

# FIRST LITERATURE EXPERIENCES

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## CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Henny Penny Script .....	2-6
Word Strips for Henny Penny .....	7
Sensory Activities for Henny Penny .....	8
Animal Masks for Paper Bag Puppets	
Henny Penny .....	9
Ducky Lucky .....	10
Cocky Locky .....	11
Goosey Loosey .....	12
Turkey Lurky .....	13
Foxy Loxy .....	14
Three Little Pigs Script .....	15-18
Word Strips for Three Little Pigs .....	19
House of Straw: Art Activity .....	20
Sensory Activities for Three Little Pigs .....	21
This Is the House that Jack Built Script .....	22-26
Word Strips for The House that Jack Built .....	27
Sensory Activities for The House that Jack Built .....	28,30
Sequencing Activity .....	29
The Little Red Hen Script .....	31-34
Phrases for The Little Red Hen .....	35
Sensory Activities for The Little Red Hen.....	36-37
The Gingerbread Boy Script .....	38-42
Word Strips for The Gingerbread Boy .....	43
Outline Drawing for The Gingerbread Boy .....	44
Sensory Activities for The Gingerbread Boy .....	45-46

# INTRODUCTION

Here are five classic tales to help children take their first steps along the path that leads to literacy. Participation readers theatre scripts and sensory follow-up activities are designed to motivate, involve and enjoyably ease children into the magic moment when they match the words they are saying with written words.

As children participate with the storyteller by responding to repetitive phrases they hear, there is no frustration or failure. Each child is drawn into the enjoyment of group participation. As phrases are chanted and repeated in meaningful context with the teacher or storyteller showing the printed pattern on the overhead projector, the decoding breakthrough will occur when each child's own timetable is reached. The decoding concept clicks because the technique captures and holds children's attention. It does not produce pressure and it builds success for each child at his or her level of participation.

Participation readers theatre is both simple and fun for the teacher and the children. The teacher, as storyteller, reads the storyteller's part in the story. The children respond with phrases repeated throughout the story. The teacher cues the children by holding up the written words they are to say and by joining with the children in repeating the phrases as long as is necessary. Through their responses, the children become storytellers as well.

Sensory follow-up activities are included for each story. Teaching which is presented using all five senses reaches each child's individual learning modality. Using sensory activities provides a reinforcement dimension to the learning the child has achieved from the stories. The approach used in this activity book results in an exciting and rewarding shared experience for both the teacher and the child.

## SHARING THE STORIES

1. Make a transparency of the phrases found on the black line master at the end of each story.
2. Point to the repetitive phrase you are saying. While children may not be decoding the words as they repeat the phrase, you are helping them to take a major step in emergent literacy by showing them that what they see as "squiggles of ink" have meaning.
3. After a second or third sharing of the tale, distribute the strips containing the word strips to pairs of children. Challenge children to hold up the correct strip as they say a repeating phrase.
4. More advanced children can be challenged to put the strips in story order and retell the story in their own words.

# HENNY PENNY

Storyteller One day when Henny Penny was scratching among the leaves, an acorn fell out of a tree and struck her on the head! “Oh, my,” said Henny Penny. “I must go and tell the king! The sky is falling!”

Children The sky is falling!

Storyteller As Henny Penny walked along the way to tell the king she met Cocky Locky. “Cock-a-doodle-doo!” said Cocky Locky.

Children Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Storyteller “Where are you going, Henny Penny?” said Cocky Locky. “I must go and tell the king!” said Henny Penny. “The sky is falling!”

Children The sky is falling!

Storyteller “Oh, Henny Penny,” asked Cocky Locky, “may I go, too?” And Henny Penny answered, “Yes, come along!” So Henny Penny and Cocky Locky

**WORD STRIPS FOR  
HENNY PENNY**

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The sky is falling!

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Cock-a-doodle-doo

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Quack, quack, quack

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Honk, honk, honk

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Gobble, gobble, gobble

# **SENSORY ACTIVITIES FOR HENNY PENNY**

- #1** Let the children make up rhyming animal names and make the noises the animals would make! Examples: Sheepy Leepy (baa baa!), Piggy Wiggy (oink, oink!) etc. Divide into teams and see which team can come up with the most names!
- #2** Have children close their eyes and have the teacher (or child) go around the room and drop peanuts (unshelled) on the children's heads. When the child feels the peanut, he or she must say, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!" and get up and follow the teacher (or child) until all the children are "off to tell the king!"
- #3** Have the children color the characters in the story on pages 9-14. Let each child choose the character he or she wants to be. After cutting out the mask, paste it on a small-size paper bag. The child slips the bag over his or her hand for a puppet! As each character is introduced in the story, the children with that puppet say the repeating phrase and hold their puppets high in the air. For additional directions for making paper bag puppets, see page 47.