

BILINGUAL LANGUAGE ARTS IN ACTION ACTIVITY KITS

“FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE”

Children’s Literature Sources:

1. “Parts” by Tedd Arnold
2. “Gilbert de la Frogponde” by Jennifer Rae
(illustrated by Rose Cowles)
3. “Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros?” by
Shel Silverstein
4. “Peg and the Whale” by Kenneth Oppel
(illustrated by Terry Widener)
5. “Monkey Business” by Wallace Edwards

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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 “FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE”

1. Teaching figurative language can be lots of fun because it involves playing with words and saying silly things; however, it is also quite challenging because the students must understand language at an abstract level.
2. Figurative language involves going beyond the literal meaning of words – students must recognize that by combining words into certain phrases or sentences they have a new, and completely separate, meaning.
3. Figurative language includes **idioms, metaphors, similes, and poetic forms.**
4. Meanings of idioms must usually be explicitly taught because it is difficult to figure out the meaning just from the words.
5. Rather than being overwhelmed by having to teach all the figurative language students may encounter – make sure they understand the concept and some of the more frequently occurring expressions.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “PARTS” (ARNOLD)

Vocabulary: aware, couple, appalled, recall, amazed, stuffing, peeling, groan, dismayed, sprout.

1. This book is very appealing to children because of the “gross” factor – talks about peeling skin, mucous, ear wax, etc.
2. Although this book does not include specific figurative language, it does illustrate very effectively the concept of “taking things literally”. Build on this to help the students understand that losing a tooth does not mean you will soon loose an arm (and so on!).
3. Have the students think of some other bodily functions that might make a person think they were “falling apart”. Write sentences and draw pictures to illustrate these examples.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “GILBERT DE LA FROGPONDE: A SWAMP STORY” (RAE & COWLES)

Vocabulary: appetite, enormous, hefty, frankly, gourmet, tempt, ruckus, scurried, scheming, fate, visualized, chefs, tres passé, jalapeno, primavera, quiche, fondue, enchiladas, haute cuisine, a la mode, recipes.

1. This book will appeal to students with the reference to eating bugs – enjoy the silliness of the story!
2. Often figurative language is incorporated into poetry – help the students follow the rhythm and rhyming patterns in these sentences (refer to the spelling patterns).
3. Look for the figurative expressions and discuss their meaning – blew up (when he grew up) to the size of a balloon, slept away the days, single soggy snore, save his slimy skin, fell fast asleep.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “WHO WANTS A CHEAP RHINOCEROS” (SILVERSTEIN)

Vocabulary: cheap, rhinoceros, cloppy, huggable, for instance, ferocious, pirate, comics, collecting allowance, unsinkable, battleship, tiptoeing, scraps, desperate, plowing, imitating, record player.

1. Clearly, the drawings in this book are as important as the text in understanding the meaning – be sure to make these connections for the students.
2. Follow the pattern of this story and have the students write their own books about animals and the way they can be used around the house – encourage creativity (silliness!), incorporate drawings, and end the stories with “and he/she is easy to love”.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: **“PEG AND THE WHALE”** **(OPPEL & WIDENER)**

Vocabulary: rigging, hauling, gutting, strapping lass, herring, halibut, haddock, hagfish, smelt, sole, sculpin, stickleback, sturgeon, mammal, Labrador, barnacles, curse, harpoon, swabbing, doubloon, reeled, hollered, crow’s nest, tuckered out, gullet, waterproof, reckoned, puckish, blowhole, sea shanties, tad, plenty, fond, mite, rudder, horizon, geyser.

1. Background information about ships, fishing, and living by the sea will be needed to understand this story.
2. Identify and discuss some of the expressions in the story – born upon the bright blue sea, do things in half measures, turned her hand to, sights set higher, pushing seven, high time she made something of herself, quicker than you can change your mind, a pox on these scurvy harpoons, a look that would fry fish, thar she blows, played out faster than a tune from a jack-in-the-box, Nantucket sleigh ride, hooked herself a whale, only slowing me down, plain tuckered out, she’s met her match, big as a blue mountain, black as a night without moon and stars, didn’t much care for the crew, mighty pleased, do the trick, none the worse for wear, pushing eight, try her hand at something new.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “MONKEY BUSINESS” (WALLACE)

Vocabulary: serious, meeting, Professor, limit, promised, gossip, craving, accidentally, formal, counted on, intention, deliver, reflecting, hard-won, luxury, departed, usual, pattern, constantly, despite, customers, attract, misfortune, blended, realized, bounced, reminded.

1. This book specifically teaches some common idioms and between the text and the pictures helps to show how the literal and figurative meanings conflict and interact.
2. An excellent feature of this book is that it provides a definition of “idioms” and also lists the real meanings of all the illustrated idioms at the back of the book.
3. Allow each student to study one idiom/picture specifically – they can list the key words, draw their own picture, and write a few sentences using the idiom.