

# There was an old lady who swallowed the sea

Liz Rhodes shows how this big book can be used with year 1 children to teach literacy. Its variation of the classic 'There was an old lady who swallowed a fly'

## Learning objectives

- To reinforce the habit of reading from left to right.
- To encourage anticipation of rhyming words.
- To emphasise and teach initial sounds.
- To teach punctuation marks, capital letters and their correct use.
- To increase the atmosphere of a poem by using sound effects.
- To use dramatic effects and emphasis to make the most of reading a poem or telling a story.

## You will need

- A big book copy of *There was an old lady who swallowed the sea*.
- An anthology of poetry that also includes some nonsense poems.
- Whiteboards and pens.
- Templates of fish, crabs, squid, seals, sharks and whales.
- Crayons.
- Paints.
- Scissors.
- Prepared zig-zag books, one for each child.
- A box of percussion

instruments, including a rain stick.

## DAY ONE

### Shared reading

If the children already know *There was an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly* remind them of it and sing it with them. If they don't know it, spend a few minutes teaching it to them (Child's Play do a big book copy of this too).

Tell the class that this is another of the old lady's adventures (it must have taken place before the other one, which had a sad ending) and show them the book's cover. Talk about the illustration. Where do they think the old lady is? What makes them think that? Look at the creatures on the title page. Can the children identify them?

Read (or sing) the book through with great expression, and declaim the last line in each verse very dramatically: 'Oh no! Dear me!'. The children will soon join in. Finger point as you read the text to reinforce that is written from left to right. Point out how the writing goes

round in a circle to show what the old lady has swallowed.

The class will notice that at the same time the old lady's tummy is filling up with all the things she has ingested. Discuss the fact that this is a nonsense poem and that lots of poems are made up just for fun.

Ask the children if they can think of other nonsense poems you have shared with them. If there aren't many, you could read some during the week.

### Whole class work

Concentrate for a minute on the initial sound 's'. Which words in the story begin with that sound? Make a list of words the children suggest: sea, seal (not shark, that's 'sh') and then ask them to think of other words not in the story. We will focus on different initial sounds during the week and you can display the lists that you make each day.

### Independent activity

Explain to the class the difference between using 'a' and 'the' in the story. It changes from general to



particular, ie, the first time a creature is mentioned, it is 'a', but when it is referred to again, it is 'the' because it is the same one.

Ask the children to write some words on their whiteboards, putting 'a' or 'the' in front of each word.

### Plenary

Ask the children to share their work and emphasise again the difference in the use of 'a' and 'the'.

## DAY TWO

### Shared reading

Read or sing through the story again, but this time pause before the rhyming words to allow the class to join in.

Encourage the children to join in reading easily recognised or simple words (a, an, the, it, on, and, to, of, get, rid).

### Whole class work

This time ask the class





to think about the initial sound 'f'. They will come up with 'fish', 'fab' and 'fail' from the story. Then ask them to think of some others as well.

Point out the punctuation marks in the story: commas, full stops and exclamation marks. Explain what they are for, and also mention question marks. Draw attention to the use of capital letters and demonstrate how to make them on a keyboard by using the shift key.

### Independent activity

Ask the children to write some questions on their whiteboards, using a question mark at the end. They can then transfer their questions to sugar paper cut into cloud shapes for display.

### Plenary

Look at the questions the children have been asking and get the class to answer them. Show them that in answering a question, the words used are repeated. For example: 'Why did

the old lady swallow the crab?'. 'The old lady swallowed the crab to chase the fish'. Remind the children not to begin an answer with 'because' when writing.

## DAY THREE

### Shared reading

Read (or sing) the book through again. By this time, the children should be able to read quite a lot of the text with you. Mention the fact that because the story is written as a poem, each line begins with a capital letter, but in ordinary narrative text you should only use a capital letter at the beginning of sentences or for special words (names of people and places, days and months). Start a list of proper nouns on the interactive whiteboard and invite the children to add to it. Encourage them to think of the different categories as mentioned above.

### Whole class work

This time think of words with the initial sound 'sw': 'swallowed', 'swam' and any other words the children can think of.

### Independent activity

Tell the children that you are going to make a display of sea creatures, beginning with the ones in the story. Prepare some simple templates for colouring in and cutting out. Provide green and silver paper for cutting into weed shapes.

### Plenary

Ask the class to share their pictures and use them later to form the basis of your display. Label each type of creature once. Extra creatures can be added to the display during the week.

## DAY FOUR

### Shared reading

Read or sing through the book,

letting the children take the lead and only helping them out where necessary. For their independent work the children are going to make a book of the story, so to help them you could model this. If you feel it would be helpful for your class, write the captions for each page.

Use A3 paper, fold it in half lengthways and then fold again into four so that, front and back, you have eight pages. It might be useful to draw an old lady outline in each section as well.

### Whole class work

Back to initial sounds. This time look for 'cr' as in 'crab' and, again, ask the children for other 'cr' words.

### Independent work

As described above. Encourage the children to make their books as bright as possible and tell them that they will take their books home to share with their families. The front pages will have the title and the child's name on them. These books may take two sessions to complete.

### Plenary

Look at the books the children have made and display them until they are completed and you are ready for the class to take them home at the end of the week.

## DAY FIVE

### Shared reading

Tell the children that today you would like to read the story with sound effects. What kind of noises do you hear at the seaside? How could you make those noises? Have a box of appropriate musical instruments ready and explain that you could also make sounds with your

mouth and hands: whistling, hissing, swooshing, rubbing noises which get louder and softer.

The rain stick can sound like a wave running back over pebbles. Having practised your sounds together and decided what you are going to do at each part of the poem, try to read it through.

It would be better to have half the class reading with you and the other half making the sounds, orchestrated by your classroom assistant.

Then try it the other way round so that everyone has a chance to both read and accompany. Finally, try recording your performance. Play it back to the children. Is there any way they think they could improve it?

Make any adjustments the children think is necessary and then record for the last time. Put your recording in the reading corner so that the children can access it.

### Whole class work

The last initial sound is 'squ' as in 'squid'. The children should be able to find plenty of other words for this list.

### Independent activity

Finish off the books, making sure that they are as bright and colourful as possible.

### Plenary

Show off all your lovely books and, if you have time, repeat the story with accompanying sound effects.

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*There was an Old Lady who Swallowed the Sea*, illustrated by Pam Adams, published by Child's Play, ISBN: 9781846430848