

The Three Little Pigs

by Marian Swinger

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Background

This is a poetic retelling of the traditional story and has a rather less gory ending than many other versions. It follows the same pattern as the traditional story and makes use of repetitive language. Children often enjoy joining in with the text, and there are many opportunities to discuss language, wordplay and actions.

Shared reading and discussing the text

- Begin by discussing the story of the three little pigs and asking the children to tell you the versions they know. Write an outline of the story on the board based upon the information they provide. Add small sketches, captions and arrows for clarification of the storyline.
- Explain that the poem is written in pairs of lines that rhyme. Ask the children to follow the poem as you read it to them, but invite them to complete some of the rhyming couplets by pausing slightly just before the final word of the second line each time. For each couplet, encourage the children to predict the word by using the word at the end of the first line of the couplet.
- Discuss the spellings of the rhyming pairs of words. Encourage the children to notice that sometimes the cluster of letters which rhymes with another word may be spelled differently and sometimes the same. For example, *straw* and *door*; *more* and *straw*; *red* and *said*; *puff* and *enough* have rimes which sound the same but are spelled differently, while *in* and *grin*; *nap* and *tap*; *tricks* and *bricks*, *Now* and *Ow*; *smoke* and *poke* have rimes which are spelled the same.
- Compare the version of the story which is recounted in the poem with the composite version produced by the class that you wrote on the board. Where there are differences, ask the children to say which version they prefer and why. Discuss the ending, contrasting it with the wolf hobbling home in Swinger's version.

Activities

- Learn the poem as a class, with children being responsible for different lines, and recite it with actions, perhaps for a class assembly.
- Provide the children with sets of word cards which can be sorted into pairs of rhyming words. Include words that appear in the poem, but add other similar ones to reinforce familiarity with sound-symbol correspondence, for example, *straw*, *raw*, *draw*, *floor*, *thin*, *lap*, *brow*, *how*, *joke* and *huff*. Ask groups of children to sort the cards into pairs. Encourage them to experiment with other possible rhymes for the words, to add to their rhyming pairs. Ask an adult helper to work with them to write down their words on blank cards.
- In guided writing, help the children to retell the story, beginning by using a story map which represents graphically the journey of the three little pigs from house to house.
- Ask more able children to make lists of rhyming words, starting off each list with words from the poem. Encourage them to note whether the rhyming parts of the words are spelled the same.

Extension/further reading

Revolting Rhymes by Roald Dahl (Puffin) includes Dahl's version of the story of the three little pigs in poetic form. Read it to the children and discuss the differences between Dahl's and Swinger's versions. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka (Puffin) is told by the wolf. After reading Scieszka's version to the children, discuss how the wolf's telling of the story differs from the text here.

Link these activities to science, 'Materials and their properties', in which children learn to recognise materials and find out about their properties and uses. Have a collection of straw, sticks and bricks in the classroom to enable the children to examine their properties and suitability as building materials.