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DEVELOPING READING SKILLS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION THROUGH STORIES (IN THE SAMPLE OF THREE BILLY GOATS)

Annotation: This article highlights the importance of using small stories and fairy tales in teaching primary school learners. The author focuses on teaching language through cultural items that show nations' cultural diversity, such as stories of local people.

Keywords: teaching reading, stories, culture, effective learning, techniques of efficient teaching, interactive activities, exercises for consolidation, role-play.

The importance of reading to children from an early age is undoubtedly emphasised in the modern age. Even though modern technology is present in all spheres of children's education, the fact that reading has a significant role in children's future development and learning, both cognitive and emotional, should not be neglected. Reading skills enable learners to benefit from educational activities and fully participate in the social and economic activities they participate in; it is fundamental to progress and success in all other school subjects. Reading development involves the participation of children, parents, educators and the community as a whole. The parental role is invaluable in early reading to the child because, reading stories and telling fairy tales develops the child's vocabulary, imagination and faster understanding. It can be said that the development of reading skills also requires a stimulating reading environment. If children have the opportunity to grow up surrounded by picture books, books and other printed media, and have the chance to see adults read, it is more likely that they will develop reading habits and skills as well.

Parents and the family environment play a significant role in preparing children to read. Parents are the first teachers and spend the longest time with them (Morrow, 1995). They provide the intellectual stimulation and the emotional atmosphere essential to reading achievement (Irwin, 1967). Teachers can create activities specifically for the home environment that engage the entire family, such as taking a family survey of favourite foods or making a family tree. Where parents are (or maybe) illiterate, the home activities should include drawing. If the teachers could create as much harmony as possible between what is taught in the classroom and what the children do and experience outside it, the reading programme could become more meaningful for the children (Auerbach, 1995). Teachers could benefit from the help of parents to reinforce the ideas and lessons taught in school. It benefits pupils, parents and teachers where there is parental involvement. The ultimate goal is for parents to be aware and prepared to lay the foundations of literacy for their children before they enter primary school, and throughout their education, at least at the primary level.

It is very important to teach learners through effective and more enjoyable methods. Storytelling is one of them that can develop even reading vocabulary and critical thinking skills. Using stories in primary language learning classes offers numerous benefits:

Engagement and Interest: Stories captivate children's attention and imagination, making learning more enjoyable and motivating.

Language Acquisition: Stories provide exposure to authentic language use, including vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures, in context. This aids in natural language acquisition.

Cultural Understanding: Stories often reflect cultural values, traditions, and perspectives, helping children develop cultural awareness and empathy.

Listening Skills: Listening to stories improves comprehension skills as children follow plots, characters, and events, enhancing their ability to understand spoken language.

Speaking Skills: Stories can prompt discussions, encouraging children to express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings about the plot or characters.

Vocabulary Expansion: Contextual learning through stories helps children acquire new words and phrases more effectively than rote memorization.

Critical Thinking: Analyzing characters' motivations, predicting outcomes, and interpreting themes foster critical thinking skills.

Memory Enhancement: The narrative structure of stories aids memory retention, helping children remember new words and language patterns.

Emotional Development: Stories evoke emotions, allowing children to explore and understand their feelings in a safe and controlled environment.

Before you read, can you match the words with the pictures?

1 big goat



2 little goat



3 grass



4 very big goat

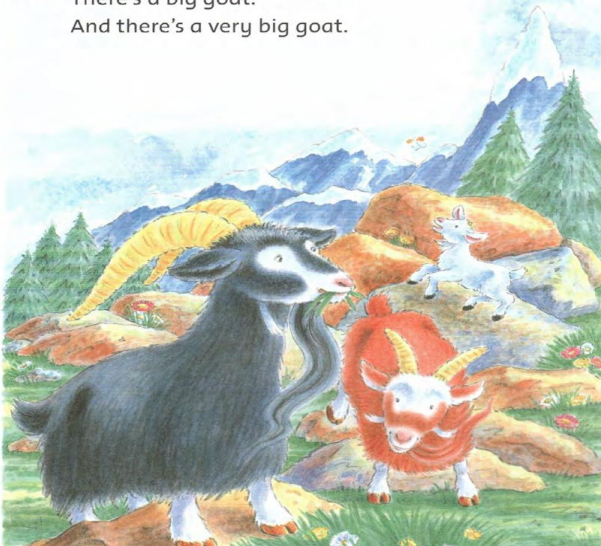
5 bridge



6 troll

7 river

THERE are three goats.
There's a little goat.
There's a big goat.
And there's a very big goat.

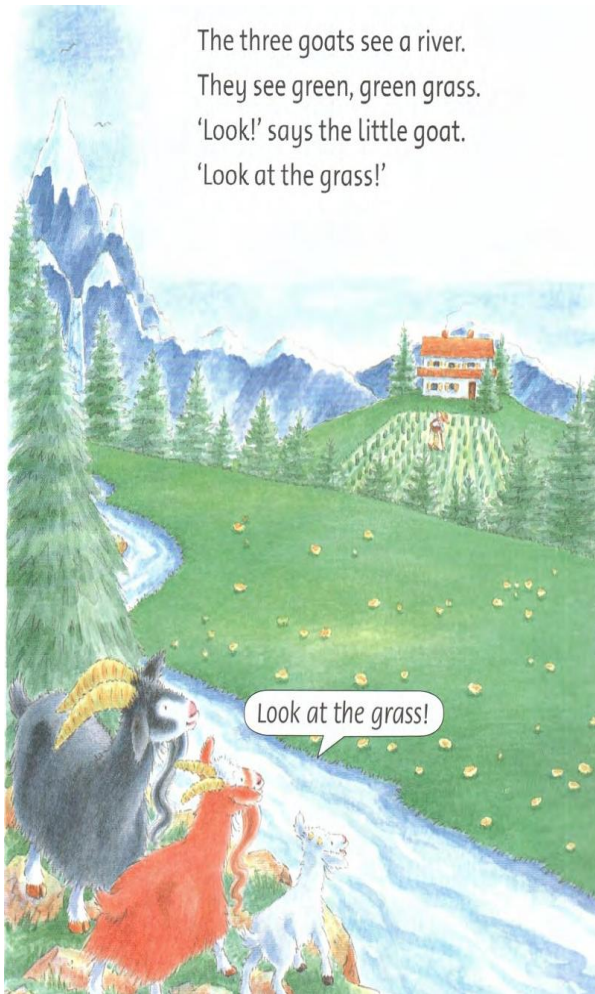


The three goats like grass.
'I'm hungry!' says the very big black goat.

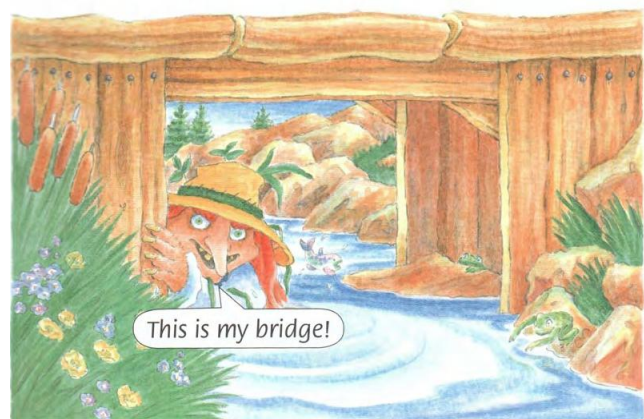


'I'm veru hunaru!' saus the bia red goat

The three goats see a river.
They see green, green grass.
'Look!' says the little goat.
'Look at the grass!'









The three goats see a bridge.









But there's a troll under the bridge.
He's a bad troll.
'This is my bridge!' says the troll.




Match the words to the pictures.

1 a happy goat
 a  b  c 

2 a hungry troll
 a  b  c 

3 a very big cat
 a  b  c 

4 a little dog
 a  b  c 

5 a bad boy
 a  b  c 





Answer the questions.

- The big goat is ...
 a black b red c white
- The very big goat is ...
 a black b red c white
- What do the goats like?
 a coffee b eggs c grass
- The goats are very ...
 a happy b hungry c angry
- The troll is under a ...
 a bed b bridge c tree
- He's a ... troll
 a good b happy c bad








Such pictured stories can be found on the internet easily. Then teacher can offer some activities to check the learner's comprehension.

Crossword.

bridge eat goodbye grass
 happy hit hungry over please see river








3  5  7  10 

6 "... don't eat me!"

1  2  3  4  5  6  7 

1 The goats ... a river

Match the pictures to the sentences.

-  a 'Come here!' says the troll.
-  b The troll wants to eat him.
-  c The black goat goes on to the bridge.
-  d There's a troll under the bridge.
-  e He runs at the troll and he hits him.
-  f The black goat goes over the bridge.
-  g 'OK. Here I come!' says the black goat.

After the reading teacher gives another pair of exercises to check their understanding or inspire learners for further language practice like creative writing or playing an act.

Such types of stories with pictures and comprehension activities can help learners interestingly develop reading skills. Other samples of stories and pictures can be found on the many websites and books, that are easily available for teachers.

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