

LUCK WITH POTATIOS

BY Helen Ketteiman

There are several ways to extend your lesson with the book *Luck with Potatoes*. You will find several ideas for adaptation in your classroom.

Science:

There are many ways to use this book in the area of science. Children love hands-in science activities, therefore, they really enjoy planting their own potato and recording its growth. You can either have each child bring in a potato from home, collect money for potatoes, or supply them yourself. It is best if each child has a potato to monitor. Another idea is to put the students in groups and let each group monitor their potato's growth together. If you do use groups, be sure to assign a role to each child in the group (secretary/recorder, captain, parliamentarian, ect.) so that one child does not do all of the work.

This book is a perfect way to introduce the concept of farming to students. The following is a list of ideas to help your class study farming.

Ask the children to draw a picture of what they think a farm looks like.

If you have a class sandbox, you may want to make a class model of a typical farm. Have the children look up words in the dictionary like:

Farmer

Silo

Farm

Tractor

Pasture

The names of farm animals.

Ask each child to choose one farm animal to research. The child will be responsible for finding out 5 interesting facts about his or her animal. Depending on your class size, you may want to put the children in groups and have each group report on an animal. The children should include a picture of the animal.

Ask a local farmer to come to your classroom to discuss the importance of farming and exactly what a farmer does.

As a class, go to the library to do research to determine if it's really possible to grow potatoes that are as large as the ones in *Luck with Potatoes*.

Visit a local grocery store to examine their produce that came from a farm.

Make a class web about farming.

Visit a local farm! Children love field trips and this is the perfect way to let them see what a farm is like!

Have the children do a research project on the different types of cows. At first, you may want to have them look up mountain cows that match the description of the ones in the book *Luck with Potatoes*. When they cannot find an exact match, then ask them to research cows and choose a particular breed to study. Next, they should find out some interesting facts about this breed of cows and present it to the class. You may not want to use the enclosed sheet.

The book mentions a jungle and rain forest. This might be a good book to introduce the idea of those two terms especially for younger students.

The growing potatoes created earthquakes in the book. Children are always fascinated by the study of earthquakes.

Geography

Since the story Luck with Potatoes takes place in Tennessee, a wonderful class activity would be to research on the state.

Take the class trip to the library. Give the children a sheet to complete like the one in this packet. Depending on the developmental level of your class, you may want to assign groups to work together to complete the worksheet. Be sure to have your school librarian pull books on Tennessee so that the information is easily accessible.

Have each child create their own map or model of the state of Tennessee. This would be a wonderful activity for involving the parents if it is a project to be completed at home. Encourage the children to be creative in thinking of a way to represent Tennessee. They may want to use clay to build a model or even bake a cake. It's all up to the imagination! Be sure to allow the students time to create their project. (This is a great art activity!)

Each child could do a presentation on Tennessee for the class. Once again, it's important for them to be creative. You may tell them they must present three interesting facts they learned about Tennessee.

Integrating Technology

You may want to allow the children to use the computer and CD Rom such as Compton's Encyclopedia or Grolier's Encyclopedia to do their research.

Another idea is to use the computer as a reward for those who finish their work early or on time. Games such as Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? Are wonderful ways to reinforce geographical skills and knowledge. There are a lot of wonderful computer programs available that can easily be integrated into the curriculum to help reinforce skills.

The computer should also be used in the classroom for writing. Children really benefit from learning how to use a word processing program geared towards their development level. It is best to expose children to computers at an early age.

Art

As mentioned in the geography section, have each child create a model of the state of Tennessee. They should use their imagination to be creative. This would be a wonderful project for the children to work on at home with their parents.

Ask the children to create an animal that has adapted to its environment like the mountain cows did in Luck with Potatoes. They should then make a visual representation of the animal.

You may just want them to draw a picture of the animal in its environment.

Another idea is to have them build a model of the adapted animal.

Once again creativity is encouraged! Give each child a sheet of paper. Then, provide the class with an assortment of colored tempura paints. Slice up some potatoes (and other vegetables and fruits, if you choose) and allow the children to create a picture using potato prints. The children will love this art activity, although it can get a little bit messy!

Creative Learning

Ask the children to write a story about the environmentally adapted animal that they created.

A wonderful bulletin board display could be made using these stories and the picture the children draw of their individual animal. A fun class project would be to create a class newspaper reporting on Clemmin Hardigree's crazy crops.

The children should use their imagination to think of their amazing crops that Clemmon could grow. Let them know that the more outrageous the crop, the better the newspaper story! Each child should have an "article" in the paper.

Ask the children to record their personal thoughts and comments on Luck with Potatoes in their journals.

Write letters to the author, Helen Ketteman, and tell the children to inform her about what they liked about the book and any changes they would make, and any questions that they may have about how she wrote the book.

Ask the students to write an alternate ending to the book Luck with Potatoes.

The students could write another story about Clemmon Hardigree and Cow Hollow.

Have the children look up the following vocabulary words:

Dwarf

Petrify

Pasture

Fertile

Meager

Ask the children to create their own recipe using potatoes as an ingredient. Compile all of the recipes into a class recipe book. Make a copy for each child.

Ask the children to write about their favorite dish that is made from potatoes. Then, ask several parent volunteers to make or purchase different things that are made from potatoes like potato salad, French fries, hash brown potatoes, potato chips, baked potatoes, scalloped potatoes, Etcetera. You may want to have a taste test! Children love every opportunity to enjoy food at school.

Ask the children to write a letter to Clemmon Hardigree and tell them they can ask him anything they want to know. This is a wonderful idea for an interactive bulletin board. Have the children put their letters in a pocket on the bulletin board.

Then, you answer the letters daily as if you were Clemmon. Post your responses along with each student's letter on the bulletin board. Children love to receive mail from characters in a favorite book!