

Lesson Plan: Fishing for Nursery Rhymes

By [Sarah Sahr](#)

One of the greatest things about teaching really young learners is how they are just like sponges, soaking up huge amounts of information, especially when it comes to songs and rhymes. Nursery rhymes are a great way to not only teach speaking patterns but also a little bit of culture. This reading and listening lesson assumes students already understand the concept of rhyming and a little bit about fishing...

Materials: Several 3"x5" cards, plastic rulers (plastic rulers work best because they have holes), string, magnets, picture print outs, paperclips

Audience: Early primary, upper-beginner to intermediate language proficiencies (Grade 2 might be the best age for these activities)

Objectives: Students will be able to recognize a variety of nursery rhymes by "fishing" for the correct item.

Preclass Preparation

Make rhyming cards:

On 3"x5" cards, write the following words in big block letters:

SNOW	WALL	MOON	BE
GO	FALL	SPOON	THREE
RULE	DIDDLE	DUB	WIFE
SCHOOL	FIDDLE	TUB	LIFE

Make fishing poles & "fish"

Construct as many fishing poles and sets of "fish" as the number of groups you will break your students into.

Fishing Poles

1. Tie about two feet of string to a plastic ruler.
2. At the other end of the string, tie a magnet. It's best to use small horseshoe or ring magnets.

Sets of "Fish"

3. Print and cut out pictures of nursery rhymes on card stock (make sure to have at least one set of five different nursery rhymes for each group). On the back of each picture, write the title of the nursery rhyme it depicts in big block letters.
4. Fasten a paperclip to each picture.

Nursery Rhymes

Mary Had a Little Lamb ([Photo](#)) ([Print](#))

Humpty Dumpty ([Photo](#)) ([Print](#))

Hey Diddle-Didle ([Photo](#)) ([Print](#))

Rub a Dub Dub ([Photo](#)) ([Print](#))

Three Blind Mice ([Photo](#)) ([Print](#))

Great Websites to find nursery rhymes:

[Nursery Rhymes - Lyrics, Origins & History!](#)

[Nicky's Nursery Rhymes](#)

[Zelo](#)

Introduction

Gather students together on the floor for a reading and listening activity (a reading corner or area with carpet works best). Read a few nursery rhymes from a book. These nursery rhymes will be used throughout class. If necessary, you could read the nursery rhymes more than once, just to get the students excited about the rhyming patterns and silliness of nursery rhymes. While students are still on the floor, make small groups of three students each. Give each group a set of rhyming cards, mixed up. Groups will have to match the words that rhyme. As a class, match a few pairs of cards together. Once students get the idea of what needs to be done, have them complete the last pairs on the floor in their groups, sitting in a triangle.

Once groups have finished matching all the rhyming cards, read the nursery rhymes again, one at a time. At the end of the reading, ask students, "Which words go with this nursery rhyme?" Students should identify the words that go with the correct nursery rhyme. (Repeat this function for each nursery rhyme.) Once all the rhyming cards have been matched with the correct nursery rhyme, ask each group to come up with more words that rhyme with the sets.

By now, students should be familiar with each nursery rhyme.

Information

With the students still in groups and the matched words on the floor, hand out the "fish." Students should place the "fish," picture side up, with the correct set of words. The teacher should walk around helping each group. Once all pictures are matched, and if there is time, read the nursery rhymes again. If possible, have students say the nursery rhyme with you.

Create the "pond":

Leaving the "fish" on the floor so that each paperclip can be seen, collect the rhyming cards from each group of three. The collection of pictures on the floor is now a "pond of fish," with each group having their own "pond" to fish in.

Bring out "fishing poles" and demonstrate:

Quickly, teach students how to fish. The magnet at the end of each "pole" will pick up a paperclip and, therefore, students will be able to catch a "fish." Allow all students to practice fishing.

Time to Fish!

One student per group will have a fishing pole. Read a nursery rhyme. While you are reading, the student with the fishing pole has to catch the "fish" that matches the nursery rhyme, from among the group's full set of "fish." When the student catches the "fish," he or she should hold it up over his or her head so you can see that his or her group has finished. (If a student catches the

wrong “fish”, he or she should place it back in the “pond” and try again.) Once complete, repeat the activity with a new student fishing each time you read a new nursery rhyme.

If time allows, turn the “fish” over and do the same activity with the titles of the nursery rhymes, not the pictures.

Once the class has finished fishing, collect fishing poles and put them someplace safe for reuse. You can use them for almost anything. For example: Call out shapes, colors, vocabulary words, or math problems with the solutions on the floor, and have students “fish” for the correct answers. The list of possibilities is endless!

Closure

Bring students back to their desks and project the nursery rhymes on a wall, one at a time. (This can be done with large chart paper, an overhead projector, or LED.) Read them together as a class.

Ask any students if they want to read the nursery rhyme alone, with no help.

Sarah Sahr works at TESOL and has her Masters in ESL administration. She has managed a school in Vietnam, trained teachers in South Korea, implemented school reform in Qatar, run a circus train classroom for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, and taught 8th grade writing in Maryland. Prior to all that, Sarah was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia. She is also a certified ashtanga yoga instructor and has managed an eco-lodge in Chugchilan, Ecuador.