

**Setting**

*In the Kitchen* is set in the country of Sweden, in the region of Scandinavia (northern Europe). Encourage students to locate Sweden on a world map, if you have one.

The house reflects traditional Swedish housing design, now most commonly seen in rural areas. The house is made of wood panelling painted red, with white edges. The distinctive red paint is traditionally made from “Falun Red” or “Falu Red”, which is a byproduct of an important Swedish copper mine, called “Falun Mine”. Copper was mined at Falun from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – which is about 1000 years!

In many places in the world, students will be most familiar with Sweden through the IKEA brand. The first IKEA store opened in 1958 in Sweden. As of July 2025, there are 486 IKEA stores in 63 countries across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. If you are in one of these regions, you can ask your students if they have visited an IKEA store, eaten food there, or have IKEA products in their homes.

Fox and Bear’s shirts, vests, and trousers are inspired by Swedish folk costume (*folkdräkter*) from a variety of regions of Sweden. Traditional dress is now worn for special occasions such as Midsummer, Swedish national day, or school graduations. Folk clothing is more clearly seen on Wolf and Lynx. In particular, on **pages 14 and 15**, we can see that Wolf is wearing a shirt, dress, and apron in the colours of the Swedish flag.



The flag of Sweden can be seen above the door on **page 14**. You can ask your students to look for objects throughout the story which have the same combination of colours as the Swedish flag:

- **Front cover:** oven mitts on the floor, kettle and saucepan on the stove, ladle and spoon hanging from the shelf on the right
- **Title page:** measuring spoons
- **Page 3:** measuring spoons
- **Page 6:** measuring spoons
- **Page 8:** oven mitts, measuring spoons, utensils in the pink jar next to the stove
- **Page 12:** oven mitts
- **Page 13:** utensils in the pink jar next to the stove
- **Page 14:** Wolf’s shirt and dress
- **Page 15:** Wolf’s shirt and dress, sugar pot and milk jug on the table.

You may also like to discuss the combinations of *pale* blue and yellow we see. For example, Fox’s vest is still blue and yellow, but not the same *shade* of blue and yellow as the flag.

**Characters**

The animals in the story are modelled on species of fox, bear, wolf, and lynx found in Sweden. Depending on where you are in the world, your students may have seen other species of fox, bear, wolf, or lynx before. What makes the animals in the story different from those they have seen before? Consider the size of the animal, colour, markings, ears (size, shape), tail (size, shape, position, thickness), legs (length, width), feet (size, number of toes), etc.

*Red fox**Brown bear**Scandinavian grey wolf*  
(Marlene Thyssen, [CC BY-SA 2.5](#))*Eurasian lynx*

### Story

The animals are making a Swedish cake called *Kladdkaka* (“klad-kaa-kuh”), which means “sticky” or “messy”. It is a simple, dense chocolate cake made without baking powder. It has a soft centre, similar to a “brownie”. Have your students ever eaten a similar type of cake or a brownie? Ask them to describe the taste (e.g., sweet, rich) and texture (e.g., soft, dense, light, fluffy, gooey) from memory.

Students may have done baking at home. You can ask questions such as:

- What have you baked?
- What help do you need from an adult?
- What equipment do you need? (e.g., bowls, measuring cups and spoons, mixing spoons, whisks, oven)
- What order do you usually do things in? (getting the ingredients, measuring the ingredients, combining the ingredients, cooking, washing up/cleaning up)

Reading and following a recipe, like following any set of instructions, is an important ability for students to develop over time. At this stage, encourage your students to identify the “action words” or “doing words” in a recipe that tell them what to do. For example, this is a simplified recipe for *Kladdkaka*:

### Ingredients:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • $\frac{1}{2}$ (half) cup butter, plus extra to grease the tin | • 1 pinch of salt                                 |
| • $\frac{3}{4}$ (three quarters) cup flour                      | • 2 eggs  |
| • $\frac{1}{4}$ (one quarter) cup cocoa powder                  | • 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ (one and one quarter) cup sugar |
|   | • 1 teaspoon vanilla extract                      |

**Method:**

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C if it has a fan, or to 200°C if it does not have a fan.
2. Measure the dry ingredients: flour and cocoa powder. Sift them together in a medium mixing bowl with the pinch of salt.
3. Measure the wet ingredients: sugar, butter, and vanilla extract. Add them to a different medium mixing bowl with the eggs. Use a whisk to mix these ingredients together.
4. Add the dry ingredients into the bowl with the wet ingredients. Mix all the ingredients together until there are no lumps.
5. Grease a cake tin with butter. Pour the batter evenly into the tin.
6. Bake the cake in the oven for 20 minutes until the edges start to get crispy.
7. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool.
8. Decorate the cake with your choice of toppings, such as icing sugar, cream, and berries.

The action words are:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. preheat (turn on)   | 5. grease (rub soft butter or oil all over the inside of the tin so the cake does not stick to it), pour |
| 2. measure, sift (pour the ingredients through a sieve into the bowl, gently shaking the sieve as you do so) | 6. bake (cook in the oven)   |
| 3. measure, add (this is <i>not</i> an addition word in this context!), mix                                  | 7. remove, let it cool   |
| 4. add, mix  | 8. decorate  |

**Mathematical concepts and language**

The story focuses on *language* rather than operations or calculations. In particular, we consider the language of *position and direction*. It is important that students are able to use these words and phrases to describe the world around them, and are able to follow instructions that include these words.

You can ask your students to identify which pairs of these words are *opposites* (antonyms), meaning they are directly related but specifically and completely different. Not all the words will have a clear opposite in the book, such as “on” or “on top of” (see table below). At this stage, it is simplest to avoid using the second meaning of “opposite”, which is a position word referring to two objects positioned facing one another.

Some words (synonyms) have very similar meanings, such as “above” and “over”. However, we would usually pair them with a different word as their opposite: above is the opposite of below, but over is the opposite of under (see table below).

Some words can be used in different ways, such as “in” and “out”. Both of these words can be used as either a position word or a direction word, and in both cases they are an adverb or preposition. For example:

- When “out” is used as a position word it is usually interchangeable with “outside”: “Stay **out** of the kitchen!”, or “Put the bins **out**”.
- When “out” is used as a direction word it might be used with the preposition “of” to indicate movement: “Bear takes the cake **out of** the oven”, “I got **out of** bed”, or just “Look **out** the window”.

The only direction words we use in this book are “in” and “out”, and “up” and “down”. All the other words refer to position.

above	below
over	under
to the left of	to the right of
in front of	behind
in	out
into	out of
inside	outside
near	far from
up	down
on, on top, onto	
alongside, next to	

You can revisit this book after covering division. Students should then be able to understand the measurement given as a fraction in the recipe book on **page 3**. To help students visualise fraction quantities, bring in a set of measuring cups and allow them to compare their sizes. Students will still not be familiar with fraction notation, so you may need to label the cups with their sizes in words: “1 quarter”, “1 half” etc.

### For students requiring extension

The clear layout of the pantry and the fridge on **pages 4-5, and 10-11** allows you to ask students further questions about the positions of objects. For example, you can ask the students to:

- describe the position of the other objects.
  - Where is the rice?
  - Where is the orange juice (OJ)?
- describe the position of the named ingredients in different ways.
  - The book says, “The flour is to the left of the rice.” but we could also say “The flour is below the sugar and salt”.
- follow instructions to draw other items, using the printable version of the pantry below.
  - Draw a tin of beans to the left of the cocoa.
  - Draw a packet of pasta in front of the beans.
  - Draw your favourite snack above the cocoa.
  - Draw a bottle of oil behind the salt, next to the sugar.
  - Draw a toy on top of the bag of flour.

Students can then colour in the page.



