

Nursery rhymes

Share the four popular nursery rhymes depicted on the poster and engage the children in discussions relating to what they like or dislike about each one

Activities to support the Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Read the poster rhyme 'Hey Diddle Diddle' and explore the related image. Why is the little dog laughing? Ask the children if they find the antics of the cat, the cow, the dish and the spoon funny. What other things make them laugh?
- Read the poster rhyme 'Hickory, Dickory, Dock' and explore the image of the mouse running up the clock. Why did the mouse run down again? Consider together how the mouse might feel when the clock chimed loudly. Invite the children to talk about situations that frighten them.

Communication and Language Literacy

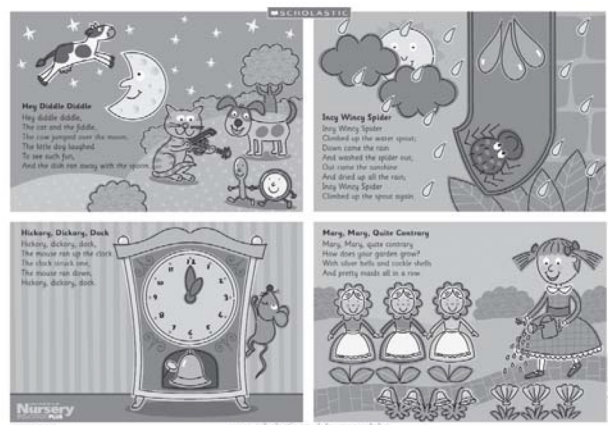
- Invite the children to identify rhyming words on the poster and point out any patterns, such as a rhyming word at the end of alternative lines (rhyming couplets). Clap the rhythm of the rhymes together. Encourage the children to take turns to choose a rhyme to say alone or with a friend. Decide together which rhyme is the most/least popular and why.
- Explain to the children that, in poetry, unusual words are sometimes chosen because they rhyme with others, for example, in 'Hey Diddle Diddle', 'fiddle' has been chosen instead of 'violin'. Try saying the rhyme using 'violin'. Does it sound better or worse? Do the same using the word 'pipe' instead of 'spout' for 'Incy Wincy Spider'.

Mathematics

- Use the poster to pose simple problems with small-world characters and objects, for example, count how many 'pretty maids' are in Mary's garden. Put three girl characters in a row alongside an adult character representing Mary and then ask questions such as 'If Mary puts two more pretty maids in the row, how many will she have?' and 'Can you make sure that each pretty maid has a cockle shell?'.
- Decide together what time it was when the mouse ran up the clock and move pointers on a cardboard clock face to match those in the poster. Change the words in the rhyme, for example, to 'The clock struck four, The mouse ran through the door' and adjust the time on the cardboard face.

Understanding the World

- Explore the image of Incy Wincy Spider climbing the spout. How do we know that it is raining? Search for web images of rainclouds and explain in simple terms how rain is formed. Go outside on a rainy day to search for gutters, drains and spouts, and look at how rain is directed into drains through these pipes.
- Read 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary' and explore the poster



How to use the poster

Create a wall display entitled 'Nursery rhymes' with the poster as the centrepiece surrounded by the children's artwork, images of nursery rhyme characters, appropriate labels and captions, and EYFS links. Arrange nursery rhyme books, prop bags and puppets on a table below.

image of Mary watering the garden. Talk about how we can care for plants in this way and also provide them with sunlight and food. Visit www.thekidsgarden.co.uk for more information.

Physical Development

- Explore the poster and say the rhymes together. Ask the children to make up large body movements to accompany 'Hey Diddle Diddle' and 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary', and small finger actions for 'Incy Wincy Spider' and 'Hickory, Dickory, Dock'.
- Cut out a circle of card and ask the children to take turns to use it to cover a small section of the poster while others close their eyes and then open them and try to identify the missing objects or person, for example, the dish and spoon or a cockle shell.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Ask the children to look closely at the pretty maids on the poster. What is unusual about them? Are they girls or plants? Draw attention to the features such as arms, faces, hair, a stalk, leaves and petals. Do the same with the cockle-shell plants. Invent new characters in this way, for example, a tree with arms and hands instead of branches and leaves.
- Transform a clear space into 'Nursery rhyme land' using drapes to enclose the area and cosy cushions to sit on. Include nursery rhyme CDs and a CD player, along with related prop bags, puppets and books.

Jean Evans is an early years consultant and author.

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