



Early Reading Connects

Story Sacks

A story sack is a large cloth bag containing a favourite children's book with supporting materials to stimulate language activities and make reading a memorable and enjoyable experience.

This guide contains instructions on how to make and use story sacks, as well as step by step instructions to make two story sacks based on *The Three Little Pigs* and *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*.

How to make a story sack

After finding the large cloth bag to make the sack itself, include any of the following materials, as appropriate for the needs and abilities of the children within your setting

- A copy of the story book
- A big book version of the story
- A CD or DVD of the story
- Related non-fiction books
- Models of characters and objects from the story
- Activities or games relating to the story
- Paper and crayons
- Plasticene
- Activity card (see below)

Include an activity card

An activity card lists ideas for how to use the sack helping parents and new staff in using the resource.

- Talk about the story and children's favourite bits
- Ask children questions about the characters and the plot
- Retell the story using the models
- Find out more about the people and places in the story by looking at the non-fiction books
- Draw a character or model one out of plasticene
- Draw a story map of the plot to help with re-telling the story

How to use a story sack

Start off by working closely with the children to model story sack activities. Once children have got used to the sacks, they will be able to use them independently.

Invite parents to see you model the use of the story sacks, before offering parents the opportunity to borrow them to use at home.

A story sack based on *The Three Little Pigs*

Include the following in your story sack

- Copy of 'The three little pigs', of which there are a number of versions
- Models of the three pigs and the wolf
- Some straw, some twigs and some stone or pebbles
- Non-fiction book about buildings
- Fireman's prop e.g. hose or hat
- Paper and crayons
- Activity card – see below

An activity card for *The Three Little Pigs* story sack

General activities (for all story sacks)

- Talk about the story and children's favourite bits
- Ask children questions about the characters and the plot
- Retell the story using the models
- Find out more about the people and places in the story by looking at the non-fiction books
- Draw a character or model one out of plasticene
- Draw a story map of the plot to help with re-telling the story

Activities for *The Three Little Pigs*

- Ask the children to have a go at blowing the straw, twigs and stone across the floor and discover which moved most easily
- Using the wolf model as a prop, children can tell the wolf off and give him some tips for making friends
- Talk about the dangers of fires and ask children what they would do in a fire
- Children can draw their own house or a house that they would like build using the paper and crayons

Questions to ask about *The Three Little Pigs*

You may not have the time or space for an activity, in this case just take a couple of things out of the sack and spend a few minutes talking about the story.

- Where did the three pigs live before they built their own houses?
- What do you like doing in your house or flat?
- Who could the pigs talk to about the wolf bullying them?
- Would you like to be a builder then you grow up? Why? Why not?

A story sack based on *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*

With thanks to Walker Books Ltd, London SE11 5HJ

Include the following in your story sack

- Copy of the book *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury
- Figurines of the family
- Map of the family's bear hunt
- Non-fiction book about bears
- Musical instruments e.g. small shaker and drum
- Plasticene
- Activity card – see below

An activity card for the *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* story sack

General activities (for all story sacks)

- Talk about the story and children's favourite bits
- Ask children questions about the characters and the plot
- Retell the story using the models
- Find out more about the people and places in the story by looking at the non-fiction books
- Draw a character or model one out of plasticene
- Draw a story map of the plot to help with re-telling the story

Activities for *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*

- Retell the story using the map of the family's bear hunt to remind you and the children what comes next
- Using the instruments ask children to recreate the sounds that they family were making or that the family heard on the hunt.
- Learn about bears using the non-fiction book. Are they all big and scary? Do bears live nearby?
- Ask children to make a model of their favourite character or place in the book using the plasticene

Questions to ask about *We're Going On A Bear Hunt*

You may not have the time or space for an activity, in this case just take a couple of things out of the sack and spend a few minutes talking about the story.

- Who would you take with you on a bear hunt? Why?
- What would you take with you on a bear hunt? Why?
- Who helps you when you feel scared?
- Would you rather be chased by a bear or a dragon? Why?

If you've made a story sack or found new ways of using them, share your pictures and feedback with us!

Email earlyreadingconnects@literacytrust.org.uk

For more practical ideas, resources and more see our website at www.earlyreadingconnects.org.uk