

Family Literacy Guided Lesson

For Ten Little Rabbits

NY State Learning Standards

Related to English

Language Arts

Learning Standard 2:

Students will read, write, listen and speak for literary response and expression.

Students will read and listen to oral and written texts and relate texts to their own lives, and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts represent. As speakers, students will use oral language for self-expression.

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About the Book

Ten Little Rabbits

Virginia Grossman, Author and Sylvia Long, Illustrator

In this culturally sensitive counting book, authentic-looking rabbits celebrate Native American traditions such as game playing, fishing and weaving. As children count their way through the rabbits' day, they are treated to artwork that respectfully and accurately depicts the dress, totems, masks and blanket motifs of western Native American tribes. The book includes, at its conclusion, paintings of ten traditional weave designs and a description of the tribes they represent.

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The Language/Literacy Connection

Learning to Communicate

Learning to use speech and printed words to express feelings, exchange information and share experiences is an important task that begins in infancy and continues to be perfected into adulthood. While children are innately capable of communicating their needs and building meaningful connections with others, learning to effectively use language and literacy skills as a means of communication requires time and practice. It is an ability that is strengthened through experiences that tap many learning modalities.

Singing, dance, art, and the use of technology are examples of activities that tap different learning modalities and that enhance children's ability to communicate. Babies as young as 8 months old can be taught to use sign language to communicate needs, a skill that Marilyn Daniels, professor of speech communication at Penn State University, believes benefits preverbal communication and accelerates oral language development. Dance is an excellent way for children who are not yet verbally skillful to communicate their feelings and ideas. Toddlers, who do not yet talk, clap hands and move about to express joy, pleasure and delight. Through art activities children express their ideas. Learning the fundamentals of technology prepares children for meaningful communication with peers on a worldwide stage.

Although not specifically a book about communication, the pictures and narrative in *Ten Little Rabbits* illustrate a variety of avenues used by Native Americans to express ideas, communicate thoughts and send messages. Two graceful dancers ask for rain. Three busy messengers send out smoke signals. Five wise storytellers relate experiences and traditions. Nine festive drummers beat out messages on their drums. Likewise, the activities in this lesson explore a variety of ways that children and adult learners communicate with others.

Early Childhood Education-Infant/Toddler Level

Baby Signs- An Early Communication Strategy

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

14. Understands what you want when you extend your hands and say, *Come with me*

Expressive

Communication

13. Communicates nonverbally, using gestures or pushing and pulling behaviors

Before the Visit

Gather Needed

Materials

- None

Prepare Lesson

Props

- Familiarize yourself with the idea of using sign language with hearing infants. There are several Web sites – *Sign2me.com*; *Littlesigners.com*; as well as some informative books that can help.

During the Visit

- With the parent and infant sitting together, look at the illustrations in the *Ten Little Rabbits*. Babies may especially enjoy the green and red pattern on the inside cover. Talk about the rabbits in each of the illustrations. Take as much or as little time as needed to satisfy the child's interest. Ask questions like: *Isn't this an interesting pattern? Where do you think this rabbit and dog are going? What do you think these rabbits are talking about?* With preverbal children, ask the questions and then model the answers.
- Say to the parent: *Some of the pictures in this book show ways that Native Americans once used to communicate with each other. Find a picture that illustrates a way that Native Americans sent messages.* (Three rabbits are sending smoke signals.)

- Say: *Smoke signals were used by some Plains tribes for long distance communication.* Show the parent the brief explanation on the last page of the book.

Non-Verbal Communication

- Say: *Other pictures illustrate ways that Native Americans communicate their feelings or ideas like dancing and storytelling. Although communicating usually involves talking, gestures and facial expression can communicate feelings and thoughts.* Shrug your shoulders and ask: *What does it mean when I shrug my shoulders?* (You don't know something.) *What does it mean when I shake my head from left to right?* Shake your head no. (It means no.)
- Ask: *Can you think of other ways that we communicate without saying a word?* (Shake your head up and down for yes. Shake your finger for no, no, don't do that. Motion your hand for come here. Wave good-bye. Point at things you want.)

Baby Signs

- Say: *Around 10 or 12 months babies begin to use gestures to communicate with their parents. What gestures does (child's name) use to let you know what he/she wants?* (Points at things. Waves bye-bye. Raises arms to be picked up.)
- Say: *Some people call gestures like those baby signs. They are signs that babies use to communicate with other people. Baby signs help (child's name) communicate with you and can help with learning to speak and later with reading. Here are the steps to follow.*

First:

Decide something you want (child's name) to be able to tell you. Often parents would like their babies and toddlers to tell when they are hungry in a way that does not involve crying. Let's start with that.

Second:

Decide on a gesture that (child's name) can use to tell you that he/she is hungry. Some baby sign books suggest bringing your fingertips to your mouth as if you were putting food in your mouth. Demonstrate.

Third:

Each time (child's name) is hungry and each time you feed him/her, bring your fingertips to your mouth and say, "eat." When he/she copies your gesture to indicate hunger or eating, give him/her a big hug and say, *that's right. Eat! Be sure to provide food.*

Early Childhood Education-Preschool and School Age Levels

Communicating Feelings through Dance

During the Visit

PLS-4 Skills

Auditory

Comprehension

46. Completes analogies

Expressive

Communication

45. Understands –er endings

♦ With the parent and child sitting together, read the story of the *Ten Little Rabbits*. If the parent and/or child are readers ask them to share in the reading. Look at each illustration and ask questions that invite the child to participate in the story like: *What is this rabbit doing?* Possible answers might include: riding, going for a ride, or, riding with a dog. Say: *He's going on a journey and his dog is pulling him. What do you think about the design?*

on his blanket? For each page think of a question or action, or ask the parent to think of a way, to draw the child into the story. Say to the parent: *Asking questions, talking about the illustrations, and imitating the actions described in the narrative are good ways to keep (child's name) interested in the story and help him/her understand and remember information from the book.*

Before the Visit

Gather Needed

Materials

- ♦ Several scarves
- ♦ Large hoops
- ♦ Bells
- ♦ Rhythm sticks
- ♦ Portable tape player
- ♦ Tapes of music with different tempos

Prepare

Lesson Props

- ♦ None

♦ Turn to the page that shows "two graceful dancers asking for some rain." Say: *What are the rabbits in this picture doing?* (Dancing.) Say: *They're dancing to ask for rain so they will have a good harvest. Dancing is a way to communicate a feeling or story or request. Sometimes people chant or sing while they dance and sometimes they just move to the music they hear. Let's all try to dance like the rabbits in this picture.*

Communicating Through Dance

- ♦ Stand in a circle with the child and parent and perform a short impromptu dance.
- ♦ Say: *People all over the world dance in different ways for different reasons. What are the names of dances that you know?* (The Macarena. Jazz. Tap dance. Ballet.)

- ♦ Say: *Sometimes people dance when they are celebrating. Some dances, like ballet, are dances that tell a story. Sometimes people dance to communicate a feeling. That's what we're going to do today, dance and move around to tell each other how music makes us feel.*
- ♦ Play music. Start with something slow and

flowing to help parents and children get in this mode. Use the scarves and model your feelings through body and scarf movements. Continue with a faster tempo and other props, bells, hoops, rhythm sticks. Close with quiet music to end the visit in a peaceful pace.

Dance to the rig-a-jig-jig in this traditional North American children's song.

As I Was Walking Down the Street

As I was walking down the street
Down the street, down the street
A little friend I chanced to meet
Hi-ho, hi-ho, hi-ho.
A rig-a-jig-jig and away we go
Away we go, away we go
A rig-a-jig-jig and away we go
Hi-ho, hi-ho, hi-ho.

- ♦ In subsequent verses change the words little friend to the name of an animal.
- ♦ Dance as the animal might dance. Use your imagination!
- ♦ A lumbering elephant
- ♦ A waddling duck
- ♦ A slithering snake
- ♦ A hopping rabbit
- ♦ A jumping frog

Parenting Education Activity

Storytelling: A Time-Honored Way To Communicate Family History

The five storytellers in the *Ten Little Rabbits* are participating in the time-honored tradition of communicating ideas and events through stories. Storytelling helps children conceptualize ideas, acquire language fluency, develop imagination, and learn to listen – all skills that enhance language, reading and writing abilities. And more than these things, when parents share family stories with children, children learn about their family legacies, discover their place in the scheme of their family's history, and bond with their parents. The goal of this parent education lesson is to give parents strategies for developing stories to share with their children.

Stories from Family Photos

- ◆ You need a photograph from your family album and a small notebook. Take several magazine pictures of people, places and activities to use in the event the family does not have family photos. Show the picture from your family album and relate a story about the picture.
- ◆ Say: *Family photographs are great reminders of special times in the life of families. They are usually accompanied with a story about the people or event.*
- ◆ Tell a story about the photograph you brought. Here is an example.

This is a photograph of my father-in-law when he was ninety years old. I loved my father-in-law, but he was a argumentative old man. I remember well the day this picture was taken. It was Christmas and I had made a special gift for him, a shirt with the words "Ninety and Still Driving" embroidered across the front. I thought he would like the shirt because he was proud that he was still independent and could drive himself around. Boy was I wrong! He hated the shirt and lost no time telling me so. In fact, he kept telling me all day long! By the end of the day I was feeling pretty argumentative myself!

- ◆ Ask: *Do you have a family photograph that has a story you can share with me? (If the parent does not have a photograph, ask him/her to choose one from among the magazine pictures.)*
- ◆ Give the parent time to tell his/her story. Prompt with the Who, When, Where, and What questions of storytelling. *Who is in the picture? When and where was it taken? What was happening?*
- ◆ At the end of the parent's story say: *What a great story! You're a talented storyteller. We should write your story to preserve it for your children.*
- ◆ Have the parent write the story in the notebook, or dictate the story for you to write. As an alternative, use a tape recorder.
- ◆ Say: *Children are our next generation of storytellers. Help (child's name) develop storytelling skills by relating memories about photos in your family album.*

Teach Your Child to Communicate by Modeling Communication Strategies

Here are some easy ways to model communication skills and teach those skills to your child.

- ◆ Talk to your child everyday about the experiences you share together. Routine activities like shopping for groceries, preparing the noon meal, and milking the cows are exciting topics for children. Make it a two-way conversation by giving your child space to share his/her ideas. This is storytelling for young children.
- ◆ Talk clearly and use correct grammar. Repeat words and phrases often and use gestures to help your child understand their meaning.
- ◆ Show interest when your child talks to you. Get down on his/her level. Look into his/her eyes. Listen to his/her ideas and add to those thoughts. Take time to finish the conversation.

Interactive Literacy Activities Between Parents and Their Children

A Few Fun Communication Activities

The *Ten Little Rabbits* use a variety of methods to communicate their ideas to others. They tell stories, dance, send smoke signals and beat out patterns on their drums. Their traditional weave patterns tell others what nations they belong to and in their games children learn to read animal tracks and weather signs that will help them be effective adults. The following literacy activities are fun ways that parents and children can work together to improve communication skills.

Family Storytelling

Fill-in-the-blank stories are an easy place to begin.

It's fun to create stories with children, but sometimes children have a hard time getting started or remembering to include a middle and an end in their tales. You can help get their creative juices flowing by scripting a story and leaving blank spots that they can fill in. The story can be about an experience that you and your child have shared. Here's an example based on an Even Start home visit.

*There is a little girl/boy named _____.
Every week a teacher comes to the little girl/boy's house. The teacher's name is _____. Today the teacher brought a book about _____. The best page in the book was the one that told about _____. After we read the book I _____.*

After a few scripted story sessions your child will become an adept storyteller creating story lines for you to complete.

Trail Signs

On a Saturday afternoon try your skill at blazing and tracking trails. Begin by agreeing on a few coded signs that both the blazers and the trackers will use. Use traditional trail signs like piled stones, knotted grass, and arrows made of twigs, or secret family trail signs. Divide the family into two teams – blazers and trackers. Be sure that there is an adult on each team for safety's sake. Give the blazers a half hour head start. Their job is to walk through the woods or neighborhood leaving trail signs for the trackers to follow. The trackers job is to follow the route established by the blazers by looking for and following the trail signs.

Blazing trails is a form of communication that involves both "reading" and "writing." The blazers "write" coded messages for trackers to "read" and follow. That's what literacy is about. Someone, a writer, uses "codes" called letters and words to communicate a message or story for others to read. Readers then use their skill to unlock the codes and interpret the message.

Train Whistle Signals

Codes are a way to communicate messages. Train engineers use train whistles to send coded messages in combinations of short (0) and long (-) blasts that can be understood by other railroad workers. Make train whistles by blowing across the opening of plastic soda bottles and send coded train signals to members of your family. Experiment with commonly used railroad signals. Or, create a family code system to send secret family codes to one another. One long blast might mean time for dinner. Two long blasts might mean Dad's on his way up from the barn. Six short blasts might mean, "Help the pasture fence is down."

Some Commonly Used Railroad Signals

- ◆ 1 long blast (-) means the train is coming into the station.
- ◆ 2 long blasts (--) mean the train is leaving the station.
- ◆ 2 long, 1 short and 1 long blast (--0-) mean the train is approaching a crossing.
- ◆ 6 short blasts (000000) is an alarm signal that something is wrong with the track.

Adult Literacy - ABE Level

Business Letters

Whether making a request or settling a dispute, writing an effective business letter is an important communication skill. Keeping a copy of letters mailed to people and companies that you do business with can be a big benefit when situations are difficult.

Situations That Call for Business Letters

- ♦ Asking for a job
- ♦ Requesting medical records
- ♦ Ordering supplies through the mail
- ♦ Communicating with your child's school
- ♦ Communicating with landlords
- ♦ Dealing with small claims court or family court
- ♦ Writing to government agencies like the Motor Vehicle Department, the IRS, or the Department of Immigration

Seven Steps to Follow in Preparing a Letter

- 1. Know what your goal is.** Why are you writing the letter? What do you hope to achieve?
- 2. Know the facts.** How can you verify that the facts are correct?
- 3. Send the letter to the right person.** Who should receive the letter? How is his/her name spelled? What is his/her correct address?
- 4. Prepare a "Practice" Letter (Draft).** What are the best words and sentences you can use to get your message across?
- 5. Write the final letter.** Does the letter look neat? Have you used a word processor or your best handwriting? Are the words spelled correctly? Have you used correct grammar? Will your letter give the reader a good impression of you?
- 6. Decide on the best way to mail the letter.** Is regular mail okay or should you send the letter by certified mail?
- 7. Keep a Copy.** Keep a copy of the letter to refer to it in the future if there is a need.

Write a Letter

Help Mary Brown write a letter to her former landlord. Her goal is to get back money she gave to him as a security deposit on an apartment she lived in from March 25, 2001 to July 16, 2002.

Here are the facts.

- ♦ She gave a \$100.00 security deposit to the landlord when she moved into the apartment.
- ♦ She has the receipt for the deposit.
- ♦ Before she moved out she cleaned the apartment.
- ♦ On the day she moved Mary Brown and the landlord walked through the apartment to make certain there were no problems.

The landlord's name and address are:	Mary's new address is:
Mr. Allen Duprey, Landlord	Mary Brown
136 North Forest Hill Road	PO Box 55
Edwardsville, NY 14450	Alienville, NY
	13360

- ♦ **Your Address** – where you receive mail now,
- ♦ **The Date** – the date you write the letter
- ♦ **Inside Address** – address of the person you are writing to,
- ♦ **Salutation** – Dear _____,
- ♦ **The body** – short, clear letter that explains why you are writing and what you want,
- ♦ **Closing** – Sincerely,
- ♦ **Your signature** – your full name,
- ♦ **Enclosures** – list of documents included with the letter such as copy of the receipt.

Adult Literacy-GED Level

Clichés-Are They a Good or Bad Form of Communication?

A cliché is an expression that is used by many people again and again. It is a metaphor that conveys a meaning that is instantly understood. While considered by some teachers and writers to be an offending form of written communication, most people use cliché in their everyday speech. And, some writers, like advertising copywriters and political speechwriters, use clichés often.

Is it a cliché? Put it to the test!

Read the first half of a sentence. Do you know how the sentence ends because it is an expression that you have heard often? If you do, it is probably a cliché.

Can you complete these clichés?

- 1 Wish upon a _____.
- 2 All's well that _____.
- 3 It was as easy as _____.
- 4 Grasping at _____.
- 5 Keep your fingers _____.
- 6 Forgive and _____.
- 7 It was a smoking _____.
- 8 As quick as a _____.
- 9 Light at the end of the _____.
- 10 Cross that _____ when we come to it.

How many did you know? Look at the bottom of the page for the answers.

1. star, 2. ends well, 3. pie, 4. straws, 5. crossed, 6. forget, 7. gun, 8. mouse, 9. tunnel, 10. bridge

How often do you hear clichés or see them in print?

As you listen to the television and read newspapers, magazines and books this week, make a list of the clichés you hear and read. Sports writers and broadcasters, political speeches, weather reports and advertisements are particularly rich sources of clichés.

What message does the cliché convey?

Clichés are metaphors that convey a meaning other than the literal meaning expressed in their words. For example, if I were to say that the clichésite.com web site offers a list of clichés **as long as your arm**, I don't literally mean that you will find a list equal to the length of your arm. I simply mean that you will find a very long list.

Choose a cliché from the list to the left and write the meaning conveyed by the cliché here.

What do you think?

Are clichés a useful form of expression for writers and speakers? Should we use them in our written and oral communications? What is your view? Take a stand and write a paragraph to defend your position.

Adult Literacy -ELL Level

Communication Words

Learning to communicate using the tools offered through the postal service is an important skill for English language learners. This lesson contains vocabulary for addressing an envelope.

Vocabulary

- ♦ Post office
- ♦ Envelope
- ♦ Address
- ♦ Return address
- ♦ Stamp
- ♦ Zip Code

Lesson Props

- ♦ An envelope
- ♦ A sheet of writing paper and a pen
- ♦ 37 cent stamp
- ♦ Several cancelled stamps
- ♦ Several junk mail envelopes
- ♦ A photograph of the local post office
- ♦ Two highlighters in different colors, i.e., one yellow and one green

Introduce Vocabulary

- ♦ Point to the envelope. Say, *This is an envelope. What is this?* Hand the envelope to the student and motion for him/her to repeat, *This is an envelope.* Pick up a junk mail envelope. Say, *This is an envelope. What is this?* Hand the envelope to the student and motion for him/her to repeat, *This is an envelope.* Repeat using multiple pieces of junk mail envelopes.
- ♦ Using the 37 cent stamp and multiple cancelled stamps, repeat process to introduce *stamp.*
- ♦ Place a junk mail envelope on the workspace. With yellow highlighter, highlight the address on the envelope. Point to the address and say, *This is the address. What is this?* Motion for the student to repeat, *This is the address.* Point to the address on other junk mail envelopes and ask, *What is this?* Motion to the student to repeat, *This is the address.*
- ♦ Use the second highlighter (different color) and repeat process to introduce *return address.*
- ♦ Using a junk mail envelope, circle the zip code portion of the address. Point to the zip code and say, *This is the zip code. What is this?* Motion for the student to repeat, *This is the zip code.* On the same envelope circle the zip code in the return address. Say, *This is a zip code. What is this?* Motion for the student to repeat, *This is a zip code.* Repeat with additional pieces of mail.
- ♦ Place the photograph of the post office on the work space. Say, *This is the post office. What is this?* Motion for the student to repeat, *This is the post office.* Repeat three times.

Reinforce Vocabulary

- ♦ Lay the lesson props (envelopes, stamps, photograph) on the workspace. Say, *Give me an envelope.* Motion for the student to give an envelope to you. Repeat procedure asking student to give you or point to other items. *Give me a stamp. Give me the photo of the post office. Point to a zip code. Point to an address. Point to a return address.*
- ♦ For more advanced learners, reverse the roles. Have student ask you for an envelope, a stamp or point to an address, a return address, a zip code. Encourage the student to use whole sentences, i.e., *Give me an envelope.*

Reinforce Concepts

- ♦ Lay the junk mail envelopes on the workspace. With the yellow highlighter, highlight the address. Point to the other envelopes and say, *Highlight all the addresses in yellow. Highlight the return addresses in green. Use the pen to circle the zip codes.*

Practical Application

- ♦ Give the student the envelope, stamp and pen. Say, *Address this envelope to a friend. Point to the center of the envelope. Say, What should be written here?* Motion for the student to answer, *The address.* Ask the student to write the address.
- ♦ Point to the upper right corner of the envelope. Say, *What should be written here?* Motion for the student to answer, *The return address.* Give the student time to write the return address.
- ♦ Provide necessary assistance and support.