Setting

Party Time! is set in the country of the Bahamas (officially, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas), in the region of the Caribbean. Technically, the Bahamas is not in the Caribbean *sea* but in the Caribbean *region*. Encourage your students to locate the Caribbean sea and the Bahamas on a world map, if you have one.

The Bahamas is part of an an archipelago (a large group of islands). Only some of the islands have people living on them. The most populated island is New Providence. This is where the capital city, Nassau, is located.

One challenge of setting a story in the ocean is representing elements of the local culture in an underwater environment! The seahorses' seaweed clothing is based on traditional, colourful blouses and skirts worn in the Bahamas for festivals and celebrations. Costumes for *Junkanoo* parades on December 26 and January 1 are often made from cardboard and crepe paper.

The story takes place on a small rock shelf in a coral reef. There are many coral the Bahamas! We can see various types of seaweed (including kelp) and coral. Seaweed is the name given to a large variety of marine algae and grasses. Coral is an animal! Coral reefs are made up of many many coral "polyps" joined together. They have a hard exoskeleton which gives the coral its structure (photo alongside).

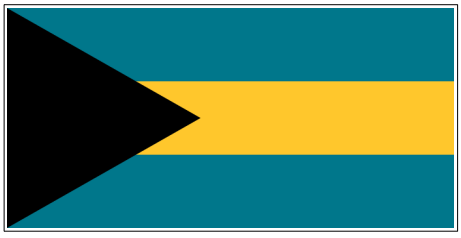
A number of "human" objects have been washed up on the reef, perhaps due to littering on land, or from a shipwreck:

- The clock is a pocket watch (**title page**, **pages 3**, **4**, **6-7**, **8**, **11**, **13**, **15**).
- The chest in which the decorations are stored is a small tin box that might be used for "trinkets", candy, jewellery, or sewing items (**pages 3**, **4-5**, **7**, **8-9**, **15**).
- The "balloons" are made from buttons and thread.
- The garland is a string of pom poms.

Other items are made from objects naturally found in the ocean:

- The calendar is made out of a large shell (**pages 2**, **4**).
- The party hats are made out of cone-shaped shells (**pages 3**, **4**, **6**, **9**, **11**, **12**, **13**, **15**, **16**).
- The ladder is made out of coral (**pages 4**, **8-9**, **14-15**).
- The brooms are made out of seaweed and kelp (**pages 4-5, 6**).
- Some decorations are made out of seaweed (on the ladder on **pages 8-9**, **14-15**).
- The record player is made out of shells (**cover**, **page 8**).
- Some decorations are made out of strings of shells (**page 10**).
- The presents are "wrapped" in shells and seaweed (**pages 10, 14, 16**).

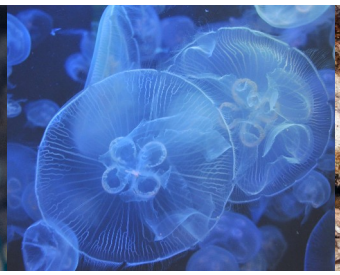
The flag of the Bahamas can be seen on the chest on **pages 3**, **4-5**, **7**, **8-9**, **15**.



Characters

The animals in the story are based on species of seahorse, jellyfish, fish, shrimp, octopus, and crab found in the Bahamas. Depending on where you are in the world, your students may have seen other species of these sea creatures before. What makes the animals in the story different from those they have seen before? Consider the size of the animal, colour, markings, fins, tentacles, claws, etc.

Seahorse



Moon jellyfish

Caribbean reef octopus

Red snapping shrimp

Blue angelfish (juvenile)
(Pauline Walsh Jacobson, CC BY 4.0, cropped)

Longspine squirrelfish

Blue land crab
(Keenan Adams (USFWS), CC BY 2.0)

Story

Birthdays are celebrated in different ways in different cultures. Discuss with your students how birthdays are celebrated in their families. Discussion questions might include:

- Do you celebrate your birthday?
- When do you celebrate your birthday?
- Who do you celebrate your birthday with?
- Where do you celebrate your birthday?
- Is there food involved?
- Are there gifts involved?
- Do you have any other birthday traditions?

In this story, Seahorse celebrates her birthday individually by having a party with her friends. Seahorse's family hosts the party at their own "house". You can discuss the various elements of the party with your students:

- Cleaning the "house" (**pages 4-5**)
- Decorations (**pages 6-7**)
- Music (**pages 8-9**)
- Guests bringing gifts for the birthday person (**pages 10**, **16**)
- Singing "happy birthday" (**pages 12-13**) (you can sing the local version of this song together as a class)
- Blowing out candles (the same number as the age the of the person) on a birthday cake (**page 16**)

Although not shown in the story, we might also expect the party guests to play games and to eat food during the party.

Ask students to notice how the party is set up progressively. What differences can they see when they compare the illustrations on **pages 4-5** and **pages 8-9**?

Mathematical concepts and language

Obviously everyone *experiences* time, but it is an extremely difficult thing to *define* without getting abstract and philosophical.

The story immediately starts with the concept of *today*. This is more difficult to define than it might seem, because *day* itself is a challenge.

- One *day* is a unit used for measuring time, and is equal to 24 hours.
- *Day* is the time between sunrise and sunset, as opposed to *night* which is the time between sunset and sunrise. In this context, a day is *not* 24 hours.
- A *day* is specifically the 24 hour period from one midnight to the next. It is in this context that *today* is the *day* we are in right here and now. The problem is that this is way too hard to explain to a 5 year old. We would have to start with the clock, which in itself is not unreasonable, but we would have to talk about a day being *two laps of* the clock, and that is horrible.

So, we are just going to let *today* be "the day we are in right now", and let students work it out further by experience.

You have probably not formally introduced *calendars* to your students yet (**page 2**). At this stage, help them to read and understand that "October" is the name of a month. They may also be able to recognise that the day circled in red means the 10th of October, and this must be Seahorse's birthday. Students likely know the date of their own birthday, and this can be a helpful comparison. You could ask if anyone in the class is born on the 10th of a month, or in the month of October.

Students will probably recognise digital clocks from using tablets and phones. However, an *analogue* clock will almost certainly be less familiar. Even though they are now used less, teaching students to read analogue clocks is important, and not only for telling the time. It gives us the chance to work with fractions, angles, and turns in a practical context.

Minutes and hours are *units* of time. Ironically, minutes are shorter than hours, but the minute *hand* on a clock is longer than the hour hand. The practical reason for this is that it means the minute hand extends right out to the tick marks on the clock, so the exact minutes can be read more easily. We do not need to observe the hour hand as closely to work out the time.

On **pages 3**, **11**, and **15**, we display "o'clock" times. When introducing "o'clock", we simply say it corresponds to the minute hand pointing to 12. We are not yet in a position to talk about *zero* minutes past the hour. If anything, we could simply say that the time is an exact number of hours. We can also say the *hour* hand tells us *how many* o'clock. The apostrophe in "o'clock" is important as it is a contraction of "of the clock". Remind students that the apostrophe should always be included.

On **page 4**, we display a "quarter past" time. Point out that the minute hand has moved exactly a *quarter* of the way around the clock. You can show this by drawing a clock on the board and shading the top right quarter. The hour hand is also moved a quarter of the way from one hour mark to the next.

This may be the first time you have talked about *turns*. For now, we only mention *clockwise* and not its opposite, since this is all we need to tell the time.

On **pages 6** and **13**, we display "half past" times. This might be the first time students see the wording "half way". It is commonly used to mean "a half of the way". Point out that the minute hand has moved exactly half way around the clock. You can show this by drawing a clock on the board and shading the right half. The hour hand is also moved half way from one hour mark to the next.

On **page 8**, we display a "quarter to" time. When the minute hand turns from 12 to 9, it has travelled three quarters of the way around the clock. However, we never say "three quarters past", so when we mention that it has travelled three quarters of the way, we immediately follow it with "....which means there is one quarter of the way still to go!" You can show this by drawing a clock on the board and shading the top left quarter. The hour hand is also moved three quarters of the way from one hour mark to the next.

There is still virtue in mentioning "three quarters past" because it is more reliable to demonstrate to students that we have moved three quarters of the way from the previous hour mark towards the one we are going to, than to talk about moving a quarter of the way *back* from the next mark to the previous one. We cannot afford confusion with the clockwise direction.

For students requiring extension
Given the party starts at 2 o'clock and ends at 4 o'clock, see if the students can think of other times in this period. It is best if the students have cardboard clocks to use, and the task is scaffolded. This is a good opportunity for students to practise following instructions. For example:

- Starting at 2 o'clock, move the minute hand until it is a quarter of the way around the clock.
  Move the hour hand until it is a quarter of the way to the next hour mark.
  What time is shown? (quarter past 2)

- Next, move the minute hand until it is half way around the clock.
  Move the hour hand until it is half way to the next hour mark.
  What time is shown? (half past 2)

- Next, move the minute hand until it has one quarter of the way to go to get back to 12.
  Move the hour hand until it has one quarter of the way to go to the next hour mark.
  What time is shown? (quarter to 3)

- Next, move the minute hand until it is pointing to 12.
  Move the hour hand until it is pointing to the next hour mark.
  What time is shown? (3 o'clock)

Common mistakes to watch out for may include turning the hands in the wrong direction, and forgetting to move the hour hand.

Once the student has generated these times, they can think of other party activities that could happen at these times. For example: playing a game at quarter past 2, dancing at half past 2, eating food at quarter to 3, opening presents at 3 o'clock.

These students may also be ready to try reading the calendar on **page 2** in more detail. For now, focus on the basics. We can add more in subsequent years.

What things can your students notice about the calendar?

- They should recognise that October is the month.
- Some students will recognise the abbreviations for the days of the week. These are written in order. Bring to their attention the difference between:
  - T for Tuesday and Th for Thursday
  - Sa for Saturday and Su for Sunday.

You can then ask further questions such as:

- How many days are in this month? (31)
  Will this be the same every year? (Yes. Most months have the same number of days each year. Only February changes from year to year)

- On what day of the week does the month start? (Wednesday)
  Will this be the same every year? (No)

- On what day of the week is Seahorse's birthday? (Friday)
  Will this be the same every year? (No)