

# *Reading Horizons*

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*Volume 27, Issue 4*

1987

*Article 7*

JULY 1987

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## Action Book Nursery Rhymes and Favorite Tales

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# Action Book Nursery Rhymes and Favorite Tales

Gerry Bohning and Margie Radencich

## **Abstract**

Action books of rhymes and tales are well suited for use with young children to help develop J:: rereading skills and foster a lively interest in books. It is the purpose of this article to present a rationale and guidelines for using action book nursery rhymes and favorite tales with preschool and kindergarten children. A booklist has been compiled to assist parents and teachers in choosing a resource collection.



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## ACTION BOOK NURSERY RHYMES AND FAVORITE TALES

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Nursery rhymes and favorite tales have a timeless appeal to young children. Many nursery rhymes and favorite tales are now available as action books. Action books are often called pop-up, pull-tab, or lift-the-flap books. Children trigger movement by turning pages, lifting flaps, sliding tabs or moving wheels. Action books is an inclusive term used to identify books with moving parts. The most common action in books is the pop-up; as the pages are opened an illustration pops up giving a three-dimensional effect.

Action books for children date back to England in the 1760s, when Robert Sayer first published pop-up and action-tab books. The paper engineers of today's action books have created the movement technology to send the cow jumping over the moon, to hide Peter Rabbit behind a pop-out watering can and to glide Pooh Bear to the top of a honey tree.

Action books of rhymes and tales are well suited for use with young children to help develop prereading skills and foster a lively interest in books. It is the purpose of this article to present a rationale and guidelines for using action book nursery rhymes and favorite tales with preschool and kindergarten children. A booklist has been compiled to assist parents and teachers in choosing a resource collection.

### Rationale

The purpose for using action rhymes and tales in the home or early childhood classroom is to develop children's representational understandings and a sense of story structure. In addition, action books help children enjoy print, an important motivational aspect for successful beginning reading.

Action books are useful in helping young children build representational understandings (McGee & Charlesworth, 1984). The movables serve as a transition between real

objects and actions and the flat representations in picture books. Pictures can aid the transition from the concrete to the abstract (Smardo, 1982). However, for some children pictures are often not enough. Action books with movable parts, on the other hand, allow for a degree of concreteness to accompany print.

Helping young children develop a "sense of story" is an important prereading skill (Petty, Petty & Becking, 1985; Stewig, 1983). Action books can serve as an aid for children to help them develop a sense of plot and story sequence. Shannon and Samuels (1985) suggest that action books help children organize thought in order to produce meaning. The moving visuals are a natural media for helping children understand and order the sequence of a plot. Young children can sequence simple storytelling by following the actions of the movables. The oral reprocessing of the rhymes and tales help children gain an awareness of story structure.

Action rhymes and tales help foster a love of literature. A child who loves books is on his or her way to becoming a successful reader (Barron & Burley, 1984; Durkin, 1983). Children enjoy action books because they are able to participate in a story and find the involvement exciting. Abrahamson and Stewart (1982) point out that books with movables show children that experiences with print can be enjoyable. Children should always be introduced to the traditional picture books of nursery rhymes and favorite tales. The action books offer an additional dimension to the traditional picture books for helping children enjoy experiences with print.

### Guidelines

The following four steps are guidelines for using action rhymes and tales with young children. The steps follow the releasing story power sequence suggested by Burke (1986). The guidelines focus on reading as a shared experience.

1. Prepare the children. Tell them to watch for surprises. Read the tale or rhyme and model the action triggers yourself.
2. Go back and show the children how to use the lift-flaps, pull-tabs, turn-wheels and pop-up pages. Read the rhyme or tale again. Guide the children's participation with the action triggers.
3. Have a child hold the book, turn the pages, lift the

flaps or turn the wheels while you model telling the story in your own words or repeating the rhyme. Have a child tell the story, with assistance if needed, as he or she triggers the action tabs.

4. Make the book available for repeated individual discovery and oral storytelling.

### Resource Booklist

Action rhymes and tales for reading in the home or classroom should be selected based on durability and simplicity. In most cases the action books of rhymes and tales of today are paper engineered for hard use. The lift-flaps are sturdy and the pop-out figures and objects are securely glued. Fragile pop-ups should be avoided for use with young children. The interest and pleasure of an action book is for the child to be able to participate.

The accompanying text for action books should be simple. Long complicated texts are not in keeping with a young child's attention span. A simple text will allow the child to tell back the rhyme or tale based on the sequence of pop-ups. However, a too abbreviated text can be a disservice to a favorite tale or rhyme. Care must be taken to have a balance between simplicity and retaining the richness of the original tale or rhyme.

The following booklist has been annotated to assist both parents and teachers in selecting durable and simple action book rhymes and tales for the home and early childhood classroom.

### Nursery Rhymes

Golden Animal Pop-Up Book. (1985). Racine, WI: Western Publishing Co. My Pop-Up Mother Goose. Sturdy stand-up animals pop up for each nursery rhyme.

Hawkins, D., and Hawkins, J. (1985). New York: Putnam. Old Mother Hubbard. Old Mother Hubbard's funny dog is hiding under the lift-flaps.

Hill, E. (1984). Los Angeles: Price/Stern/Sloan. Nursery Rhyme Peek-A-Book. Nursery rhyme riddles are solved by lifting the flaps to find the answers.

Honey Bear Giant Pop-Up Book. (n/d). New York: Modern Promotions. Mother Goose. A delight of simple pop-ups of favorite rhymes.

Playtime Pop-Ups. (reprinted 1985). New York: Outlet Book Co., Deans International. My Nursery Rhyme Pop-Up Book and Lucy Atwell's Pop-Up Book of Rhymes. Favorite rhymes have simple stand-out scenes.

Real Mother Goose Pop-Ups. (1985). New York: Rand McNally & Co. Cat and the Fiddle and Other Animal Rhymes, Humpty Dumpty and Other Nursery Rhymes, Jack and Jill and Other Favorite Rhymes, and Pat-a-cake and Other Playtime Rhymes. A marvel of movables to accompany nursery rhymes; hands clap, fiddlers bow, and children line up by the Old Woman's shoe.

Revolving Picture Book Series. (1984). New York: Franklin Watts. Humpty Dumpty and Other Favorite Nursery Rhymes and Jack and Jill and Other Favorite Nursery Rhymes. Revolving wheels give action pictures for the rhymes.

Sesame Street. (1976). New York: Random House. The Sesame Street Mother Goose. Pop-up Sesame Street Characters pose for the rhymes.

#### Favorite Tales

All-Action Treasure Hour Pop-Up Books. (1971; 1983). New York: Outlet Book Co., Deans International (Artia; Brown Watson). Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Jack and the Beanstalk, Puss-in-Boots, Snow White, The Three Little Pigs, and Cinderella. Durable pop-outs sequence the plot for each tale.

Baum, Frank. (n/d). New York: Windmill. The Wizard of Oz: A Windmill Pop-Up Book. A tornado lifts Dorothy's house off the page and carries it high into the air.

De-Luxe Pop-Up Book Series. (reprinted 1985). New York: Bookthrift, Deans International. My Pop-Up Book of Fairy Tales, My Pop-Up Book of Sleeping Beauty, My Pop-Up Book of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, My Pop-Up Book of Puss-in-Boots, and My Pop-Up Book of Cinderella. Scenes and characters fold out to set a sequence of scenes for each of the five stories.

Favorite Tale Pop-Up Books. (1984). New York: Crown Publishers. Alice in Wonderland, The Three Little Pigs, Cinderella, Tom Thumb, Goldilocks, Puss-in-Boots, The Tortoise and the Hare, and The Ugly Duckling. Eight

tales fold out as a lively sequence of the favorite tales.

- Hill, E. (1984). Los Angeles: Price/Stern/Sloan. Fairy Tale Peek-a-Book. A riddle fairy tale book; answers are under the flaps.
- Hillard, S. (1986). New York: Putnam. Billy Goats Gruff. A troll is hiding under the lift flaps.
- Honey Bear Pop-Up Books. (n/d). New York: Modern Promotions. Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, Pinocchio, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Four pocket-sized pop-out books of favorite tales. Honey Bear Giant Pop-Up Books. (n/d). Alice in Wonderland, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, Peter Rabbit, and The Wizard of Oz. Sturdy pop-ups of favorite scenes.
- Milne, A. A. (1984). New York: Dutton. Winnie-the-Pooh: A Pop-Up Book. Christopher Robin tugs back and forth to free Pooh from Rabbit's hole.
- My Favorite Pop-Up Books. (n/d). New York: Modern Promotions. Hansel and Gretel, Wizard of Oz, Alice in Wonderland, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Sleeping Beauty. Easy to tell the tale from the pop-up scenes.
- Patience, J. (reprinted 1985). New York: Crown Publishers. All in a Day in Fern Hollow, Outdoor Fun in Fern Hollow, Busy Times in Fern Hollow, and Winter Fun in Fern Hollow. Fold-out scenes bring the characters from Fern Hollow into action.
- Play Time Pop-Ups. (reprinted 1985). New York: Outlet Book Co., Deans International. My Pop-Up Book of Fairy Tales. The pop-ups are simple and sturdy.
- Potter, B. (1983). New York: Frederick Warne. The Peter Rabbit Pop-Up Book. A fold-out watering can emerges and a pull-tab pops up Peter with a "Kertschoo."

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