

# Stories as a Springboard into English



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# Stories as a Springboard into English

- ▶ *“Young learners acquire language unconsciously. The activities you do in class should help this kind of acquisition. Stories are the most valuable resource you have. They offer a world of supported meaning that they can relate to. Later on you can use stories to help children practise listening, speaking, reading and writing.”*
- ▶ **Mary Slattery & Jane Willis, (2001), *English for Primary Teachers*, OUP**

# Stories

Children of all ages like stories

Provide opportunities for communication

- ▶ Dialogic reading builds vocabulary and narrative skills. It helps children relate a story to their life experiences. To get the most of story times, children should hear stories in different ways. As always, the book should be fun for the children and for the reader. We motivate children to read when they see us enjoy great books.

Turning storytime into a conversation might sound difficult at first, but you will find it natural once you get started. Perhaps we cannot all read books like actors with dramatic expressions and a different voice for each character, but we can all learn to use a picture book to talk to a child.

- ▶ Children enjoy being part of story telling.

You will enjoy the creative ways children share ideas about books.

- Please give it a try - you will find it's FUN!
  - Have clear, attention-grabbing pictures.
  - Present a simple story, one that children can follow.
  - Use a short story written with short sentences.
  - Have pictures about familiar things that children will recognize.
  - Use the pictures to tell important parts of the story.
  - Choose themes or characters that children are interested in.
  - Repeat phrases so that children can "read" along.
- ▶ It can work with groups. Try to find ways to use different styles and formats when you share books with children.
- ▶ Getting children actively involved with stories can be done in steps.
- 1. Read books as written, asking** children to identify parts of the action illustrated by the pictures and having children repeat any phrases that are used repetitiously in the book.

**2. Choose a page from the book with an attractive picture that illustrates action.**

Ask children "what" questions (what they are seeing, what is happening, what will happen next, etc.).

Be prepared to give children time to answer - they are still developing these skills.

**3. Extend the answers they give you.**

For example, if they say, "the cat found a hot dog", you could say, "yes, the cat found a hot dog, a hot dog in a bun that is half eaten."

**4. Ask children to repeat your extended answer.**

Be prepared to give children time to restate the extended answer - they are still developing these skills.

**5. Be careful asking yes/no questions.**

There's little chance for dialog, however, in groups they may be effective.

# Illustrations support the text and provide meaning

Finn, I & J. Tickle, (1999), [The Very Lazy Ladybird](#), Little Tiger Press

## Repetition, recycling and reinforcement of language

### ► Great Books: Repetition & Rhyme

- 1,2,3 to the Zoo by Eric Carle. This counting book counts animals as they travel on the zoo train.
- Brown, Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? By Bill Martin Jr. The rhythmic, repetitive pattern of the text and the bold animal pictures makes this book an all time favorite.
- Five Little Sharks Swimming in the Sea by Steve Metzger. This silly book is filled with rhymes and funny text that will delight any preschool child.

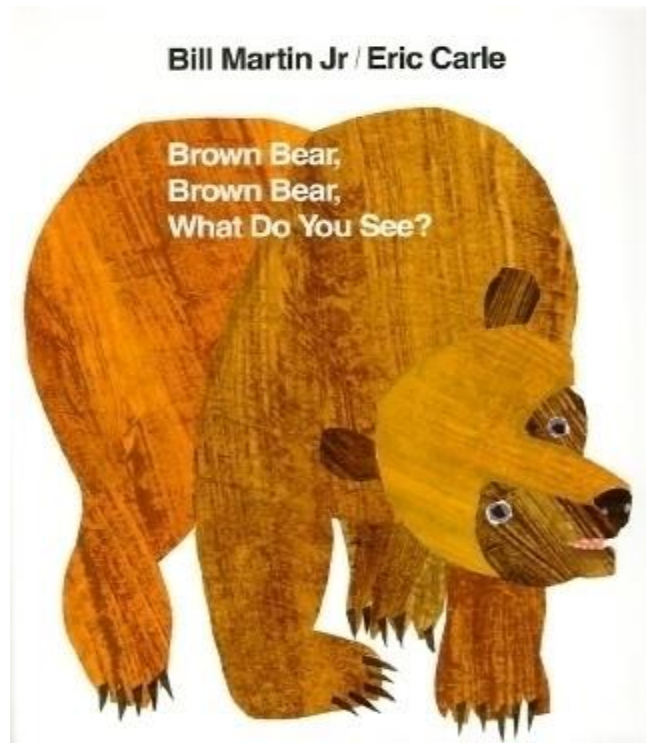
- **Giraffes Can't Dance by Guy Parker-Rees.** A giraffe that discovers his own special dance and music teaches a funny and charming lesson about being you.
- **Green Eggs and Ham, by Dr. Seuss.** A great book with a limited vocabulary, lots of predictable repetition, and a wonderful cadence that makes this fun to read  
and share.

# Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?

Eric Carle & Bill Martin, Jr.

You can sing the book to the tune of 'Tommy Thumb'.

<http://www.dltk-teach.com/books/brownbear/index.htm>





- ▶ “Vocabulary needs to be met and recycled at intervals, in different activities, with new knowledge and new connections developed each time the same words are met again... a new word needs to be met at least five or six times in a text book before it has any chance of being learnt.” Cameron, L, (2001)

- ▶ Repetitive language in stories can enhance S-S-I-T-H-P (Murphey, T, 1992, Music & song, Oxford University Press)

Refrains in stories can target active language in the narrative and can help trigger the children’s memory later.