

Lebona and the moon



Making stories fun!

Tips for reading books with young children

Children aged 4–5 years will enjoy this story.

National Curriculum Framework Birth to 4 years (NCF) level:
Towards Grade R

★ **Children love stories! They build important language skills when we read with them, especially when it is fun.** Involve the children when you read, use languages that they know, and talk about the stories together. Here are ideas to make storytime fun for the children ... and for you!

📖 **Get ready:** Include time for a story every day. You can read the same book many times! Choose a story, or let the children choose a favourite. Sit together and hold the book so that everyone can see the pictures.

📖 **Before** you read, introduce the story with the title. Show the front cover and read the story description on the back. Show the first few pages. Ask: What do you see? Do you look at the sky at night? Have you seen the moon?

📖 **During** the story, read with expression and use different voices to keep the children interested. Remember to show the pictures. Ask: Have you heard any stories about the moon? Can you tell them?

📖 **After** the story, discuss the book. Ask: What did you like about the story? Extend the learning with play-based activities:

Sharing circle: Did you know that the name “Lebona” means “the one who sees” in Sesotho. Why do you think the boy is called that? What does your name mean?

Drawing and writing: Make cards for the moon. Help the children write their wish on their card. They can “sign” their own name (even if it’s just a squiggle).

✅ **Let the children use the books.** Children need time to discover the books for themselves. Keep the books in a reading corner. Make it comfortable with a carpet and cushions. Encourage children to look at the books during free-play time.

Sharing books supports the **three themes of the NCF**: (1) I am a competent person, (2) My learning and development is important, and (3) I need strong connections with adults.

Books and reading build children’s skills in **all six of the Early Learning and Development Areas (ELDAs)**: (1) Well-being, (2) Identity and belonging, (3) Communication, (4) Exploring mathematics, (5) Creativity, and (6) Knowledge and understanding of the world.

This story aligns with early learning themes:

My family and friends
The beautiful sky
Feelings and emotions

Lebona and the moon





Lebona was a quiet boy who lived with his grandmother in a village far from the bright lights of the city. At night, they could see the moon and stars twinkling brightly in the sky.

Lebona asked Nkgono lots of questions about the moon:
“What’s it like on the moon?”
“How do you get there?”
“What are those black spots on the moon?”
“Why does it get bigger and smaller?”

And Nkgono would answer each question as best she could.

Every evening, they sat by the fire eating their supper while they watched the moon and stars. And after supper, Nkgono would tell a story. Lebona loved all her stories, but the ones about the moon were his favourite.

One evening after supper Nkgono said, "Tonight is a special night, Lebona. It's your birthday tomorrow. It is said that if you whisper a birthday wish to the moon, it helps make that wish come true."

"Really, Nkgono?" asked Lebona, surprised. He had never heard that before.





As Nkgono tucked Lebona up, he said, “Do you know what, Nkgono? My wish is that Mme and Ntate will come from the city for my birthday.”

“Maybe in your dreams you will visit the moon and whisper your wish to it,” said Nkgono. “Good night, my child. Sweet dreams.” Then she kissed Lebona gently on the forehead.

Lebona lay there quietly until sleep came.

As he slept, Lebona dreamt
of the night sky. It was filled
with stars and the big round
moon. Then ... as he was
looking up, Lebona saw
the moon slowly drop
a very long ladder made
of rope.

Lebona climbed the
ladder carefully –
up and up and up ...





... until he reached the moon.
Then he sat down because he
was a little afraid of falling off.

“Hello, Moon, I am so happy to
be here,” said Lebona. “Thank
you for letting me visit. May I tell
you my birthday wish?”

The moon listened as Lebona
whispered his wish. Then they
sat together quietly, looking out
at the stars.

When it was almost time for the sun to come up, the moon said gently, “It’s time for you to go home now, Lebona. Thank you for visiting. You can come again anytime!”

Lebona climbed all the way back down the ladder. He had just got to the bottom when he heard Nkgono say, “Good morning, birthday boy!”

Then she went to boil some water for their morning tea.





Lebona and Nkgono sat outside sipping their tea and watching the sun rise. He told her all about his visit to the moon.

Just then, Lebona heard a noise in the distance.

“Look,” he pointed excitedly. “It’s a car.”

Nkgono squinted to see. “My boy, your wish may have come true! That looks like Mme and Ntate’s car. This really is a special birthday surprise!”

Lebona smiled. He looked up, but the moon had already disappeared. So he closed his eyes tightly and whispered, “Thank you, Moon.”

Lebona and the moon

Story development by Book Dash,
with Shelley O'Carroll and Arabella Koopman

Design by Magenta Media

Proofreading by Ilse von Zeuner

ISBN: 978-1-4315-4030-3

This storybook was developed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Book Dash to increase access to quality reading materials and encourage reading for joy with children from birth to five years.

© DBE and UNICEF, Pretoria, 2025

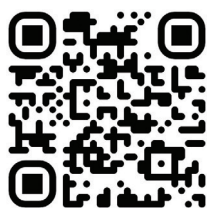
The original story "Gogo, where did the sun go?" was first published in *Big Book 2: Early Learning and Development from the Start (NCF-LTSM for 1- to 2-year-old children)*, DBE and UNICEF, 2024.

Storyline by EISH Production Services

Illustrations by Jane Appleby

Get more books

You can find this book, as well as other books in the *Stories for Joy* series along with materials to support emergent literacy and the National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four, at www.ecdinfohub.org.



The licence of this book allows you to:

- ✓ **Print out or photocopy:** You **may** print out or photocopy as many copies of this book as you like, on your own printer or at a print shop. For "How to print", see www.ecdinfohub.org.
- ✓ **Translate, change, adapt or quote:** You **may** translate, adapt or make changes to this book. You **may** also quote or use extracts from it. You must credit the creators of this book.
- ✗ **Sell:** This book is free. You **may not** use it commercially or charge anyone to use it.

How to credit this book: *Lebona and the moon, Early Learning and Development from the Start: Stories for Joy* series, Department of Basic Education, Pretoria, 2025.

Department of Basic Education
222 Struben Street, Pretoria, 0002
Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001

Telephone: 012 357 3000

Fax: 012 323 0601

Email: ecd@dbe.gov.za

Website: www.education.gov.za

Lebona lives with his
Nkgono in a village far from
the bright lights of the city.

In the evenings, they
watch the night sky together.

One magical night, Lebona
visits the moon in his dreams ...
and receives a special
birthday surprise
in return.



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

unicef 
for every child

English



9 781431 540303