

The Gruffalo

Storybook Song

This activity can be done with any number of children; with the whole nursery, in small key-worker groups or with a single child. Storybook activities use well-known tunes as familiar melodies, which makes it easier for children to engage quickly with the activity of reading. For this book, the melody from 'Down in the Jungle' scans well with the words, and has an energy and sense of fun about it that matches the story.

Regularly reading stories with children improves their concentration, vocabulary, memory and sequencing; singing the stories is an approach that can be utilised to further embed these skills. Using well-known tunes to sing the stories can help children to remember the words more easily, in turn helping to accelerate and embed the learning.

Areas of learning & development

Communication and language:

- Understanding
- Speaking

Preparation for literacy:

- Reading

Resources

1. The story book *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Axel Scheffler.
2. Sufficient space to make a circle, so everyone can see the book.

Song words

*A mouse took a stroll through the deep
dark wood*

*A fox saw the mouse and the mouse
looked good*

*"Where are you going to, little brown
mouse? Come and have lunch in my
underground house"*

*"It's terribly kind of you fox, but no. I'm
going to have lunch with a Gruffalo"*

*"A Gruffalo, what's a Gruffalo?"
"A Gruffalo? Why didn't you know?"*

Audio: 9.1 The Gruffalo
Full song

How to...

- 1.** Introduce the story to the group and sing it all the way through a few times, asking the children to listen carefully to the words.
- 2.** Sing it through again, this time encouraging the group to join in where they can, using the pictures as a memory prompt.
- 3.** Sing it once more, this time stopping towards the end of each page and asking the group if they can remember what is on the next page.
- 4.** Take time to point out both the rhyming words and the punctuation, such as speech and exclamation marks.

Extension & development

- 1.** Let the children take turns to be in charge of turning the pages. This will consolidate their memory of both the individual story and the book's structure in general, as well as promoting confidence and positive leadership.
- 2.** The song provides great scope for developing vocabulary and explaining and practising rhyming. When the children know the story and enjoy it, start to point out the rhymes, and see if they can begin to spot them. Repeat this as many times as required.
- 3.** Expand the children's memories of the book into further nursery-based activities by encouraging them to draw the animals from the story.
- 4.** Get children in the group to volunteer to be the different animals in the story and walk round the circle whenever that animal appears in the story. Encourage them to be as expressive as they can in terms of how they move, etc.

Learning outcomes

Communication and language: Understanding

Early learning goals

- 1.** Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
- 2.** They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Activity contribution to goals

Children are encouraged to understand both the storyline and structure of the song.

Communication and language: Speaking

Early learning goals

- 1.** Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.
- 2.** They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.
- 3.** They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Activity contribution to goals

The group is encouraged to join in with reciting the whole story.

Children are encouraged to learn the more unusual vocabulary in the story, and embed this through repetition.

Preparation for literacy: Reading

Early learning goals

- 1.** Children read and understand simple sentences.
- 2.** They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words.
- 3.** They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

Activity contribution to goals

Children are encouraged to participate in page turning, in order to familiarise themselves with the structure of the story.

Rhyming words are found and embedded through repetition.

Punctuation is identified and explained to the group.