

Kindergarten ► Unit 1

A Colorful Time with Rhythm and Rhyme

In this first six-week unit of kindergarten, students are introduced to colorful picture books, traditional poetry, and nursery rhymes filled with rhythm and rhyme.



ESSENTIAL QUESTION



poetry?

How does rhyme affect the way that we hear and read

OVERVIEW

Focusing on phonological awareness, students are challenged to listen for rhythm and rhyming words within the literature. Concepts of print are taught as students read poems on wall charts and in informational books. Descriptions of gathered objects and artworks highlight the secondary focus on color, encouraging rich description, discussion in spoken language, and vocabulary development. In this early stage of writing, students use a combination of drawing, dictation, and writing to give opinions about favorite colors.

FOCUS STANDARDS

These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.

RI.K.4: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

RL.K.5: Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).

RF.K.2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and phonemes.

RF.K.2(a): Recognize and produce rhyming words.

W.K.1: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., “My favorite book is . . .”).

SL.K.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.K.1(a): Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns talking about the topics and texts under discussion).

L.K.5: With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

L.K.5(a): Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

SUGGESTED STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the difference between a storybook and a poem.
- Understand that poems (poetry) are written by poets and that they often rhyme.
- Distinguish between a verse (stanza) and a line in a poem.
- Identify the author and illustrator of a storybook and of an informational book.
- Ask questions about unknown words in a text.
- Understand the organization and basic features of print.
- Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book; follow the words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
- Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, or writing to share an opinion.
- Listen to others and take turns speaking while discussing favorite rhymes.
- Expand vocabulary by sorting objects (e.g., by color, noticing colorful places in school and describing objects with “color” adjectives).

SUGGESTED WORKS

(E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

LITERARY TEXTS

Picture Books (Read Aloud)

- *Red, Green, Blue: A First Book of Colors* (Alison Jay)
- *Colors! Colores!* (Jorge Lujan and Piet Grobler)
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle)
- *If Kisses Were Colors* (Janet Lawler and Alison Jay)
- *My Many Colored Days* (Dr. Seuss) (EA)
- *Mary Wore Her Red Dress* (Merle Peek)
- *The Red Book* (Barbara Lehman)
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Bill Martin Jr., John Archambault, and Lois Ehlert)
- *Rap a Tap Tap, Here's Bojangles: Think of That!* (Leo and Diane Dillon)
- *And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon* (Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel)
- *The Real Mother Goose* (Blanche Fisher Wright)
- *Red Is for Dragon: A Book of Colors* (Roseanne Thong and Grace Lin)
- *Clang! Clang! Beep! Beep! Listen to the City* (Robert Burleigh and Beppe Giacobbe)

- *Itsy Bitsy Spider* (Iza Trapani)
- *Grandmother's Nursery Rhymes: Las Nanas de Abuelita* (Nelly Palacio Jaramillo)

Poems (Read Aloud)

- "Halfway Down" (A. A. Milne) (E)
- "Singing Time" (Rose Fyleman) (E)
- "Mary Had a Little Lamb" (Sarah Josepha Hale)
- "Time to Rise" (Robert Louis Stevenson)
- "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" (Ann and Jane Taylor)

Nursery Rhymes (Read Along)

- "Diddle, Diddle, Dumpling"
- "Early to Bed"
- "Georgie Porgie"
- "Hey Diddle Diddle"
- "Humpty Dumpty"
- "Jack and Jill"
- "Jack Be Nimble"
- "Little Bo Peep"
- "Little Boy Blue"
- "Little Jack Horner"
- "Little Miss Muffet"
- "Old Mother Hubbard"
- "Pat-a-Cake"
- "Ring Around the Rosey"
- "Rock-a-bye, Baby"
- "Roses Are Red"
- "Simple Simon"
- "Star Light, Star Bright"

INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Informational Books

- *My Five Senses* (Ailiki) (E)

Informational Books (Read Aloud)

- *All the Colors of the Rainbow* (Rookie Read-About Science Series) (Allan Fowler)
- *The Magic School Bus Makes a Rainbow: A Book About Color* (Joanna Cole, Carolyn Braken, and Bruce Degan)
- *Colors and Shapes: Los colores y las figuras* (Gladys Rosa-Mendoza, Carolina Cifuentes, and Michele Noiset)
- *I Spy Colors in Art* (Lucy Micklethwait)
- *Colors (Learning with Animals)* (Melanie Watt)
- *Matisse: The King of Color* (Laurence Anholt)
- *A World of Colors: Seeing Colors in a New Way* (Marie Houblon)

ART, MUSIC, AND MEDIA

- Henri Matisse, *The Dessert: Harmony in Red* (1908)
- James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Black and Gray: The Artist's Mother* (1871)
- Diego Rivera, *Flower Day* (1925)
- Pieter Bruegel, *The Hunters in the Snow* (1565)
- Helen Frankenthaler, *Mountains and Sea* (1952)
- Paul Gauguin, *The Midday Nap* (1894)
- Pablo Picasso, *Le Gourmet* (1901)

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS

1. POETRY/PRINT CONCEPTS

As students read a rhyme, ask them to focus on listening for rhyming words and hearing the rhythm of the lines. By teaching the children to follow along with you on wall charts or an interactive whiteboard, they are able to enjoy rich vocabulary in context and become familiar with sight words and word families. Adding the simple melodies to the nursery rhymes will enhance the students' perception of rhythm. By using musical recordings of the nursery rhymes, students can move to the rhythm of the rhymes in song and recite the words with ease. (RF.K.1, RF.K.3c)

2. POETRY/PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

While reading (reciting) “Humpty Dumpty,” snap your fingers on the word at the end of a line (e.g., “wall”). The children will snap when they hear the word that rhymes with it (e.g., “fall”). Continue with various rhymes and poems. Afterwards, put up a second nursery rhyme, but leave out the end word of every other line (i.e., “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great _____”). Some students can pick from a list of words the appropriate one to fill in the blank. Once they've mastered that, repeat the exercise without providing the list of words. (RF.K.2a)

3. POETRY/PRINT CONCEPTS

As students read a nursery rhyme (or poem) from a chart or interactive whiteboard in the front of the class, choose a student to come up and follow the words from left to right with a pointer. Instruct the students that if there is a word they do not understand in this rhyme, they should raise a hand to ask about it. (RF.K.1a, RL.K.4, RL.K.5)

4. INFORMATIONAL TEXT/LITERARY TEXT

As the class reads an informational or literary book, introduce the idea of author and illustrator. Describe their roles in the creation of a text. Do a “text walk” by carefully showing the front cover, back cover, and title page of the book. As you read an informational text such as *All the Colors of the Rainbow*, pause to ask the children questions. Encourage them to ask questions about the text and unfamiliar words. (RI.K.4, RI.K.5, RI.K.6, RL.K.4)

5. CLASS DISCUSSION/POETRY

Arrange small groups of students and place an object (e.g., a block) in the middle of each circle. Instruct the students to discuss which poem in this unit is their favorite. Students pick up the block when ready to share. Ask them to put the block back in the middle when finished. When working with a group, ask the student who has the floor to think of/share a word that rhymes with the last word of a sentence in the chosen poem. (SL.K.1, SL.K.1a)

6. ART/WRITING

Show students the Whistler and the Rivera. Ask them to discuss how Whistler used a mostly black and white palette, while Rivera used a wide range of colors. Then ask them to choose to draw their favorite of the two works, either in black and white or using a wide range of colors. (W.K.2, SL.K.5)

7. LANGUAGE/VOCABULARY

Prepare a basket of colored objects. Invite students to come to the basket and choose something to tell the class about. This is the rule: Each student must describe the object using at least two “describing words” (i.e., adjectives). Example: a bright red apple, a small green block. Extend this activity by introducing opposites of one of the adjectives. “You showed me a small block. Now find a large block.” You could have another vocabulary activity with the same collection by sorting the same objects into color categories such as “red” and “green” or by asking the students to think of rhyming words that describe. (L.K.5a)

8. ART/CLASS DISCUSSION/VOCABULARY CONNECTION

Display the works by Matisse and Picasso. Ask the students what color dominates each work. Ask the students why they think Picasso chose blue and Matisse chose red. Ask how the paintings are the same (e.g., both figures are preparing food and neither is looking at us) and how they are different (e.g., we can see outside in the Matisse, whereas Picasso’s is a close-up), preparing the way for literature conversations in comparing and contrasting texts. (SL.K.1, SL.K.5)

READING FOUNDATIONS: A PACING GUIDE FOR READING INSTRUCTION

See Kindergarten, Level One, in the Reading Foundations section for a complete pacing guide for this unit.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Generating Rhymes: Developing Phonemic Awareness (ReadWriteThink) (RF.K.2a)

Growing Readers and Writers with Help from Mother Goose (ReadWriteThink) (RF.K.1b, RF.K.2a)

Hats Off to Color (ArtsEdge, The Kennedy Center) (L.K.5a)

Interview with Eric Carle (RL.K.6)

“Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” video

“Rap A Tap Tap” video (Shirley Temple and Bill Robinson)

Spicy Hot Colors video

“Halfway Down” video

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom video

TERMINOLOGY

Artist	Illustrator	Poem	Rhythm
Author	Informational book	Poet	Stanza
Description	Line	Poetry	Story book
Illustration	Opinion	Rhyme	Verse

MAKING INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

This unit teaches:

Art: Color in painting (e.g., Matisse, Whistler, Rivera, Bruegel, Frankenthaler, Gauguin, Picasso)

Science: Color in nature (e.g., rainbows), the five senses (e.g., seeing color—eyes, hearing rhythm and rhyme—ears)

This unit could be extended to teach:

Art: Color (e.g., the color wheel, warm and cool colors, and primary and secondary colors)

Science: the five senses (e.g., touch—skin, smell—nose, taste—tongue)

Math: Patterns (e.g., rhyming patterns in Mother Goose rhymes)

Kindergarten, Unit One Sample Lesson Plan

“Halfway Down” by A. A. Milne

In this series of four lessons, students read “Halfway Down” by A. A. Milne, and they:

- Identify the form of the poem (RL.K.5)
- Note the connection between form and content (RL.K.1, RL.K.5)
- Examine the theme of the poem (RL.K.1)
- Explore a different reading interpretation of the poem (RL.K.1, SL.K.2)
- Reflect on the power of a poem to provoke thoughts and feelings (SL.K.1a, SL.K.1b)

Summary

Lesson I: Meet A. A. Milne and “Halfway Down”

- Note the form of Milne’s “Halfway Down” (RL.K.5)
- Meet A. A. Milne (RL.K.6)
- Identify repeating sounds in the poem (rhyming) (RF.K.2a)
- Identify the setting of the poem (RL.K.3)
- Probe the shift from the first to the second stanza
- Explore what the poem is about (RL.K.1)
- Examine the theme of the poem (RL.K.1)
- (Through illustrations) individualize response to the theme (W.K.1, W.K.3, SL.K.5)

Lesson II: Kermit the Frog Meets Milne

- Examine Kermit the Frog’s performance of Milne’s poem “Halfway Down” (SL.K.2)
- Note the differences between the reading and the singing of the poem (RL.K.1, SL.K.2)
- Evaluate Kermit’s interpretation of the poem (SL.K.2)
- (Through memorization) develop ownership of Milne’s words

Lesson III: We Write Along with Milne Revisit Milne’s “Halfway Down” (RL.K.2) Revisit Kermit’s interpretation of the poem (SL.K.2) (While citing the poem) revisit its rhymes (RF.K.2a) Explore the purpose of the rhymes (RF.K.2a) Compose a new stanza (W.K.2)	Lesson IV: Halfway Down and Halfway Up Assimilate the varying components of the unit: Milne’s poem; Kermit’s song; the students’ new stanza and the students’ illustrated poems Reflect on the power of a poem to provoke thoughts and feelings (SL.K.1a, SL.K.1b)
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Lesson I: Meet A. A. Milne and “Halfway Down”

Objectives

- Note the form of Milne’s “Halfway Down” (RL.K.5)
- Meet A. A. Milne (RL.K.6)
- Identify repeating sounds in the poem (rhyming) (RF.K.2a)
- Identify the setting of the poem (RL.K.3)
- Probe the shift from the first to the second stanza
- Explore what the poem is about (RL.K.1)
- Examine the theme of the poem (RL.K.1)
- (Through illustrations) individualize response to the theme (W.K.1, W.K.3, SL.K.5)

Required Materials

- ☐ Enlarged copy of A. A. Milne’s “Halfway Down”
- ☐ Copies of the poem (free of illustrations) to distribute to the students
- ☐ Markers and colored pencils

Procedures

1. Lead-In:
 - a. The purpose of this part of the lesson (even before reading the poem) is to help the students note the form of the poem.
Point to the enlarged copy of A. A. Milne’s “Halfway Down.”
Ask the students what they notice.
They will note that it is not very long (i.e., they can count the number of words).
Ask if anyone knows what we call this “grouping of words.”

- If there is no response from the students, introduce the term *poem*.
You may want to hold up a chapter book to help the students visualize the difference between prose and verse.
- b. Continue to probe with students (i.e., “What else do you notice about the poem?”)
 - c. Introduce the word *stanza*.

2. Step by Step:

- a. The teacher will read the poem aloud (at least twice).

Halfway Down

(A. A. MILNE)

*Halfway down the stairs
Is a stair where I sit.
There isn't any other stair
Quite like it.
I'm not at the bottom,
I'm not at the top;
So this is the stair
Where I always stop.
Halfway up the stairs
Isn't up and isn't down.
It isn't in the nursery,
It isn't in the town.
And all kinds of funny thoughts
Go running round my head:
“It isn't really anywhere!
It's somewhere else instead!”*

- b. Introduce A. A. Milne (this part can be moved up and become activity a.)
For example, produce a poster with Milne's picture and perhaps a picture of Winnie the Pooh. This is a good opportunity to connect with some of the students' prior knowledge.
- c. Back to the poem.
Read the poem to the students again; at this point, some of the students may join as the teacher points to the words that she reads. The purpose of this step is to emphasize rhyme.
Introduce the term *rhyme* through probing and repeating pairs of words (e.g., sit/it, top/stop).

- d. Before reading the poem again (with the help of the students), ask the students to notice the difference between the first and the second stanzas. The students will notice the shift from “halfway down” to “halfway up.” Through a series of questions, demonstrate the difference between the two stanzas, for example:

What does the speaker say in the first stanza?

- The focus is on the speaker; “I” is repeated four times; (point to the “I’s”); he sits there because it is “halfway down.”

What does he say in the second stanza?

- There are no “I’s.” Instead, the speaker pays more attention to the stairs, especially in the first four lines.

What happens in the last four lines?

- The speaker refers to himself again, but he makes a confusing statement: “It isn’t really anywhere! It’s somewhere else instead!”

- e. This is a good time to introduce the students to the idea that sometimes you need to think carefully to figure out what a poet is saying. Provide them with time to discuss their ideas.

3. Closure:

A good way to conclude the lesson is to let the students absorb the information and spend some quiet time, on their own, reflecting. Distribute the individual copies of the poem and ask the students to draw upon their reflections to illustrate the poem.

Differentiation

Advanced

- Expand the students’ exposure to and enjoyment of more Milne poetry, using poems such as “Solitude,” “Waiting at the Window,” or “Us Two.” Discuss the themes of these poems and ask students to illustrate them. A multi-stanza poem could be cut into stanzas and glued into a book illustrated by the students.

Struggling

- If there is a staircase in your school, physically take students to the staircase. Have various students experience going halfway up and halfway down the stairs. If a staircase is not available, draw it on the board and have a student finger-walk up the stairs and down the stairs, stopping at the halfway point.
- Spend some time exploring rhyming sounds by doing rhyming word pairs like: red/bed, blue/shoe, yellow/fellow, black/sack, brown/clown, white/kite.

Homework/Assessment

N/A