

BILINGUAL LANGUAGE ARTS IN ACTION ACTIVITY KITS

“DIALOGUE”

Children’s Literature Sources:

1. “The Salamander Room” by Anne Mazer
(illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher)
2. “The Frog Prince Continued” by Jon Scieszka (illustrated by Steve Johnson)
3. “The Velveteen Rabbit” by Margery Williams (illustrated by Michael Hague)
4. “Hansel and Gretel” illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky (retold by Rika Lesser)
5. “Something From Nothing” by Phoebe Gilman

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GENERAL TEACHING PRINCIPLES:

- The basic principle behind these activities is to use **children's literature** to teach the grammatical structures of written language (English).
- Children learn best when they **discover** the rule themselves, rather than being told the rule and then practicing it in meaningless drills.
- Our role as teachers is to make sure children have lots of **exposure** to the target structure in different contexts, and to **direct** their attention to how it is used.
- We also need to make sure students have lots of opportunities to try to **use the structure** in their own writing – this means **accepting approximations** and gradually **shaping** them into correct productions.
- **Repetition** is important for learning – reading and writing must be done over and over – but it is also important to keep it **fun** and **interesting**.
- It is not enough to simply read the books in this activity kit to children during story time – the books must be the focus of **extended and repeated study** and this difference should be emphasized and made clear to both teachers and students right from the outset.

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TEACHING “DIALOGUE”

1. **Dialogue** is the **conversation** between characters in a story.
2. Writers use dialogue to show something about the characters – to **express** their **feelings** and **point of view**.
3. **Quotation marks** are used to mark the words being said by a character. There are some specific rules for using quotation marks:
 - a) Only the words spoken by the character are included in quotation marks.
 - b) A new paragraph is usually used to show a shift in speakers.
 - c) Punctuation (commas, periods, question marks, etc.) is placed inside quotation marks.
4. In ASL storytelling, **shoulder shifting** and **eye gaze** are used to mark dialogue between characters. Build on students’ familiarity with these ASL structures to help them learn and use dialogue and quotation marks in written English.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “THE SALAMANDER ROOM” (MAZER, JOHNSON & FANCHER)

Vocabulary: salamander, forest floor, moss, carpet, stumps, boulders, insects, multiply, lift off, ceiling, vines, ferns.

1. This is an excellent book to tie into the theme of ecological systems and how animals (and humans) are dependent on each other within their environment.
2. The dialogue in this story is between a boy and his mother – have the students identify what the boy says and what the mother says (they will need to rely on paragraphs and punctuation to do this).
3. Follow the problem-solving pattern of the dialogue in the story to have the students create their own dialogue (or dialogues between each other) to ask questions and give solutions.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: THE FROG PRINCE CONTINUED” (SCIESZKA & JOHNSON)

Vocabulary: miserable, nagged, whined, slay, perfectly awful fit, actually, cast a nasty spell, member of your profession, webbed, rescuing, poisoned, plump, windowsill, wand, carriage, rotten luck, spookier, idiot.

1. It is important for the students to be familiar with various fairy tales (Frog Prince, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella) for this story to make sense.
2. This is an excellent model of a variation on a classic fairy tale – use this in a unit where you study various different versions of stories.
3. Have the students write their own version of a fairy tale – be sure to encourage the use of dialogue.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “THE VELVETEEN RABBIT” (WILLIAMS & HAGUE)

1. The text is quite dense in this story and requires a higher reading level. If it is possible for students to read the story themselves, present it in sections and pre-teach vocabulary and concepts as you go. If you read the story aloud (“story signing”) to the students, you can still present it in sections and introduce key concepts.
2. The idea of toys becoming real and being able to talk is very engaging for children. Have the students imagine and write about the conversation they would have with their favourite toy.
3. To identify dialogue in the story, photocopy sections of it and have students use different coloured highlighters to mark the words spoken by each of the characters.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: **“HANSEL AND GRETEL”** **(ZELINSKY & LESSER)**

Vocabulary: woodcutter, scarcely manage, miserable, terribly anxious, reconcile, glistened, replied, gazing, nightfall, rejoiced, comfort, daybreak, perched, strewn, fetch, thousands, woodland, pecked, spongy, sparkling, greedily, devouring, gnaws, rubble, gnarled, tasty morsel, stall, crayfish, cauldron, slaughter, kneading, roast, iron bolt, precious gems, prospered.

1. This is a classic fairy tale and is beautifully illustrated – make sure to draw attention to the mood conveyed in the pictures.
2. Pull out of the text and group together all the things said by the mother, father, and witch. Help the students understand how the things each character says shows something about their nature and intentions.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “SOMETHING FROM NOTHING” (GILMAN)

Vocabulary: cozy, frazzled, unsightly, material, shrunken, vest, spotted, stain, droop, handkerchief, collection, tattered, splotched, splattered, suspenders, kaput.

1. There is an entire other story being told through the pictures of the mouse family living under the floor – be sure to draw the students’ attention to this in multiple readings of the book.
2. Analyze the dialogue in the story to show the repetition in what the mother says, what the boy says, and what the grandfather says.
3. Have the students write their own versions of this story with different things that the grandfather could make – they can even keep some of the text and quotes exactly as written.