

The Sheep and the Goat by Pie Corbett

Once upon a time,
there was a sheep and a goat
who lived on the side of a hill.

In the winter, it was too chilly.
In the summer, it was too hot.

So, one day the sheep said,
“Let us go and build a house
in the deep, dark forest.”

So, they walked and they walked and they walked
until they met a hare.
“Can I come with you?”
said the hare.

So, the sheep, the goat and the hare
walked and they walked and they walked
until they met a cow.
“Can I come with you?”
said the cow.

So, the sheep, the goat, the hare and the cow
walked and they walked and they walked
until they met a cockerel.
“Can I come with you?”
said the cockerel.

So, the sheep, the goat, the hare, the cow and the cockerel walked and they walked and they walked until they came to the deep, dark forest.

There they found just the right place to build their house.

The sheep sharpened the posts,
the goat grabbed the bricks,
the hare hammered the roof,
the cow covered the walls with moss
and, every morning, the cockerel crowed
and woke everyone up.

Unfortunately, living close by
there were two greedy wolves.

Late one night, the grey-legs
came creeping, creeping, creeping
into the house where the four friends slept.

Luckily, the cockerel crowed
and woke everyone up.
So, the sheep sharpened the cow's horns,
the goat grabbed their tails,
the hare hammered their sides,
and the cow butted their bottoms!

Finally, the four friends
went straight back to sleep –
Shhhhh!
They're sleeping now!

*Four leaf clover,
our story is over.*

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Teaching ideas for *The Sheep and the Goat*

Story Background

This story is based upon a traditional story, probably of Norwegian or Russian origin, often known as 'The Sheep and the Pig'. Like so many early stories for younger children, it features farmyard animals and would sit comfortably alongside other common stories such as *The Little Red Hen*, *The Enormous Turnip*, *Chicken Licken* and *The Billy Goats Gruff*. It uses the common theme of leaving home as well as a potential threat that is eventually overcome. I spent a long time honing the story so that I ended up with something that jogs along when spoken aloud with an easy rhythm. I tried to build in a strong repetitive pattern, making it easy for learning orally.

Imitation

The hook

Ideally, hook the children in with a farm trip or by using short film clips showing the different animals in the story.

Alternatively, you could leave clues in the classroom or round the school to suggest that wolves have been sighted!

Learn the story orally

- Retell the story to the class and get them gradually joining in.
- Draw a simple story map to show the sequence of events.
- Children draw their own maps.
- Simple maps should be sent home so children can retell the story at home.

- Retell as a class in any short slot so that after three or four days everyone knows the story word for word.
- Retell as a class, in groups and ultimately in pairs.
- Provide toys to hold, masks or simple costumes to wear, enhancing retellings.
- When retelling, bring it alive by adding in sound effects for the animals when they build the house and when they chase off the wolves.

Playing at the story

- Provide a story area with toys and floor story mat so children can retell the story playfully.
- Provide play bricks or wooden blocks so children can build a house for the animals.
- Change the role-play area into the house. Use masks, toys or costumes for the children to pretend to be the animals in the house.
- Set up small-world play with the animals, including some different animals (including some scary animals) for innovation play – dog, cat, donkey, horse, zebra, giraffe, elephant, mouse, rat, as well as foxes, wolves, bears, etc.
- In art, design animal masks.
- Act the story out, especially the building of the house.
- Accompanying songs: *Peter Works with One Hammer, Old Macdonald* (vary the animals).
- Act and perform the story with expression to other classes or in assembly.

Reading as a Reader

Once the children know the text orally, then provide a Big Book version so it can be read with confidence. Begin by working on the basic decoding with plenty of rereading to gain fluency. As with all stories, you need to secure the **vocabulary** so everyone understands the text, e.g. *sheep, goat, hare, cow, cockerel, chilly, hot, dark, right place, sharpened the posts, grabbed the*

bricks, hammered the roof, covered, moss, greedy, wolves, grey-legs, unfortunately, close by, creeping, butted, straight back, clover.

Use line-by-line reading and oral comprehension to deepen understanding. For instance:

Why wasn't the hillside the right place for the sheep and the goat to live – find two reasons? Which word in this line means the same as 'make' - *Let us go and build a house*. Does the forest sound safe – which word makes it sound scary – *in the deep, dark forest*? Was it a long way – how do you know? (*so they walked and they walked and they walked*). What do you think the *right place* was like? Discuss the jobs that the animals had. Which two words tell us that the wolves were not going to make friends? – *Unfortunately, living close by there were two greedy wolves*. Who are the greylegs? Why did they *creep* rather than *walk*? Talk about the link between how the animals built the house and how they fought off the wolves. Do you think the wolves learned their lesson? What might happen next?

Wider Reading

Look at different sorts of homes where humans and animals live and the materials used to make the homes. Read books about the animals, especially the wolves! Check out Emily Gravett's book *Wolves and Wolf won't bite!*

Reading as a Writer

The list below shows what the text teaches though what you focus upon will be directed by the main objectives that you have decided upon to help the children make progress. **In Nursery and Reception classes, most of the learning will be implicit as the children do not need to know the following linguistic features, they just need to use them:**

- The story starts with the classic *Once upon a time there was ... who lived ...* This sentence structure is very useful for young children as it provides a simple means of introducing a main character in a setting.
- There is a pair of sentences that start with prepositions *In the Winter/ In the Summer* that could be extended into places, e.g. *In the forest, / In the city*, etc.
- There is some speech that could be acted out and captured in speech bubbles, to begin to establish the notion that what is spoken is contained within the punctuation.
- Key connectives: - *Once upon a time (opening), who, so, and, until, where, unfortunately (for dilemma), luckily (resolution), Finally (ending)*. Orally rehearse using the key connectives that will be needed for innovation.
- Alliteration: -

Luckily, the **cockerel crowed**
and woke everyone up.

So, the **sheep sharpened** the cow's horns,
the **goat grabbed** their tails,
the **hare hammered** their sides,
and the cow **butted their bottoms!**

Finally, the four friends
went straight back to sleep –

Play at inventing alliterative sentences about animals, e.g.
One silly snake silently slithered.
Two tiny turtles taught a terrible tornado.

- The overall text structure is a simple journey story to find something and then the common theme of overcoming something bad.

- A well-designed text map, perhaps on a roll of lining paper, should show clearly the basic journey and key dilemma so that the pattern is obvious.

Innovation

- Provide a range of different toy animals, puppets, masks or story cards to choose from so that other animals can travel and build their house. Change the wolves to another scary animal or mythical creature, e.g. giant, goblin, troll.
- Create a new class version and then work with groups of children so that they can create new story maps of their versions with different animals. They should orally rehearse their own stories in pairs and be ready to tell it with the class helping along.
- Retell just by changing the animals or, for a more demanding innovation, decide on a different reason for travelling from one place to another, e.g. to visit the King, to go to the market, etc.
- You could, with confident children, add in adjectives or build description of the different places where the animals meet.
- Ensure plenty of oral retelling before any writing.
- In Nursery and Early Reception, children will have developed their own oral innovation and recorded this through their own map.
- During the Reception Year and into Year 1 many children should be moving into writing their own innovated text down. Space this over about 5 days so that each day they do the next little section. Each day, model through shared writing how to write the next part. Some children may only write a sentence each day, whilst by the Spring and into the Summer, many reception children will be writing more.

- This story would lend itself to being written into a zig-zag book that can fold out, showing the journey made. Make sure the children illustrate the booklet so that it is something they can be really pleased with and take home at the end of the year as part of their bank of innovated stories.

For a clear explanation of the process, packed with practical ideas, including a chapter called *Telling your first story*, plus 21 texts and maps, please read *Talk for Writing in the Early Years* (Year one teachers would also find this invaluable). It can be found at: <https://www.talkforwritingshop.com/product-page/talk-for-writing-in-the-early-years>

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