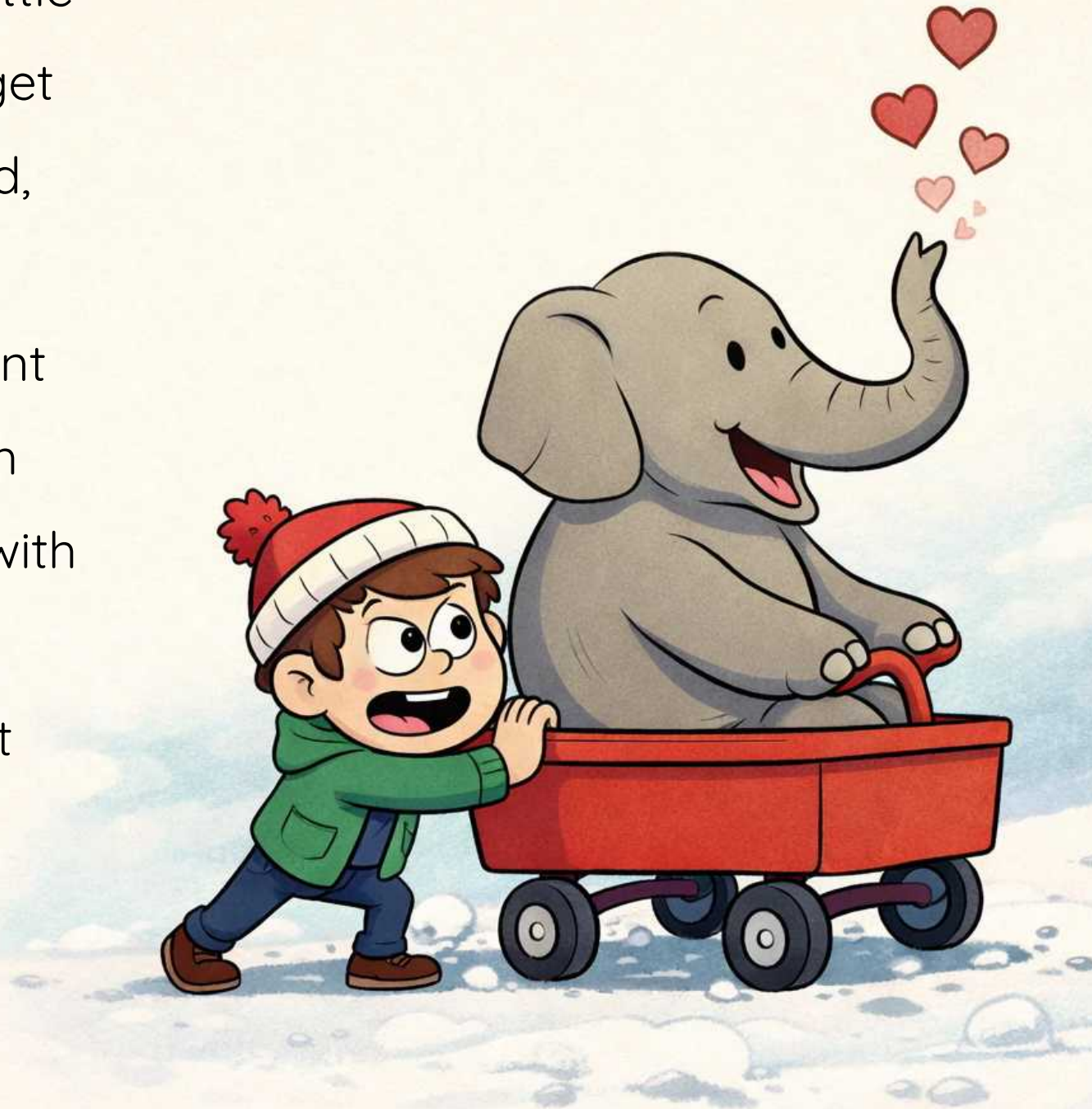


Push Harder,
It's an Elephant!



The elephant sat in the little red cart and would not get out. 'Push harder!' it called, blowing hearts from its trunk. Easy for an elephant to say. Bex leaned in with both hands and pushed with all her **weight**. One enormous elephant, and it would not budge one bit. This was going to be a very long day.





Bex needed a break from all that pushing, so she slipped out into the **neighbouring** yard. A red hen was pecking around on the snowy ground, with two small eggs tucked near some rocks.

Bex crouched low behind the hen and grinned, holding up two fingers. 'One elephant, two eggs,' she said. 'I'm counting things!'

Inside, the big fan was spinning its three blades. Bex grabbed the bubble wand and took a deep breath. Whooooosh! Bubbles flew everywhere, spinning and swirling across the room. Papers fluttered off the table. The bubbles looked almost **weightless** as they sailed past the spinning fan. 'Three blades and a billion bubbles!' Bex shouted. What would four look like?





Bex jumped into the little orange car. Four wheels, a face on the front, and pinwheels spinning on top. It zoomed through the snow, and Bex laughed out loud. 'You are not a horse!' she called. 'Cars do not **neigh!**' Four wheels and zero interest in slowing down. Number five had to be close now.

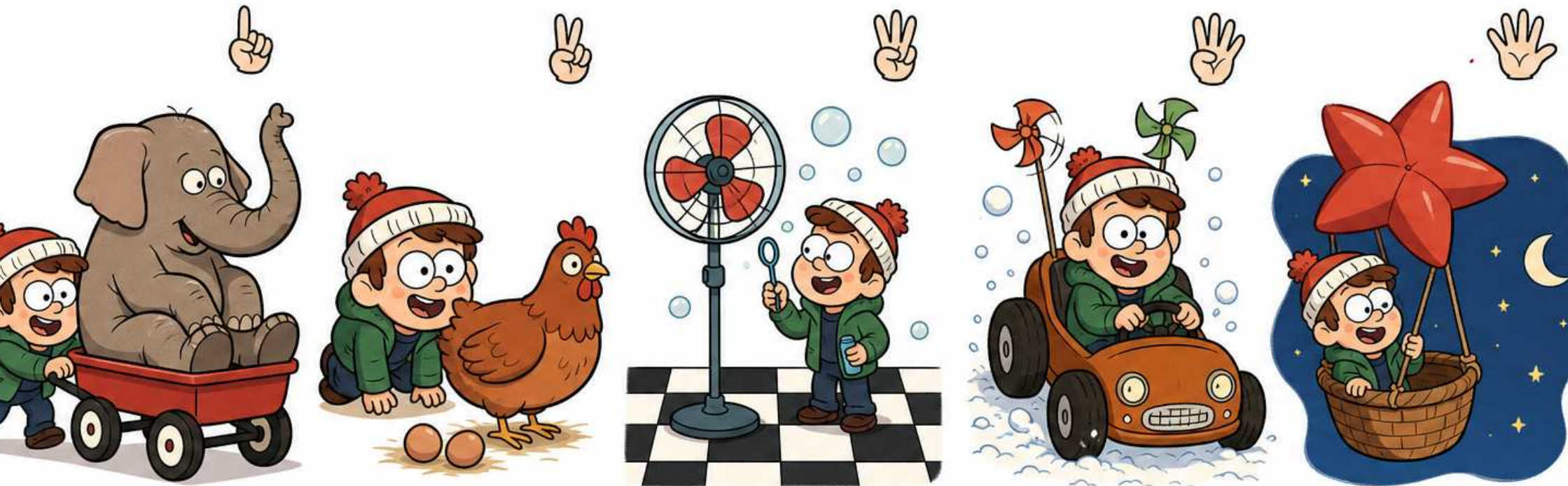
A red star balloon with five sharp points. The basket lifted off, and up Bex went. Past the rooftops. Past the birds. All the way up to where a crescent moon hung, thin and glowing in the dark. Up that high, everything felt **weightless**. 'Five,' Bex whispered, reaching out one hand. The whole world looked tiny from up here.



One elephant, two eggs, three spinning blades, four fast wheels, and five bright points on a glowing star.

Five was the halfway point, and getting to five felt really, really good to Bex.

But Bex knew the second half was not going to be easy, not even close.



A giant ant. Six thick legs, stomping across the rocky ground. Bex climbed right up and held on tight. The ant marched forward like it owned the whole world, and Bex's mouth fell wide open. Each leg **outweighs** a tree trunk! 'This is the greatest ride I have ever had!' The ant said nothing. Ants are not big talkers.





'It is my birthday!' said Bex, pointing at the big desk calendar. Today was circled in red, and a second date was marked just below it. Ned stood beside her, holding a red balloon and a green balloon by their strings. 'My birthday is seven days after yours,' said Ned, grinning. 'Seven whole days, and then I will be **eight!**'

The web was made of string as thick as rope. And sitting right at the top, with **eight** enormous legs, was the biggest spider Bex had ever seen. Bex's arms flew wide open. 'You are incredible,' she said. The spider wiggled one leg. Then another. Then all of them at once. Was it dancing? Bex was pretty sure it was dancing.



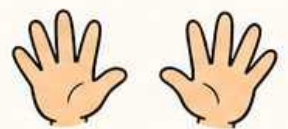
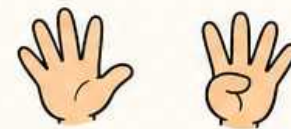
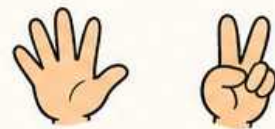
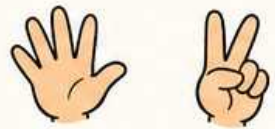


The pheasant stood on the crumbling brick wall like a king on a throne. 'Look at those feathers!' Bex said. Red, gold, green, blue, copper, cream, black, white, and a colour that sparkled and danced. Nine colours! Bex would need nine pencils, one for each shade. Would they ever capture the full **weight** of all that sparkle? Probably not.

Bex held up one hand.
Five fingers, wide open.
Then the other hand. Five
more. 'Six, seven, **eight**,
nine... ten!' Both hands up,
all ten fingers spread
wide. The biggest number
of the whole count, and
it had been right there at
the end of Bex's own two
arms this whole time.



Six legs. Seven on the calendar. **Eight** legs. Nine bright colours. Ten fingers. Every number, one to ten. What a ride. What a count. What a day. But wait. Back at the very start, one very large elephant was still sitting in one very small cart. Even the **neighbours** could hear Bex shout. She cracked her knuckles. 'Right then. Let's go back to one. And this time? Push harder!'





Push Harder, It's an Elephant!

How heavy is an elephant, really? When one stubborn elephant refuses to budge from a little red cart, Child sets off counting everything in sight - two warm eggs at the neighbour's, four wheels that won't neigh, a spider with eight wiggling legs, and a pheasant dressed in dazzling colours. Can counting all the way to ten give Child the strength for one more giant push? This decodable reader practises the eight phonogram in words like 'eight,' 'weigh,' 'neigh,' and 'sleigh.'

Reading Skills: <eight>

eight, neigh, neighbouring, neighbours, outweighs, weighed, weight, weightless

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