

A-Rhyme-A-Week: Classroom Instruction

There Was an Owl Lived in an Oak

Monday

1. Place 2 of the children's favorite rhymes on the chalkboard, and review them with the children. Tell them that we will be learning a new rhyme.
2. "There Was an Owl", like last week's rhyme, seems to be a relatively recent addition to the Mother Goose compendium, appearing in volumes written in the 1800's. It, too, is a rhyme that appeals to children's sense of silliness.
3. Introduce the "There Was an Owl" poster to the children. Begin as we usually do, having the children look first at the picture. Ask the children to tell you who or what the owl in the tree is looking at [maybe the man below?]. Next, have them look at the man in the corner. Ask the children what we would call someone who goes to hunt [a hunter or a gunner]. We'll read this rhyme to find out what happens to the owl and the hunter. **Be sure to run your fingers under the words as you read them.**
4. This rhyme doesn't have much sense or story line to it, so we will focus children on the fun of saying "Wisky, wasky, weedle" and "Fiddle, faddle, feedle". Then, chant "There Was an Owl" again, running your fingers under the words as you sing or chant. Work with the children to teach them the rhyme, encouraging them to join in.
5. This Monday, we are continuing our follow-up activity. At the end of this file, you will find word cards that feature the "oke/oak" rhyme -- *oak* and *spoke*. Cut out the cards. First, show the children the word *oak*. Then, match the word card to the word in the nursery rhyme. Repeat this process with *oke*.
6. Because *oak* and *spoke* have similar rimes in terms of phonemes but not in terms of spelling, we will not be concentrating on our segmenting activity this week. If, however, your children are very advanced, you can cut the *sp* off of *spoke* and show the children that both *oke* and *oak*, even though they have different letters, are read the same way.
7. Finish your lesson by returning to "There Was an Owl". Distribute the hole-punched copies of the rhyming card for "There Was an Owl" to be placed in children's **My Very Own Nursery Rhyme Collection** folders at home.

Tuesday

1. Begin by putting the "There Was an Owl" poster back on the blackboard, and chant the rhyme.
2. Remind the children that Tuesday is "acting" day. You will only need 2 children for each performance. One is the owl, the other is the hunter. Begin by having all children pretend to be an owl; ask them how an owl would move its head and look at the ground. Tell them that many people think owls look wise. Then, have all the children pretend to be the hunter, walking quietly. The performance begins with the owl in the center of the playing area, looking "down" from the old oak tree. When it is time for the owl to speak, if the child can say the words, let the actor say, "Fiddle, faddle, feedle." Then, have the gunner enter as the children chant the first line of the second stanza. Gunners will cup their hands around one ear to hear where the sound has come from. The gunner approaches the tree, but never shoots the owl.
3. The nonsense lines make this a great favorite with children. Divide the children into 2 groups and sit them facing each other, with the playing area between them. Assign each side to say either "Wisky, wasky, weedle" or "Fiddle, faddle, feedle". The rest of the lines can be spoken by all children. As we have been doing, tape record the children's choral performances of the nursery rhyme for use in your classroom listening center. Be sure that you have a copy of the nursery rhyme to keep with the tape.
4. You might like to continue having children stand for each word of the rhyme. You can have each child stand, and if you run out of children, you can have the standing children sit (one at a time) as you all continue speaking a word at a time of the nursery rhyme. Remember that an activity like this helps children understand that words can be separated (segmented) from a stream of speech.
5. Special words in this week's chanting are *Wisky, Wasky, Weedle, Fiddle, Faddle, Feedle, gunner, silly* (these have 2 syllables). Remember that you can demonstrate that although the word has 2 syllables (demonstrate with two claps), it is only one word.
6. Finish this lesson with your cloze activity. Use the following lines in particular:
There was an owl lived in an ____.
Wisky, Wasky, Weedle.
And every word he ever ____
Was Fiddle, Faddle, Feedle.

Wednesday

1. Begin by putting the "There Was an Owl" poster on the blackboard, then run your fingers under the words as you chant the rhyme. Repeat the cloze activity from Tuesday, having children fill in the missing words.
2. Remind the children that **oak** and **spoke** rhyme, and that we are going to learn some other words that rhyme. Introduce these pictures from the picture card set: **broke**, **choke**, **cloak**, **coke**, **croak**, **oak**, **poke**, **stroke**, and **spoke**. (There are other pictures you may include as well.) Be sure to explain to the children what the word and picture mean. Some words, such as *flit* may be new for the children. As usual, take the time to talk about the pictures, relating them to what your children have seen and know. Always remember, **if there is a picture that you feel is unsuitable for your particular classroom**, you can eliminate this picture from the set.
3. Many of these words can be pantomimed or acted out. For instance, you can ask the children to do the breast "stroke" or to be a great old "oak".
4. Remind children we have been sorting by rhyming sounds. This week, we'll be contrasting **it** with **ide**. Use the following pictures: **spoke**, **broke**, **Coke**, **poke**, and **it**, **hit**, **knit**, **sit**. Call the children's attention to the word "spoke" in the nursery rhyme poster. Then, tape the picture for **bit** at the top of one column and the picture for **spoke** at the top of the other. Place all other pictures in the chalk tray, saying each one's name.
5. Remind the children that when words end the same we say that they **rhyme**.
6. Call children one at a time to take a picture and decide if it ends the **same** as **bit** or **spoke**. Keep in mind that some children are still working to hear and understand "rhyming" and "same-ness". If a child is hesitant, go ahead and support him or her with the task.
7. Finish today's lesson by chanting "There Was an Owl". You may choose to chant it as the "standing up" version we used yesterday, with the children in a circle, standing one at a time for each word of the rhyme.

Thursday

1. Select 5 or 6 of the downloadable riddle cards that you think are best suited for your students.
2. Begin by putting the "There Was an Owl" poster back on the blackboard. Ask children to chant the rhyme, allowing 2 or 3 at a time to chant or sing the rhyme for the class.
3. Set the pictures from the picture card set on the chalk tray. Tell the children that today we will be guessing the answers to some riddles. The answer to the riddle will be one of the pictures we looked at yesterday.
4. Put the riddle cards on the board one at a time. Read the riddle, then help your students decide which picture best answers the riddle. Tape the picture at the bottom of the riddle card. You read the riddle, letting the children fill in the missing word, completing the rhyme by saying the name of the picture.
5. Finish the lesson with the cloze activity you did on Tuesday, having the children supply the missing word at the end of each line of the rhyme.

Friday

1. Remind the children of the various activities you've done this week, and tell them that this is **Children's Choice** day. Display 3 different rhyme posters -- **There Was an Owl**, **There Once Were Two Cats of Kilkenny**, and **If Wishes Were Horses**. We are continuing with the *individual* or *small group* performance option on **Children's Choice** day, when children who are ready to recite a rhyme alone or with a friend can add their name(s) to the Choice list. Because being able to recite the rhymes will ultimately help children with their understandings of "text", we hope that, by the end of the year, all children will be able to successfully recite four to five of the rhymes we are learning. There will also be children who can chant many more than five rhymes! Continue encouraging those children who have never volunteered to consider reciting with someone who has volunteered several times. Let the children decide which rhymes they would like to act out, to chant, to sort pictures for, or to do the riddle rhymes for.
2. Record the children's choices on the board using the written list as the order to follow. Then complete the activities. Crossing them out as you complete them will give children a chance to think of how we use print to remind us of things.
3. We are continuing to sing the alphabet song every Friday. Place your alphabet card (see *Dr. Seuss's ABC* in the **A-Book-A-Week** section) on the board, encouraging children to point to the letters as they sing the alphabet song.
4. Finish by chanting "There Was an Owl" All children may pretend to be either of the fighting cats. Again remind them of the safety that actors practice.
5. Remind children to look at their **My Very Own Nursery Rhyme Collections** with their families over the weekend.

spoke
oak