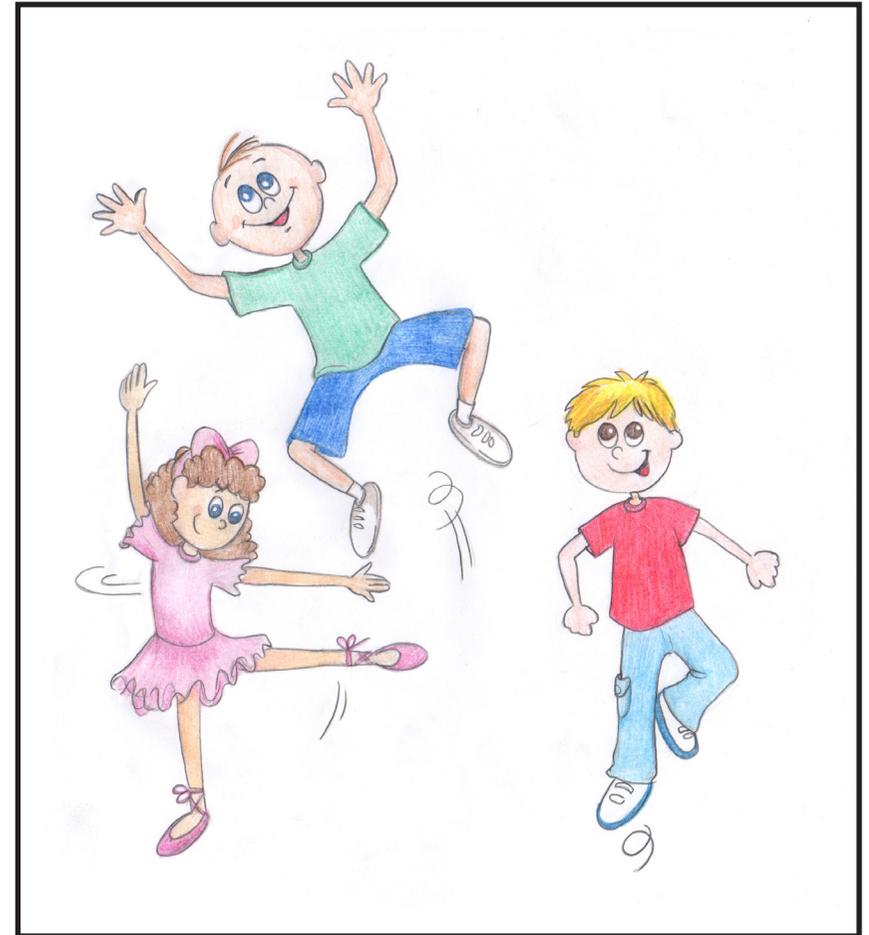
He gazed out the window, wanting to think about something more pleasant, and his mind drifted to thinking about the frog he had caught and played with the day before.



*Actually, he mused, I think a frog could teach grammar a whole lot better than this book. Can you imagine how much fun a frog would have teaching us about verbs? Why, a frog is a living verb!*

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“Okay, children,” Mrs. Frog, the new teacher that had just hopped in through the open window, would say, “close your grammar books, and let’s study my most favorite subject—verbs! Everyone down on the floor for lesson number one—the hop. All right, hop, hop, hop! Out the door on all four of those things you call arms and legs. Put some muscle into it. Hop higher! Let’s see distance between you and the ground. Lift that rump and really learn to jump!



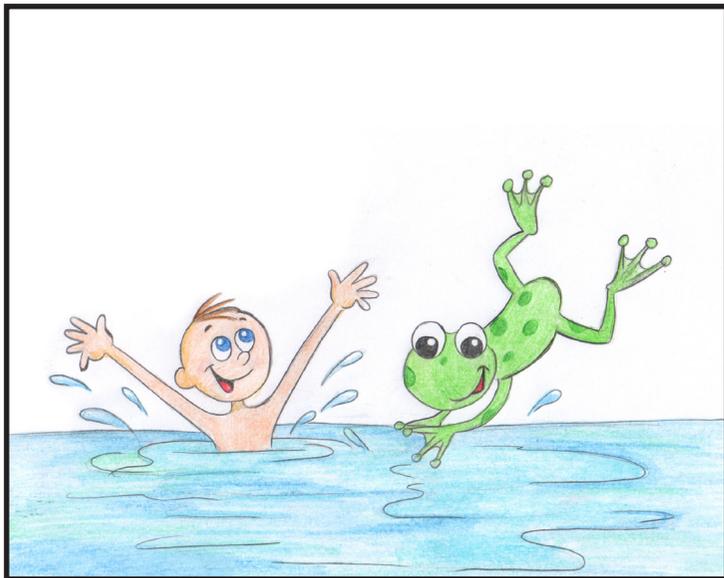
“Action, people! Verbs are action words! I want you to become verbs. Billy, what on earth are you doing sitting there in the corner like a noun—a rock, a block, a bump, a lump! Don’t be a person, place, thing, or idea! Jump up. Move around. Wave goodbye to Mr. Noun. Run and play. Have some fun today.



“And, Fred, you remind me of one of those state-of-being verbs while you sit there talking about what was and is and could be.

“Move, move, move! Make those muscles work, work, work! Feel all those action words, those wonderful verbs come bubbling, tumbling, hurrying, scurrying, scampering through you. Verbs are powerful, whether moving or being!

"You are, were, and will continue to be happy as you are learning about the wonders of verbs, and as you hop, skip, and jump right out the door and race over to the swimming pool where we can all learn to swim, splash, dive, waddle, and frolic in another learning environment—water. How anyone can stay in air so long completely dehydrates my mind. Then again, I'm a frog."



"Wait a minute! Stop all this jumping, running, and wild activity!" said the big, old tree just outside the door. "Why don't all of you sit down on the ground and let's have some fun being nouns?"

Needless to say, Mrs. Frog was a bit miffed and kept on hopping anyway. "Nouns are such a bore; they put you to sleep and make you snore!" Then with a flick of an eyelash, splash, she was gone to the bottom of the pond.



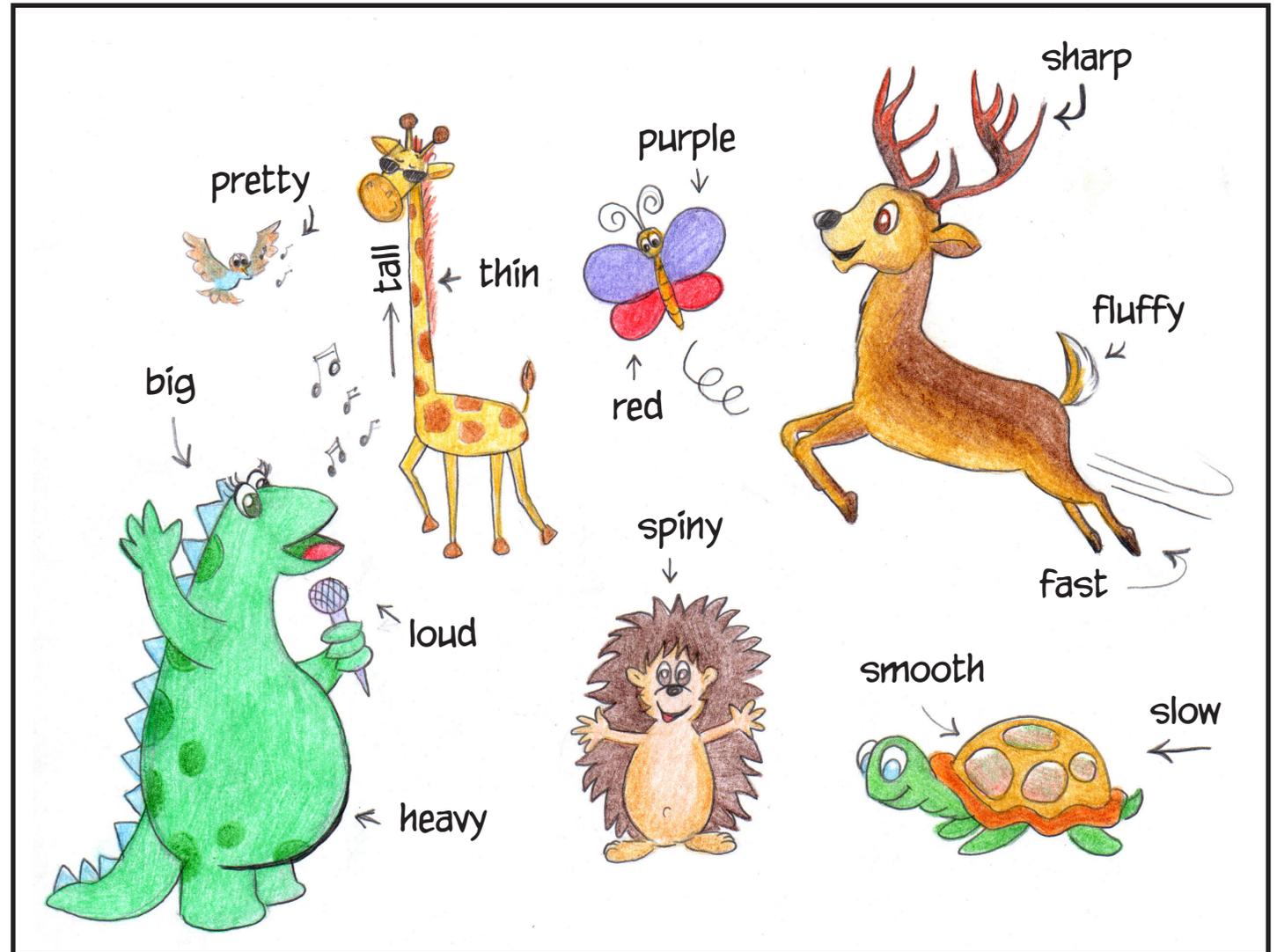
Mr. Tree cleared his throat, trying not to gloat. "Let's play a game of 'imagine' after me, and become all the things you see. For all the many things that can be seen or counted, and even ideas big or small, all belong to the wonderful world of the noun. Rocks and water, sunshine and sand; in fact, everything over, under, and in the land, diamond rings, lace, candy, gum, paper, cars, and houses, roads and streets, ideas and thoughts, the janitor and Mrs. Frog, cats and dogs, and clowns belong to the wonderful world of nouns. Boys and girls, moms and dads, recipes and stories, birds and clouds and flowers..."

Mr. Tree was clearly just warming up to his subject of nouns when a spiny, somewhat whiny, bushy, and brown hedgehog came waddling by.



“Oh my, is Mr. Tree telling you all about the virtues that can be found in each and every noun? I think not, because he can’t, you see, without a descriptive word like an adjective. And Mrs. Frog jumps up and down for verbs. But how dull, how down life would be as only a noun or verb—no color or character at all, you see. No, no, not a noun or a verb for me.

I want description, details, information that gives me a seeing, hearing, or feeling sensation.



Is it big? Is it tall? Does it run fast or slow? Is it purple? Is it red? What kind of horns does it have on its head? Is it heavy? Is it thin? Is it fuzzy or smooth? When she sings, is it loud or soft? I want you to paint a picture in my mind with all the adjectives and adverbs you can find to describe things to me.”

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"Tom, would you like to answer that question?" asked Miss Sprint. "Tom?"

Tom turned his gaze back to the teacher.

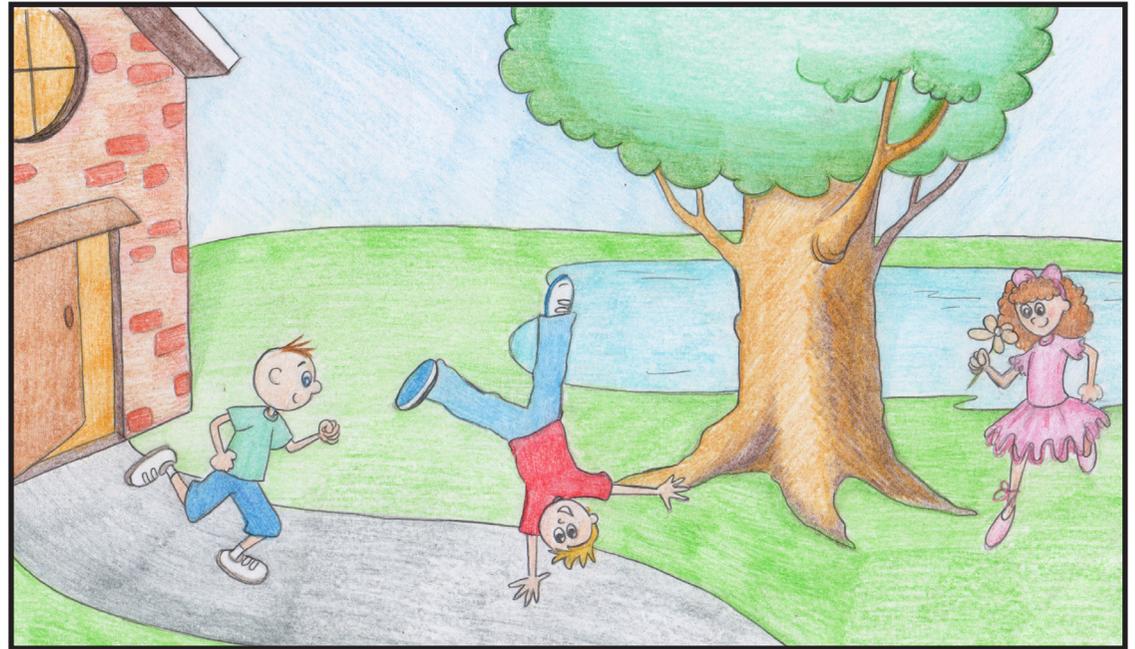
"Well, Tom?" said Miss Sprint. "Can you tell me the name for the part of speech that includes the action and state-of-being words in sentences?"

"I can," answered Tom. "Frogs ... I mean frogs jumping over logs. Well, I mean verbs! Verbs are action words!"



"Very good," said Miss Sprint.

"I'm not sure why you answered, 'Frogs,' though it's true a frog jumping is an action verb. All right, that's all for today, class. I'll see you tomorrow."



Tom was up in a flash. "Hurray! A verb saves the day!" Tom hopped, jumped, and skipped out the door.

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