

Activities during Storytelling

During-storytelling activities are usually used to check comprehension. They can also be used to keep students' interest and allow students the chance to interact and practice using English.

Q & A:

Use questions during the storytelling to check comprehension of the story and keep students engaged. The teacher should keep a balance between asking questions to keep the learners engaged but not so many questions that it detracts from the storytelling. The questions should check comprehension of the characters, setting, and plot. The questions could also ask students to predict what comes next.

For example, if the teacher is telling the Aesop's fable The Hare and the Tortoise, it could progress like this:

- "Point to the hare."
- "Point to the tortoise."
- "A hare is also called a . . ." (rabbit)
- "A tortoise is also called a . . ." (turtle)
- "Is a hare slow or fast?"
- "Is a tortoise slow or fast?"
- "Who will win the race?"
- "What is Hare doing?" (hopping fast)
- "Is Hare hopping slowly or fast?"
- "What is Tortoise doing?" (walking slowly)
- "Is Tortoise walking slowly or fast?"
- "What is Hare doing?" (sleeping)
- "Is Tortoise sleeping, too?"
- "And the winner is . . . !" (Tortoise)

Repetition:

Repetition of key phrases or chants in a story can keep students active and give them a chance to practice set phrases or language structures. Teachers can cue students in the right places for them to join in.

For example, from the story The Gingerbread Man, it could be a call and respond, like this:

- Teacher: *Run, run, run,*
- Students: *As fast as you can.*
- Teacher: *You can't catch me,*
- Students: *I'm the Gingerbread Man!*

Alternatively, the teacher and students could chant the lines altogether and clap a beat to keep a rhythm. Since many children's stories have repeated structures, it is easy to add repetition to a storytelling.

TPR (Total Physical Response):

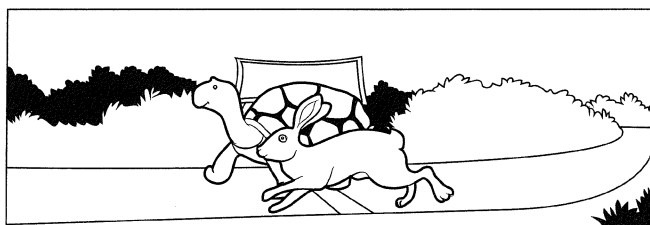
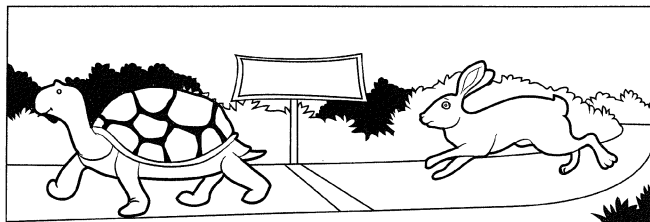
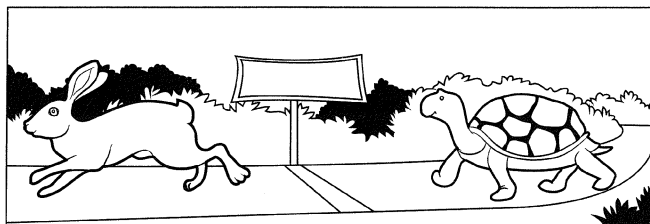
Movement and actions can be built into most children's stories. Some stories have movement embedded in the story. Doing TPR with students during the storytelling appeals to kinesthetic learners and makes the experience more active and fun. This also supports comprehension of the story.

For example, *Five Little Monkeys (Jumping on the Bed)* has physical actions of changing into pajamas, brushing teeth, jumping, falling, calling, and sleeping. These actions can be practiced before the storytelling and then done during the storytelling by both the teacher and the students. Whenever possible, the teacher should look for movement to accompany a storytelling.

Create your own ending:

Teachers can tell the story up to the climax and ask students to predict the ending before they finish telling the story. Students can draw a picture of their own ending or demonstrate it using the puppets from the storytelling. For lower-level students, the teacher can prepare pictures of alternate endings and have students make sentences for each, to create their own ending.

For example, the pictures below could accompany the story of the Hare and the Tortoise.



Activities after Storytelling

After a storytelling, you can do follow-up activities to check comprehension of the story. Post-storytelling activities should also give learners plenty of practice using the new language structures and vocabulary. Be sure to use all four language skills, cooperative activities, scaffolded instruction, and activities that cater to different learning styles and intelligences.

- **Check predictions:** Check the predictions that students made in the before- or during-storytelling stages. Doing this helps students explain what happened in the story as they reflect on whether their predictions were correct. If students wrote a prediction and put it in the prediction box, then the teacher can take out the predictions and read them. If the students chose a picture that predicts an ending, like the Hare and the Tortoise example in the previous section, the teacher can bring out the three pictures and have the students confirm the correct one.
- **Group retelling:** Teachers can have students work with them to retell the story. It could be as simple as retelling the story with students saying the character parts with you. Where appropriate, a retelling can include role play. Students can act out the story, or parts of the story. Or students can retell the story on their own, with the teacher filling in the gaps when they encounter difficulty.
- **Games:** Many different games can be used to check comprehension following a storytelling. In the game Start & Stop, you can retell the story with mistakes and have students stop you when they hear a mistake. You can then choose a number of errors to check comprehension: using the wrong vocabulary word or pronouncing a word incorrectly, putting pictures of major plot events out of order, or changing characters' actions to see if children truly understood the story.
- **Storyboarding:** Have students make simple drawings in boxes that show the plot of the story sequentially, like a comic book. The teacher can give a blank storyboard template like the one on the following page.

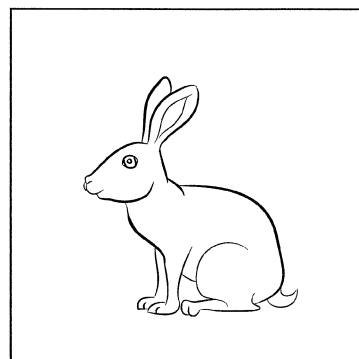
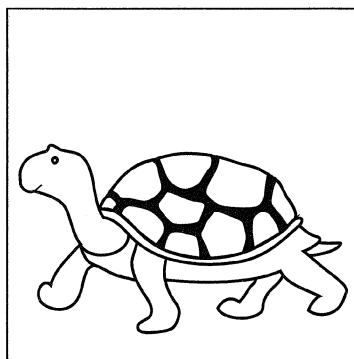
Blank Storyboard Template

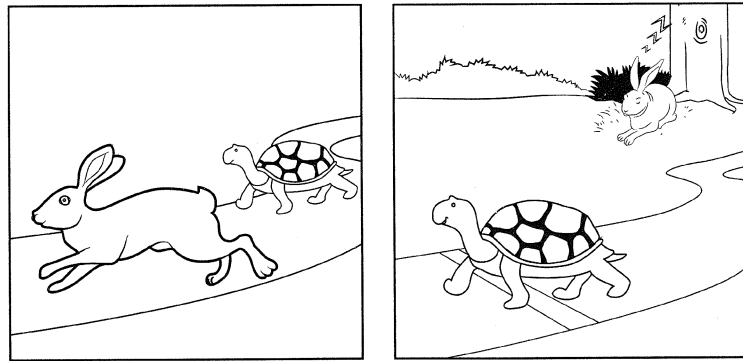
Storyboard

Title:
Author:
Illustrator:

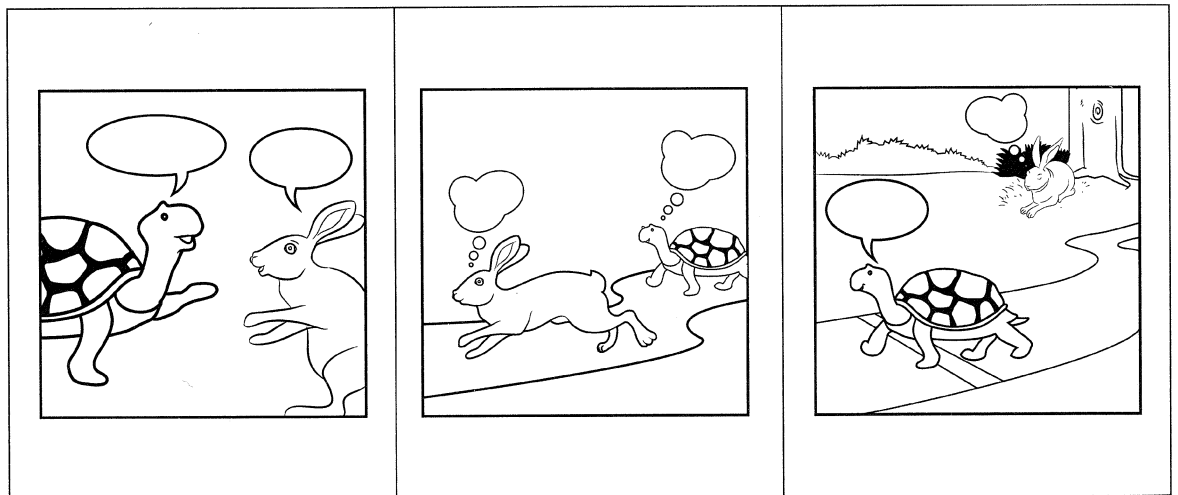
If students need more support, the teacher can give them pictures to use in the storyboard template.

For example, for the Hare and the Tortoise, the teacher could hand out the following to the students:





In order to give students an opportunity to practice language in a different way and to be creative, the drawings can be accompanied by blank text or dialog bubbles. Students can write the characters' dialog or thoughts into the bubbles.



- **Story mapping (story analysis):** Teachers can check comprehension of the storytelling by giving students a graphic organizer to map out the plot of the story or to compare the characters of the story. Students can show deeper levels of comprehension of the story by analyzing the characters, ending, or moral of a story where appropriate. Below is an example of a story map that shows comprehension of the setting, characters, and plot.

Title:

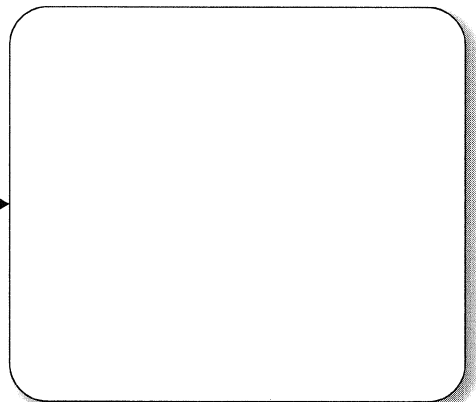
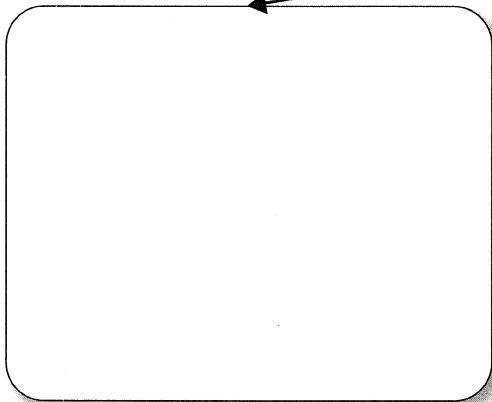
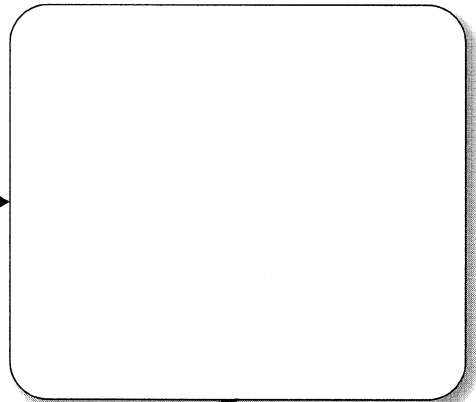
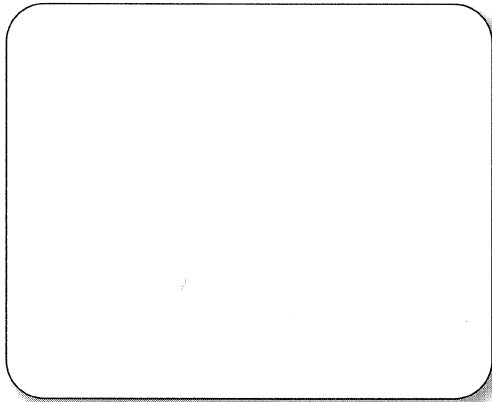
Author:

Illustrator:

Setting (Draw and describe)

Characters (Draw and label)

Illustrate and write the story events.

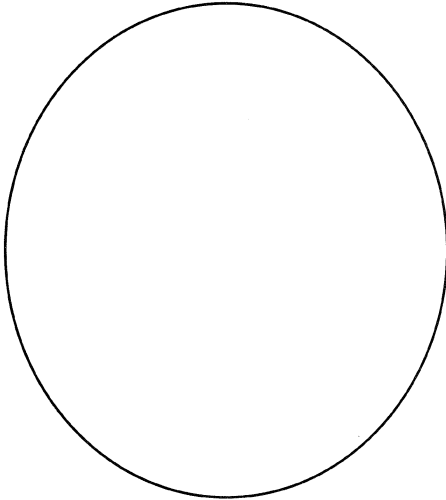
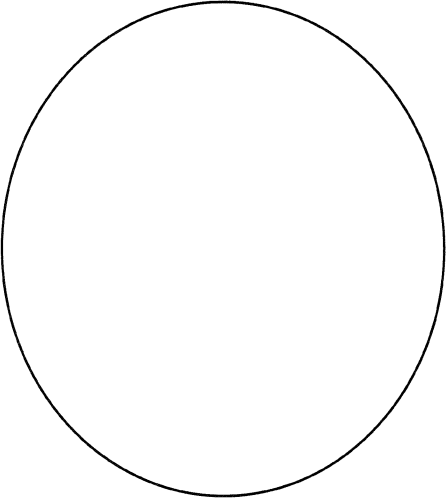


The teacher can check students' comprehension of a story by analyzing the main characters. Students can draw a character and describe him or her on a piece of paper. In addition, students can compare two characters in a story.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Title:
Author:
Illustrator:

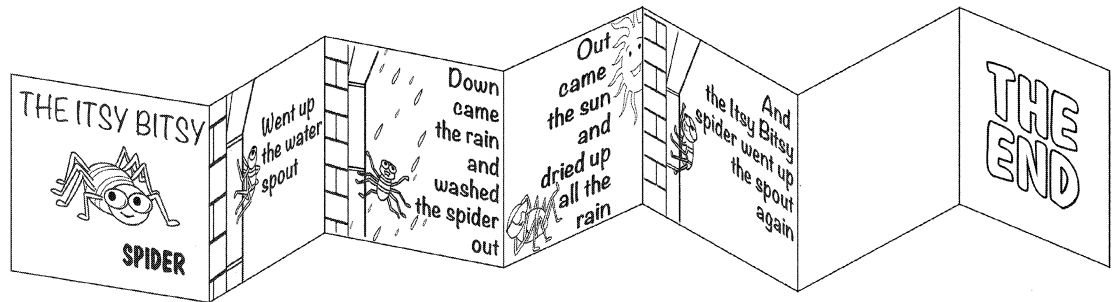
*CHOOSE 2 CHARACTERS.
DRAW THEM BELOW*

CHARACTER #1	CHARACTER #2
	
NAME: _____	NAME: _____
POSSIBLE SENTENCE STARTERS: <i>She/He is... She/He isn't... I like... I don't like...</i>	
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

For example, students could compare the tortoise and the hare by drawing them and describing them with sentences like: *The tortoise is slow. He is hard working. I like the tortoise. He won the race.*

- **Mini-books:** Let students create their own storybooks. Teachers can show students how to make different mini-books (see Chapter 5). Then students can add their own text, pictures, or both.

For example, the mini-book below was made by a student after her class had read , Itsy Bitsy Spider. She used the pages to illustrate the story and to write a few lines about the story.



- **Personalized or parallel story:** Have students write a story similar to the one in the storytelling but with details that draw from their own experiences, culture, and imagination. This is effective guided practice that helps students use the language learned in a creative way. For example:

Parallel story: Instead of “The Hare and the Tortoise,” the students can write a story about two new animals. They can brainstorm fast and slow animals and make a list. Then they can choose a context, like the jungle, rainforest, or the ocean and write a similar story with their new animals. For example, they might write a new story about the Cheetah and the Porcupine or the Dolphin and the Starfish.

Cultural connection: Students can tell a similar or parallel story set in their native country or culture. As mentioned earlier, there could be a fairytale or folktale similar to the story, like Cinderella. If there is a similar story or a contrasting story, students can use the language from the storytelling and tell their own country or culture’s story.

Personalized story: If possible, have students create a new story that mirrors the story studied but relates to their lives. For example, a cute finger play story:

Here is a turtle. (*Make fist with thumb tucked inside*)

He lives in a shell.

He likes his home very well.

When he gets hungry, he comes out to eat. (*Pull thumb out and wiggle it*)

Then goes back to his house to sleep. (*Push thumb back into fist*)

Students could personalize this simple story by substituting the words about the turtle with their own lives:

Here is Maria.

She lives in a house.

She likes her home very well.

When she gets hungry, she goes to the kitchen.

Then goes back to her bedroom to sleep.

- **Projects:** Have students work together in small groups to complete a project that shows comprehension of a story. The project can be a part of a thematic unit requiring students to learn more about the story topic or context, author, culture, etc. You could invite students' families or other classes to see the students' work. Some examples could be:

Creative storytelling with story maps: Groups can work together to create a poster with pictures of the characters and scenes to show the plot of the story. It could be a larger version of a story map or character file. Then the poster can be used as the starting point for creative retellings. A creative retelling of the story could have the same plot but different characters, or the same characters with different plots. In either case, the language learned would be recycled and practiced in new and creative ways.

Explore the context: If the topic or context is related to a broader topic, then the story could be a part of a larger project.

For example, Goldilocks and the Three Bears might be a story that is part of a larger unit on houses. Students could do a project to research the different kinds of homes of children from around the world. They could create posters or mini-books with pictures of different types of homes from various cultures and regions.

Research the author: Students could also research information about the author with the teacher's guidance.

For example, students could do a research project about Aesop and make a collection of different fables with illustrations.

Perform a play: If there is a chance to put on a play, then students can work on making and producing a play to perform. They could role play different characters in a play or put on a puppet show. The project could include making the costumes, masks, or puppets as well as writing a play version of the story.



Eco Images/Universal Images Group/Getty Images

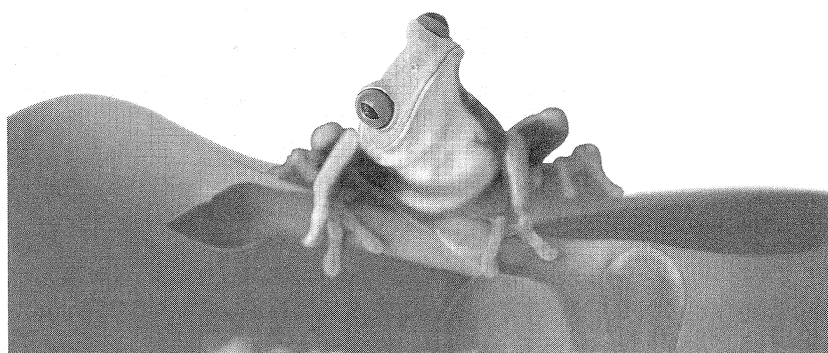
■ Designing a Lesson with Storytelling

In order to conduct a storytelling lesson, it is important to prepare activities for before, during, and after the storytelling. These can be incorporated into a lesson plan. Using the lesson plan format from previous chapters, teachers can use this form to prepare their storytelling. Preparing for storytelling is not limited to these ideas, but this is a good start for any teacher.

Stage	Type of Activities	Suggested activities
Warm-up	Before-storytelling activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture their attention • Connect to prior knowledge and experiences • Review language students have learned • Pre-teach new vocabulary or expressions • Ask students to predict what will happen after this line. • Give students a purpose for listening

Presentation	During-storytelling activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&A • Repetition • Total Physical Response • Create your own ending • Keep Ask students to predict in Warm-up
Practice	After-storytelling activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check predictions • Group retelling • Games • Storyboarding • Story mapping (story analysis) • Mini-books • Personalized or parallel story • Projects • Play performance
Application		
Assessment		
Follow-up		

Here is an example storytelling lesson plan using a story called, *A Big Lesson for Little Frog* (Shin & Crandall, 2013).



Provided by National Geographic Learning

A BIG LESSON FOR LITTLE FROG

One day Little Frog looks up. He sees Monkey in a tree. Monkey says, "Look at me! I can swing through the trees! Can you swing, too?"

Little frog says, "No. I can't swing through the trees."

Parrot flies down to the tree. Parrot says, "Look at me! I can fly from tree to tree. Can you fly, too?"

Little Frog says, "No. I can't fly."

Giraffe walks up to the tree. Giraffe reaches up with her long neck and eats leaves at the top of the tree.

Little Frog is sad.

Giraffe sees Little Frog and asks, "Why are you sad, Little Frog?"

Little Frog says, "Monkey can swing through the trees. Parrot can fly. You can eat leaves at the top of the tree. I am sad because I can't do those things."

Giraffe says, "But Little Frog, you can do things we can't do."

"Really?" says Little Frog.

"Can Parrot hop like a frog?"

"No."

"Can I hop?"

"No."

"Can Parrot swim?"

"No."

"Can I swim?"

"No, but I can," says Little Frog.

"Can we catch flies with our tongues?"

"No, but I can," says Little Frog.

"There are many things Monkey, Parrot, and you can't do, Giraffe. I'm very sorry for you! Please don't be sad!"

Little Frog is happy now. He hops away to swim and to catch some flies.

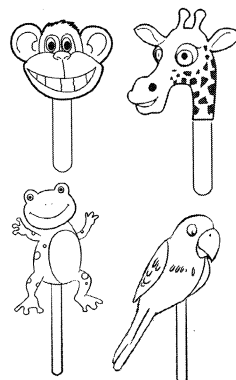
A Big Lesson for Little Frog

Student profile	Grade 2, beginning level of English language proficiency
Skills to be emphasized	Listening and speaking
Language	Grammar: can/can't; Can you . . . ? I can . . . I can't . . . Vocabulary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals: frog, giraffe, monkey, parrot • Animal actions: swing, fly, hop, swim • Expression: Look at me!
Objectives	By the end of this lesson, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what animals can and can't do
Materials	Puppets Background scene which includes a tree Flashcards of different animals from previous lessons Word cards for all the actions

Warm-up
Before-storytelling Activities

Capture their attention

Make a popsicle stick puppet and introduce your new friend "Little Frog" to the class.



As the teacher: Class, meet my friend. His name is Little Frog. Say Hello, Little Frog!

As the frog: Hello, Kids! How are you? I'm soooooo happy to be here—ribbit ribbit! (*in a cute frog voice*)

As the teacher: Class, say hello like Little Frog! Ribbit ribbit! We are going to read a story about Little Frog. (*Show the cover of the book*)

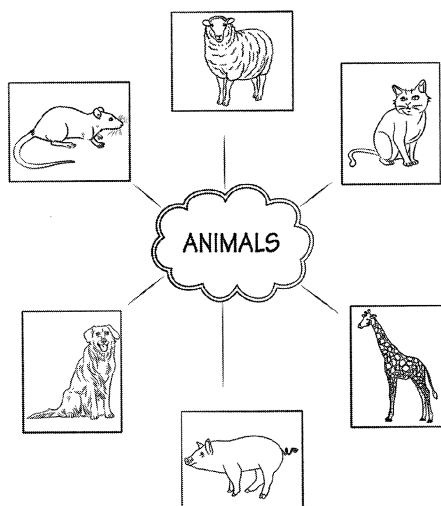
As the frog: What do you see on the cover? That's right! It's me! Ribbit!

Connect to prior knowledge and experiences

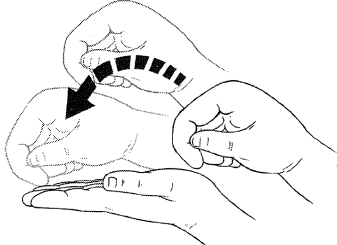
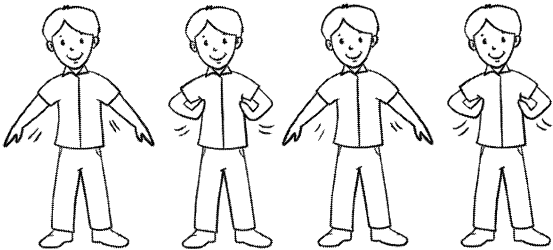
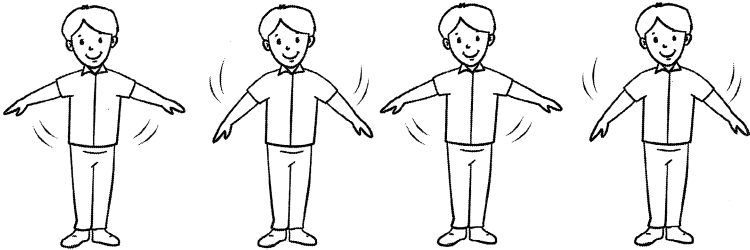

Look through the pages of the storybook secretly. "I see Little Frog has some animal friends. What animals do we know?"

Review language students have learned


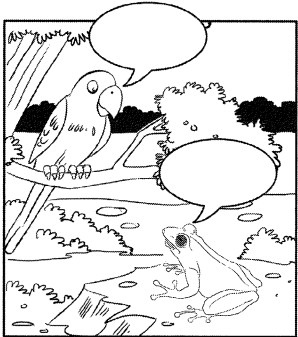


Make an Animal Web with pictures and/or text. The teacher can use flashcards to review the animals. When the child names an animal, the teacher can put the flashcard on the board in the web.



<p>Pre-teach new vocabulary or expressions</p>	<p>"How do these animals move?" Do a TPR activity to teach different actions, including the ones in the story: swing, fly, hop, swim, etc. Use word cards for each movement and show the word card with each movement.</p>										
<p>Ask students to predict what will happen in the story</p>	<p>Show the Little Frog puppet and the background with a tree. Using the puppet, ask students:</p> <p>As the frog: Can I swing through the trees?</p> <p>As the teacher: Can Little Frog swing through the trees?</p> <p>Then go through each action: fly, reach the top of a tree, hop, swim, etc.</p> <p>As you ask questions as the Little Frog and the teacher, put the word cards for <i>swing</i>, <i>fly</i>, <i>hop</i>, <i>swim</i>, etc., on the board in a T-chart. Then for each action, put a check if the students say, "yes," and an X if they say, "no."</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>FROG</p> <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;"></td> <td style="border: none;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">Swing</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">Fly</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">Hop</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">Swim</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> </table> </div>			Swing	X	Fly	X	Hop	✓	Swim	✓
Swing	X										
Fly	X										
Hop	✓										
Swim	✓										
<p>Give students a purpose for listening</p>	<p>While pointing at the T-Chart, say, "Let's listen to the story and see what Little Frog can and can't do!"</p>										
<p>Presentation During-storytelling Activities</p>											
<p>Storytelling with puppets</p>	<p>Do the storytelling with the puppets and the background. Use different voices for each animal and show the movements with your body.</p>										

<p>Listen and respond/ TPR</p>	<p>First storytelling: "When you hear an animal, do the action."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frog: <i>(Fist hops on hand twice)</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monkey: <i>(Arm movement with hands moving toward armpits twice)</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parrot: <i>(Make wings with hands, flap twice)</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giraffe: <i>(Hold arms up, then make the head with hands.)</i> 
<p>Listen and respond/ TPR</p>	<p>Second storytelling: "When you hear actions, then do it!" Point to the words on the T-chart (swing, fly, hop, etc.) and practice once.</p>

Practice
After-storytelling Activities

<p>Check predictions/ Q&A</p>	<p>Pairwork Q&A to check predictions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students in pairs: Partner A and Partner B. For each action on the T-chart, tell Partner A to ask Partner B "Can Little Frog ___?". Partner B has to answer: "Yes, he can." "No, he can't." Then switch roles. After the pair work, ask students to confirm each prediction on the T-chart. Check off the correct answers to confirm their predictions.
<p>Storyboarding/ Group retelling</p>	<p>Storyboard jigsaw</p> <p>Prepare a large storyboard with pictures of the different scenes in the story. In the scenes the animals have speech bubbles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First students put them in order. Together with the students retell the story. Works with the student to write the dialog in the speech bubbles. Students copy the storyboard pictures and text in speech bubbles on their own paper. <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap; justify-content: space-around;">     </div>

Application After Storytelling Activities	
Mini-books/personalized/parallel story	<p>Students make mini-books about themselves. They should be the main character instead of Little Frog. The other characters can be anyone the students want. Brainstorm who the other characters could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sibling • friend • parent • grandparent • neighbor • teacher
Assessment	
Monitor progress	Walk around the classroom and give one-on-one assistance to students who are struggling to finish their mini-books.
Collect books	Collect the mini-books when they are finished and give students feedback.
Follow-up	
Homework	Continue working on mini-books about themselves at home and at the beginning of the next class, if necessary.
Next class	Ask a few students to volunteer to share their mini-book stories by doing a short storytelling using the pictures in their mini-book to help tell their story.