



FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR ESL

Listen, Understand, Speak, Read, Write and Create Language

NFB ESL videos lend themselves easily to activity-oriented teaching and learning. Whole language and cooperative classroom strategies are incorporated so that the language utilization activities are purposeful, meaningful, and fun. Students won't even notice that they are learning vocabulary lists, answering comprehension questions, writing grammatically correct sentences, and reading aloud!

"The activities allow the children to demonstrate their understanding and... develop language acquisition."

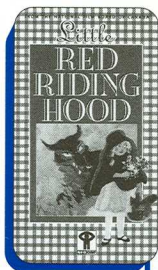
— Marina Salhany Walter, ESL Teacher

Grades 4-6 Beginner Series

Little Red Riding Hood

Answers to the well-known five Ws: Who, What, When, Where and Why, provide the key points to the plot of any story.

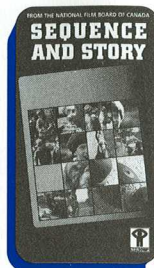
- 1 Watch the video and elicit the answers to the five Ws from the class.
- 2 Chart the answers to the questions so that students see a print version of the visual images they watched.
- 3 This print version will become a class story that can be illustrated by the class in a big picture-book format.
- 4 Students can practice reading it aloud to each other and then read it to younger children in the school.



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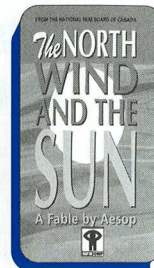
Sequence and Story

- 1 Depending on the number of students in the class, buy one or two disposable cameras that have 24 or 36 shots.
- 2 Pick one day of the week, and during that day provide each student with an opportunity to take three or four pictures.
- 3 If your school has the materials and an appropriate room, develop the film with the students; if not, see if your media centre can do it, or take the film to the local pharmacy for processing.
- 4 When you get the film back, number the pictures on the back with a felt pen and shuffle them like a deck of cards.
- 5 Divide the class into small groups and give each group about ten pictures.
- 6 The groups must put them in an order that describes a day in the life of their school.
- 7 The students can glue the pictures in a row along the left edge of a large sheet of paper.
- 8 Depending on their linguistic ability, they can either write a sentence beside each picture describing what is happening and when it happened during the day; or they can give the teacher this information, who then writes the sentence which they can practice reading.



The North Wind and the Sun: A Fable by Aesop

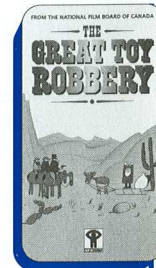
- 1 Discuss the story so that the plot is broken down into very specific actions, e.g.:
 - the wind and the sun are talking;
 - the man is walking on the ground;
 - the wind is trying to blow the man's coat off;
 - the sun is sending heat rays;
 - the man takes his coat off.
- 2 Put the list of actions on the board or on an overhead, so that students can refer to it while they are working.
- 3 Have examples of flip books on hand to demonstrate how they work. These are books you hold in one corner with your hand, flipping the pages at the open side. The action appears to move as in animation.
- 4 Ask the class what is happening in the story of these flip books.
- 5 Pair up students and give each pair fifteen squares of paper stapled together.
- 6 Together, they must create a flip book of the story they watched on video, allowing three drawings for each statement — the beginning of the action, the middle of the action and the end of the action.
- 7 This activity will prompt lots of discussion.
- 8 When finished, students can show their flip books and tell the story to each other or to younger children in the school.



The Great Toy Robbery

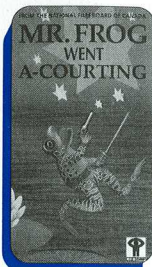
Here's an opportunity for students to be movie reviewers and publicists.

- 1 Discuss the job of the movie reviewer, e.g.:
 - they recommend who should see the film;
 - they comment on the action in the film;
 - they comment on the story line;
 - they rate the film: then review thumbs up or down.
- 2 Students then review this video:
 - recommend an appropriate age group to see it;
 - rate the action in the video (*good, bad, O.K. for a cartoon*);
 - discuss the main idea of the story;
 - rate the video: thumbs up or down.
- 3 Discuss the job of a publicist, e.g.:
 - publicizing a screening of a film.
- 4 Divide the class into small groups and have them make posters advertising the screening of the video on a specific day, at a specific time and in a place where students would come.
- 5 If they have determined that the video would be appropriate for grades K-2, make sure they aim the posters to that grade level.
- 6 Screen the video and have your students count how many other students came to the screening.
- 7 Were their posters effective?



Mr. Frog Went A-Courting

Although this is a simple story told through a simple song, the illustrations are rich and intricate. They are a perfect starting point for the exploration of descriptive language — adjectives.



- 1 Using the brainstorming technique, how many different words can the class discover and list to describe the wedding breakfast?
- 2 Have students, either individually or in small groups, use these words to create sentences that describe the scene.
- 3 Use these same sentences to build a class-created descriptive paragraph of the scene and the action that happens in the scene.
- 4 Have students suggest other possible endings for the story.

A Sense of Sound

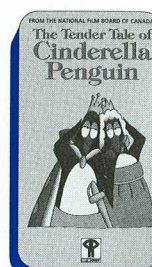
Before viewing the video, elicit words from students that describe sounds, e.g. loud, quiet, soft, squeaking, low.



- 1 While watching the video, ask students to write down five different sounds that they heard.
- 2 As a class, have the students put their words into the categories they created before viewing the video. They may have to create some new descriptors for categories.
- 3 Choose four pairs of students, give each a tape recorder and a watch and, with an older student (monitor), send each pair to a different place, e.g. the schoolyard during recess, the school office, the street in front of the school, the gymnasium during a noon activity.
- 4 The students must tape the sounds of the place for five minutes.
- 5 Divide the class into four groups, giving each group a tape to listen to. Students should not be listening to their own tape.
- 6 Each group must write down all of the sounds that they hear and then draw a group picture depicting the sounds and activities in the tape.
- 7 When finished, display the pictures.
- 8 Play the tapes in a different sequence and have the class match the tapes with the pictures.
- 9 Students should explain their reasons for the matches they made.

The Tender Tale of Cinderella Penguin

This story is a takeoff on the classic story of Cinderella.

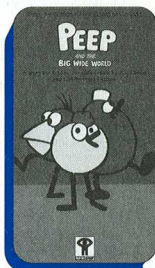


- 1 Have four or five different copies and/or versions of the story available.
- 2 Try to have versions with lots of colourful pictures.
- 3 Read one version aloud to the class and discuss it, i.e., detail the sequence of events, name the cast of characters, determine the time period in which the story took place.
- 4 Watch the video.
- 5 Have the class determine which elements from the video and print story were the same, which elements were totally different, and which elements were modifications of the original story.
- 6 Did these modifications increase or lessen their enjoyment of the story? Why?
- 7 Divide the class into groups and give each group one of the books to look at and read.
- 8 Allow students to read the books to each other and to discuss how they are different from the one that the teacher read to the class.

K-3 Intermediate Series

Peep and the Big Wide World

Peep, the newly hatched chick; Quack, the cantankerous duck; and Chirp, the excitable robin, are drawn with simple geometric shapes. These characters are easy to reproduce using cutout circles, rectangles, triangles and ovals, and using fasteners that allow the various shapes to move independently.



- ① Have students create their own Peeps, Quacks and Chirps.
- ② Try to make sure that there is an even distribution of the characters within the class.
- ③ Groups of students can also use large brown paper sheets to create various backgrounds for the characters, e.g., *barnyard, street, schoolyard, shopping mall, fire station and park playground.*
- ④ The necessary elements are in place for students to create their own puppet plays of the characters' adventures while discovering these places.
- ⑤ Students can either perform spontaneously after a few minutes of group planning or discussions; or, in small groups, they can write a story outline first and then adlib the specific dialogue.