

USING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE  
FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM:  
A HANDBOOK,

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education  
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Education

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August 1991

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

For numerous elementary school-aged children today, reading instruction is implemented using a basal reader (Koeller, 1981 as in Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989). This type of instruction consists of stories with controlled vocabulary and little meaning to the reader. A reading lesson is usually followed by a less than meaningful Ditto sheet or workbook pages. Children seem to merely read words, without understanding the meaning behind those words, if there is one.

As children move through the grades, their interest in reading appears to diminish, as well as their ability to understand what they read. Demands for comprehension are put on students as they begin reading more and more in the content areas, only to understand less and less of what is read. Students suddenly see science and social studies text as something separate from the language skills they learned earlier (Alex, 1988). Could this problem have its origin in the lower grades, where students are forced to read basal stories of little or no interest to them?

This project was chosen as a direct result of classroom experiences. When children read stories in the basal, they read them once, do a few workbook pages, and are never interested in the story again, even to read on their own. However, trade books read to

students are often requested for second readings, are examined and reread by students independently and are often focuses for class projects. An idea from a story can blossom into a writing activity, an art project or class book on the topic. Isn't this the kind of interest and excitement that children should have for reading? As a result, a handbook containing ideas and activities to go along with some popular children's stories would be both helpful and useful.

### Review of Literature

A study conducted by Cohen (1968) compared students who were taught reading using the basal method with students who were taught using a literature component with regular instruction. The selected children came from low socio-economic backgrounds. The experimental group had trade books read aloud to them, had access to those books, and had meaningful follow-up activities to go along with the stories. The control group received regular basal instruction. The experimental group showed remarkable reading progress over the control group in such areas as reading comprehension and quality of vocabulary. A similar study was conducted later by Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland (1974) with comparable results (Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989).

Eldredge and Butterfield (1986) employed a study of 1,149 second grade students in 24 schools in four Utah school districts. Here, the basal method of instruction was compared to five other experimental methods, two of which included the literature-based

program. Their findings were that "the use of children's literature to teach children to read had a positive effect upon students' achievement and attitudes toward reading" (Eldredge and Butterfield, 1986).

#### Justification of Problem

A handbook of children's stories and language activities would benefit other educators as it would provide lessons for using children's literature in the classroom. This type of reading instruction would enable students to see a relationship between their experiences and the stories they may read.

#### Problem Statement

The purpose of this project was to design a handbook consisting of children's stories and language activities to go with them. The activities were designed so that the child would think critically about the story, as well as express his/her own views through language activities.

#### Procedure

The handbook was designed for use by first grade teachers whose students may be in the pre-reading or reading stages. The handbook is for use in a regular classroom, and all activities can be done in a whole class setting. Students are required to do their own creative thinking, writing, and reading.

### Data Collection

The chosen children's literature and activities are those that have been done successfully in the above setting. They have been collected from teachers and other sources and compiled into this handbook.

### Design

The handbook contains forty children's stories and activities that can be used in a regular first grade classroom. Each story lesson contains a brief story synopsis, a topic, an introduction to the story, follow-up questions, and one to four follow-up activities.

### Assumptions and Limitations

This handbook has been written specifically for use in a regular first grade classroom. Activities are designed to enhance critical thinking skills, creative writing, and reading ability.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RESEARCH

#### Introduction

One of the most important jobs first grade teachers have is teaching a child to read. This can sometimes seem like a difficult task, considering that some students enter the classroom already able to read some on their own, while others may never have picked up a book on their own. Even so, most of these students will still pleadingly ask, "When do we learn to read?" It is this natural curiosity and eagerness that the reading teacher hopes to capture and hold, to witness the joy on the beginning reader's face as he/she "really" reads the words on the familiar storybook pages.

Yet this joy and excitement tends to falter as the school year progresses. As children begin to read more and more, they are increasingly asked to complete accompanying work books and Ditto pages. The enthusiasm for reading a story dies as a child must sit and listen to a slower reader struggle over words in 'round-robin' fashion reading groups. Sometimes the teacher may even hear the phrase, "Do we have to read today?". No longer is the child interested in the stories themselves. Rather, his/her reading delight has been stifled under mounds of Xerox pages and the reader's new concern for "getting all the words right".



### Basal Readers - What's Wrong With Them?

Currently, an on-going debate rages over the use of traditional basal texts and their effectiveness when teaching reading. Advocates of basals confidently state that basals have been successfully used for decades, and that 80% to 90% of reading teachers still use them (Koeller, as in Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989). The basal program does contain many strengths. Skills are presented in a logical sequence. Most basal series contain a variety of children's literature. Story difficulty increases with student readability level. A controlled vocabulary is maintained, and comprehension and word analysis skills are presented (Russavage, Lorton, and Millham, 1985). These strengths are inherent in most school districts' Course of Study, but these same strengths have come to be weaknesses in the basal program as well.

Why must a child read a story with controlled vocabulary? Most real books are not written in that manner. Wonderful children's stories have become distorted and meaning has been lost in the publishers' attempt to match vocabulary with so-called "readability-levels." Many times this rewriting causes the original stories to be more difficult to understand and read than if they had been left in their original form (Goodman, 1986).

Even though reading skills are presented, children are not given enough practice using them. Arbitrary fill-in-the-blanks do not involve the learner as there is no meaning to comprehend. Stories and corresponding worksheets in the basal program have no relevance to students, or to their prior experiences. Students are

simply not interested in basal stories. Yet Thorndyke (as in Russavage, Lorton and Millham, 1985) points out that memory and comprehension skills improved when a story is related to what the reader already knows. So why do teachers continue to use basals? Many teachers cite "administrative pressure" to follow the teacher's manual as the reason for keeping them from trying something new. Others admit that they feel secure knowing that what they are supposed to teach is covered in the basal. This teacher security hardly seems fair to the beginning reader who is already tired of reading.

#### Literature-Based Instruction

A growing body of research and teachers themselves are finding that children learn to read by reading (Fuhler, 1990). When students are permitted to read books of their own choosing and at their own pace, there is a personal interest in reading. Well-written trade books provide excellent language models for students. Goodman (1986) states that language is most easily learned when it is both functional and meaningful. The difference between basals and children's literature is the significance of who chooses the reading material. Children's literature can be and should be used to teach the same skills as presented in the basal.

A literature-based program also allows children to combine reading with writing and other Language Arts skills. The program can

begin for emerging readers with the teacher selecting a book to read to the class. Children may then be asked to respond to the story, perhaps by writing or designing a project. In this way, reading and writing can be purposefully linked with other Language Arts skills (Alex, 1988). Literature extension activities may be implemented by the student, with teacher guidance. As the students' reading ability improves, these activities may include retelling of the story, rereading the story for a different purpose, developing a comparison chart, illustrating favorite scenes, writing stories for wordless books, or sequencing story events (Routman, 1988). Students introduced to a story by a particular author may choose to read other books by that same author. A wide selection of literature can provide many opportunities for writing, questioning, comparing and introducing important concepts (Zarrillo, 1989).

One of the most interesting studies for using literature to teach reading is the Ohio Reading Recovery Program, currently in use. This program is based on methods devised in New Zealand, where reading skills are taught in context during "real reading" of books. Reading Recovery is targeted for beginning readers who are at risk of failing. The results of a controlled study of Reading Recovery students can best be described in the following:

After an average of 15 to 20 weeks, or 30 to 40 hours of instruction, 90% of the children whose pretest scores were in the lowest 20% of their class catch up to the average of their class or above and never need remediation again (Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989).

If the program works this well for at-risk students, imagine the boost it would give to children who have no reading difficulties!

## Reading Aloud

An important criterion in a literature-based program is reading aloud to students. When a teacher reads to students, both fluent and slow readers meet on common ground. Growth in reading skills, such as listening, comprehension and development of imagination are improved. It is unimportant if a story is above a child's own reading level. At the very least, a "difficult" book read aloud may serve as a motivational tool for a child to improve his/her own reading skills so as to read that book on his/her own (Smith, 1989). Reading aloud introduces children to a wide variety of books, as well as a number of concepts about books. Reading aloud demonstrates how to hold books, left to right print directionality, and that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends (Strickland and Morrow, 1989). Older readers may begin to see similarities and differences in oral and written language. Vocabulary and background knowledge expand.

A 10-week study conducted with 3rd and 4th grade reluctant readers found that reading aloud was most beneficial. Students became more interested in reading and improved their reading skills (Smith, 1989). Other research has shown that reading scores have improved due to regular read-aloud programs. Lundsteen (Butler, 1980) even found a high correlation between good reading and good listening skills. Trelease states that one of the primary learning methods of children is imitation (Trelease, 1985). It follows then that if children are exposed to quality literature, then they will imitate quality literature both in their reading and writing.

### Modelling the Reading Process

Teacher modelling is an influential aspect of the literature-based program. William S. Gray wrote, "A chief aim of reading instruction is to deepen interest in reading both for pleasure and information" (Perez, 1986). When teachers serve as models, children are awakened to the value and joy of reading.

The "modelling approach" is where teachers ask students to call upon their prior knowledge or experiences before the story is read. Teachers may then ask students to think about a certain aspect of the story as they listen to it. Numerous "good reader" skills can be modelled for the student as the story is read, including tracking print from left to right and matching speech to print. Students are encouraged to make predictions about what will happen in the story. However, emphasis is always on the enjoyment of the story itself. Children are urged to listen to the words to gain meaning. Stories may even be reread. As Yaden (1988) notes, children do not always understand words, illustrations, and the story itself the first time they hear it, so rereadings are beneficial.

A study conducted on the effects of modelling reported that students exposed to the modelling approach had better recall and comprehension of stories. Children were able to recall story events with little or no prompting (Combs, 1987). Children will begin to imitate what they see the teacher model doing--tracking print and "pretending" to read words, turning pages, and moving their fingers along the line of print. Students feel that they are really reading! In fact, Hickman (1984) observed a classroom for several months where

the teacher modelled reading and found the teacher "to be the single most influential person in the development of children's response to books" (Perez, 1986).

To further enhance the modelling approach, many teachers are now using "big books", children's literature that has been reprinted in a much larger size. These books have text and illustrations large enough for a whole class to see, even from a distance. Big books can be expensive so some teachers have opted for making their own big books, recopying text onto chart paper for whole group instruction. Other teachers have even enlisted the aid of parents to make these big books, complete with illustrations (Routman, 1988). Combs (1987) found that children were often more attentive to big books and books read using the modelling approach. Students even began to object when the traditional method was used! As evident, children can become involved in the stories they read.

### Reading and Writing

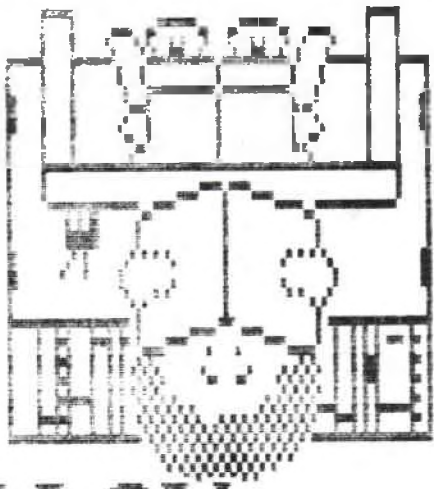
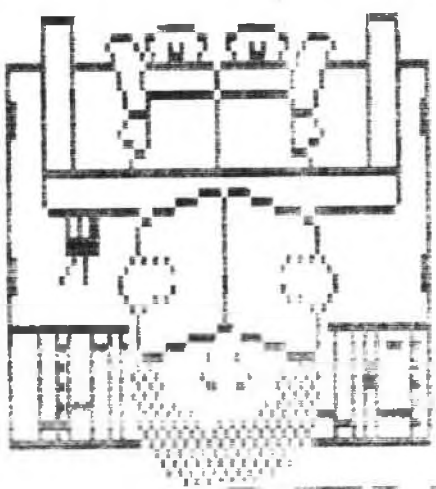
An undeniable link exists between reading and writing, yet many educators insist on teaching them independently of one another. Both subjects are acts of composing; reading uses background knowledge to create meaning from the text, while writing uses background knowledge to create meaning into text. The literature-based approach allows teachers to put the two together.

Some researchers say that reading and writing are inter-dependent, that a child can learn to read without writing, but he/she cannot write without reading (Parry and Hornsby, 1985). This

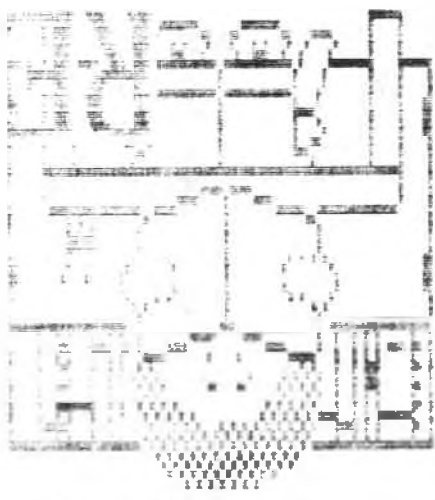
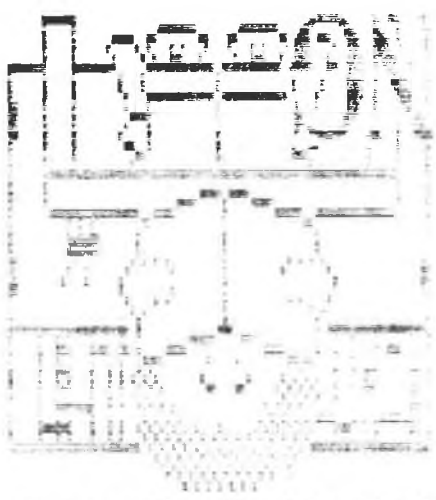
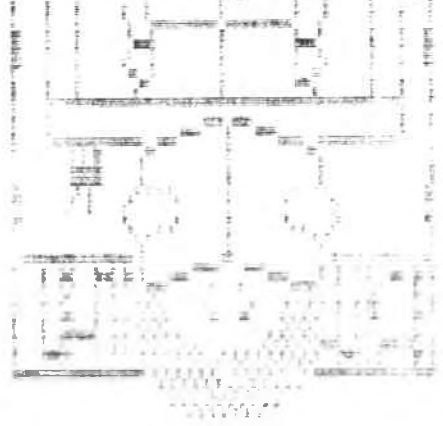
connection can be noted in an example from Routman (1988) who compared the writings of children from a literature-based program to those from a basal program. The writings of the children from the literature-based program contained interesting characters and story lines, as well as an enormous increase in vocabulary. Children taught using the basal method wrote stories with limited vocabulary and dull story lines. These children were also less willing to write for fear that what they wrote must be correct.

The literature-based program encourages children to write creatively, and to not worry about "correctness". Teacher advocates of this program want children to be pleased with what they have written, despite the errors. Conventional spelling, grammar and punctuation will come with practice. Teachers in this program accept what a child writes, asking the child to read what he/she has written. Rereading helps the child check for clarity as well as enabling the beginning writer to feel as if he/she is an author, and that what he/she has written is real language and is valuable.

Being exposed to good writing helps children to be good writers themselves. Children's literature provides excellent models for writing poetry, factual information, fiction, and a host of other writing styles, as well as expose young writers to language patterns, grammar, punctuation and spellings (Graves, 1983). Beginning writers can learn these techniques through reading stories and eventually incorporating those skills into their own writings. As children continue to read and write, they will become more confident in their own ability to be readers and writers.



# ACTIVITIES





**CHAPTER III**

**HANDBOOK**

## INTRODUCTION

The activities included in this handbook are but a few suggestions to enhance the enjoyment of sharing literature with children. The ideas and projects may be adapted to fulfill both teacher and student needs in the classroom. It is hoped that by using these activities and developing others like them, beginning readers will see literature as something to use and enjoy for a lifetime.

No Jumping on the Bed by Tedd Arnold

-- A little boy goes through the floor while jumping on the bed.

Topic - Just for fun. Great story for imagination.

Introduction

-- Ask children if they have ever jumped on the bed? What happened?

Questions

-- What did Walter's father tell him before he turned out the lights? Did Walter obey? What happened?

-- Did all of those things really happen? How did the story end?

Activity

-- Have children write a make-believe story about what happened when they jumped on the bed (draw pictures too!). This can be compiled into a class book.

-- Have children recall events in the story, list them on chart paper, then put them in order.

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett

-- A tall tale about a town that gets its food from the weather.

Topic - Just for fun. Also good when talking about the weather.

Introduction

-- Ask children what their favorite food is. Wouldn't it be neat if it came from the sky?

Questions

-- Who told the story of the town of "Chewandswallow?" What happened there? What happened to leftovers?

-- What problem happened in Chewandswallow? What did the people finally do?

-- What was special about the snow that Grandpa stood on at the end of the story?

Activity

-- Have the children write about their favorite food coming from the sky. Draw a picture too! (This activity can be turned into a class big book.)

I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly by Rose Bonne

-- An old tale about a very hungry woman and what she eats.

Topic - Just for fun. Good use of repetitive words.

Introduction

-- Explain what a folktale is. As children listen to story, ask them to think if this could really happen.

Questions

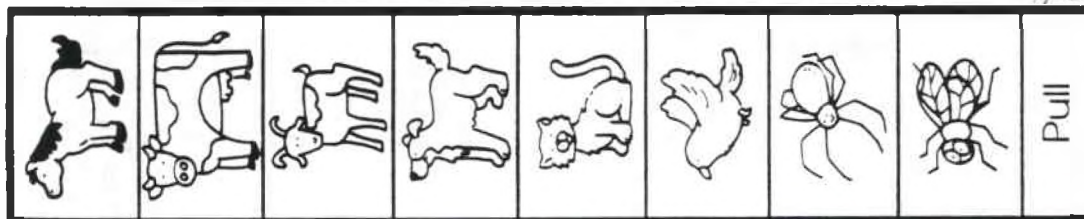
- Could this story really happen?
- What were some things that the Old Lady swallowed? Why?
- Why did she swallow the fly?
- What finally happened to the Old Lady? What caused that to happen?

Activity

- Have children recall events in story, list them, then put in order.
- Children may act out story.
- Let children make their own story characters and retell story together as they "feed" the old lady (see following page).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Skill: Listening

# I Know an Old Lady



Teacher: Use this page with the idea on page 47. Give students these directions for completing the page: 1) Color. 2) Cut out face and strip. 3) Cut slits. 4) Insert strip through slits. 5) Pull the strip down as you sing the song "I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly."

Clifford's Birthday Party by Norman Bridwell

-- Emily Elizabeth has a party for her favorite dog.

Topic - Just for fun. Can be a basis for planning a party.

Introduction

-- Ask children if they have ever been to a birthday party, or had one themselves. What was it like?

Questions

- Who was this birthday party for? Who gave the party?
- What were some things that Clifford received for his birthday? What was the best present he received? Why?

Activity

- Let children brainstorm on other possible gifts that they might give Clifford. List them.
- Learn more about piñatas. If possible, find one (or make your own) and let children try to break it.
- Plan a birthday party for Clifford. Let children think of what is needed to have a party and list their ideas.

Clifford Takes a Trip by Norman Bridwell

- Poor Clifford. He was so lonely when Emily Elizabeth and her family went on vacation that he tries to find them.

Topic - Just for fun.

Introduction

- Ask students if they have ever gone on vacation. Did they leave pets behind?

Questions

- Why does Emily Elizabeth's family only go on short trips?
- What happened last year when they left Clifford at home?
- Do you think your pets miss you?

Activity

- Let students brainstorm ideas for how to take Clifford on vacation.
- Write a story about going on vacation with Clifford - what happened?



Excuses, excuses by Andrea Butler and Class

-- A teacher is exasperated with student excuses.

Topic - Just for fun. Good use of repetitive words and rhyming.

Introduction

-- Ask students if they know what is an "excuse".  
Explain. Have they ever used an excuse?

Questions

-- What were some excuses in the story?  
-- Why was the teacher late?  
-- How do you think the children felt when they were late? How do you think they felt at the end of the story? Why?

Activity

-- Let children write their own "excuse" story and illustrate. Encourage them to follow the story pattern "Sorry I'm late... Excuses, excuses." These can be compiled into a class book.  
-- Encourage children to find the rhyming words in the text.  
-- Reread the text, allowing children to say "Excuses, excuses" when appropriate.

Oh No! by Scharlaine Cairns

- Cute story about the frustration of having spots on many things.

Topic - Just for fun. Great story for cause and effect and rhyming words. Also introduces "!".

Introduction

- Ask students if they are familiar with the phrase "Oh No!".  
When do they use it?

Questions

- What were some reasons for saying "Oh No!" in this story?
- Have any of these things ever happened to you? Who else might say "Oh No!"?

Activity

- Let children discuss what causes things to happen in this story.
- Have children write their own "Oh No!" stories and compile into a class book.
- Ask children to identify rhyming words in the text.

The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle

-- A ladybug has a rough day, especially since he is so grouchy.

Topic-- Be nice and share. Good story to use when introducing time.

Introduction

-- Ask children if they have ever had a bad day. Why? How could it have been better?

Questions

-- Do you think the ladybug will be grouchy anymore?

-- What did he keep asking the other animals? Did he ever fight them? Why not?

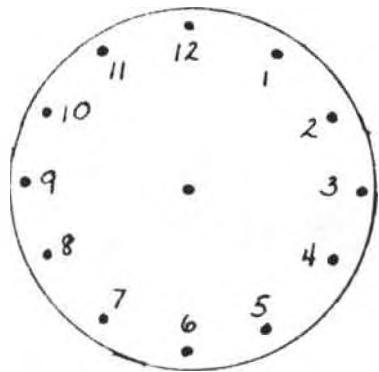
-- What were some animals that the grouchy ladybug saw? What animal finally made the grouchy ladybug a nice ladybug?

Activity

-- Discuss/write about ways to share and be nice.

-- Make a book about what you do at certain times of the day (see following page for example).

Example of page for book to go with The Grouchy Ladybug.  
Add as many pages as desired.



(Child can write in the  
time and complete the  
sentence. He/she may  
draw a picture to go with  
it too!)

At \_\_\_ o'clock, I

\_\_\_\_\_.

Rooster's Off to See the World by Eric Carle

- Rooster sets off to explore but becomes lonely, so he picks up some friends along the way.

Topic - Good story for counting and sequencing.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever spent the night away from home. How did they feel?

Questions

- What did the rooster want to do? What was the problem?
- Who did the rooster meet?
- What finally happened?
- Did the rooster get to see the world? Do you think he ever will?

Activity

- Ask children to recall the events in the story. List them and put them in order.
- Act out the story.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

- Cute story about the changes a caterpillar goes through before turning into a butterfly.

Topic - Good story to use when talking about butterflies, insects or hibernation. The story reinforces the days of the week.


Introduction

- Ask children to think about butterflies. Do they know how it became a butterfly?

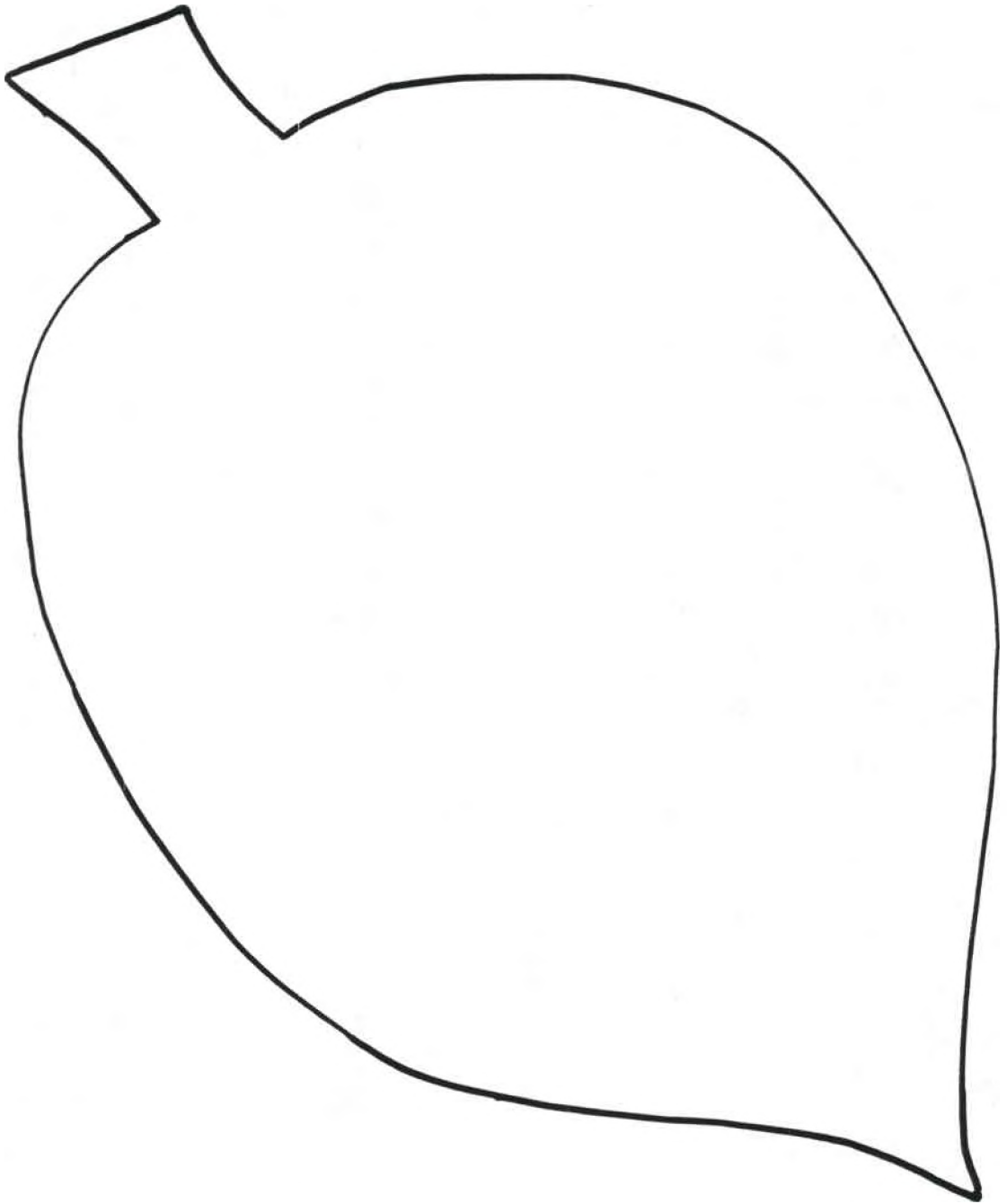
Questions

- Where did the caterpillar begin his life?
- What was the caterpillar looking for?
- What are some things he ate?
- Why did he have a stomachache?
- Why did he build a cocoon?
- How would you feel if you were a caterpillar? A butterfly?

Activity

- Give children 5 strips of paper (6" x1") to make rings; past together (  ). Add antennae. Cut out leaf, punch holes on leaf for caterpillar bites. Attach caterpillar to leaf (see following page for pattern).
- Let children create their own book, following the format of this story, but changing the words (The Very Hungry Hippo, The Very Hungry Mouse, etc. "On Monday, the \_\_\_\_\_ ate through one \_\_\_\_\_, but he was still hungry.").

Use this pattern for the leaf.



Nathan's Fishing Trip by Lulu Delacre

- Nathan's friend Alexander takes him on his first fishing trip - with some disastrous results.

Topic - Just for fun, make good out of bad.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever gone fishing? Where? With whom? What happened?

Questions

- Who was Nathan? Who was Nicholas Alexander?
- What were they going to do?
- What did they take with them?
- Had Nicholas ever been fishing before?
- What happened to the worms? What happened then?
- Did they catch anything? What did they do instead?

Activity

- Have children write a story about what happened on their fishing trip.
- Recall/list events in story and put them in proper sequence.



Strega Nona by Tomie de Paola

- An old woman leaves a young man in charge of her 'Magic Pot', telling him not to touch it. He disobeys, with terrible consequences.

Topic - Great story about the importance of following directions.

Introduction

- Ask children to think about something they did, even though they were told not to. What happened?

Questions

- Who was Strega Nona? Who was Big Anthony?
- How do you know the pot was magic?
- Why did Anthony disobey Strega Nona?
- What did Big Anthony forget to do?
- Do you think the punishment was a good idea?
- Would you like to have a magic pot? Why?

Activity

- Give each child a piece of 'pasta' (yarn or real) and let them paste it to paper. Write about something in the story.
- Let children write about their own experiences of doing something they shouldn't have.
- Have children write a story about their 'magic pot'.

In the Forest by Marie Hall Ets

- A little boy goes for a walk in the woods and imagines he sees an animal parade.

Topic - Imagination! Good use of repetition of words.

This story may also be used when talking about things that live in the forest.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever gone for a walk in the woods. What did they see?

Questions

- What 2 things did the boy take with him?
- What were the animals doing when the boy saw them?
- Why didn't the boy's father see the animals?

Activity

- Ask children to "take a walk in the forest". Write about what they see (draw picture too).

Mop Top by Don Freeman

- A little boy does everything to avoid getting his hair cut - until others make fun of it.

Topic - Just for fun. A good story for "good grooming" habits, or feelings.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever gotten a haircut. What was it like? Did it tickle? Was it scary?

Questions

- Why did the boy's mother want him to get a haircut?
- What were some things that the boy thought needed a "haircut"?
- What finally convinced the boy that he needed a trim?
- What was the boy's real name? Why was he called "Moppy"?

Activity

- Have children write/draw about something in the story.
- Have children write about getting their hair cut.
- Make a 'Mop Top' - draw a face and paste on orange yarn.

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

- Cute story about Peter's adventures in the snow.

Topic - Just for fun.

Introduction

- Ask children to share some things that they like to do in the snow.

Questions

- What were some things that Peter liked to do in the snow?
- What wasn't Peter old enough to do?
- What happened to Peter's snowball?
- How did the snow make Peter feel? Make you feel?
- Did Peter do anything in the snow that you like to do?

Activity

- Allow children to have a pretend snowball fight (but there should be no noise because snow is so quiet!).
- If snow is available, bring some into the classroom to examine it, and watch it melt. Use a magnifying glass!
- Make snowy day pictures using white crayons. Children may write stories to go with their pictures of snowy days.

Whistle for Willie by Ezra Jack Keats

-- A little boy tries to learn to whistle.

Topic - If at first you don't succeed, keep trying!

Introduction

-- Ask children if they can whistle. Was it easy or hard to learn?

Questions

- Why did Peter want to learn to whistle? Who was Willie?
- Where did Peter hide when he whistled for Willie? Could he whistle?
- Can you whistle for Willie?

Activity

- Ask children to write about something in the story and draw a picture to go with it.
- Ask children to write/think about something that they had to keep practicing before they could do it.
- Teach whistling song, 'I Want to Learn to Whistle' (see following page).

Taken from  
The First Grade Book,  
Ginn and Co., 1949,  
p.4.

Dorothy Aldis

# I Want to Learn to Whistle

Francis Hilliard

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "I want to learn to whistle, I've always wanted to; I fix my mouth to do it, but the whistle won't come through. I think perhaps it's stuck and so I try it once a - gain. (Whistle)". The final system shows a whistle line in the vocal staff and a piano accompaniment line.

I want to learn to whistle, I've always wanted to; I  
fix my mouth to do it, but the whistle won't come through. I  
think per-haps it's stuck and so I try it once a - gain. (Whistle)  
(whistle)

Can I Keep Him? by Steven Kellogg

- A little boy tries to convince his mother to let him have a pet.

Topic - Just for fun. Great story about kinds of pets and their care.

Introduction

- Ask students if they have a pet. Is it easy to have one? What are some reasons for not having a pet?

Questions

- Arnold asked to keep several pets. What were the animals that he might get to keep?
- What animals would not make good pets? Why?
- Why did Arnold want a pet?
- What was Arnold finally allowed to play with?
- Have you ever felt like Arnold?

Activity

- Let children write about a pet they have or would like to have.
- Let children write about their friend and why they like them.

Annie Bananie by Leah Komaiko

- A little girl feels that she will never have another friend like Annie.

Topic - Good story for talking about friendships and making new ones.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever had a friend move away or had to make new friends. How did they feel? What are some ways to be a friend?

Questions

- Who was telling this story?
- What was happening to Annie?
- What were some things that the friends did together?
- Do you think Annie will find another friend? Do you think her friend she's leaving behind will find another friend?
- Do you think she wants Annie to find another friend?

Activity

- Discuss ways to be a friend. Children can write these down, illustrate them and compile into a class book.
- Ask children to write about their friend. Why is that person a friend?



The Biggest Pumpkin Ever by Steven Kroll

- Two mice discover that they have each been nurturing the same pumpkin for 2 different reasons.

Topic - Good story about sharing. Great for Halloween!

Introduction

- Ask children to think about a time that they had to share.  
How did it make them feel?

Questions

- What were the mouse's names? Where did they live?
- What did they want to do with the pumpkin?
- What did Clayton do to the pumpkin during the day? What did Desmond do to it at night?
- What did they both do to it?
- How did the mice discover each other?
- What finally happened to the pumpkin?

Activity

- Give each child 4 to 6 1" x 6" orange strips, to make rings.  
Paste sideways onto pre-drawn (posterboard size) pumpkin outline. Teacher can add eyes, mouth, and nose cut-outs to finished pumpkin.



The Man Who Didn't Wash His Dishes by Phyllis Krasilovsky

- A man doesn't wash his dishes, and soon nothing is left on which to eat. Now what?

Topic - Do it now, don't put things off until it's too late.

Introduction

- Ask children to think about something they don't like to do. Name some. What happens if they don't do it?

Questions

- Why did the man not wash his dishes? What started to happen to them? What finally happened to all the dishes?
- How did he get them clean?
- Do you think this will ever happen to the man again?

Activity

- Have children draw and write about something in the story (The story can be pasted on a paper plate).
- Have children draw and write about something that they don't like to do.
- The poem "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out" by Shel Silverstein is another story along these lines. Share it with students and compare.

Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus

- A small tiger wonders if he'll ever be able to read, write and draw like his friends.

Topic - Each of us grows/develops at our own rate. Good story about growing and changing.

Introduction

- Ask children to think of a time that they wanted to do something but couldn't because they were too small or didn't know how. How did they feel?

Questions

- Who were the characters in the story?
- Who knew Leo would "bloom"? Who wasn't sure?
- What does it mean to "bloom"?
- What could Leo do at the end of the story that he couldn't do at the beginning?
- Have you bloomed? How do you know?
- What can you do now that you couldn't do before?

Activity

- Have children write about 3 things they can do. "I have bloomed! I can. . .". Draw a picture to go with it.

Alexander and the Wind-Up-Mouse by Leo Lionni

- An unloved mouse wishes to be like the toy mouse who is everyone's favorite. However, when he gets the chance, he changes his wish.

Topic - Be glad for who you are; do things to help others.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever wanted to be like someone else, or wished for something. What would they wish for? (Teacher might need to explain the word "envy").

Questions

- Who was Alexander? Who was Willie?  
-- Why did Alexander want to be like Willie?  
-- How could Alexander be like Willie?  
-- What was going to happen to Willie? Why?  
-- Did Alexander find a purple pebble? Did he get his wish? What was it? Why did he change it?

Activity

- Ask children to write about their wish - what would it be? (Each child can be given a "magic pebble" to make their wish).

Swimmy by Leo Lionni

- A little fish finds a way to work with other for the benefit of all.

Topic - Good story for sharing, working together.

Introduction

- Ask children to think of a time that they worked with or helped someone. How did they feel? Also make children aware of how illustrations in this story were done using a sponge.

Questions

- What color was Swimmy? What color were the other fish?
- What was the problem in this story?
- What were some things that Swimmy saw in the water?
- How did Swimmy solve the problem?

Activity

- Ask children to write about a time that they shared or worked with someone else.
- Do a sponge painting, using the same technique as the author. Children may need to share sponges or paint.

Frog and Toad Are Friends by Arnold Lobel

- This book contains five short stories about Frog and Toad's friendship. A different story can be read and discussed each day of the week.

Topic - Friends and friendships are important. Many concepts can be emphasized.

Introduction

- Ask students if they have a friend or friends. Why do they like that person?

Questions - The teacher can ask students questions relevant to the story just read.

Activity

- Make a frog puppet (see following page).
- Write a letter to Frog or Toad that you think they might like to receive and read.
- Write a story that will help Frog rest.
- Write your own story about Frog and Toad.

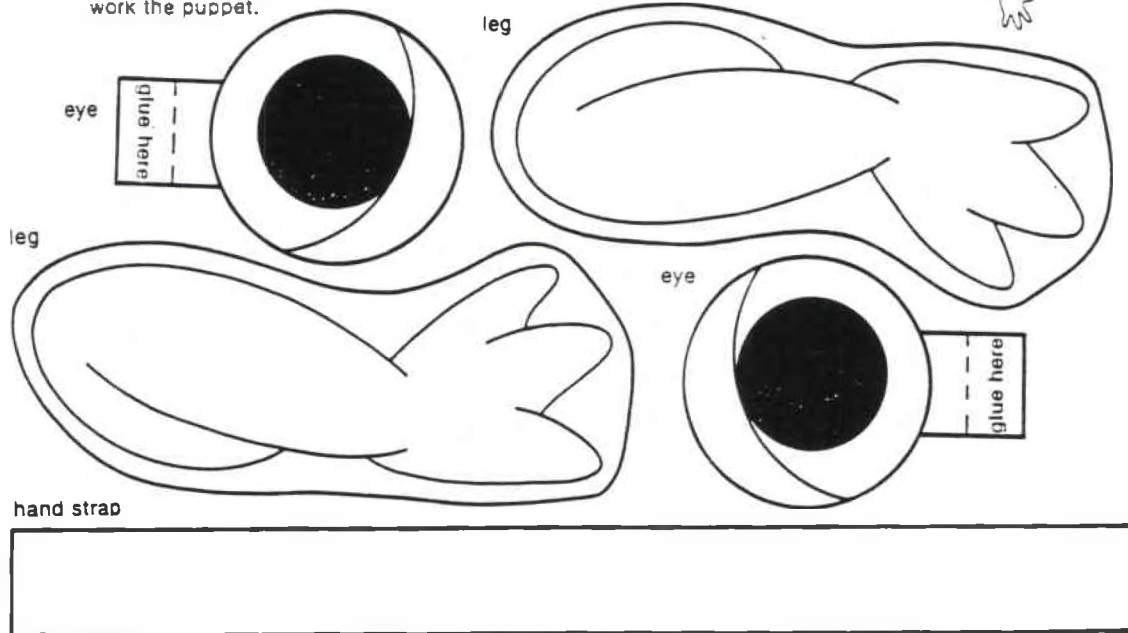
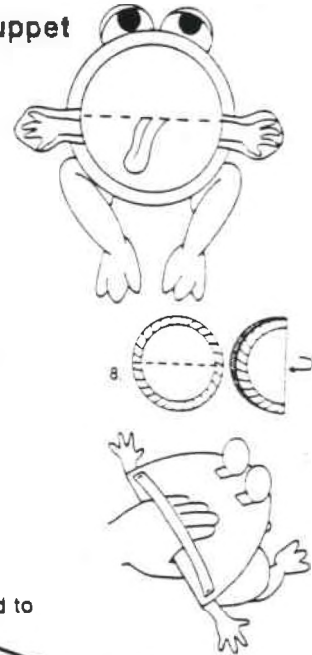
Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Frog Puppet

**Materials:** paper plate, crayons, scissors, glue, tape or stapler

**Directions:**

1. Color the bottom of the paper plate and the hand strap green.
2. Color the top center of the plate red.
3. Color the top rim of the plate green.
4. Color the eyelids yellow.
5. Color the legs and arms green.
6. Color the tongue red.
7. Cut out all of the pieces.
8. Fold the paper plate in the middle so that the red side doesn't show.
9. Fold the tongue back on the dotted line and glue it to the middle of the red circle.
10. With the red side open, glue the arms to the plate by placing them between the two halves of the plate.
11. With the red side open, glue the legs to the plate by placing them beneath the bottom of the plate.
12. Fold the eyes back on the dotted lines and glue them to the plate by placing them behind the top of the plate.
13. Staple or tape the hand strap to the plate by placing the strap several inches behind the eyes.
14. Slide your fingers under the strap and put your thumb below the fold to work the puppet.



The Giant Jam Sandwich by John Vernon Lord

- An invasion of wasps fly into Itching Down, and the townspeople catch them using a jam sandwich.

Topic - Just for fun, creativity. Story is written as a poem.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever been stung. Challenge students to listen for rhyming words.

Questions

- What was the problem in the story?
- How did the townspeople solve it?
- How did they make the sandwich?
- What finally happened to the sandwich?
- What might have been some other ways to get rid of the wasps?

Activity

- As the story is read, ask children to make predictions about how to solve the problem.
- Make jam sandwiches and enjoy!
- Write/draw about something in the story, or child's own experience being stung.



The Boy Who Was Followed Home by Margaret Mahy

-- Cute story about a boy who is followed home by hippopotami.

Topic -- Just for fun. Good story for imagination.

Introduction

-- Ask students if they have a pet. How did they get it? Did it follow them home?

Questions

- Why was Robert pleased at the end of the story? What had happened?
- How did the story begin?
- What did Robert's parents do to get rid of the hippos? Why?
- Who was Mrs. Squinge? What did she do?
- What animal would you like to have follow you home?

Activity

- Let students write stories about what followed them home.  
Illustrate!
- There are two pages at the end of this book without words. Let students write words for those pages.

Little Critter's These are My Pets by Mercer Mayer

-- Cute story about all the pets that Little Critter has.

Topic - Good story for discussing pets and taking care of them.

Introduction - Ask students if they have a pet. What kind? What are some other types of pets?

Questions

- What were some of the pets that Little Critter had?
- Do you have some of those pets?
- Which pet would you like to have?

Activity

- Ask students to write about the pet they have (or would like to have). What type of care does it need? Why do you like your pet?

Little Critter's The Trip by Mercer Mayer

-- Little Critter's family takes a trip - with many mishaps in ABC order.

Topic - Many things that can happen on a trip. Also good story for ABC order.

Introduction - Ask children if they have ever gone on a trip. Where?  
Did anything ever happen on the way?

Questions

- What were some things that happened on this trip? Have any of these things ever happened to you?
- What special thing did you notice about the things that happened?

Activity

- Have children write about a trip they went on.
- Write a class story about a trip using ABC's. Assign a letter to each child.

Underwear by Mary Elise Monsell

-- A grumpy buffalo learns the importance of being able to laugh.

Topic Just for fun. Great story about making friends and being happy.

Introduction

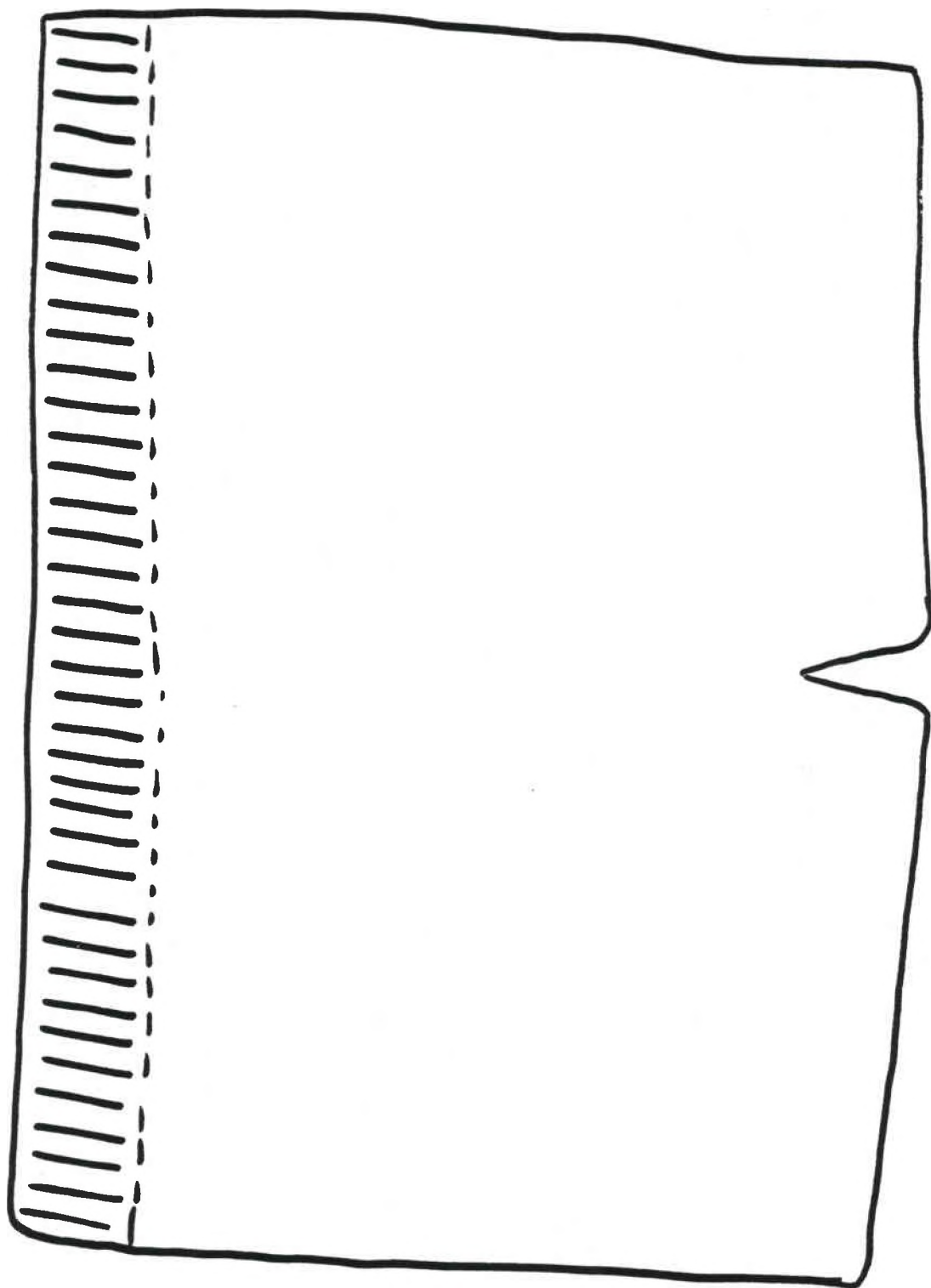
-- Ask students to think about their friends and what they do to be happy. What makes them laugh?

Questions

- Who liked wearing underwear in the story? Who thought it was silly?
- What finally made the buffalo laugh?

Activity

- Challenge students to say the word "underwear" several times without laughing.
- Let children write about what they do with their friends to have fun.
- Encourage children to design and decorate a unique pair of underwear (see pattern on following page).



If the Dinosaurs Came Back by Bernard Most

- Cute story about some things that might happen if the dinosaurs returned.

Topic - Imagination! Just for fun.

Introduction

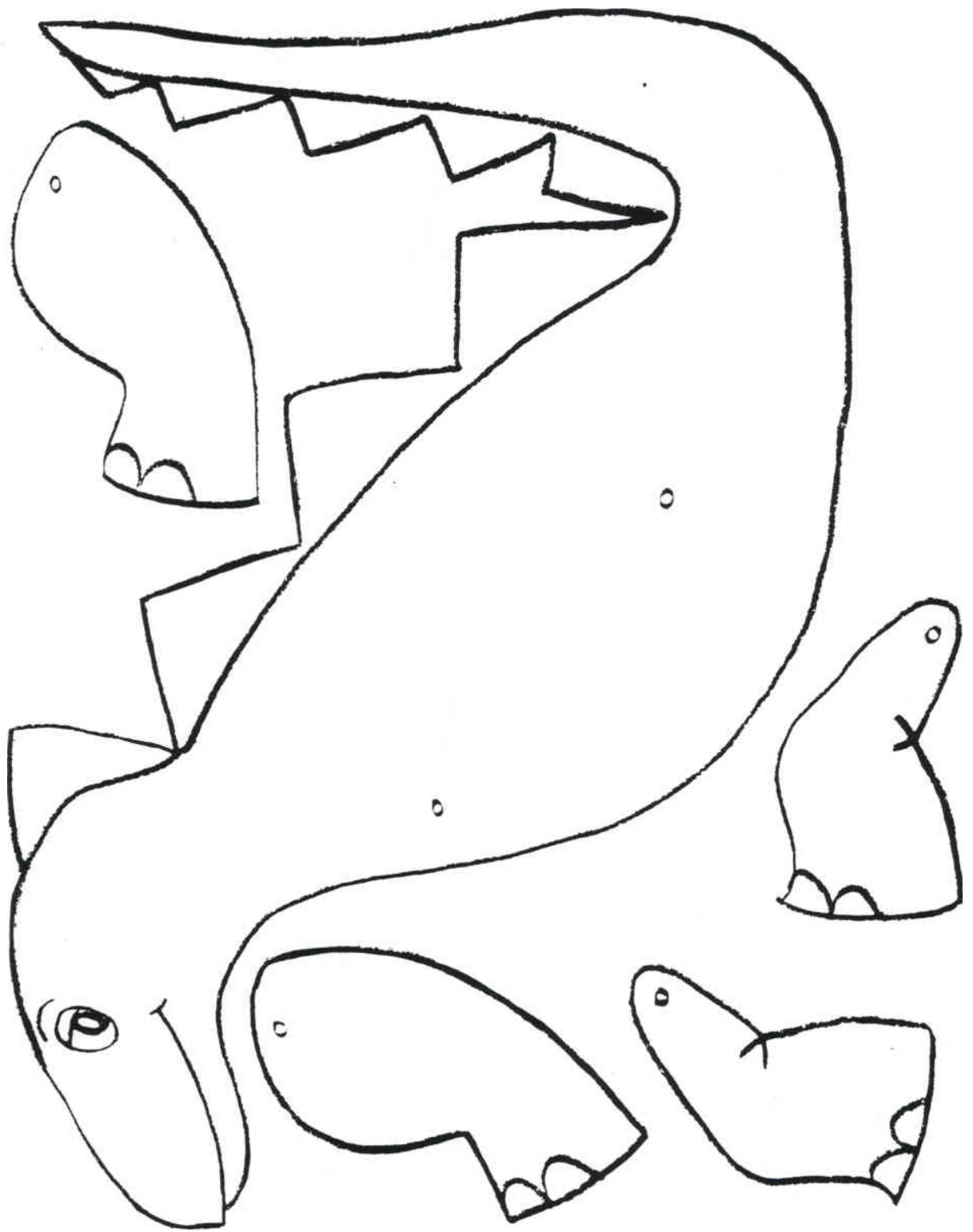
- Ask children to think about dinosaurs. Explain the term "extinction". Talk about size, what it might be like to have dinosaurs now.

Questions

- What could the dinosaurs do if they came back?
- Would you want the dinosaurs to come back? Why or why not?

Activity

- Have each child write what they would do if the dinosaurs came back. Compile into a class book (draw pictures too!).
- Children may make their own dinosaur and write a story about it (see following page for pattern).



If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Joffe Numeroff

-- Cute story about the consequences of giving a mouse a snack.

Topic - Just for fun. Good story for sequencing.

Introduction

-- Ask children if they have ever given a mouse a cookie. Do they think he would be satisfied?

Questions

- Was the mouse satisfied with just a cookie? What else did he need?
- What were some things that the mouse did?
- Could this story really happen?
- How did the story end?
- Do these things ever happen to you?

Activity

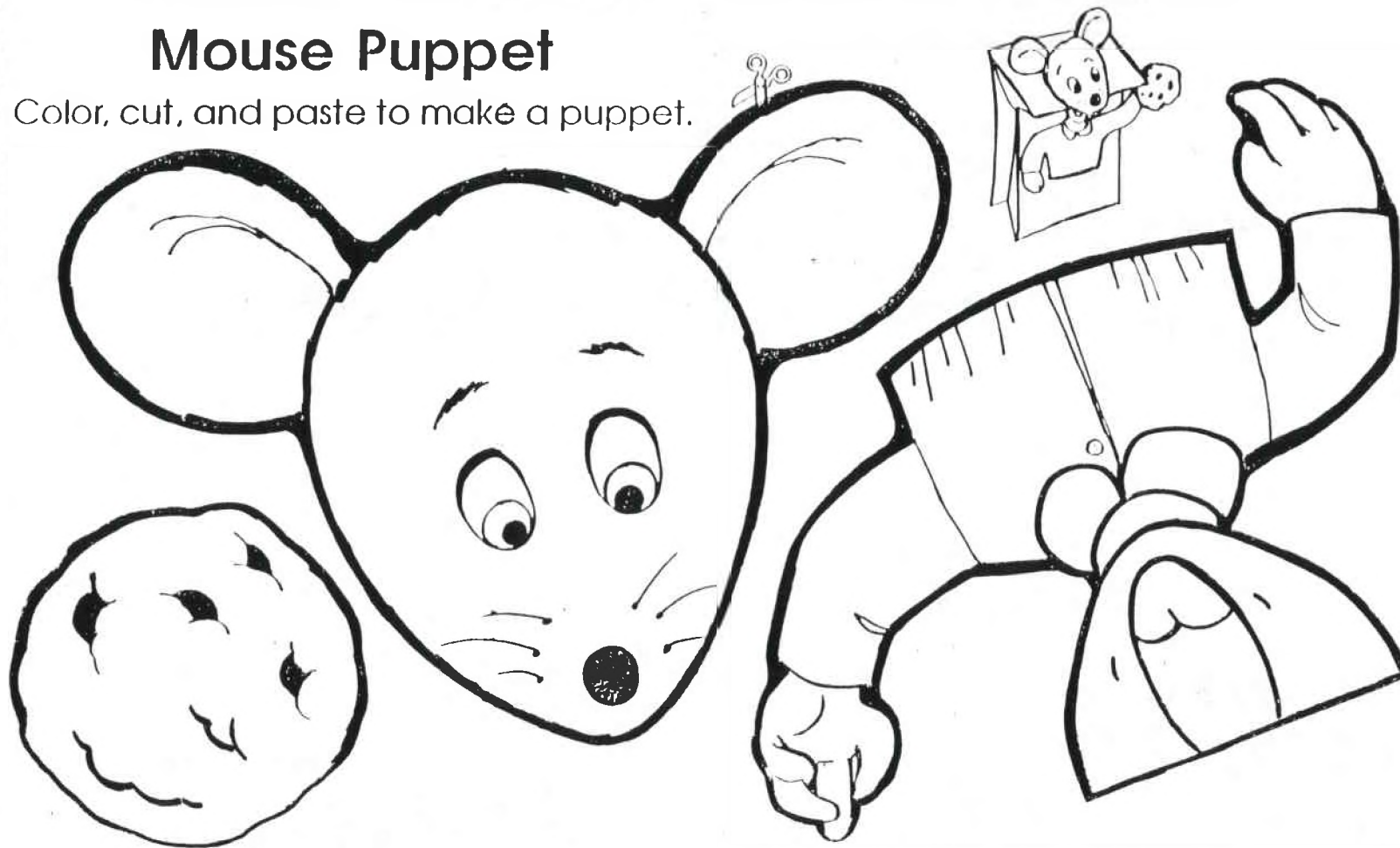
- Put events of the story in order (have children recall events, list them, then put in order).
- Make a mouse puppet (see following page for pattern).



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Mouse Puppet

Color, cut, and paste to make a puppet.



Teacher: Read and reread *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* written by Laura Joffe Numeroff and illustrated by Felicia Bond. Invite children to join you in completing sentences from the book. If you give a mouse a cookie, he'll come to a kitchen for a glass of milk. Then have children complete the paper for puppet and use it to "cook" with a partner.

Katy No-Pocket by Emmy Payne

- Katy Kangaroo has no pocket to carry her baby. A handyman with an apron helps out.

Topic - Good story for discussing animals and their babies.

Introduction

- Explain the term "marsupials" and their pockets for their babies.

Questions

- What was Katy's problem? What did she decide to do first? Who did she ask for advice? Did their ideas work?
- Who finally helped Katy?
- What could Katy do with her pockets now?

Activity

- Have children write about what they might carry in their pocket. Decorate a "pocket" (made of construction paper) to carry their story.

Where's Max? by Barbara Seuling

- A family prepares to go on a picnic, but can't find their dog Max. Where could he be?

Topic - Just for fun.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever looked all over for something that was lost, only to find it in their pocket. Challenge them to find Max in the story.

Questions

- What was the family in this story going to do?
- What was the problem? Who was Max?
- Where were some places that they looked for Max?
- What did the family decide to do? Where was Max?
- What finally happened in the story?

Activity

- Children may write about something that they themselves lost and where they found it.
- Ask children to write pretend stories of where Max is hiding. Illustrate!

The Hungry Thing by Jan Slepian and Ann Seidler

-- A hungry monster visits a village and demands to be fed.

Topic - Good story to use with manners ("thank you" at the end of the story). Also a good story to use when talking about food groups.

Introduction

-- Ask children to tell some of their favorite foods. Have they ever eaten "foodles" or "gollipops"? As they listen to the story, ask them to predict what the Hungry Thing really wants.

Questions

- Have you ever eaten "foodles" or "gollipops"? What are they?
- What was the problem that the villagers had?
- What were some things that the Hungry Thing asked for?
- How did the villagers solve the problem?
- Did the Hungry Thing have good manners? How do you know?

Activity

- Ask children to write about their favorite food. Paste their story to a paper plate.
- Ask children to write about a monster that came to visit them. Where was he from? What did he look like? What happened?

Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina

-- A peddler has his caps stolen by a bunch of monkeys.

Topic - Just for fun, "monkey see, monkey do".

Introduction

-- Ask children if they have ever hear the expression "monkey see, monkey do". What does it mean? Explain what a "peddler" is.

Questions

- What did the peddler sell? Why did he go for a walk? What happened?
- Why did the monkeys throw down their caps?
- How might you have gotten the caps away from the monkeys?

Activity

- Act out the story. Give each student a 'cap' (paper plate) to put on their head. Choose one student to be the peddler.
- Play 'Simon Says' or have children play "Follow the Leader", doing whatever the leader does.
- Discuss why people wear different caps.
- Let children design their own caps (use folded newspaper and decorate with felt, paper scraps, etc.)

Imogene's Antlers by David Small

- Imogene wakes up to discover she has antlers. Her day is filled with ideas and problems concerning them.

Topic - Just for fun. Neat story using imagination.

Introduction

- Prepare students for the story by asking them what they would do if they woke up and found antlers on their head? Encourage children to look at picture for clues to understanding.

Questions

- What were some problems that Imogene had because of her antlers? What were some benefits?
- What did her mother do?
- What did her family decide to do about the antlers? Did it work?
- Did the antlers go away? How? What happened instead?

Activity

- Ask children to pretend that one morning they woke up and had changed. They had grown \_\_\_\_\_! Write about it and draw a picture.

Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig

- A young donkey finds a magic pebble and mistakenly turns himself into a rock.

Topic - Just for fun. Good story to use when discussing feelings.

Introduction

- Ask children if they have ever wished for something. What would it be? Explain that in this story, Sylvester finds a magic pebble that can give him his wish. (Each child may be given a pebble to hold during the story).

Questions

- Who was Sylvester? What was his hobby?
- How did his family feel when he disappeared?
- Why didn't Sylvester turn himself back into a donkey?
- Why did the family put the pebble in a safe?

Activity

- Let children pretend that their pebble is magic - make a wish! (Children may write about their wish).
- Discuss feelings - how does the rock "feel", how do people "feel".
- Allow children to paint their magic pebble.

The Monster at the End of This Book by Jon Stone

- Grover tries to keep the reader from reaching the end of the story.

Teacher's Note - This story can be used when discussing monsters and make-believe.

Introduction

- Ask children if they know who Grover is. As the story is read, encourage children to look for the word 'monster' on the pages.

Questions

- Was there really a monster at the end of the story? Who was it?
- What were some things Grover did to keep us from turning the page?
- Are monsters real? Should we be afraid of monsters? Is it okay to be afraid?

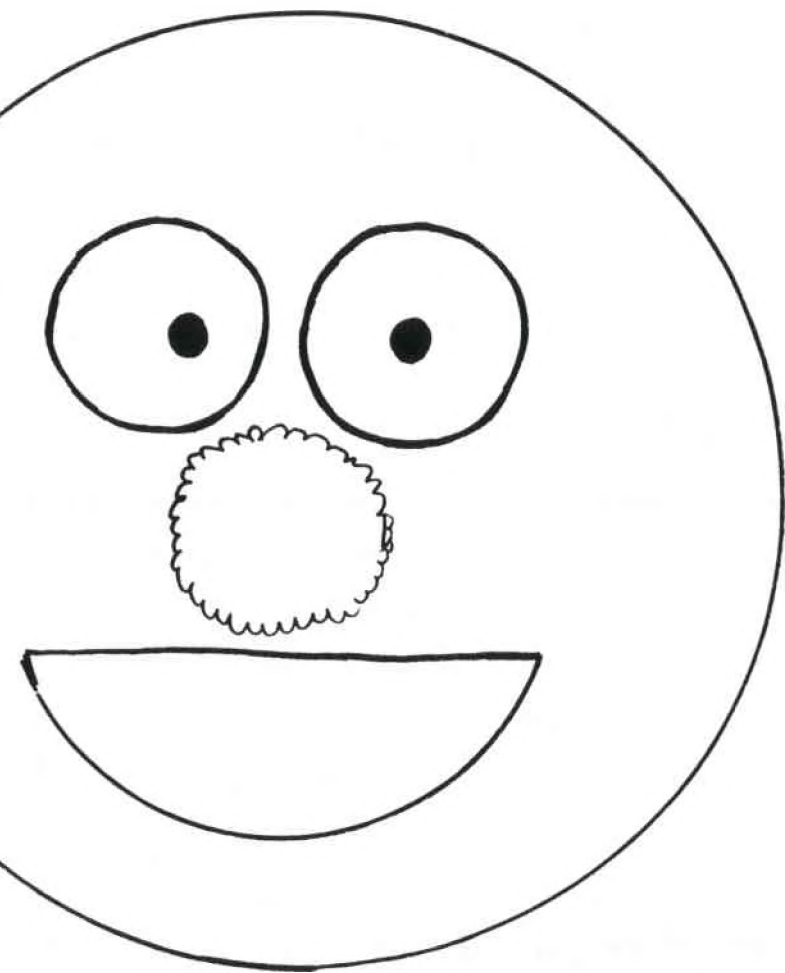
Activity

- Have children identify the word "monster" on different pages.
- Before the story is completed, ask children to make predictions about the "monster at the end of the book".
- Let students make their own Grover (see following page).



Cover entire bottom of luncheon-sized paper plate with glue and attach wads of 1-inch square blue tissue paper to cover glue. (Wrap paper around pencil eraser and press into glue for fuzzier effect). Cut  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch Styrofoam ball in half for eyes, add a pupil with marker and attach to plate. Cut a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch diameter black paper circle in half and attach to the plate for the mouth. Attach a large pink pom-pom or pink paper circle for a nose.

Grover



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

by Judith Viorst

-- This just isn't a good day for Alexander.

Topic - We all have bad days.

Introduction

-- Ask children to explain "a bad day". Have they ever had one? How did it make them feel?

Questions

-- Why was this a terrible day for Alexander? What happened?  
-- Do you think tomorrow will be better for Alexander?  
-- Could this really happen? What do you do if you have a bad day?

Activity

-- Have children write about their bad day - real or make-believe. Draw pictures too!  
-- Have children write about their "very good day" (see following page for example).  
-- Show children where Australia is on a map. Why would Alexander want to go there? Do some class research on Australia. What's it like?

AND THE WONDERFUL,  
FANTASTIC, EXCELLENT, VERY GOOD DAY!

Cookie's Week by Cindy Ward

- Cute story about all of the things that happened to a curious kitten.

Topic - Good story for discussing days of the week.

Introduction

- Ask children if any of them have a pet. Does it sometimes get into trouble? What happened?

Questions

- What were some things that happened to Cookie?
- Who can remember the days of the week? Say them in order.
- Do you think Cookie will rest on Sunday?

Activity

- Children can write what they think Cookie will do on Sunday.
- Children can make their own book about what happens to them each day of the week, using the format of the story (On Monday \_\_\_\_\_ went everywhere!  
Etc.).

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## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Too often in the primary grades, children are becoming disinterested in reading. The thrill of learning to read soon becomes buried under worksheets that need to be completed. As children continue through school, the basal series requires them to read more, yet much of what they read has little meaning for them. They are unable to connect "reading book" stories to their own experiences. Reading has become a chore, complete with a set of rules and skills to be mastered and an accompanying workbook. Rather, reading should be seen as a tool that can open the readers' mind to thoughts, opportunities and imagination. A literature-based reading program can attain that goal.

The literature-based program can be accomplished successfully in first grade, with remarkable results. Children exposed to various types of literature can improve their reading and writing skills, as well as their appreciation for good literature. Through the use of literature-related activities, many Language Arts skills can be incorporated, maximizing instructional time. Students' interest is peaked as they complete a wide range of activities and projects, such as making a puppet, writing about the story, acting out the story, or writing their own story. Children are able to connect reading with their own experiences, giving meaning to the words on the page.

A strong reading interest needs to be developed at an early age. It should be the goal of the first grade teacher to spark that interest in the beginning reader. By providing encouragement and meaningful reading stories and activities to maintain that interest, a child can be well prepared for the many reading and writing experiences he/she will encounter.

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