

Once upon a time

Explore this delightful poster and enter a magical land inhabited by favourite characters from traditional stories. Imagine what it would be like to visit this fantasy world...

Activities to support the Early Years Foundation Stage

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- As you explore the poster depicting a sunny day in a fantasy setting, talk about what the characters are doing and compare this with the activities your children enjoy on sunny days. Consider where the characters sleep at night. Identify the homes of the Little Pigs and the Country Mouse and discuss where the other characters might sleep. Compare this with the children's sleep routines.
- Encourage close observation by asking the children to find characters from the Little Red Hen story (White Goose, Grey Dog and Brown Horse). Find the owl and cows, and talk about some of the other stories in which these characters appear.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- Make up a story together about visiting this magical land. Ask the children who they would talk to and what sort of questions they would ask. Discuss who might be the best character/s to play with and why. Consider whether it would be better to avoid any of the characters and for what reason.
- Invent conversations between the characters, for example, by asking the children what the hen might be saying to the pigs to make them smile. Discuss what the cows might say to each other about things they can see happening. Consider how the Country Mouse might greet the Town Mouse.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

- Play with small world animals representing those on the poster, for example, counting out one hen, two mice and three pigs. Put three hoops in a row with the numbers 1, 2, 3 inside and put the single animals in the first hoop, the pairs in the second and the three pigs in the third.
- Use positional language as you ask the children to identify various story scenes happening in the poster, for example: *Which pig/house is in the middle? Which pig is the nearest to the path? Who is behind the straw house?*

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Draw attention to the Town Mouse and the Country Mouse and ask the children which one is the visitor and how they know this. Invite them to imagine that they are country mice expecting their town cousins to come and stay. Where would they take their town visitors and what would they do?
- Ask the children what time of year they think is depicted in the poster land and why they think this (green leaves, flowers and the pigs' summer clothes). Consider how the same poster would look in different seasons and pose questions, for example: *Which season would be best for collecting the leaves*



How to use the poster

Display the poster in a cosy corner festooned with bright drapes and filled with appropriate books, puppets and props to inspire interest in traditional stories.

Alternatively, stimulate child-initiated ideas by displaying the poster alongside play opportunities, such as small world, creative resources and story-related role play.

that have fallen from that big tree/watching birds build their nests/sledging down that hill?

Physical Development

- Invite individuals to choose a character from the poster and create an action and sound for it while others try to guess which character they are imitating.
- Look at the Little Red Hen with her loaf, as shown on the poster. With the children in a circle, choose someone to be Little Red Hen sitting in the middle with their eyes closed, while the others pass around a pretend loaf saying, 'Little Red Hen, Little Red Hen, Who has your loaf?' Someone then hides the loaf behind them and the hen opens their eyes and tries to guess who has it. If they are correct the hider swaps roles with them and the game begins again.

Creative Development

- Using the poster for reference, create a small world story land so that the children can re-enact familiar stories or invent new combinations involving well-known characters.
- Create your own version of story land in a large space, again with the poster for reference. Decorate the area with artificial flowers and drapes, and provide soft toys, puppets, character costumes, building materials and additional props, adding more as they are suggested by the children during their play.

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