

# Grandma Thinks It's Cake Baking Weather

## Summary

This activity uses Patricia Polacco's book "Thunder Cake" to help students understand how daily life has changed over the past 150 years.

## Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 2nd Grade

### [Standard 1](#)

## Materials

- *Thunder Cake*  
, by Patricia Polacco; ISBN 0698-11581
- [Interview form](#) (pdf)

## Background for Teachers

### *Thunder Cake*

is a story based on the author's memories of life on her grandmother's farm in Michigan. It explores a young girl's fear of a thunderstorm and how her grandmother helped her overcome her anxieties.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

5. Understand and use basic concepts and skills.
6. Communicate clearly in oral, artistic, written, and nonverbal form.

## Instructional Procedures

### Invitation to Learn

Direct the students to sit in a circle.

"Games, in the old days, often helped sharpen skills needed in adult life. Games were also sometimes played just for fun." The *Rain Game* was played along time ago on the Northwest coast by the Native American children who lived there. It rained a lot, and so the children often stayed inside and made up games, often imitating mother nature. One game they made up created the sound of a rain storm.

### 3. *Rain Game*

Ask your students what often goes before the rain. (the wind)

Rub hands together so they make a swishing noise. ( *wind sound*)

Ask your students what usually comes next. ( *small drops of rain*)

Slowly begin to snap the fingers of both hands.

Continue snapping fingers picking up the tempo. Add a clicking sound with your tongue. ( *Rain is beginning to fall.*)

Slap hands on your knees. ( *The rain is really beginning to come down.*)

Pound the ground with the palms of your hands. ( *The storm is reaching its climax.*)

Slap hand on your knees a little more quietly. ( *Begin to slightly slow down motions. the storm is beginning to subside.*)

Snap fingers very gently.

Rub hands forward and back, pressing lightly.

Stop all movements and sit quietly.

After the students have learned how to create the various sounds, they are performed starting with the teacher and then continuing around the circle one by one. Each time around the teacher starts the next step. If available, a cymbal can be used at the climax of the storm to create thunder. After the students have mastered the various steps, it might be fun to have them close their eyes and listen as the storm is created. They love to turn off the lights and do it in a dark room.

#### Instructional Procedures

Prompt the students to examine the illustration on the front of the book and read the title. Ask them to predict some of the problems characters might face in this book.

Read *Thunder Cake*. Encourage the students to look at the illustrations and describe what is happening.

Explain that many years ago farm families provided for many of their own needs, such as growing gardens, raising chickens to lay eggs, animals for providing meat and milk, sewing their own clothes, etc. Sometimes they were able to go to the store and buy some items like wheat or sugar. Stores were usually quite a distance away, so they bought these things in bulk. They often had separate buildings on their farm designed to store these things, such as a smoke house, granary, dry shed, etc. Daily life was very different from ours today.

Ask to students to compare how life has changed over the past 150 years. (transportation, food, houses, technology, etc.)

Draw a chart on the board and list student responses.

<u>Many Years Ago</u>	<u>Now</u>

To help students more fully understand how life has changed, assign students to interview a much older relative or neighbor, such as their grandparents or great-grandparents.

Pass out [Interview form](#) and explain what they are expected to do.

Demonstrate an interview for the class, modeling good interviewing techniques (i.e., stating the purpose of the interview, asking questions, listening to the speaker, repeating or rephrasing ideas, recording information).

Have the students bring their completed Interview Forms back and share them with the class.

#### Extensions

Use the information gathered and write a biography for the interviewee.

Write a personal narrative about a storm they might have experienced. Remind them to tell what the storm was like and how they felt during it.

Write a poem about a noisy storm.

Find out about the accuracy of Grandma's method for figuring out how far away a storm is. There are many types of resources available such as books from the library or Web sites on the Internet.

Invite grandparents or older citizens of the community into your class to share experiences or tell stories.

Write follow-up letters to the people interviewed.

Create original dance movement to accompany the rainstorm.

## Assessment Plan

Assessment is based upon teacher observation of participation and cooperation and by the completion of their interview form.

## Authors

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