

# Nursery Rhyme Rewrites

## Summary

Students will develop a sense of self in relation to families and community as they rewrite a classical nursery rhyme.

## Materials

*One per class:*

Various nursery rhyme books

Nursery rhyme poster— Little Miss Muffet, Wee Willie Winkie, Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill, and Hickory Dickory Dock, or others of your choosing

Nursery rhyme rewrite chart—Little Miss Muffet, Wee Willie Winkie, Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill, and Hickory Dickory Dock, or others of your choosing

Set of Unifix cubes in various colors or colored paper squares

Chart paper

8 x 11 inch art paper

Markers, crayons, scissors

## Additional Resources

- *Rhymes and Reasons: An annotated collection of Mother Goose Rhymes*  
 , by James C. Christensen; ISBN 0-86713-040-7
- *The Little Dog Laughed: And Other Nursery Rhymes from Mother Goose*  
 , by Lucy Cousins; ISBN 0-14-055469-6
- *Hey Diddle Diddle: And other Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes*  
 , by Tomie dePaola; ISBN 0-399-21589-1
- *Mary Had a Little Jam and Other Silly Rhymes*  
 , by Bruce Lansky; ISBN 0689033923

## Background for Teachers

The goal for students in Content Standard II is that they develop a sense of self in relation to families and community. As students form relationships with their family and with one another, they draw upon common experiences to strengthen those relationships. One common bond that can strengthen relationships in the family and at school is literature. Traditional forms of literature that we can share are nursery rhymes and folk tales. Nursery rhymes are lyrical passages that can be shared between members of a family. Usually a parent recites nursery rhymes to young children. By reciting nursery rhymes, oral traditions are passed down. Through this time spent together, bonds between a parent and a child can be strengthened. These important lessons help us build and strengthen the relationships in our families and community. Many students have experiences with these traditional literature forms at home. At school, we can expand their knowledge and build classroom relationships.

During this activity, the students will rewrite a classical nursery rhyme as a class. The students will have the opportunity to recite/read the nursery rhyme, discover the pattern of the text, and duplicate and extend that pattern to rewrite the nursery rhyme. As the rhymes are rewritten, the class will perform the original or rewritten version of the nursery rhyme.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

2. Develop social skills and ethical responsibility
3. Demonstrate responsible emotional and cognitive behaviors.
6. Communicate clearly in oral, artistic, written and nonverbal form.

## Instructional Procedures

### Invitation to Learn

Begin chanting the nursery rhyme "Jack and Jill." Invite the students who know the rhyme to join in. Ask the class if they have heard this nursery rhyme. What rhythm or beat pattern do they feel? Tell the students that during the next week the class will be reciting nursery rhymes and finding the pattern of the rhythm in the rhymes. The class will also have the opportunity to write its own nursery rhyme and perform it in the form of a puppet show.

### Instructional Procedures

Read the "Jack and Jill" nursery rhyme to the class. You may write the nursery rhyme on chart paper and do a shared reading from the chart.

To identify the pattern of the nursery rhyme, the teacher generates a physical pattern such as snapping and clapping (AB pattern) as you recite the nursery rhyme. Ask the students to identify the pattern. Ask the students if anyone else has another idea of how to show the pattern. This may include clapping twice and slapping legs twice or touching shoulders and knees in an AABB pattern. Various patterns such as AAA or ABCB patterns may be used as extensions. The teacher may model each of these patterns and students will join in.

Provide the class with an assortment of Unifix cubes or colored paper squares. Each student can make the AB pattern with the materials. Recite the nursery rhyme as the student points to his/her Unifix cube/paper pattern. AABB or AAA patterns may also be constructed and the rhyme recited.

After the students are comfortable in identifying the pattern(s) they hear in the nursery rhyme, introduce the nursery rhyme rewriting chart. The original text of the nursery rhyme is written on the left side of the chart and the rewritten version of the nursery rhyme is on the right side. The class can produce their own version of the nursery rhyme "Jack and Jill" through a shared or interactive writing experience.

Ask the students to identify the characters in the nursery rhyme (e.g., substitute "Ann and Clark" for "Jack and Jill"). As a class, write the text on the rewriting chart.

Discuss the setting of the nursery rhyme. Jack and Jill went up the hill and Ann and Clark go to the park.

Create an alternative action for the nursery rhyme. Instead of getting a pail of water, Ann and Clark watch the keeper feed the shark.

Provide a different ending to the rhyme. Instead of Jack falling down and breaking his crown, Ann fell in and hurt her chin and Clark dived in to save her.

Compare the patterns of the original nursery rhyme with that of the rewritten version. You may use clapping and snapping motions or Unifix cubes, as in steps two and three, to check the patterns.

Provide each child with paper and crayons. Each student may create a character from the nursery rhyme. Affix the decorated and cut-out character to a drinking straw. This will be the puppet for the puppet show.

The class may recite the nursery rhyme while the student moves his/her puppet. Each student will demonstrate his/her knowledge of the spatial relationships in the nursery rhyme through the movement of the nursery rhyme character puppet.

## Extensions

Rewriting other nursery rhymes may be used as extensions for this activity. The same format that was used to rewrite "Jack and Jill" is followed for other nursery rhymes. As the students identify the character, setting, problem, and resolution for each nursery rhyme, they are practicing important skills from the language arts core curriculum. Students are also using skills that will strengthen phonological awareness and writing skills. Of course, the rhythm/beat pattern is always emphasized.

All students may participate in this activity. Because it is teacher directed, students with varying skills in mathematics and language arts will be successful.

#### Family Connections

The parent may read a variety of nursery rhymes with his/her child. Discuss the rhythm of the nursery rhymes. Use hand motions to emphasize various parts of the nursery rhymes.

The parent and student can go for a walk around the neighborhood and look for various patterns on homes, sidewalks, fences, etc.

#### Assessment Plan

By participating in the class recitation of the nursery rhyme(s) and through participation in the puppet show, a teacher can assess the students level of knowledge of rhythmic patterning and knowledge of spatial relationships. The teacher may assemble the rewritten nursery rhyme that the class composes in a book format. The original form of the nursery rhyme may also be included to compare and contrast the two versions. Each student can illustrate the pages of the rewritten nursery rhyme and the original version. This book may be included in the student's portfolio where it may be examined by the teacher and parents.

#### Authors

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