

IMITATION GAMES

Activities to deepen children's understanding of a story:

Over time, develop a range of activities that help children to deepen their understanding of a story. Of course, the first activity is for the children to draw their own map. Here are some common activities that teachers draw upon at the stage of imitation:

- **Map and retell** – this is nearly always the first activity. The children must draw their own map and begin retelling as a class, in groups and pairs.
- **Retell** – in pairs or round a circle. This can be word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence. You can hold races (babble gabble), mime it or play tennis with the story.
- **Gesture** – children decide on a gesture to go with a section of the story. Stand in a circle and take it in turns to make a gesture perhaps with a word or phrase that sums up that part of the story. Everyone copies the gestures in turn.
- **Dressing up clothes** – build a bank of clothes/props for each story for role-play and performing.
- **Vocabulary hunt** – underline words or phrases that need discussing because they are new or hard to understand.
- **Favourite lines** – go round a group/circle with everyone saying their favourite line or word.
- **Character graph** – draw a feelings graph. Label with story quotes.
- **Role on the wall** – draw an outline round a child. Gather quotes from the story to build an impression of evidence from the tale.
- **Freeze frame** – children form a tableau at a key moment and can monologue or be interviewed.

- **Hot seating** – child or adult in role as character is interviewed. A variation is to be in role as news reporters and either create an article or film a news clip.
- **I can see** – pause at a key moment. Each child is in role – what can they see, hear, feel – what are they thinking, feeling, hoping, regretting. This game helps children become part of the story.
- **Gossip** – a character from the story gossips with someone else who is not in the story about what is happening.
- **Agony aunt** – a character in a dilemma visits an agony aunt.
- **Phone a friend** – sit children back to back in role as a character; a child phones a friend to talk about what is going on.
- **Trial** – put a character such as the troll on trial.
- **Writing in role** – this could be a message, letter, diary entry, advice note, police report ... Children talk and then write in role.
- **Story boxes or museums** – develop using images, photos, texts, objects from the story.
- **Miming scenes** – miming a scene from a story. Can the others guess which scene? Miming what might happen next.
- **Role-play** – this could be re-enacting a scene or role-playing the next scene – or a scene that must have happened but is not in the story.
- **Free role-play** – providing a play area such as a bear's cave or Grandma's cottage complete with dressing up clothes acts as a simple invitation to 'play at' the story.
- **Act the story** – works well if the teacher narrates the story as the children act it out.
- **Puppet theatre** – finger or stick puppets (or felt boards).

- **Objects or costumes** – telling the tale of the character, or placing an object from a story in the centre of the group to then decide what should happen.
- **Role-play area** – turning an area into a three bears' cave or Grandma's Cottage.
- **Cut up stories** – literally cut up a story into sections or pictures and the children have to re-sequence them and use this to retell their story.
- **The missing link** – a sequence of images from a story with a key section missing. Children draw and tell the missing section.
- **Cloze procedure** – choose a section that you want to focus upon, eg characterisation. Omit key words for the children to complete.
- **Retell and sketch** – you read a section or tell it – the children have to listen carefully and rapidly sketch the scene. Follow this with the next suggestion.
- **Listen and retell** – now read the same section aloud and the children have to then retell or write it down, recalling as much as possible.
- **First thoughts** – After hearing a story, everyone thinks of a word that captures their feelings or that seems to sum up a key theme in the story. On the count of 3, all say their word aloud. Collect and discuss.
- **Riddles** – write riddles for objects in the story.
- **Create a text** – to go with the story, eg a postcard arrives for Jack. The diary entry of a guard in Icarus. A wanted poster for the Troll.
- **Wondering** – take each character in turn and generate questions that we would like to ask the character.
- **Pause a story** – and write messages, advising a character or warning them. Draw a map for a character on a journey. Provide the old lady with a gingerbread recipe. Populate stories with texts.

- **Create a shoebox of story mementos** – items from a story, eg a slipper, a kitchen rag, a torn fragment from a dress, an invitation.
- **Small world** – children build a small world, using selected characters and objects from the story for play.
- **Story hats** – provide hats for different characters. Retell the story and pause at key moments – the child with the character hat on has to ‘talk in role’ or they role-play the story.
- **Character blog** – children or the teacher creates a blog for a main character.
- **Quickwrite** – children write down the learned text, concentrating on accurate punctuation, spelling and neat handwriting. This might be the whole text or an extract.
- **Dictation** – dictate key sentences from the text so children can practise accurate spelling and punctuation.
- **Spelling** – provide a spelling card with key words that will be needed for innovation – rehearse these.
- **Sentence** – play sentence games in relation to the story/text, eg sentence doctor (editing errors), boring sentences (adding to and extending sentences), joining sentences (using conjunctions to extend sentences).

Reading as a Reader

A key element to deepening understanding involves the phase ‘Reading as a Reader’. Once the children are familiar with the story, it can be turned into a Big Book for shared reading. Children need to see what the words look like when written down and see how the sentences are constructed and punctuated. You will want to discuss vocabulary and word choice, moving on to prediction, inference, imagining, raising questions, clarifying as well as summarising and talking about the effect on the reader.



Imitation

The hook/ creative context

| Key process | Key points | Comments |
|--|---|----------|
| Select, create or adapt a model/ exemplar text | Build in specific language features and structures for progress | |
| Oral learning of model text – internalising language patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class, groups & pairs • Word for word or in own words • Use physical map and actions • Activities to help children understand text, eg drama, writing in role, making porridge | |
| Reading as a READER | Turn text into a big book for rereading | |
| Play | Provide props, toys, costumes and specific areas for retelling and playing at the story, eg small world, 3 bears cave, etc | |

Innovation

| Key process | Key points | Comments |
|------------------------------|--|----------|
| Make a new version up | Change class map and retell new version – use objects and props to help with new choices. Children make maps and retell | |
| Shared writing | Write down parts of new story and illustrate – provide materials for children's free writing | |
| Play | Provide toys, costumes, maps, etc to encourage children to retell and change a known story, creating new versions | |

Invention

| Key process | Key points | Comments |
|--|--|----------|
| Daily – through play – adults intervene to open up possibilities and invent stories with children | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Story play areas eg zoo, farm, small world, etc• Play story games, use toys and pictures as starting points, drama to develop a story• Story corners + maps, writing equipment, cloak, hat, toys• Banks of characters, settings, objects, animals, events | |
| Daily | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several children have their story written down; use questioning to develop ideas• These stories are acted out | |
| Daily shared, guided and independent writing – including handwriting and phonics for spelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily stories, messages, letters, notes, labels, instructions, etc• Adult led groups – phonics, spelling, handwriting, writing from sounds to words to sentences (+ tricky words)• Writing through play | |
| Weekly | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least once a week, the class or groups create a story with adult mapping or writing the tale• Turn into Big Books for reading• Provide mini booklets/maps for children to create own stories | |

Story bank for early years and KS1

1. Mr Wiggle and Mr Waggle

Once upon a time there were two friends
– Mr Wiggle and Mr Waggle.

Mr Wiggle lived in this house
and Mr Waggle lived in that house.

Early one morning, Mr Wiggle decided
to go and visit Mr Waggle,
so he opened up the door – eeeeeeee!
popped outside – POP!
and closed the door – eeeeeeee!

Then he went up the hill and down the hill, up the hill and down the hill all the way
to Mr Waggle's house.

Where he knocked on the door,
Knock, knock, knock!
Do you think Mr Waggle woke up?
No, he did not.

So Mr Wiggle knocked on the door,
Knock, knock, knock!
Do you think Mr Waggle woke up?
No, he did not.
So Mr Wiggle went home ...

Up the hill and down the hill, up the hill and down the hill all the way home ...

Where he opened up the door – eeeeeeee!
Popped inside – POP!
and closed the door – eeeeeeee!

The next day – Mr Waggle decided
to go and visit Mr Wiggle
so he opened up the door – eeeeeeee!
popped outside – POP!
and closed the door – eeeeeeee!

Then he went up the hill and down the hill, up the hill and down the hill, all the way
to Mr Wiggle's house.

Where he knocked on the door,
Knock, knock, knock!
Do you think Mr Wiggle woke up?
No, he did not.

Knock, knock, knock!
Do you think Mr Wiggle woke up?
No, he did not.
So Mr Waggle went home ...

Up the hill and down the hill, up the hill and down the hill all the way home ...

Where he opened up the door – eeeeeeee!
Popped inside – POP!
and closed the door – eeeeeeee!

Now next day - Mr Wiggle and Mr Waggle decided
to go and visit each other....
so they opened up the door – eeeeeeee!
popped outside – POP!
and closed the door – eeeeeeee!

Then they went up the hill and down the hill, up the hill and down the hill, till they
met in the middle.

[Mr Wiggle and Mr Waggle then have a conversation that you can make up.]

Then they decided to go home.

They went up the hill and down the hill, up the hill and down the hill all the way
home ...

Where they opened up the door – eeeeeeee!
Popped inside – POP!
and closed the door – eeeeeeee!

Bee Bo Bendit
My story is ended.

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2. The Little Red Hen

Once upon a time there was a little red hen who lived on a farm.
Early one morning she woke up and went outside. There she found some corn.

"Who will help me plant the corn?" said the little red hen.

"Not I," said the bull.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Oh very well, I'll do it myself," said the little red hen –
and so she did!

"Who will help me water the corn?" said the little red hen.

"Not I," said the bull.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Oh very well, I'll do it myself," said the little red hen –
and so she did!

"Who will help me cut the corn?" said the little red hen.

"Not I," said the bull.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Oh very well, I'll do it myself," said the little red hen –
and so she did!

"Who will help me carry the corn to the mill?" said the little red hen.

"Not I," said the bull.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Oh very well, I'll do it myself," said the little red hen –
and so she did!

"Who will help me grind the corn?" said the little red hen.

Continue using the same pattern with – "Who will help me knead the bread?" / "Who will help me bake the bread?" ... until –

"Who will help me eat the bread?" said the little red hen.

"I will," said the bull.

"I will," said the cat.

"I will," said the rat.

"Oh no you won't," said the little red hen, "I'll eat it myself –
and so she did!

3. Little Charlie

Once upon a time there was a little boy called Charlie **who** lived on the edge of a big city.

Early one morning he woke up and his Mumma said, "Take this bag of goodies to your Grandma's." **Into** the bag she put a slice of cheese, a loaf of bread and a square of chocolate.

Next he walked, and he walked and he walked **till** he came to a bridge. There he met a cat – a lean cat, a mean cat.

"I'm hungry," said the cat. "What have you got in your bag?"

"I've got a slice of cheese, a loaf of bread," – **but** he kept the chocolate hidden!

"I'll have the cheese please," said the cat. **So** Charlie gave the cheese to the cat and it ate it all up.

Next he walked, and he walked and he walked till he came to a pond. There he met a duck – a snowy, white duck.

"I'm hungry," said the duck. "What have you got in your bag?"

"I've got a slice of cheese, a loaf of bread," – **but** he kept the chocolate hidden!

"I'll have the bread please," said the cat. **So** Charlie gave the bread to the duck and it ate it all up.

Next he walked, and he walked and he walked till he came to a tall town clock – tick tock, tick tock, tick tock. There he met not one, not two but three scruffy pigeons.

"We're hungry," said the pigeons. "What have you got in your bag?"

Unfortunately, there was only the chocolate!

Luckily, Charlie found some crumbs.

So he scattered them on the ground and the pigeons ate them all up.

Next he walked, and he walked and he walked till he came to a crossroads. There he met a ... Nobody.

"Mmmm, I'm hungry," said Charlie. "What have I got in my bag?"

"Mmmmmm, chocolate!" **So**, he ate it all up!

Next he walked, and he walked and he walked till he came to Grandma's house. There he Grandma.

"I'm hungry," said Grandma. "What have you got in your bag?"

Unfortunately, there was only the chocolate wrapper.

Luckily, grandma had pizza and chips for tea.

4. The Squeaky Story

Once upon a time
there was a little girl and a little boy
who went to stay
with their Grandma.

Last thing at night,
Grandma said, 'Goodnight,'
gave them a kiss,
turned out the light,
and closed the door ...

but the children said,
'It's too noisy!'

So, Grandma said,
'What you need
is a cat.'...

So, she said, 'Goodnight,'
gave them a kiss,
turned out the light,
closed the door ...
and the cat said, 'Meooooow!'

but the children said,
'It's too noisy!'

So, Grandma said,
'What you need
is a dog.'...

So, she said, 'Goodnight,'
gave them a kiss,
turned out the light,
closed the door ...
the cat said, 'Meooooow!'
and the dog said, 'Grrrrrrr!'

[Keep adding in animals – sheep, cow, horse, donkey, etc till:]

So, Grandma said,
'OK,' and she –
Took away
The cat – 'Meow!'
The dog – 'Grrrr!' etc.

Then, she said, 'Goodnight,'
gave them a kiss,
turned out the light,
closed the door ...

5. Cat, Bramble and Heron

Once upon a time there were three friends – Cat, Bramble and Heron who lived by a lake.

Early one morning they went out to seek their fortune.

First Bramble slithered through the grass but all that he found was a rusty old pot.

Next Cat sneaked along by the wall but all that he found was an old fishbone.

Finally, Heron flew down the road where he spied a pile of gold.

So Heron, Cat and Bramble divided the gold into not one, not two but three bags. Then they decided to hide their gold.

First, Heron spread out his wings, took the bag in his beak and flew high over the lake. Unfortunately, he saw his reflection in the water below. He thought that it was his brother so he called out, "Hello," and as soon as he opened his beak, the gold scattered down like rain.

Next, Cat crept along the wall and paused by a small hole. Unfortunately, Mr Mouse sneaked out and stole Cat's gold.

Finally, Bramble slithered along the hedgerows. Unfortunately, a thief sneaked by and stole Bramble's bag of gold.

And that is why, to this very day, Cat is still waiting outside Mr Mouse's hole.

And that is why, to this very day, Bramble snatches and grabs at your legs as you pass by.

And that is why, to this very day, Heron is standing still in the water forever staring, still looking, looking, looking for his lost bag of gold.

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