

How to Build Curriculum Around a Story

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Because students are engaged by the world of story, they want to know more. They feel as if they know the characters and places. They will ask questions, especially if you encourage them to, which will give meaning and purpose to the activities that follow the story. We have included ideas for curriculum tie-ins for the story "Problems, Problems, Problems" (a folktale from India included on page 92 in *Children Tell Stories: Teaching and Using Storytelling in the Classroom*) to show you the kinds of activities stories can inspire. (All page references refer to the book.) These ideas are for many grade levels; choose the ones that are appropriate for your students.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Listening and Speaking Skills:

- * Go over the sequence of events in the story; draw a story map
- * Retell the story in a circle with each student saying a sentence
- * Have students discuss the main points or theme of the story
- * Tell the story as if it's a news report
- * Have students conduct interviews of the characters in the story
- * Have students tell the story from one character's point of view
- * Do "The Mind's Eye" exercise (p. 67): have students describe one or more of the village leaders

READING SKILLS

- * Read the story over and over to help with the retelling process
- * Read other versions of the story (See "Story Sources" on the companion DVD to *Children Tell Stories* for other versions) and make Venn diagrams to compare and contrast
- * Read other stories from India
- * Read stories with a similar theme

WRITING SKILLS

- * Retell the story in your own words; draw illustrations and publish your version (this could also be a small group activity first; then have students create individual stories)
- * Write a different story with the same theme
- * Write a different story with the same characters (What might have happened if people had spoken up and questioned the leaders?)
- * Write a story about what happens when the people move to the new village
- * Write the story in the form of a poem or play
- * Keep a journal including reactions to the story and activities
- * Write a letter to a character(s) in the story: for example write to the leaders as if you are a disgruntled villager

SOCIAL STUDIES

- * Study the history, people, geography, and culture of India
- * Show slides and photos, describe traditions and customs, and serve ethnic dishes of India
- * Look for current news articles about India; display them on a bulletin board
- * Find India on a map; check the latitude and longitude

MATHEMATICS

- * Pretend to take a trip through India; have students add the miles from one place to another
- * Make up word problems with characters from the story. (For example: Suppose the village was plagued by ten thousand mosquitoes and the villagers captured fifty frogs to eat them. If each frog ate four mosquitoes a minute, how long would it take them to get rid of the mosquitoes?)

SCIENCE

- * Study the habitats of mosquitoes, frogs, and snakes
- * Study the eating habits of each creature and the food chain
- * Teach the scientific method: (1) Have the students ask any questions that the story brought to mind (2) Define one problem the class chooses to investigate such as which of the three creatures [the mosquito, frog, or snake] has the fastest reproduction cycle? (3) Discuss possible answers to the problem (hypotheses) (4) Discuss ways to test the hypotheses (experiments, research)
- * Ecology: Use the story to demonstrate what can happen in nature when solutions are not carefully thought out

ART

- * Draw a storyboard for the story
- * Draw a favorite scene from the story; students can then put them in the proper sequence
- * Create a quilt (made with paper) with various scenes from the story
- * Create puppets, props, costumes, or scenery to put on a play of the story
- * Make a diorama
- * Create paper dolls for retelling the story

MUSIC

- * Write the story in the form of a song or rap and perform for class
- * Rewrite the story as a musical play
- * Play recordings of indigenous music of India as students do artwork or physical education activities
- * Make musical instruments to use while telling the story

DRAMA

- * Act out the story as a play or Readers' Theater
- * Create a puppet show of the story

CHARACTER EDUCATION

- * Discuss the story to reinforce values such as the importance of thinking through the consequences of one's actions

HEALTH STUDIES

- * Investigate diseases that are carried by mosquitoes
- * Investigate "mosquito control" and how that has changed the lives of people in tropical climates

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- * Tell the story in dance form
- * Have students imitate the movements of mosquitoes, snakes, and frogs as they listen to indigenous Indian music