

Using Predictable Stories and Poems to Develop Concepts of Print

This strategy is intended to support children's understanding of the following concepts of print:

- letter
- words (high frequency and decodable words)
- sentence structure
- punctuation
- provides vocabulary enrichment

Materials

- variety of books/poems that make use of predictable patterns
- blank sentence strips
- pocket chart

Ideas for a weeklong unit using a story or poem.

1. Read the story or poem you have selected to the children, inviting them to join in with you as you read (the second time) Children often do this spontaneously without always being able to talk about the pattern they have identified.
2. Each time you reread the story or poem omit words from a repetitive sentence pattern with each subsequent rereading--for example, moving from omitting very predictable words to omitting more difficult ones. In this way, you are encouraging students' use of syntactic knowledge.
3. Write some or all of the text, from the story or poem you are using, on chart paper. Use the chart to draw attention to concepts of print through activities like the following
4. Go on a High Frequency word hunt using a pointer or fly swatter to highlight the words discovered.
5. Draw children's attention to the appearance of the sentences and words through framing them, or moving a pointer along them as you read (e.g., find "big" words and "small" words).
6. Count the number of letters in a few selected words.
7. Point out the spaces between words and count the words in one or two sentences.
8. Show students the features of a sentence that help the reader know where it begins and ends (capitalization of first letter of first word, periods, question marks, or exclamation marks at the end).
9. Frame one sentence and ask students how many words it has in it, or frame a word and ask students who think they can read it.
10. Let students take turns being the reader. Allow enough time for all students to participate if they wish.
11. Distribute the sentences from the story or poem. Ask the children to come up to the chart and place their sentence strip in the correct place in the poem
12. Duplicate the poem or story on paper in a large font. Give one sentence to each child (or have students work in teams). The children cut up their sentence into the words it contains. Ask students to work in pairs to scramble their words and then put them back in the order of the sentence they were given. The students then paste their sentence on a large piece of white paper in the correct order. At this same time the large pocket chart is still available for students to use as a reference. Allow students to illustrate the sentence and combine all sentences to create a class book.
13. Make a cloze activity by leaving specific words out.