

BILINGUAL LANGUAGE ARTS IN ACTION ACTIVITY KITS

“QUESTIONS”

Children’s Literature Sources:

1. “The Very Busy Spider” by Eric Carle
2. “Whose Mouse Are You?” by Robert Kraus (illustrated by Jose Aruego)
3. “What’s That Awful Smell?” by Heather Tekavec (illustrated by Margaret Spengler)
4. “Dinosaur Days” by Linda Manning (illustrated by Vlasta van Kampen)
5. “Farmer Joe’s Hot Day” by Nancy Wilcox Richards (illustrated by Werner Zimmermann)

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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 “QUESTIONS”

1. There are two main types of questions: “**yes/no**” (because they can be answered with either “yes” or “no”), and “**wh**” (because they begin with question words – who, what, where, when, why, which, and how).
2. “Yes/no” questions involve putting the **auxiliary verb** before the subject, or if there is no auxiliary verb using “**do**”. E.g., “**Can** I buy that?” or “**Do** you want more?”
3. “Wh” questions are used to get specific information, depending on the question word; who = person, what = thing, where = place, when = time, why = reason, which = choice, how = description.
4. There are some combinations of question words that have their own meaning: “What if..” (asking you to imagine something), or “What time..” (asking a “when” question).

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “THE VERY BUSY SPIDER” (CARLE)

Vocabulary: silky, thread, trailed, spin, web, niegh, moo, baa, meadow, maa, oink, woof, chase, meow, nap, quack, cock-a-doodle-do, pesty.

1. The text is very simple and repetitive in this story, so once you have explained the words describing the animal sounds to the children, they can read the story themselves.
2. The question form used in this story does not actually follow the grammatical rule, i.e., only intonation is used not adding “do” before the subject. Make connections with how facial expression is used to indicate questions in ASL.
3. This book is easily acted out – make sure all the children get a chance to be the spider!
4. Have the children write their own version of the story using several different animals so they can create questions with activities that their animals like to do.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “WHO’S MOUSE ARE YOU?” (KRAUSS & ARUEGO)

Vocabulary: whose, nobody’s, inside, caught, trap, shake, free, wish, brand new.

1. This is a simple story that the children can learn to read independently.
2. It may be important to explain the concept of “possession” in order to distinguish “who” and “whose”.
3. Use this story when teaching about “family” and how important it is for us to belong.
4. Incorporate the students’ own families into stories they create about themselves – follow the story pattern to ask questions about their own family members (parents, siblings, etc.).

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “WHAT’S THAT AWFUL SMELL?” (TEKAVEC & SPENGLER)

Vocabulary: headed, cooler, meaty, awful, frantically, sniffing, bounced, bleated, trudged, disappeared, moaned, blurted, agree, mouthfuls, puddle, budge, soggy, meadow, bounded, coop, suggested, nudged, cackled, squawked, squealing, squished, snout, sticky, complained, slurped, huddled, patch, wandered, whimpered, strutted, stall, rotten, snorted, gulp.

1. Use this story to introduce simple “What” questions.
2. Brainstorm a list of “smelly” things with the children and then have them take turns asking, “What’s that awful smell?” and giving different answers.
3. Change the question (“What’s that great/delicious smell?”) and have the children come up with answers.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “DINOSAUR DAYS” (MANNING & VAN KAMPEN)

Vocabulary: pudgy, slurped, squished, tame, post, scaley, ticklish, left tracks, shy, drain pipe, pansies, divebombing, gooey, scrawl, rumbling, detergent, severely, chef, sizzling, toppings, guzzle, gulp, sprawled, heap.

1. This story is wonderful for incorporating all kinds of basic concepts – days of the week, counting/numbers, descriptions, and dinosaurs.
2. The repetitive questions stimulate children’s imaginations (“What if...”) and then require them to make choices (“Would you....”).
3. Use the pattern of the story to have the children imagine and ask questions about impossible situations and then provide a choice of what they would do.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR: “FARMER JOE’S HOT DAY” (WILCOX RICHARDS & ZIMMERMAN)

Vocabulary: field, wheat, corn, weeds, shone, complained, shines, jacket, scarf, mittens, angry, never, again.

1. This story is good for independent reading because it has so much repetition.
2. Discuss the concepts of “complaining” and “problem solving” – both in terms of how they are introduced in this book and how they apply to the students’ lives.
3. Have the students write their own stories that pose a problem, ask the question, “What can I do?” and then present a solution. Repeat this pattern.
4. This story can be fun to act out – make sure the students contrast Father Joe’s strong emotions and his wife’s lack of emotion.