

Audience – Grade One

Objective

- ▶ To address outcomes from Grade One Science in which we study characteristics and needs of living things and the five senses.
- ▶ Students will understand how animals survive in winter and that bears hibernate.
- ▶ To cover outcomes in the ELA curriculum through drama, storytelling and word play.
- ▶ To use storytelling as a tool to teach students the curriculum, for students to share and learn in a creative and memorable way.
- ▶ Students will discuss the idea of community and friendship and how we can count on our friends and community to help us solve problems and support us in difficult times.

Rationale – In Grade One we are learning to read in ELA and in Science we study animal characteristics and needs.

As a class using modeling and repetition we have been practicing reading the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, illustrated by Eric Carle. We have been discussing bears and their habitat. We have been looking at animals in the story and studying their habitats, how they live, what they eat, etc. We discussed the sounds the animals make and made the sounds ourselves.

A perfect extension to this study and to the storytelling concept is the story, “Why the Bear Sleeps All Winter Long” by Annette Harrison. This story focuses on animals and especially the bear, in a fun and inviting way. The story allows the students to get involved and share their knowledge of animals and habitats. In addition this story addresses the social aspect of community and friendship. It brings into the classroom a discussion based on problem solving and how our friends can help us solve our problems. Included in this was the concept of school and classroom community can be compared to the community of animals.

Activity

1. Review animals we know and have discussed their sounds, colours, habitat, behaviour, etc.
2. Introduce the story as a tale about the bear and a theory as to why he hibernates each winter. This story includes a little challenge for the animals that they must solve. Read pages 57-62, “Why Bear Sleeps All Winter Long” from *Stories for Young Children* by Annette Harrison. Teacher reads once through and class listens. Harrison, Annette. *Stories of Young Children*.
3. Invite students to participate in the story as rabbits and bear. Discuss how we can be the animals in the story by getting into character and saying the lines the animals have.
4. Split the class into 2 groups. One group was the rabbits and the second group was the bear. I taught the rabbits to say their 4 lines and then taught the bears to say their 4 lines. There are 4 lines for everyone in the story as well (this chant can be done by inviting the class to join in on the first reading)
5. After the second reading discuss with the class what else we could we do in our roles as bears or rabbits. Students brainstormed for ideas together. They decided Bears could snore, grab food, pretend to eat and Rabbits could fill the winter store or make stomping sounds for putting mud in the log. We added these ideas to our third and subsequent readings of the story.

Activity Analysis

The best analysis for this activity with young students is their attention and participation in the story. If it holds their attention then it is a success.

This activity was a hit in my grade one class. As a group and individually all students stayed on task. In the first reading they listened to the story and began to join in on the repetitious part with some prompting from me as I read the story. It felt very natural for the students to use their minds to become the story and join in on the dialogue. I wanted to keep the storytelling atmosphere of listening as well so encouraged them for this run through to just say the words and continue to listen carefully. At times young ones can get carried away depending on how much storytelling you do in a class.

They gave suggestions on the actions for the animals. Each time I read the story after that they waited with anticipation until their part came up. They were fully engaged each time we read and dramatized the story. They asked to have the story told many times after the initial introduction and even suggested we incorporate musical instruments into the story telling. Students suggested we add more animals into the section of the story where they ask various animals for help with the bear.

As an exit note, I asked students to draw a picture of the story and a smiley face to record how they felt about that story.

In Science we made dioramas of animals and their habitats. Many of the students chose animals from the Bear story. They remembered characteristics of the animals through the exercise of role play in the song and aspects of the animal's habitat.

As we read and share the book, we talked about the use of rhyme, repetition, word recognition and have been able to review our colours. We discussed working as a class or on our own to make our own ending to the story. We have discussed storytelling as a narrative of the community of animals, how they live and how they decided to solve a problem. We added some of our own animals and ourselves to the story by continuing the theme of "What do you see?" in the story to make and tell our own class story.