

## **Lights, Camera, Action—Bringing Books to Life in the Classroom**

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*The desire to read is not born in a child – it is planted. The only rational way of educating is to be an example. Show them how – read aloud.*

*Jim Trelease*

### **THE JOY OF READING**

The focus of this curriculum unit stresses the importance of reading to children. The foundation of reading really begins in first grade. Each year, it amazes me to watch students re-learn their letters and sounds for three months, and take off into reading. A child taking off into reading is similar to the butterfly cycle. You watch the kids evolve into wonderful readers over time. I love to watch students identify letters and sounds as they stretch out a word. Once they can say that word after they have stretched it out, their little faces light up. They realize that they can read, and there is no turning back. Once they start stretching out to read, it becomes automatic with other words and before you know it, they can read chapter books. I don't think anything makes me feel more worthy than watching students create and read a meaningful sentence.

Reading should be fun. Reading aloud is the most enjoyable activity I have experienced as a child and as a teacher. I can remember listening to read-alouds as a child and sitting on the edge of my chair to see what would happen next. The presentation of the read-aloud with a simple change in a character's voice filled me with anticipation. As I got older, I found that same eagerness in reading novels. I see my students enjoying read-alouds in the classroom. I hear their laughter and comments about the book. I want to extend that joy from the read-aloud with activities that enhance comprehension skills.

### **USING READ-ALOUDS TO MAKE READING FUN**

The way to make reading fun for first graders is to utilize reading aloud. A child who only associates reading with boring activities (worksheets, hours of intensive instruction, or tests) will associate reading with negativity and withdrawal. Reading aloud stimulates the brain to connect reading with pleasure (Trelease 2). It is simply entertaining to hear a dramatic read-aloud. During my certification classes, I had to read *Where the Red Fern Grows* for a literature class. I had already read it in junior high school, so I chose to get the audio version. It was amazing. I can remember listening to the tape and having tears run down my face. The tone of the reader's voice was so real. It was as if I was right there in the story. I could feel everything that was happening in the book. I had a similar experience when a professor read *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* to the class. I was so

drawn to Lilly. While the professor read the book, I listened to her voice change with the characters. I felt like I was in the first grade again. I wanted a purse, just like Lilly's. A good read-aloud is like a magic spell. It captures your attention and brings you into another world.

Reading aloud to children fosters unity and a caring attitude in the classroom. Feeling safe and loved are two essential ingredients that must be present in the classroom in order for students to learn (Short 39). If we want students to learn anything, they must be willing to take risks. The learning environment must be non-threatening in order for students to be able to reflect on reading. The classroom atmosphere should encourage investigation and critical thinking. Students should be allowed to think about the story and reflect with their peers (Short 104). During story time in my classroom, I allow students to stretch out on the floor, and I welcome any comments they have during the read-aloud. Our story time is never quiet. Students laugh and make many comments about the read-aloud. I believe that discussing the story as I read it helps my students to get a better understanding of the story. They verbalize what I have read on each page; therefore they comprehend the story. Students are more comfortable and more likely to make comments if they know they can. The classroom atmosphere is most important in determining how students will react in the classroom. I create a vocal and inviting atmosphere in my classroom where I want feedback from my students. I want to know their thoughts on the read-aloud. I also include thinking and pair time. If I ask a question, I will give students about 30 seconds to think about the question, and then they will pair with a partner. The partners will tell each other their answers to the question and discuss them. I will call on a partnership, and they will share their thoughts with the class.

Reading aloud increases vocabulary skills, and builds knowledge (Linge 213). Children gain many lessons from a read-aloud. They connect the print with meaningful words, understand the letter/sound relationship, and learn the structure of a book. Increasing a child's vocabulary is most useful for English as second language learners (also known as ESL learners). For example, an ESL child may not know what to call a mop or dog in the English language because that word does not exist in their vocabulary yet. Repetitive exposure to unfamiliar words in meaningful context will help students identify and understand what the words mean. If a student hears an unfamiliar word several times in a read-aloud, he or she will begin to associate a definition with the word.

Reading aloud provides an opportunity for students to engage in critical thinking and oral language development (Short 40). Reading means understanding what you read or heard during the story. Studies have shown that, sometimes, exercises that involve a particular component of comprehension will not help students. Reading something that interests students and discussing it in class is a more effective approach (Short 103). Last year, there was a very shy little boy in my room. He despised everything associated with reading. He kept his head down during the entire 90-minute block of reading time, and he would moan and complain during story time. One day I asked him to eat lunch with

me in the classroom, and we discussed things that he liked. I knew he loved to draw, but he shared with me how much he loved to go camping with his Grandpa. I began to check out books from the local library about art and camping. I allowed him to take the books home, as long as he returned them at the end of the week. I also told his Mom to start checking out or buying him books that interested him. Not long after this, he began to chime in and comment during story time. That same little head that stayed down during reading was now beginning to stay up for short periods of time. As time passed, he began to like reading more each day.

Comprehension depends on tapping into prior knowledge. Understanding reading depends on one's thought processes, language, and prior knowledge of the subject at hand (Short 109). Talking about the story during the read-aloud enhances comprehension (Short 111). Students who are considered low readers often lack the prior knowledge needed to relate to a story; therefore, it is essential to discuss the read-aloud.

Reading aloud to children is the number one factor associated with success in school (Short 35). The purpose of my unit is to read aloud to children and involve students in activities that expand on the read-aloud and allow them to understand the text. Reading aloud to children is research and classroom proven to groom successful readers (Short 34).

## **READING WITH READER'S THEATER**

Besides reading aloud, I will teach reading and bring out the joy of reading by using Reader's Theater. Reader's Theater is a dramatic interpretation of a book that is performed by students. Reader's Theater uses oral language development as a vehicle for understanding a story (Fredricks xviii). Reader's Theater encourages critical and creative thinking. The script helps students to understand the plot, theme, setting, point of view, and characterization of the story. Students are involved in a cooperative learning atmosphere as they work together for production. Reader's Theater helps ESL learners to observe language and usage. Props and costumes are not used in this theater because the focus is solely on understanding the storyline.

Reader's Theater builds fluency. Students will create a script with a teacher's help. They will read the lines several times before the performance occurs. Reading the lines several times builds fluency. Students will recognize letters and sounds as they stretch out simple words. Students will also recall sight words. Sight words are words that are memorized because they cannot be stretched out.

Reader's Theater develops reading comprehension. Reader's Theater is one of the most powerful tools of comprehension for the performers. Students will learn about plot, theme, setting, and character analysis through Reader's Theater. In order to maximize comprehension skills, students will create their own script. Developing a student-made

script will integrate oral language, comprehension, and writing into one activity (Short 119).

Reader's Theater provides a forum for student participation. After each part of a story is acted out, the class may take a break to discuss the interpretations. Discussion will allow the students to interpret the story. Children will be actively involved in the story. Students can share their interpretations of the story with the class. Since there are no right or wrong interpretations, students will not be afraid to share what they think. In the end, I hope that Reader's Theater enhances self-esteem and promotes a positive attitude towards reading.

Discussion also enhances the students' comprehension and critical thinking skills. Students will evaluate the characters in the story. There will be discussions on character descriptions, personalities, and analysis. Some of the questions to stimulate conversation about the characters of the story will include, "Did that character make the right decision? What would you have done?"

Reader's Theater encourages inquiry and excitement in literature. It supports an active and non-threatening atmosphere for students so they can enjoy reading. It provides all students with opportunities to participate in the storyline, and allows those students who are not reading the script to learn the etiquette of being audience members (Fredricks 5).

Through Reader's Theater, this unit will integrate math. For example, students will survey their peers about which book students liked best. Students will gain experience by creating a table and graph to present their data. Finally, students decide which picture book is most popular on their campus and adapt it into a Reader's Theater performance. All students will have the opportunity to document the book and performance through illustrations, writings, and photographs. All documentation will be published and submitted to the school library for display.

## **THE STUDENTS I TEACH**

I am a first grade classroom size reduction teacher/ESL teacher. I teach no more than 21 students. Many of the students experience difficulties with reading. This unit is designed to fit the needs of these students, but it may be adapted into any classroom setting. Most of the first graders enter my room in the fall after completing kindergarten in summer school. In the fall, we start the year by immersing ourselves in learning the alphabet—the sounds and how to write upper and lowercase letters. We spend the majority of our language block on letters and sounds until December. In January, we return to stretching out those letters to make words. We work hard to read on a first grade level in order to be promoted to the second grade. We get so involved in reading/fluency skills that we forget about understanding the details of what we have just read.

The life inside of a classroom is very stressful. Teachers are pushed to their maximum capacity to improve test scores and to have all children reading on grade level. Students are stressed to perform at higher levels, even when they are hungry, sleepy, and/or sad from problems at home. Sometimes it seems as if nothing is ever good enough. I chose this unit because I am always rushing through the day to teach all necessary objectives so that our class won't fall behind. Through this unit, I am consciously reminding myself that no matter what is going on, we need to stop and read books everyday. We may not complete all the daily objectives, but students should enjoy reading or listening to a good book.

## **THE PICTURE BOOKS OF THIS UNIT**

### ***Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day***

I will start the unit with *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst. Ray Cruz did a fabulous job with the illustrations. The cover page is done in color, and the rest of the book is in black and white. Each page has incredible detail. This book is about a little boy named Alexander who wakes up in a very bad mood. He has fallen asleep with gum in his mouth, which gets in his hair; he trips over his skateboard; and he drops his sweater in the sink. As the day continues, nothing goes his way. Alexander predicts that it will continue to be a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. Alexander's solution to his bad day is to go to Australia. At the end of the book, Alexander's Mom tells him that some days are not good days, even in Australia.

I chose this book first because everyone can relate to it. The students will connect to this book. As the students start a new school year, I want them to realize that there will be both good and bad days. I hope they will remember from this story that all bad days come to an end. I will begin the read-aloud by asking students to tell me what they see in the cover picture. I will ask students to describe the little boy's facial expression. Is he happy or sad? I will ask students to tell me how the title of the story relates to the cover picture. Students will draw the conclusion that Alexander is the little boy in the bed and he's having a bad day. I will also ask students to tell me about their experiences with having a bad day in order to tap into their prior knowledge.

During each read-aloud, we will stop and discuss the story. On page two, I will ask students how Alexander feels when his brothers find a surprise in their cereal box and he does not find anything. After reading page five I will ask students what Alexander could do differently to not have such a bad day. On page six I will ask students why Mrs. Dickens doesn't like Alexander's picture of the invisible castle. On page nine I will ask students to tell me if Alexander made himself feel better by saying ugly things to Paul. On page 14, is there a different way Alexander could have handled the interaction with his brothers outside the dental office. On page 23, what does Mom mean when she says that some days are like that? The final question will ask what the big deal with Australia is. Why does Alexander want to go to Australia? In order to understand why Alexander

may want to go to Australia, we will extend this read-aloud and learn about the continent of Australia. We will read books about Australia during social studies time, locate Australia on a map, and learn fun facts about the continent. This social studies segment will be divided into three parts—land, people, and animals.

Australia is the sixth largest country in the world. The climate of Australia is dry in two-thirds of the continent; therefore it may not rain for years at a time (Smith 16). It is usually called the “land down under,” because it is below the equator in the Southern Hemisphere (Parker 8). Many people live in houses with gardens, high rises, underground houses, and houses built on stilts (Smith 28).

There are 17.6 million people in Australia (Smith 4). Australia has the most diverse population of any region in the country. Ninety-five percent of Australians have ancestral roots in Britain. Four percent of the population is from Asia. One percent of the population are Aborigines. This group of people has lived in Australia for over 40,000 years (Bagley 21). Literacy levels among children are high in Australia. School of Air allows children that live in remote areas to go to school via radio. Aboriginal children are taught in their native language and in English (Smith 30).

The Great Barrier Reef measures the longest coral reefs in the world. Many sea animals live among this beautiful coral that was established thousands of years ago. We will also explore Australian animals. Australia is unique for its unusual animals. A common characteristic of these animals is that they are mammals that carry their young in pouches. Australian animals include kangaroos and koalas. Other animals include strange birds and reptiles. The emu is a big bird that cannot fly. The frilled lizard has a collar that flares out when the lizard is in danger (Parker 27). Australia is known to produce the greatest amount of wool in the world. More than one-sixth of the world’s sheep live in Australia. The sheep outnumber people by a ratio of 7 to 1 (Dolce 101). The last animal we will learn about will be the Tasmanian devil from the island of Tasmania in Australia. The Tasmanian devil is a marsupial with strong jaws and pointy teeth that allow it to chew through bone (Parker 28). We will compare the real Tasmanian devil to the famous Warner Brothers cartoon version of the animal.

### ***Where the Wild Things Are***

*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak is the second book for the unit. This story is about a little boy named Max. Max puts on his wolf suit and runs around the house like a wild animal. His mother calls him a wild thing, and he tells her that he will eat her up. Max is sent to his room without supper, only to take a wild voyage through the forest and the ocean to the home of wild things, where he becomes the king of all wild things. After a big celebration, Max begins to miss home, so he travels back to his room through the ocean and the forest to find his warm supper waiting for him in his room.

I was a second year teacher when I first read this book to my class. I love to read this book to students to show them that it is okay to be wild sometimes. In our classroom, we can be wild and learn together. I want to tap into that vast reservoir of imagination and wake it up with this fun story. Puppetry will be utilized during this read-aloud because of the fantastic illustrations of all the creatures in the book. We will start the read-aloud by discussing the cover picture and title. In order to tap into prior knowledge, I will ask students if they have ever been punished and sent to their room, and why. During the read-aloud, I will also ask students why Max was sent to his room. I want students to tell me if a forest really grew in Max's room to see if they can understand that the home of the wild things takes place in Max's imagination. I want students to share any experiences about using their imagination as Max does in the book. I will ask students if the ocean is in Max's room. Why did the wild things call Max the wildest thing of all? Students will interpret the pictures that do not contain any text. I will ask students to explain to me what was happening to Max when he sent the wild things to bed without any supper. At the end of the story, I will ask students how long Max was with the wild things.

After the read-aloud and discussion, we will make puppets out of paper bags and paper plates. Students will use yarn and buttons, and will color in features of their puppets with crayons and markers. Students will create puppets according to their interpretation. After the puppets are made, students will retell the story in groups of three. One student will play Max, another student can play Max's Mom, and the third student will play a wild thing.

### ***If You Give A Mouse A Cookie***

*If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff and Felicia Bond comes in third place for the unit. This has to be one of the funniest books I have ever read to my students. It is hilarious to witness the chain reaction that occurs from this mighty mouse getting a cookie. This story is about a little boy who gives a mouse a cookie. After the mouse gets the cookie, he makes numerous requests. The little boy runs around the house getting everything that the mouse has requested. The boy has to run behind the mouse and clean up his mess. The book ends with the mouse eating another cookie. Felicia Bond has drawn great illustrations with such rich color.

Students love to chime in and read along with this book. We will discuss the cover picture and make predictions. As I read this book to the class, I will ask students to tell me what the mouse asked for first, second, third, etc. To extend this read-aloud, students and I will create a cookie recipe as if we were making cookies for the mouse. I will ask students to tell me what we need to do in sequential order. I will ask students to tell me what ingredients we need, what we will use first, second, third, etc. After ingredients and directions are written on the board, I will bring out the actual ingredients for students to prepare in groups of four. After all ingredients are prepared and mixed we will bake them in an easy bake oven.

### *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*

The first time I encountered *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, I was in one of my courses for elementary certification. It was a class on teaching reading in an elementary setting. The professor entered the room with a small, glittery purple purse in her right hand, and a small book under her left arm. The way she read this book to our class made me realize why I wanted to be a teacher. At 24 years old, I was a kid again. I was so drawn to the character of Lilly and her purse as my professor changed her voice with different characters. I want to have the same effect on my students.

This book is about a spunky little girl mouse named Lilly who loves school. Lilly loves every aspect of school, especially her teacher, Mr. Slinger. One weekend Lilly goes shopping with her Grandma. The following Monday morning she returns to school with a new pair of sunglasses, three quarters, and a beautiful new purse. She cannot wait to show off her new possessions. Mr. Slinger has to collect Lilly's valuable possessions because she cannot wait until recess or sharing time to show off her valuables. Lilly's love for Mr. Slinger quickly turns to rage. At the end of the day, Mr. Slinger returns Lilly's things with a tasty treat, and lovely note. Lilly felt awful, because she had stuck a bad note in Mr. Slinger's bag. Lilly punishes herself when she gets home and writes a nice story about her teacher. The next day, Lilly apologizes to her teacher. She patiently waits until sharing time and she is able to share her quarters, purse, and sunglasses with the class.

The day I read this book, I will play the character of Lily. I will dress up, wear the sunglasses, and carry the plastic purse. I had to incorporate this book into the unit because there are so many times I have had to pick up toys from students and return them at the end of the day. When this occurs, students feel as if their world has ended. They feel as if a teacher's sole purpose on earth is to be cruel and keep their toy. I want students to understand at the beginning of the year why teachers must do what they do through Mr. Slinger's character in the story. We will start by discussing the cover picture and how it relates to the title. We will discuss every illustration in this book because there is more than one picture on each page.

In order to tap into prior knowledge, we will discuss students' favorite toys and how they feel about them. During the read-aloud, I will ask students what Lilly liked about school. What did Lilly like about her teacher? What were the three things Lilly came to school with on Monday morning. Why did Mr. Slinger take Lilly's precious possessions away during story time? When Lilly's things were taken away, how did that make her feel? Why did Lilly slip the drawing into Mr. Slinger's book bag? How did Lilly feel when she found the note and treats from Mr. Slinger? Why did Lilly decide to sit in the uncooperative chair? How did Lilly feel about the next day? We will review what Lilly brought to school and why it was taken away from her. Were her things returned safely



to her? We will discuss appropriate times of the day where students can bring out toys. The following day students will participate in show and tell where they bring their most valuable possession to school as Lilly did in the story. At the end of the day, we will have a show and tell hour. We will review the story and listen as each student shares his/her favorite toy with the class.

### ***The Giving Tree***

As a child, my most memorable storybook was *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. My Mom read it to me so much that I practically know it by heart. I never appreciated all the things a tree can give us until I was exposed to this book. We will begin the read-aloud by discussing the title and the cover picture. I will ask students what the tree loved. What did the little boy make with the leaves from the tree? What other things did the tree and the boy do? What happened as time went by? What did the boy take from the tree to sell in the city? What part did the boy cut from the tree to build a house? What did the boy cut from the tree to make a boat? How did that make the tree feel and why? Why was the tree happy at the end of the story? We will extend the read-aloud by learning about the parts/functions of a tree and all the wonderful materials trees provide for us. During science time, we will learn how trees grow. We will learn about the parts and functions of a tree. The required science textbook in grade one of the Houston Independent School District has a section on trees that will be most helpful for this part of the unit.

### ***Ramona The Brave***

The last book of the unit will be a chapter book that I will read to the class. I have chosen *Ramona the Brave* by Beverly Cleary. This book is appropriate for students in the age range of eight to 12. I am keeping in mind that I will read this book aloud to the class and that listening levels have proven to be higher than reading levels.

This book is about a brave girl who enters first grade. She wants to be a big girl even though she misses the comfort of kindergarten. My students will relate to Ramona as she makes the transition to first grade. Ramona experiences problems in first grade. She runs home upset when a classmate has copied off of her paper. No matter what she does, Ramona cannot win her teacher's approval. At the end of the book, Ramona finally adjusts to first grade and to her new teacher. She learns a lot about herself through the experiences she has.

I have devoted half of the unit, or the last two weeks, to cover this chapter book. We will read half a chapter each day. We will read *Ramona* for the sheer joy of reading aloud and enjoying it. Students will draw and write about the read-aloud in their daily journals.

In summary, I chose these books because they have been continued favorites among students and teachers. All of these books will provide my ESL learners with repetitive exposure to vocabulary words in a meaningful way (Hall 207).

## **OVERVIEW OF READING ACTIVITIES**

We will begin the unit by discussing the definition of an author and illustrator. I will tell the students a few characteristics of each author and illustrator. Students will be active participants in the read-alouds. I will ask them to turn pages, make sound effects, and repeat lines. Hopefully, I will spend no more than two to three days on each book. All the books will be used in read-alouds. Students will decide which book we will use in Reader's Theater through our school-wide survey.

We will use a variety of strategies before reading in order to enhance comprehension through predictions and through tapping into prior knowledge. Students will predict through looking at some illustrations in each book. After the read-aloud we will discuss any unfamiliar terms we heard during the story. We will also address the characters, setting, and what took place in the story. We will discuss if students enjoyed the book or not and why. We will summarize the stories. Students will focus on the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Students will enhance comprehension skills through focusing on the main idea and supportive details. We will focus on modeling questions before, during, and after the read-aloud: who, what, when, where, how, and why. We will look into the purpose for reading, discuss the author and illustrator's style, and engage in story retells through puppetry/dramatic play. We will compare student's experiences, character experiences, and audiovisuals to the book. Students will be able to describe narrative text structure and its features through discussing the setting and the characters.

There will also be a continuous word wall that will be displayed throughout the entire unit. This word wall will feature all unfamiliar vocabulary along with definitions. The words will also be alphabetized so students can associate letters and sounds. I will also incorporate visuals in order to assist students with retaining the letter/sound relationship. For example, under the words that begin with A, I will put a picture of an apple or a student's picture that has that sound at the beginning of their name. In my experience students get really excited when I use their pictures with letter sounds and blends. Student comprehension will be assessed through oral retells and informal observations of their discussions, illustrations, and writing. Students will keep a journal of reflections on the read-alouds. Journals help students become independent thinkers.

## **CREATIVE INCENTIVES**

Each child will be given a retell reward card. The design of the card will include the student's picture, name, birthday, age, and the name of our school. Students may retell

the story to two people for each story. These people may include classmates, other teachers, other faculty members, older students, or me. I will keep a record of the retells to make sure the students include characters, settings, and the plot of the story. After they have retold the story, they may spend extra time in the reading center, check out a book from our school library, or eat lunch with a friend or with me to discuss their favorite book. These incentives were created to motivate students to read. The goal of these incentives is to get children to read more. The students are not restricted in what they can read. They can read magazines, comic books, newspapers, and books. As long as they pick up reading material, I am happy.

I am also persuading my principal to allow my class to take a field trip to the local library. The school library is a valuable resource during the week, but I want them to know a fun place to go on the weekend and in the summertime.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Graphs and Tables for Reading with Reader's Theater**

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will use a table and/or graph to conclude what picture book students like the best on the school campus. Students will develop a table and a corresponding graph. Students will interpret a table and a graph related to the unit. Students will understand tally marks by counting by fives and will use them in the table and graph.

#### ***Activity One***

Students will sit on our classroom rug in a circle. I will sit with students and present a list of all the books that were covered in the unit on chart paper. I will ask each student to tell me what book they liked the best and why. I will jot down notes on my clipboard as students share their thoughts. After all the students have spoken, I will give them a picture of themselves that was taken earlier in the week. I will explain that when a student's name is called, he/she will put his/her picture next to the book he/she liked the most. The purpose of this activity is to provide students with a visual presentation or picture graph of how many students liked which books. After all students have posted their pictures next to the book title, we will count how many children were in each category. I will explain to the students that we will expand on this activity tomorrow. We will keep the chart paper posted in the classroom for students to see.

#### ***Activity Two***

The day after activity one is completed, we will expand the activity into the second phase. Students will sit on our classroom rug in a circle. I will sit with the students and we will review the chart paper from activity one. Students will count out the total number of students per book. I will write the title of the book and a tally mark for each student on a different sheet of chart paper. A tally mark represents one and is counted in groups of five. The week before presenting activity one, students will start counting by

groups of five from five to twenty five. We will practice counting by fives daily and add a five each week. This is also a great way to prepare students to count nickels in the future. We will convert the picture graph into a tally mark table and keep it posted in the classroom. Students will compare and contrast the picture graph to the tally mark table.

### ***Activity Three***

I will create a survey listing all the books used in the unit. The survey will be passed out school wide to all students, teachers, and faculty members. The purpose of the survey is to see which book is liked the most on the school campus. I will tally up the votes and present the data to the class in a tally mark table. The graph will include all classes and faculty members. Students will count the total of tally marks for each book and conclude which book was liked the most throughout campus. The most popular book will be chosen for a script in Reader's Theater. Students will create a script and perform for a small audience.

### ***Activity Four***

Students will sit on the classroom rug in a circle. I will sit with students and review the tables, and picture graphs. We will convert the picture graph and the tally mark tables into numerical units on a bar graph. Each unit will be counted by groups of five. This activity provides students with a different representation of the data that can be posted in the classroom.

### ***Evaluation***

Each student will understand the significance of a table and a bar graph through this lesson. Students will examine the tables and graphs for any trends. Who liked which book best, and why? For example, did the fifth graders really like a particular book? Did the faculty really like a particular book? We will also examine any differences between students and faculty.

### ***Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day and Australia***

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will learn about the continent of Australia. They will learn about the land, people, and animals. Students will be able to locate the continent of Australia on a map and will know three facts about the continent.

#### ***Activity One***

Students will sit in a circle on the classroom rug. After we have read *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, I will ask students what the big deal with Australia was. Why did Alexander keep referring to Australia in the story? I will explain to students that we will learn about Australia to see why Alexander may have wanted to go there so badly. I will place books about Australia in the social studies center. Students will browse through the books with a partner during social studies time. I will walk around the room and ask students what they like about Australia so far. What

do they see in the books that looks interesting? I will also ask students what they think Alexander wanted to see in Australia.

### ***Activity Two***

Students will be seated on the classroom rug. The day after activity one, we will locate Australia on a map. Students will return to their desks in order to see the overhead map of the continents. Each student will be given a map of the continents where they can label and color in Australia and the other continents. Students will learn from this map lesson that Australia is the smallest continent in the world. Students will discuss what they learned about yesterday in the social studies center.

### ***Activity Three***

Students sit in a circle on the classroom rug. I will read aloud *Dropping In On Australia* by Lewis K. Parker. I chose this book to read aloud because the text is very easy for my students to understand. The book begins with a discussion of the earth and the southern hemisphere. Throughout the book, students take a trip to Australia. The first stop is Sydney, the largest city in Australia. Stop two is the Great Barrier Reef, known as the longest string of coral in the world. Stop three is Ayers Rock, which is a natural sandstone tower. The book also discusses the Aborigines, who are the natives of Australia. Stop four is the Great Sandy Desert. The Sandy Desert is a huge desert in Western Australia. Stops five and six are Perth and Victoria. Perth is a major seaport city in Australia. Victoria is known for its beautiful, snow-covered Alps. Stop seven takes students through the city of Melbourne. The most exciting part of the book covers the unusual animals of Australia and the island of Tasmania, the home of the Tasmanian Devil.

### ***Activity Four***

We will examine the unusual animals of Australia. Most of the animals from Australia are marsupials. Marsupials are mammals with pouches to carry their young. There are also unusual birds and reptiles. The Tasmanian Devil is found in the island of Tasmania in Australia. We will learn about all of these animals from the books listed in the social studies center. We will compare and contrast the real Tasmanian Devil to Warner Brothers' animated version

### ***Evaluation***

Each student will draw and write in his/her daily journal to show what he/she has learned about Australia.

### ***Where the Wild Things Are and Puppetry***

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will create puppets based on characters in *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. Students will retell the story to each other with the puppets. Students will increase their comprehension skills through this activity.

### ***Activity One***

After the read-aloud of *Where the Wild Things Are*, students will be given paper bags, cotton balls, yarn, buttons, and crayons/markers. Students will create their puppets based on their interpretation of the story.

### ***Activity Two***

Students will retell the story with each other.

### ***Evaluation***

Students will strengthen their comprehension skills through retelling the story with puppets.

## ***If You Give A Mouse A Cookie and a Cookie Recipe***

### ***Student Objectives***

The read-aloud of *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* will be expanded on through this lesson, during which we will create a cookie recipe and bake cookies in an easy bake oven. Students will review sequential order/ordinal numbers by reviewing what the little mouse asked for and will learn directions for the cookie recipe.

### ***Activity One***

Students sit in a circle on the classroom rug. After the read-aloud, we will review what the mouse asked for. I will stress that the students explain to me what the mouse asked for first, second, third, etc., using ordinal numbers. As students state what the mouse asked for in order, I will write it on the board. After students have stated everything the mouse asked for, we will review all statements on the board. Students will return to their seats to draw/write in their daily journals about this activity.

### ***Activity Two***

The day after activity one is completed, students will sit in a circle on the rug. We will review activity one, which is still on the board. I will explain to students that we will bake cookies just like the ones the mouse ate in the book. I will ask students to tell me what ingredients we need to make the cookies. As students explain their answers, I will record them on the board. After students have stated the essential ingredients, I will bring these ingredients out for the students to see. I will ask students to explain to the class how we will bake the cookies. After students have stated that you need a stove to bake the cookies, I will bring out the easy bake oven. The easy bake oven comes with pre-packaged ingredients to which you add water and then bake. I will explain to students that all the ingredients that we discussed are already in the pre-packaged mix. Each student will get to bake a tasty treat, with my supervision. While students are baking their treats, the remaining students will respond to a question on the board in their daily journals: What would you want to have with your cookie? Think about all the things the mouse wanted after he got a cookie.

### ***Evaluation***

Students will discuss what the mouse asked for in the story. Students will discuss what is needed to bake cookies. Students will bake their own cookies. Students will draw/write about what else they would like to have with their cookie in their daily journals.

### ***Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse and Show and Tell***

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will orally discuss what makes their favorite toy so special with the class during show and tell hour.

#### ***Activity One***

After the read-aloud and a discussion of the book, I will ask students to bring a favorite toy for show and tell hour the following day. Students will explain to the class the name of the toy, any unique features of the toy, and why the toy is so special to them.

### ***Evaluation***

Students will describe their favorite toy to the class.

### ***The Giving Tree and Parts/Functions of a Tree***

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will learn about the parts of a tree. Students will be able to identify and describe the function of a root, a branch, a trunk, and the leaves of a tree.

#### ***Activity One***

Students will pick a leaf from outside the classroom. Students will take their leaf and do a leaf rubbing. A leaf rubbing is made when a leaf is placed between two pieces of paper and students gently rub a crayon on top of the paper, revealing the leaf image and pattern. After the leaf rubbing, we will discuss what students noticed about their leaves. What does the shape of your leaf look like? Describe the pattern on your leaf.

#### ***Activity Two***

I will lead students outside with their daily journals and pencils in hand. Students will sit in a circle around a tree. They will draw their own version of a tree in their journals. After students have drawn their trees, we will discuss the parts/functions of a tree. The roots carry nutrients throughout the tree. The trunk holds the branches in place. The leaves provide food for the tree.

#### ***Activity Three***

Each student will be given a picture of a tree to color. We will label the parts of a tree together and continue to discuss their functions. We will focus on the roots, branches,

trunk, and leaves of the tree. We will read our science text to help us understand these basic functions.

#### ***Activity Four***

With the permission of our school principal, our class will plant a tree on the school campus. If this is not feasible, we will observe the growth of plants in our classroom.

#### ***Evaluation***

Each student will draw or write about the parts and functions of a tree in their daily journals.

### ***Ramona The Brave and Daily Journal Entries***

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will review what we just read in their daily journal entries. Students will respond to comprehension questions in their daily journals after each read-aloud.

#### ***Activity One***

Students will sit in a circle on the classroom mat, and listen to the read-aloud. I will read half of a chapter per day. After I have read, we will discuss what happened in today's reading. I will write a comprehension question on the board and read it to the students. The students and I will discuss the answer to the comprehension question. If students have a hard time with the question, I will go back and read a little bit of the passage to refresh their memory. For example, in the first half of Chapter One, the comprehension question could be: Why didn't Beezus want to be called Beezus anymore? The answer to this question is that there were little boys teasing her. They were making fun of her name by saying, "Jesus, Beezus." After we have discussed the correct answer to the question, students will return to their seats and draw/write about it in their daily journals. This activity will continue for each read-aloud segment of the book.

#### ***Other Possible Comprehension Questions***

Chapter 1 - Did Ramona find out where her Mom went during her errand?

Chapter 2 - What happened to Ramona's crayon?

Chapter 2 - Where did her Mom go on her errand?

Chapter 3 - What did Howie and Ramona like to play?

Chapter 3 - Why did the workmen yell at Howie and Ramona?

Chapter 4 - What grade is Ramona in this year?

Chapter 4 - Did the class believe Ramona had a hole in her house?

Chapter 5 - Why was Ramona so angry with Susan?

Chapter 5 - What happened to Susan's owl?

Chapter 6 - What did Ramona leave for her Mom?

Chapter 6 - What did Ramona have to do in front of the entire class and why?

Chapter 7 - Why didn't Ramona like first grade?

Chapter 8 - Why did Ramona want to say a bad word?



Chapter 8 - Why didn't Ramona want to go back to first grade?

Chapter 9 - What happened to Ramona on the way to school?

Chapter 9 - What did Ramona make instead of the Thanksgiving turkey?

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