



Introduction

Sharing books with children is a great way to promote a love of literacy and to provide a fantastic foundation from which to launch teaching or therapy activities. In the age of video games and action-packed television shows, storybooks are becoming somewhat of a novelty. It's important to show our students that storybooks possess a magic all their own!

Speech & Language Activities for Grades 1-3 utilizes ten popular children's books as the starting point for a variety of speech and language activities. These activities can be implemented in a classroom or in a therapeutic setting with groups or individuals. Activities can be presented orally or in a paper and pencil format if a student's reading and writing skills permit. Each unit contains the activities listed below.

Vocabulary

- Definitions
- Sentence Completion
- Word Relationships

Comprehension

- Prediction
- Story Map & Sequencing
- Main Idea
- Wh- Questions
- Wh- Questions Flash Cards
- Inferences

Narrative Language

- Retelling a Story
- Writing Activity

Figurative Language

- Idioms, Similes, or Metaphors

Grammar & Syntax

- Grammatical Identification
- Grammatical Judgment & Grammatical Expression

Articulation/Phonology

- Story Creation

Reward Activity

- Art or Word-Theme Activity

These ten books are featured in *Speech & Language Activities for Grades 1-3*:

1. *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman
2. *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina
3. *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett
4. *Corduroy* by Don Freeman
5. *Hey, Al* by Arthur Yorinks
6. *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney
7. *Strega Nona* by Tomie dePaola
8. *The Hat* by Jan Brett
9. *The Wednesday Surprise* by Eve Bunting
10. *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

* Instructions and Components

Preparing for a Unit

Activities can be presented and completed orally or in a paper and pencil format, depending on a student's reading and writing skills.

1. Before reading the story, do the following:
 - Use sticky notes to mark the points in the text (listed on the Comprehension: Prediction page of each unit) where you'll stop to ask the students to make a prediction.
 - Give each student a copy of the Story Prediction Chart in Appendix A (page 169).
2. Gather the vocabulary picture and definition cards for the unit.
3. Copy the activity sheets that the students will work on.
4. Provide wide-ruled, lined paper for the grammatical expression, figurative language, and extension writing activities.
5. Copy additional appendix templates as needed. These include:
 - Appendix B: Story Map Template (page 170)
 - Appendix C: Story Sequencing Template (page 171)
 - Appendix D: Wh- Question Visual Aid (page 172)

You can adjust the difficulty level of any exercise by providing or eliminating response options, allowing group or independent work, and/or requiring written responses from students.

Vocabulary

Each unit addresses ten core vocabulary words and five bonus vocabulary words from the featured story. There are a picture card and a definition card for each of the ten core vocabulary words. Before reading the story, use the cards to introduce students to key words, discuss story background, and activate students' prior knowledge.

Pass out the picture vocabulary cards to students and ask them to raise their hands when they hear their word read in the story.

There are three vocabulary exercises in each lesson: definitions, sentence completion, and word relationships. In the definitions exercise, students match a definition to a word. For the sentence completion exercise, students use context clues to choose the appropriate vocabulary words to fill in the blanks. Finally, each lesson addresses one of five word relationships: antonyms, synonyms, categories, associations, or multiple-meaning words.

You may use the vocabulary cards in a variety of ways. Give each student a definition card, then show a picture card and ask who has the corresponding definition. When working with children who are nonreaders, lay out the picture cards, read a stimulus sentence from the sentence completion activity aloud, and ask students to choose the matching picture card. For an extra challenge, show students a picture card for a word and ask them to provide a definition.

Comprehension

This section addresses predictions, story elements, sequences of events, main idea, *wh*-questions, and inferences. The activities range from students recalling concrete information to using abstract thinking skills.

Students should complete the prediction activity while you are reading the story to them for the first time. At five points throughout the story, you will ask students what they think will happen next. This activity is a great way to address self-monitoring of comprehension skills. Use sticky notes to mark the text beforehand, to remind you to stop reading at these points so students are able to make predictions. Give each student a copy of the story prediction chart in Appendix A (page 169) so they can record predictions along with what actually happens in the story.

After reading the story, students can use the story map template in Appendix B (page 170) to describe story elements, such as setting, characters, and major events. For sequencing story events, each unit contains five major event descriptions that students cut out and arrange in order on the sequencing template in Appendix C (page 171). Next students determine the main idea of the story by choosing one of four possibilities. When completing *wh*-questions, it is helpful to discuss different types of questions (e.g., *when* questions ask us about time or order of events, *why* questions ask us to give an explanation). A *wh*-question visual aid is provided in Appendix D (page 172). For inference activities, students answer questions about the story using context clues. This abstract task pushes students to sharpen their reasoning skills and to make conclusions about the story that are not explicitly stated.

Narrative Language

The narrative language tasks focus on discussing the main parts of the story. Prompts are provided to help students organize story events and convey their thoughts about the story. A writing activity is also included so you can work on the connection between oral and written language. You can provide more writing prompts for additional practice.

Figurative Language

The figurative language activity for each unit covers idioms, similes, or metaphors. In each activity, students figure out the meaning of a given phrase within the context of a sentence. Then students create their own sentences using figurative language.

Grammar & Syntax

This section contains activities for grammatical identification, judgment, and expression. For grammatical identification, students choose a picture that corresponds to a sentence. Discuss plural/possessive markers, negation, and verb tense to help students understand how the use of different grammatical forms changes the meaning of a sentence. The grammatical judgment task requires students to discriminate between an incorrect and a correct sentence. Incorrect sentences include common errors in pronouns, subject-verb agreements, irregular past-tense verbs, etc. Finally, for the expression task, students produce three to five sentences to describe a specific picture from the story. You may customize these directions to target individual student needs (e.g., Tell me three sentences using correct pronouns).

Articulation/Phonology

This task is a highly customizable summary of the story. Each story contains symbols (e.g., star, circle, square) that represent nouns or verbs. The students fill in the symbol table with words that contain their target sound or phonological pattern. If the students have difficulty filling in the table, you can give them a word bank containing appropriate word choices or you can fill in the table yourself. Then the students read their unique stories by substituting their words for the symbols. Using new nouns and verbs puts a humorous twist on each book. You can adapt this activity for the word, phrase, or sentence level. You may use it with readers and nonreaders alike, depending on the amount of scaffolding you provide.

Reward Activity

This page contains a fun activity that provides students with a sense of reward for completing previous tasks, while still targeting vocabulary and concepts from the unit.

As a speech-language pathologist who has worked in the North, South, East, and West, crisscrossing the age continuum and hierarchy of needs, I have found storybooks to be a common denominator among children. I hope you find the same to be true when using this resource with your students!

Kristin