

Teaching Nursery Rhymes



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Preface

Nursery rhymes are a delight to listen to and sing. Most of us grew up with nursery rhymes and familiar sounds associated with their content, structure and vocabulary.

While teaching teachers relive those moments of joyful learning of their own childhood. They are a treasure trove of ideas for activities that help the learner develop language and communication skills. An eclectic range of pedagogical, linguistic and communicative possibilities can be profitably exploited with imaginative planning.



Introduction

Learning to speak a second language, in this case English is not an easy task for children. It requires both recognition and production of the speech sounds of English. Any method, technique or material used should make the teaching–learning process interesting and productive.

Do you know?

One of the most delightful ways of practicing English is ‘Nursery Rhymes’ as they are known in England and ‘Mother Goose songs ‘ in America..



Chapter 2

Why teach Nursery Rhymes?

The why and how of teaching nursery rhymes will help in making classroom teaching enjoyable, motivating and effective. Children learn best when they enjoy what they are doing. The objectives of teaching nursery rhymes specify the need for including them in the repertoire of communicative activities in the classroom, development and integration of language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

The objectives to be kept in mind while teaching nursery rhymes are

1. For enjoyment: An activity or task which a child finds amusing and entertaining motivates him to learn, practice and remember. A wide range of sensory experiences, emotions and thoughts along with the elements of fun and humour are the sources from which enjoyment is derived. Thus, nursery rhymes should be taught primarily for enjoyment.
2. Training in listening: Listening skill is important because on it depends effective speech, development of the thinking process and comprehension of the topic. It also involves auditory perception as well as understanding the message.
3. Training in the rhythm pattern of English: Nursery rhymes have well defined patterns of stress and rhythm. Material for teaching features connected speech (contracted forms, strong and weak forms, intonation, word accent, sentence stress, linking, assimilation and elision).



4. Practice in the pronunciation of English Speech sounds: Mechanical drilling in the production of consonants and vowels both in isolated words and in sentences becomes boring and meaningless. Nursery rhymes, on the other hand, give contextualized practice in all the elements of effective speaking with appropriate intonation patterns, correct pronunciation and clarity of diction. In spite of a limited vocabulary the pupils gradually acquire a mastery over the phonological systems of English.
5. Practice in intonation: Nursery rhymes give practice in meaning –appropriate intonation patterns which include falling , rising- falling, rising – falling tones. These tones are used to convey different meanings through different utterances in specific contexts for particular functions .
6. Development of fluency of speech: Fluency refers to ‘smoothness of continuity in oral interaction.’ It includes an understanding of how sentences are linked through meaning , structure and variation in word order and ellipsis i.e. substituting or leaving out elements. Nursery rhymes give enjoyable practice in learning to speak confidently, without hesitation and at different speeds.
7. Development of intelligibility of speech: Speech must be understandable. Distinct crisp articulation and clarity of expression contribute to a speaker’s message being understood as well as understanding of what others say. The message is well received if words and sentences patterns of the spoken form can be aurally recognized.
8. Learning to appreciate rhythm, meter and music of poetry: Every language has a distinct rhythm of its own. A child is exposed to these as soon as he is born and acquires them unconsciously. Nursery rhymes is raw data of the rhythm and meters of the English language and thus, excellent practice material.
9. Used as a source material for conversation practice in different contexts and for different languages functions: For example, making personal statements to convey purpose and attitude, asking for and giving information, agreeing and disagreeing etc. Though the style and subject matter make them suitable for young children, they offer interesting and stimulating material for practice of spoken English for adult learners too. Describing characters and events and discussing themes in terms of their socio-economic and cultural background as well as moral and ethical concerns leads to the development of spontaneous, natural conversation.



10. Reinforcing syntactic structures that have already been learnt in class: These include structures of increasing complexity, that is, from one word to short simple sentence and then progressive to complex sentences with visible or embedded clauses. Sentence types includes affirmative, negative interrogative, exclamatory structures and sentences with nouns, adjectives infinitive or adverb clauses among others.
11. Increasing vocabulary, both active and passive: The rich vocabulary of nursery rhymes stimulates language development in general and facilitates learning of new words in particular in a variety of contexts and provides languages material for reinforcing grammar rules already learnt. Singing games and nursery rhymes help children explore meaning in a playful and enjoyable manner.
12. Helping children reading easily and quickly through early recognition of sounds, word and patterns: Rhymes help develop the skills needed for reading (aloud and silently) and learning spellings.
13. As part of preparation for writing short compositions in the second or third year of English: Ideas in nursery rhymes can be used for short and simple compositions that could be descriptive, narrative or in the form or short dialogues.
14. Help the child cope with concepts, prepare for sensory experiences: Nursery rhymes are invaluable because they have a tremendous developmental influence on early learning.
15. Stimulates Creativity: The rhyme and rhythm patterns of nursery rhymes along with the inexhaustible word-play and word- invention possibilities help develop the child's linguistic creativity. He could be encouraged to make up rhymes with various sound patterns on various themes.
16. Helping integrate cognitive, language and communication skills along with body language through role-play and language games based on rhymes: The variety of rhymes offers practice in developing the mentioned skills as the child participates mentally, emotionally and physically in joyful singing of rhymes. Numerical development, concept elaboration, logical connectivity and language usage which is socially and culturally sensitive and acceptable



Thus, it is important for the teacher to understand why she is teaching nursery rhymes to children. An informed pedagogy helps in the productive use of time, energy and other resources. It facilitates the learner to use the language in a natural, spontaneous and enjoyable manner as much as possible. It helps lay the foundation for a more complex, nuanced use of language in the ever widening circles of the learner's overall development and the demands put on him by the various roles he performs in real life.



Chapter 3

HOW TO TEACH NURSERY RHYMES

In the first few weeks teacher could choose rhymes that are short and popular. Structure and lexical items should be simple, themes and topics are familiar, that is, relevant to and based on the pupil's personal experiences and interests. Start with rhymes that are easy to learn to recite. Try not to teach a rhyme in one lesson unless it is very short. A longer rhyme must be spread over three to four lessons. In the weeks that follow, longer and more difficult rhymes could be taken up. There are different ways of teaching rhymes.

3.1 FIRST PROCEDURE

The teacher could introduce a rhyme through simple recitation, without any comment or explanation. This first recitation should be vivid and dramatic enough to catch children's attention. Use mime and gestures wherever appropriate as well as audio-visual support materials if available. Do not forget to mark words to be stressed, intonation, meaning and pauses in the text. Practice reading it before you say and teach it.

However, while rendering a rhyme in class do not look at the text. The teacher can ask pupils to listen carefully to what she is going to say and do. Then she recites the rhyme using appropriate facial expressions and suitable gestures.

TEACHER SAYS : Jack and Jill 'went up the hill'

TEACHER DOES: (looks up and extends her right arm upwards
towards an imaginary hill)

TEACHER SAYS: To 'fetch a pail of' water

TEACHER DOES : (extends right arm and closes her hand as if holding a
bucket, expression is as if she is carrying heavy object)

TEACHER SAYS: Jack 'fell down'

TEACHER DOES: (falls down; expression shows pain)

TEACHER SAYS: And 'broke his crown'

TEACHER DOES: (clutches head and expresses intense pain)

TEACHER SAYS: And Jill came 'tumbling after'

TEACHER DOES: (does rolling movement with hands)

Having recited the rhyme, teacher could briefly explain the theme. She asks simple questions regarding characters, actions, time, place and related information.



3.2 SECOND PROCEDURE

Most rhymes can be effectively dramatized and the teacher could begin to do this after reciting a rhyme few times. She could first tell the rhyme as a story using simple language and imagery and ground these in the learner's experience by asking questions. For example, the story of Jack and Jill could be narrated in the following way:

Once upon a time there was a boy called Jack. He lived with his parents and his sister in a beautiful house. His sister's name was Jill. One day Jack's mother asked him and Jill to get some water from a well which was on a hill. In those days, there were no taps. People used to fetch water in pails from wells.

Jack and Jill took a pail and went up the hill. They got water but as they were coming down the hill Jack fell down and hurt his head. Jill fell down and rolled after Jack down the hill. The bucket fell down and all the water flowed out. Oh dear, oh dear!

The teacher can now ask some questions:

- QUESTION: What is the boy's name?
ANSWER: Jack \ The boy's name is Jack.
QUESTION: What is the girl's name?
ANSWER: Jill \ the girl's name is Jill.
QUESTION: Where did they go?
ANSWER: Up the hill. \ They went up the hill.
QUESTION: Did they take a pail with them?
ANSWER: Yes, they did.
QUESTION: Why did they take a pail with them?
ANSWER: To get water.
QUESTION: Do you take a pail to get water?
ANSWER: No, I don't.
QUESTION: From where do you get water?
ANSWER: From the tap.

This step elaborates the crucial objective of teaching a nursery rhyme, that is, teaching the child to speak clearly, coherently and intelligibly in English, and is a necessary element for both the first and second procedures. The pupil learns to say the rhyme, initially after the teacher, with relevant facial expressions, gestures and appropriate body movements. It is this point in the learning of nursery rhymes that the child says the rhyme, expressing various emotions. He also uses his head, torso and limbs to make expressive, accompanying gestures and body movements. In the actual recitation of the rhyme, the class as a whole repeats each line after the teacher.



For example, the recitation of the rhyme, Jack and Jill could be taught in the following manner:

TEACHER SAYS: 'Jack and Jill' went 'up the 'hill
TEACHER SAYS: (look up and extends her right arm upwards, towards an imaginary hill)
Pupils say: 'Jack and 'Jill went up the hill
Pupils Do: (look up and extend their right arms upwards, towards an imaginary hill)

And so on till the end of the rhyme. It becomes an enjoyable process of learning watching, listening, speaking, doing and acting. Individual participation, group participation and full class participation provide variety in speaking aloud a rhyme and ensures enthusiastic participation in a layered, sequential manner. The same could be said in the following way:

Pupil 1: Jack and Jill
Pupil 2: Went up the hill
All: To fetch a pail of water
Boys/ Group 1: Jack fell down
Girls 2/Boys 2: And broke his crown
Girls/ Group 2: And Jill came tumbling after

Pronunciation and the features of spoken English which include word and sentence stress, strong and weak forms, linking, assimilation elision and intonation should be corrected gently and directly if need be. For example, the teacher could say. "Well let's say that line again. Listen to me carefully. Speak clearly. Repeat after me".

Step

The teacher could now give an explanation in the mother tongue if necessary (especially in non-English Medium schools) and through questions and illustration point out words or structure (s) which are familiar to the pupils. She can then teach new language items and patterns, for example, a few common nouns (hill, pail), one or two prepositions and a simple sentence pattern.

This outline of teaching a rhyme can be used effectively in teaching other rhymes. It can be summarized the teacher introduces the rhyme in a vivid manner, dramatizes it and make the pupils say the rhyme with correct pronunciation, stressing on weak forms, linking devices and intonation. Also remember that if a teacher enjoys saying rhymes with emotion and enthusiasm, the pupils enjoy listening and learning them.



Chapter –4

HOW TO SAY NURSERY RHYMES

Children are excellent mimics. As a teacher you must make an effort to undergo specialized voice and speech training. This would help in a positive attitude towards your own voice, language as well as towards the presentation of the language.

Your voice is your most effective teaching tool and helps in creating an enthusiastic, inspiring and challenging classroom atmosphere besides proving useful for classroom management. These factors are closely related to your emotional state, the dynamics of your interaction and, most important of all, your self-image. It should be well-modulated, capable of articulating distinctly the sounds of English, producing appropriate intonation patterns and free from any distracting phonetic features.

Attitude towards language is the second important element to be considered. Language is one of the methods of expressing thoughts and feelings. It is also a powerful and significant tool of communication. An understanding of the power of language as well as its forms and functions will confirm your efforts in attaining a high level of proficiency in your own speech. A sensitive response both in aural perception and oral production of the physical quality of English speech sounds along with an awareness of how you express will add depth to your voice.

Do remember that for your pupils, exposure to a stimulating learning environment and opportunities available for talking reciting or singing are both necessary in helping them develop not only their language but also their communications skills. Thus, the presentation of language must be confident and expressive in delivery and related to an interesting idea or experience. Correct pronunciation, proper articulation, clarity of diction, ease and sureness in speech delivery along with fluency, appropriateness of language are crucial for an imaginative and motivating presentation.



An oral presentation of a rhyme involves a creative interpretation of its meaning and atmosphere. Effective speaking or recitation of a nursery rhyme must reflect the following features of delivery:

1. **Clarity of speech:** Speak clearly, distinctly and with expression. Do not become inaudible at the end of a line or a sentence. Endings should be well-articulated because they carry grammatical information, that is, number, tenses, possessive markers, participles and contracted forms. Also remember not to flatten the vowels or harden the consonants.
2. **Rhythm of English:** Use a lively, natural rhythm in your speech. Connected speech in English has its own rhythmic patterns. Stressed syllables are said with greater force than the other syllables that occur in between.
3. **Variety in speed:** Make sure that your speech reflects different speeds to suit different themes, moods as well as parts of a nursery rhyme. However, when presenting a rhyme, remember to speak slowly so that pupils can follow. In the first repetition they should speak slowly even if it sounds exaggerated. Just remember that pupils tend to go too fast or monotonously slow. So your model should reflect a variety of speeds which they can imitate to bring variety and interest in their recitation.
4. **Variety in volume:** An increase or decrease in the volume of your voice prevents the fading away of pupil's interest and ensures their motivation in listening and speaking. It also makes them sensitive to the emotional fabric of the language. Moreover, it creates certain playfulness in children and develops their sense of the drama and a sense of audience. When they recite a nursery rhyme or a poem, the volume of their voice should be along an incline of very loud – loud –normal –soft whisper- silent mouthing.
5. **Variety in tone:** A spatial, temporal and mood atmosphere can be created by varying the tone of your voice. Some parts of a nursery rhyme should be matter of fact, some happy, some energy to reach out to your listeners and fill the words with conceptual and emotional textures.
6. **Pausing at appropriate places:** Pauses should be of various lengths. Do not hesitate to pause and keep the pupils guessing. Give them time to reflect over what has been said and to speculate about what is to come. Pause before any kind of climax. Dramatic tension heightens anticipation and appreciation. A sensitive use of pauses helps development of a sense of drama in the learner.
7. **Reciting a rhyme intelligently:** A mechanical rendering becomes boring and monotonous. Avoid exaggerating the metre or pausing automatically at the end of the line regardless of meaning. Mark the text of a rhyme with words to be stressed, appropriate intonation patterns and pauses. Practice it few times before reciting it in class.
8. **Placing appropriate emphasis:** Decide what are the most important words in terms of meaning and emphasize them. This emphasis invites learner's attention to significant ideas and emotions so that she can experience them during recitation of the rhyme.



9. Avoid a singsong or too nasal a presentation: The former manner of speaking with its 'repeated rising and falling rhymes' may grate on sensibilities and make fun of the metre of English poetry. The latter presentation may sound not only pretentious, affected and artificial but also, more important, prevent the learner from developing an ear for metre and its variations.
10. Using appropriate body languages: Suitable facial expressions, gestures and body movements are self-expressive and help the learner express a range of ideas and emotions himself while miming the teacher.

4.1 DIFFERENT WAYS OF SAYING A NURSERY RHYME

The most common model of saying a nursery rhyme is one in which the teacher says a line of a rhyme and the whole class repeats. However, this exercise needs to be carefully structured to avoid it becoming boring, mechanical and tedious for both the teacher and the learner. To motivate and maintain the enthusiasm and interest of the pupils, other ways of saying a nursery rhyme should be explored.

The recitation of a rhyme can be done in three innovative steps. In the first step, the teacher says a line and the pupils silently make the lip, tongue and mouth movements in enunciating the line. In the second step, the teacher says the same line again followed loudly by the students and then she/he whispers the line. This exercise generates a lot of interest and enthusiasm because of the different kinds of volume control activities.

If the structure of a rhyme permits, it should be de-structured into smaller units according to parts, for example, individual or solo, group and whole class parts. Individual speaking helps the learner in reciting in front of an audience. However, this mode of speaking limits the recitation of rhymes to a few learners only. Choral speaking, on the other hand, ensures the participation of the whole class.

The atmosphere and emotional mood of the rhyme, its thematic content as well as its rhythmic pattern structuring can be effectively expressed through choral speaking. The psychological advantage is that shy children gain confidence to speak in front of others and the class as a whole acquires a sense of audience. Choral speaking is appropriate with a sensitive interpretation of the idea and the emotions in it through the modulation of voice. There are four main types of choral speaking:

- ⇒ Individual / group
- ⇒ Cumulative;
- ⇒ Refrain
- ⇒ Part



4.1.1 INDIVIDUAL/GROUP CHORAL SPEAKING

In the individual speaking or what is popularly known as 'Line-a-Child' choral speaking, individual children say some lines while groups recite or the whole class recites the other line. The following rhymes clearly illustrate this type of choral speaking.

DIDDLE DIDDLE DUMPLING

ALL: Diddle Diddle Dumpling
My son John
PUPIL 1: Went to bed with his trousers on
PUPIL 2: One shoe off and one shoe on
ALL: Diddle Diddle Dumpling
My son John

SOLOMAN GRUNDY

ALL: Soloman Gurndy born on Monday
PUPIL 1: Christened on Tuesday
PUPIL 2: Married on Wednesday
PUPIL 3: Very ill on Thursday
PUPIL 4: Worse on Friday
PUPIL 5: Died on Saturday
PUPIL 6: Buried on Sunday
All: This is the end of Solomon Grundy

In antiphonal rhymes contrasting voices, that is, light /high-pitched/low-pitched /heavy/happy can be used to convey the mood, atmosphere and rhythm of the rhyme, starting with a light, cheerful mood, progressing in a voice filled with quiet happiness, continuing in a growing atmosphere of sadness and concluding on a note of grief.

4.1.2 CUMULATIVE CHORAL SPEAKING

In cumulative choral speaking various sections of a rhyme are recited by different groups, that is, each group says a few lines. To ensure a paced and emotive rendering there should be no more than four to five groups. The force of voices in a group makes for effective choral speaking. The rendering of the following rhyme is an example of this type of speaking.

GROUP 1: There was an old lady, who swallowed a fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly,
Perhaps she will die.
GROUP 2: There was an old lady who swallowed a spider,
that wriggled and jiggled and tickled inside her;
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly; I don't
know why she swallowed a fly, perhaps she will
die.



- GROUP 3: There was an old lady who swallowed a frog, What a hog, she swallowed the spider to catch the fly. I don't know why she swallowed a fly perhaps she will die.
- GROUP 4: There was an old lady who swallowed a cat, fancy that, she swallowed a cat to catch the frog. She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. I don't know why she swallowed a fly perhaps she will die.
- GROUP 5: There was an old lady who swallowed a dog. What a hog, she swallowed the dog to catch the cat. She swallowed a cat to catch the frog. She swallowed the frog to catch the spider. She swallowed the spider to catch the fly. I don't know why she swallowed a fly perhaps she will die.
- GROUP 1-5: There was an old lady who swallowed a horse, she's dead ofcourse.

ONE, TWO , BUCKLE MY SHOE

- GROUP1: One, two,
buckle my shoe.
- GROUP2: Three, four,
Knock at the door.
- GROUP3: Five, Six,
Pick up Sticks.
- GROUP4: Seven, eight
Lay them straight
- ALL: Nine, ten,
A big fat hen.

4.1.3 REFRAIN CHORAL SPEAKING

Refrain speaking consists of different groups, narrating an event or a story while the whole class says the refrain with appropriate emotions, gestures and movements. Fast paced and humorous benefit from this kind or recitation. The following rhyme is an evocative example.

A FARMER WENT TROTTING

- GROUP1: A farmer went trotting upon his grey mare,
ALL: Bumpety, bumpety, bump!
- GROUP1: With his daughter behind him so rosy and fair,
ALL: Lumpety, lumpety, lump!
- GROUP2: A raven cried "Croak"
And they all tumbled down,
ALL: Bumpety, bumpety bump!
- GROUP2: The mare broke her knees,
And the farmer his crown,
ALL: Lumpety lumpety, lump!
- GROUP 3: The mischievous raven flew laughing away,
ALL: Bumpety, bumpety, bump!
- GROUP3: And vowed he would serve them the
same next day,
All: Lumpety, lumpety, lump!



4.1.4 PART CHORAL SPEAKING

In this mode, the sequence of ideas or the flow of a dialogue in a rhyme is maintained by individuals or groups taking on the parts of the characters in the rhyme and saying the lines in a smooth, evocative and natural manner. The following rhyme is an excellent or part speaking.

CHORUS: A beautiful maid lived at a mill.
She sang and she laughed and she worked with a will
But the Mayor of Gloucester was riding by,
And he caught a glance from her bright blue eye.

ALL: Humbledum.

CHORUS: The sails of the mill went whirring on,
The gold on the good Mayor's chariots shone;
The Mayor stepped out and strode to the door,
And the maiden stood on the powdery floor.

ALL: Humbledum.

THE MILLER: O Miller, give me your lass so fine
To ride in this handsome coach of mine;
Tho' she is the maid of the mill on the down
She shall be Queen of Gloucester town!

ALL: Humbledum.

THE MILLER: Oh, who will waken me at dawn
Or bake my bread so brown?
Or brew the heavy nut-brown ale
If you go off to town.

THE MAID: The hind will bake thy bread for thee,
The white bread and the brown;
The cock will crow to waken thee
When I go off to town.

THE MILLER: The wealth of twenty sacks I'll give,
And leave the mill to thee;
And twenty ploughs to plough the down
If you will bide with me.

THE MAID: Not twenty sacks nor twenty mills,
Nor ploughs to plough the down,
Will keep me from my own true love
That dwells in Gloucester town.

The teacher can, thus, exploit the various ways of saying a nursery rhyme and create interest in the speaking and learning of rhymes effectively and enthusiastically. Both individual and choral speaking lend variety to the learning of speaking and reading aloud English with correct pronunciation, stress and intonation. Be it situational, contextual conversation, prose or poetry. All the four types of choral speaking encourage and reinforce the phonetic features of spoken English and linguistic features of aural-oral interaction.



Chapter 5

VERBAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 PREPARATION FOR A LANGUAGE GAME

A language game should be preceded by the teaching and practicing of the required structures and vocabulary- the functional language needed for a smooth and fast- paced participation in a language game. Before the actual conduct of a game, the teacher must explain to the learners what they are expected to do, that is, the roles they are going to play and the functions they are going to perform, like asking for information, giving orders, inviting, refusing, accepting, agreeing, disagreeing, etc. It is important to emphasize that the fun in playing a game is dependent on their willingness to communicate with each other.

Instructions should not be long-winded or complicated. They should be clear and concise. The procedure as well as the rules (not too many) should be explained to the pupils in simple language. The teacher should invite questions from pupils to ensure comprehension of what has been explained to them. Language games at the primary level should be extremely simple. The language should include a limited number of structures and vocabulary items.

The teacher should start with highly contextualized drills in the form of questions and short responses, simple one word substitutions or fixed phrases. These prove to be highly effective in reinforcing the language learnt. With increased proficiency in language use along with greater confidence, tasks or activities can be set up in which the challenge (the level of difficulty) is greater and the language more open ended and less predictable. The duration of game at the primary level should not take more than 10-12 minutes.

GAME 1: The objectives of the game are:

- i) developing sound recognition,
- ii) matching rhyming words, and
- iii) asking simple questions .

The teacher divides the class into two teams. She asks a question from each team . A point is given for a correct answer. The team with the largest number of points wins. The teacher thinks of a word and gives a clue to pupils like “I am thinking of something in this room which rhymes with where”.

- i. Pupils can answer in a single word, for example, hair, chair.
The teacher can reply : “Yes, that’s right”, or “No, that’s not right.
Try again”.
- ii. Pupils ask, “Is it hair?”
Teacher replies, “No, it isn’t.”



GAME 2: The objectives of the game are:

- i) matching words and pictures,
- ii) following instructions, and
- iii) responding quickly.

Teacher makes two or three teams, according to the number of pupils in the class. She draws pictures of a cat, a tree, an aeroplane, a clown, a flower, a pencil, a duck, a bus and a ball on the blackboard. She gives instructions “When I say ‘Touch the flower’, pupils from Team ‘A’ must touch the relevant picture on the blackboard”. The instructions are repeated for other groups. If the team member touches the right image, then the team gets a point otherwise not. This game is challenging only if it is played quickly.

GAME 3: The objectives of the game are:

- i) developing aural-oral-visual recognition and matching items,
- ii) practicing short response, and
- iii) promoting accuracy in listening comprehension and fluency in spoken expression.

Teacher draws pictures on the blackboard. These could be simple, easy-to-draw stick figures or complete pictures. She points to the pictures one by one and says a sentence for each image. Then she asks pupils to repeat the sentences after her.

1. There is a pail in Jack’s hand.
2. There is a hat on Humpty Dumpty’s head.
3. There is a hen on a table.
4. There is a man in a tub.

The teacher asks questions and pupils provide short responses.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| i. Teacher: | There is a man in a tub. Which number picture is it? |
| Pupils (Team A): | Picture 4. |
| ii. Teacher: | Is there a hen on a table in picture 3? |
| Pupils (Team A): | Yes, there is. |
| iii. Teacher: | Someone is sitting on a wall. Which number picture is it? |
| Pupils (Team B): | Picture 2. |
| iv. Teacher: | Is there a hen on Humpty’s head? |
| Pupils (Team B): | No, there isn’t. |

If a pupil from a team cannot answer, the teacher quickly goes to the next team. The team that gives the maximum number of correct responses wins. Questions are to be asked quickly and answers have to be just as quick. This is to promote fluency in aural comprehension and spoken expression.



5.2 ENGAGING IN ROLE-PLAY

Role-play provides the learner opportunities to practice not only language structures for various functions but also different aspects of the enactment and the actual roles he may need to perform in the world outside the school. It offers the possibility of learning appropriate communicative behavior. What to say, to whom, when, how, why and where are the essential elements in any interaction situation. It also involves the confident and appropriate use of movements, gestures and facial expressions along with rhythm, stress and intonation for oral interaction. All these elements promote a natural, spontaneous and realistic expression of language behavior for present and future communication need.

Role-play is most effective where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a person who determines each move of the learners. The teacher's role is important for the selection of materials, that is, sentence patterns and lexical terms needed to perform specific language functions in a particular role-play. She must also provide adequate practice of these materials in activities which precedes the active role-play in class. The learner's needs and expectations must also be kept in mind while planning a role-play situation. The teacher could make a list of situations in which a learner is likely to use English, for example, buying things, travelling, going to the doctor's, etc. Functions such as politely asking for and giving information, agreeing and disagreeing, greetings and thanking can also be listed in terms of the actual structured used.

Before role-play is actually done in class, both teacher and pupils must make adequate preparation for a smooth performance. This preparation is multi-pronged and is made up of various elements and skills. It includes:

- i. Selecting a situation: Buying things like a toy, a book, a pen, etc.
- ii. Determining roles to be played: Customer, salesperson, etc.
- iii. Making a list : Asking for information about items to be purchased, expressing preference for colour and size, asking for and stating the price of goods bought.
- iv. Listing out vocabulary items related to buying and selling like names of shops, kinds of shops, goods, numbers, weights, measurements, colours, sums of money, containers, etc.
- v. Deciding on intonation for various utterances like questions, statements, requests, etc.
- vi. Listing features of oral interaction, including gap-fillers, questions, tags, etc, for spontaneous, natural sounding English.
- vii. Writing down the dialogues to be practiced .
- viii. Listing discrete units of body language, that is, posture, gait, facial expressions, gestures, body movements of head , shoulders, torso and limbs.



- ix. Collecting teaching aids such as pictures of a variety of goods, posters, toys, paper money, audio cassettes for music and role-play cards.
- x. Demarcating space and arranging furniture in the classroom where the role-play is to be enacted.

5.2.1 DIALOGUE

The dialogue should not be very long. It should reflect the phonetic and interactive features of the spoken language, that is, weak form, contractions, linking word accent, intonation, assimilation, phrasal verbs, question tags, ellipses, etc. The sentences should be short and simple. Alternative structures should be given wherever possible. It should be modified to cater to different levels of linguistic proficiency and cognitive skills. Teacher should also decide upon the appropriate body language that will accompany the utterances.

Examples:

1. Leela: Mother, I'm feeling very hungry and thirsty. May I have something to eat and drink, please?
 Mother: Well, what would you like to have?
 Leela: I think I'll have a sandwich and a glass of milk.
 Mother: Here you are, Leela.
 Leela: Oh, thank you mother.

2. Salesperson: Good evening, can I help you?
 Mahesh: Well, I need three notebooks, a ruler, an eraser, a sharpener and five sheets of white chart paper.
 Salesperson: Just a moment. I'll get them for you.
 Here you are.
 Mahesh: How much for all these?
 Salesperson: That'll be Rs 45 for the notebooks, Rs 5 for the ruler, Rs 3 for the eraser, Rs 4 for the sharpener and Rs 20 for the chart paper. That makes it Rs 77 in all.
 Mahesh: (gives a 100 rupee note) Here you are.
 Salesperson: (Packs all the items and hands them to Mahesh).
 Here are the things and your change too.
 Mahesh: Thank you, sir.
 Salesperson: Thank you and goodbye.

3. Salesperson (SP): Good morning. Can I help you?
 Customer (C): Yes, please. I am looking for a pullover.
 SP: I see. What size please?
 C: Er.... Small size.
 SP: Any particular colour that you would like?
 C: Yes. Green, if possible?
 SP: Here you are, light green and dark green.



C: The light green one looks nice. How much is it ?
 SP: Rs 400. Would you like to try it on ?
 C: Yes.
 SP: The changing room is over there.
 C: Thank you. (Tries it on and comes back.)
 SP: Well, did it fit?
 C: Yes, it's perfect. I'll take it.
 SP: All right. I'll pack it for you.
 C: And here's Rs 400. Thank you.
 SP: Thank you, sir/madam.

5.2.2 PROCEDURE

STEP 1: Using the assumed knowledge of the pupils as a starting point, teacher presents vocabulary items to the pupils that include words and phrases required for role-play.

DIALOGUES

1. Sandwich, a glass of milk
Please, thank you
2. Stationery: notebook, ruler, eraser, pencil and sharpener
Help, need, get, pack
Good evening, goodbye

WORDS

garment: pullover, cardigan, jacket
 colours and shades: red, green, yellow, grey, brown,
 black
 size: small, medium, large

PHRASE

greeting: Good morning, Good afternoon, Good evening
 enquiry: What would you like? How much?
 acceptance: Yes, please.
 asking for something: I'm looking for...../I'd like to see, etc.

STEP 2: The teacher selects the two pupils who are to play the roles of the salesperson and customer respectively.

STEP 3: The teacher prepares all the pupils for the role-play by presenting the dialogue to be spoken in the given situation and making them practice it orally. The dialogue is not to be learnt by heart. The class can be divided into two groups: salesperson and customer. The teacher reads out the dialogue. She then asks the class to repeat sentence by sentence, changing the voice to indicate the person who is speaking, the salesperson or the customer. After the third repetition, the salesperson group says its lines followed by the customer group. This can be practiced a few times.



STEP 4: Finally, the two pupils who will play the roles of the inter-locutors, the salesperson and customer, interact, repeating the dialogue. Suitable improvisations are to be encouraged rather than frowned upon. The linguistic interaction will be accompanied by appropriate intonation, relevant body language and actions. For example, showing different sizes and colours of garments, trying one on, packing it, and lastly, paying for it at the counter and collecting it.

Thus, role-play is a valuable activity for the development of the skills of listening and speaking, and using socio-linguistic form appropriate to the context. Other activities like mime and language games prepare the way for effective role-play as they involve the use of movement, gesture, expressions, the phonetic features of spoken English and the linguistic features of oral interaction. These elements are necessary for a spontaneous, natural and realistic enactment of a role in a given situation.

5.3 STORYTELLING

'Once upon a time'-the marvelous, magical, opening phrase of a story takes you to the world where everything is possible, where the unknown, the mysterious, the fantastic, the unexpected and the exciting beckon, where the imagination gallops to horizon creating wonderful worlds of adventures. As a technique for the development of aural-oral skills, it is one of the most powerful and effective development stimuli. However, this is only one of the ways in which a story can be introduced. Others include

- i. Showing a picture of the characters, a place or an object which is in the story;
- ii. Asking questions related to the child's own experiences, family, toys which echo the theme or content of the story; and
- iii. Plunging into the story with a one-line introduction: "I'm going to tell you a story about..."

Listening to stories, prepares learners to become proficient in using language for a range of communicative needs in a variety of interactive situation. The child is exposed to structured narrative, different kinds of vocabulary items, concepts, ideas and emotions. He learns to use appropriate words and a variety of sentence patterns in different style and registers to express himself and to explain something. Also, story telling as a language development technique stimulates a lifelong interest in reading.

The highly stimulating and rich language experience for the learner is possible through storytelling. It develops his listening ability, understanding of content, skill of deduction and reasoning and the capacity for self-expression and self-understanding. A well told story by teacher is a model for pupils to learn to tell a story, describe an event or narrate an experience effectively and creatively.



5.3.1 DIFFERENT WAYS OF STORYTELLING

Reading aloud a story or telling it are useful informal techniques to promote language development, stimulate language use and lastly, to give inputs which will prepare the pupils to read effectively and efficiently. Learning a language formally is only a small visible part of the process of language acquisition and development. Incidental, non-formal, unconscious internalization and use of structures and lexical items are the ways in which learning takes place.

There are two ways in which a story can be narrated to pupils. Both have their advantages and limitations. Teacher can alternate between two styles of narration:

- (a) reading aloud, or
- (b) telling a story.

Reading aloud is one of the time-favored ways of talking about people, things happening to them, things they do, their picaresque adventures through a coloring of fantastic, futuristic, improbable as well as realistic elements. The magic of this 'mélange' is irresistible. The advantages of reading aloud are that children will associate stories with books and this in turn will facilitate the development of their reading skills. Also, many rhyming words, onomatopoeic words or repetitive phrases attract children's attention and they want to hear them every time they listen to the story, so text must ensure an accurate reproduction of these elements. Besides it gives pupils the confidence of knowing a story and later narrating it themselves to friends, grandparents and others because they remember the sequence of events. For teacher, it is an easier way to narrate a story without worrying about forgetting the sequence of events or important details of a character, a situation or a happening. The limitation of this narrative style includes a lack of spontaneity and a lack of control over reading speed. Any pause to ask a question to check the pupil's comprehension or inviting their comments tends to be disruptive, breaking the flow of reading aloud.

Telling a story, on the other hand, has a spontaneity, naturalness and intimacy which make it a vivid and enjoyable experience. Teacher reaches out to the pupils through her conversational style of narration, maintains an eye contact with all listeners and a changing voice quality and body language according to the character, the action in progress, the atmosphere and the tonal texture of the elements of the narrative. Also, using easier words, repeating catchy phrases or refrains, modifying the story to make it more appealing, and exaggerating body movements and facial expressions add to aural comprehension. Asking questions at various points in the narration about what has happened so far and children to predict what will happen next, is possible without disturbing the flow of telling a story. The limitation of this kind of narration is that teacher has to memorize the story to prevent omission of details or not getting the sequence right.



Thus, both styles and methods of narration are equally effective in presenting language material through an irresistible language experience. They can be used alternately or children can be asked which style they prefer. Visual aids like posters and puppets can be used as effective illustrations to make the storytelling experience a vivid and engrossing one in which exposure to English and the use of the language are crucial objectives. Sound effects or pieces of music at various points can be used for added interest, for example, the sounds of animals, thunder, stormy wind, people running, shouting or crying. Music pieces could include classical, contemporary or folk music.

5.3.2 SELECTION OF STORIES

There is a wide range of material which can be used for storytelling. It includes fairytales, folktales, legends, stories based on ballads, plays and films, personal experiences or those of others and lastly, the products of faithful make the listener think, question and experience the story in all its cathartic possibilities as well as enlarge his field of experience. The story itself must be entertaining, of high interest value and appropriate to the conceptual and emotional development level of the pupil. Such material can lead to activities which promote reflection, develop imagination and facilitate the transfer of skills of reasoning, awareness and observation to other areas of learning.

5.3.3 PROCEDURE

Teacher should make pupils sit comfortably around her on chairs or on the floor. The arrangement should allow her to have eye contact and control over all of them. In reading aloud, the cover page and title should be shown to them. Teacher can ask them what they think the story will be about. While telling a story, the magical phrase 'Once upon a time' never fails to catch children's attention.

Teacher should look at children when telling the story. She should try to increase their interest in the story and help them focus their attention better on listening to the story by using gestures, body movements and mime to listening to introduce and develop the story. In case there is waning of interest or the story disturbs them she should not hesitate to improvise through elaboration, modification or deletion and give it a form which is acceptable and provides positive stimulation.

The story should be animated by entering into the skin of the characters, the language and the mood of the story, using variation in voice, gestures and movement. Teacher's own voice is her best and most creative prop. She can change its pitch, volume, speed and tonal quality to create an appropriate medium for introduction and elaboration of characters, signal changes in narrative and atmosphere and stimulate the imagination of the young listeners.



The story should be punctuated by inviting opinion of the children on the narrative, their comments on what is happening and has happened so far and lastly, to guess what is likely to happen next.

5.3.4 STORYTELLING BY CHILDREN

Telling a story is a useful activity for children for several reasons. Besides developing their acting skills, their feel for drama and a sense of audience, it promotes oral fluency, intelligibility, clarity of thought, crisp, distinctive, elegant and eloquent diction, and confidence in handling language. Children should be allowed to select the story they wish to tell or the experience they choose to narrate. A rehearsal before the actual storytelling may help the child to

1. develop confidence in speaking before others,
2. sequence events properly,
3. express complete thoughts,
4. use a variety of sentence patterns,
5. use appropriate vocabulary,
6. articulate distinctly,
7. pronounce words correctly,
8. speak clearly,
9. vary and control volume of voice,
10. use appropriate gestures and facial expressions,
11. avoid unnecessary repetitions,
12. maintain a proper posture to perform before an audience,
13. emote well, and
14. select and use pictures, puppets or other aids, audio or visual—if he wants to.

During the telling of the story, teacher should be ready to prompt or fill in if necessary. In case the child gives up half way, teacher should not insist on continuing with narration. The activity should be an enjoyable learning experience for the learner. A little preparation will prove immensely beneficial in making it worthwhile.

5.4 SINGING

Singing is the one of the most enjoyable verbal activities for all age-groups of learners in acquiring and using language. A wide range of objectives can be achieved through. All learners can be trained to sing as well as develop an appreciation for different rhythm patterns. Singing means to utter musical sounds or utter words in a succession, usually set to music.

The following objectives of singing will enable the teacher to carefully select songs and chants for practice.



1. Acquire a sense of rhythm and different rhythm patterns
2. Develop an ear for melody
3. Be acquainted with and be able to produce a wide range of pitch and amplitude variations
4. Produce a variety of tones
5. Develop an ear and a taste for different styles of singing –classical, folk, jazz, pop, etc.
6. Familiarize himself with different grammatical structures as well as those modified to suit the lyrics and the melody
7. Acquire vocabulary, active and passive, related to different things
8. Develop confidence in uttering a variety of tones and melodies

Singing is thus an admirable activity of sensitizing pupils to the variety in volume, texture, tone and emotions of the human voice.

5.4.1 PROCEDURE

The teacher should start the singing class with relaxation and breathing exercise. These are to be followed by practice in singing the scales –ascending and descending. Nursery rhymes and popular songs provide sufficient practice material. Rhymes and songs which offer moods and emotions should be chosen.

- STEP 1: Teacher could make pupils listen to a music tape. She/He could compile rhymes or songs on a cassette, or sing/recite these herself. For example, “Row, row, row your boat” or “What shall we do with the drunken sailor?”
- STEP 2: Pupils repeat the rhyme/song line by line after the teacher.
- STEP 3: Pupils sing it on their own without a prompt by the teacher.
- STEP 4: Teacher asks pupils to sing the rhyme, first very slowly, then very quickly.
- STEP 5: Teacher asks pupils to sing it sadly and then happily.

5.5 ENGAGING IN FINGER-PLAY

The educative experiences of all learning, especially early learning, focus on the holistic development of the child in terms of mental, emotional, physical and social processes, values and skills. Among the range of activities which facilitate this overall development and stimulate speech production, finger play is a valuable creative experience for young children as it provides them motivation to participate, to think, to feel, to do and to learn. Also, it helps them coordinate body and mind to enact a story and narrate it in a sequential order at the same time. Finger play involves playing out a simple, easy-to-say rhyming story accompanied by hand and finger movements and facial expressions.



As a technique for language development and use, finger play helps the learner do the following:

- i. Develop skills of deductive reasoning which help perceive the relationship between various elements in a situation or a series of connected situations, and see the cause –effect link in any text.
 - ii. Understand and follow the logical structuring of a narrative, that is, the sequential nature of rhymes and stories, or for that matter any text: how it starts, what happens next and after that, and finally, what happens in the end.
 - iii. Understand and express concepts of space and time.
 - iv. Acquire a greater proficiency in the skills of listening and speaking through aural comprehension of the teacher’s presentation of the story to be ‘finger played’ and oral practice of it.
 - v. Develop the skill of composition so that he can write in his own words the story based on the finger play with greater control over sentence construction and increased facility in using new words learnt in the story.
 - vi. Develop his creativity through the illustrations he makes to accompany his writing effort. Drawings and pictures cut out of newspapers and magazines can be used as pictorial complements.
 - vii. Perform creative tasks that could include making innovative and imaginative additions or variations in terms of characters, events, facial expressions, gestures and body movements to the finger play of learning, and speaking fluently, intelligibly, appropriately and creatively through the coordination of speech and physical movements. An effort is required to put together the spelling out of the narrative as well as eloquent gestures like hand and finger movements. The emphasis is on co-ordination of speech and physical movements.
 - viii. Research different ideas, concepts and activities related to the finger play story with the help of teacher. A lot of interesting and comprehensive learning experiences are possible through projects based on finger-play. For example, size and shapes, different types of dwellings, flora and fauna, personality types, etc.
 - ix. Link topics, themes and skills across different subjects: literature, arithmetic, art and craft, history, geography, science and elocution.
 - x. Acquire ethical and social values through discussions based on finger-play stories, for example, outer and inner behavior in character in the story, cruelty to animals, and desirable qualities are some of the topics for class discussion.
- Overcome shyness and develop confidence in speaking, as this is a group activity and the focus is not on the individual child. He can then progress to speaking and performing in front of the class.

Thus, finger play offers opportunity not only for developing the skill of speaking but other language skills also, along with developing the potential of the hands and fingers as learning aids.



5.5.1 TEXT FOR FINGER PLAY

A selection of rhymes to be used for finger play can be made at the beginning of the school year. Rhymes selected should include the following elements:

1. Actions of various kinds, which include (a) describing objects, people, animals, birds, etc. (b) making movements of the body and limbs showing various kinds of actions and different speeds- starting to walk very fast, running, jumping, skipping, etc.
2. Text must not be too long to begin with. Later, as the pupils become familiar with techniques of finger play, they could be given short stories to recite and finger play. For example, they could start with 'Jack and Jill', 'Humpty Dumpty', 'Three Blind Mice' and then move on to rhymes like 'This is the House that Jack Built' and 'Who killed cock Robin?'.

5.5.2 PREPARATION FOR FINGER PLAY

As finger play involves both speech and hand movements, teacher can prepare pupils for this activity by speech- training exercise, and those which ensure the flexibility of the arms, hands and fingers. Exercise designed to improve neuro-motor skills of upper limbs include the following movements. Each exercise can be done three times. The teacher asks pupils to

1. flail their arms sideways as if they are flying like a bird;
2. hunch their shoulders up and down smoothly and then make a circle, first forward and then backward;
3. make huge sweeping circles with their arms stretched sideways;
4. hold out arms in front, flex them quickly so that hands touch the shoulders;
5. shake hands as if they are wet and are being dried;
6. make a fist of both hands and turn them around in circles, first clockwise and then anticlockwise;
7. spread out fingers as far as possible, hold for three seconds and then relax hands;
8. play an imaginary piano with firm, clear finger movements;
9. close the hand in a fist and open fingers one by one;
10. open hands, spread out fingers and close the finger one by one into a fist;
11. make imaginary circular, triangular and square objects with their fingers; and
12. write letters of the alphabet in the air with each finger one by one.

All these exercises will ensure flexibility of the arms, hands and fingers and create clear, distinctive, well-defined and expressive finger movements to delineate a narrative.



5.5.3 PROCEDURE FOR FINGER PLAY

This involves a step-by-step linking of spoken sentence and expressive finger movements. The following sequence illustrates the procedure for this activity.

1. Teacher presents the complete story and finger play to be learnt through a live demonstration or playing a text of the tape accompanied by hand movements. There should be complete synchronization between the telling of the text and the accompanying hand and finger movements.
2. Pupils learn to say the rhyme or story, articulating text with emotions.
3. Teacher demonstrates and pupils learn finger movements needed for the story in a properly paced sequence.
4. Text and finger play are combined to produce a coherent and complete enactment. Teacher recites with the class by saying text and making the related finger/hand movements. This activity can be repeated several times so that pupils gain confidence in doing it without hesitation or prompting them. Teacher asks pupils to say the first line and also do the finger play and so on till the end of the rhyme or the story. Finally, they perform the complete finger play in a smooth sequence by themselves.
5. The class can be divided into groups if there are several characters in the story or a chorus, each group playing one character or the chorus or highlighting sounds and movements.
6. The characters can be discussed in terms of their appearance, qualities, emotions and intentions. Children can then be helped to enter into the character for a meaningful rendition.
7. Use any audio or visual aid which can help the pupil to visualize the required movements in a rhyme. Prior preparation and practice enables the teacher to ensure an interesting flow of sequenced movements and guide the pupils in well demarcated actions and finger play.

5.5.4 ILLUSTRATION OF FINGER PLAY HICKORY DICKORY DOCK

STEP 1: Teacher says the whole rhyme, accompanying the recitation with hand movements and facial expressions.

- i. Hickory: Teacher closes her hand into a fist, opens the first finger.
- ii. Dickory: Opens second finger.
- iii. Dock: Vigorously places right fist on the palm of her left hand.
- iv. The mouse: Teacher brings both hands up below the chin with fingers slightly curled.
- v. Ran up the clock: Right hand fingers move up quickly in the air.
- vi. The clock struck one: Claps both hands loudly.



- vii. The mouse ran down: Right hand fingers express a scurrying movement downwards.
- viii. Hickory: same as i)
- ix. Dickory: same as ii)
- x. Dock: same as iii)

STEP 2: Teacher asks pupils to repeat the nursery rhyme one line at a time and make the appropriate hand movements: Coordination between recitation and hand movements may be difficult the first time, but very quickly the pupils will be able to do the whole exercise smoothly.

Finger play is an important activity in combining verbal and nonverbal activities. Teacher could write down arm/hand/body/leg/foot movements and facial expressions needed for all the rhymes to be taught, so that complete, coherent, discrete units of body language are established and this vocabulary used with every succeeding class. Verbal and nonverbal expressions are complementary modes in learner's language development and his use of the language.

