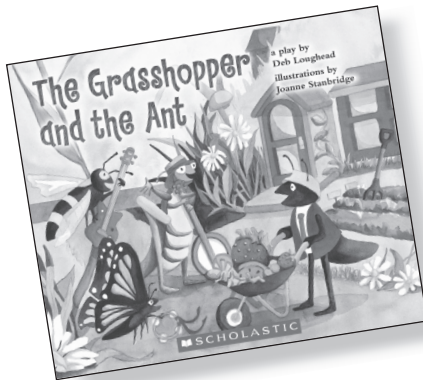


The Grasshopper and the Ant

Written by Deb Loughead

Illustrated by Joanne Stanbridge



Text Type: Fiction: Narrative — Rhyming Play

Summary: This play tells in rhyme the story of a wise ant who spent the summer preparing for winter and a foolish grasshopper who spent the summer singing.

Audio Available Online
www.lpey.ca

Text Features

- ▶ list of characters
- ▶ text on even pages; illustrations on odd pages except first and last pages

Visual Literacy

- ▶ environmental print

Print Concepts

- ▶ variety of punctuation (colon, exclamation mark, question mark)
- ▶ italics

First Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ predicting
- ▶ making connections: text to self

Working with Words

- ▶ attending to print (words, spaces between words, tracking across lines and down page)
- ▶ language predictability: associating meanings to words (vocabulary)

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ join in with predictable and familiar language patterns
- ▶ use illustrations and back cover text to predict story events
- ▶ make text-to-self connections
- ▶ understand new vocabulary using prior knowledge, context clues, illustrations and actions

Teaching Tip :

The online audio for this book includes a song version of this text. You may choose to begin the lesson by listening to the song. Alternatively, you may listen to the song after reading the book. Encourage students to sing along once they become familiar with the melody.

**BEFORE READING****Making connections:
text to self****Activating and Building Prior Knowledge**

Ask, *Have you ever been doing something that you really enjoyed doing and then had someone tell you to stop and do something you didn't want to do? For example, sometimes you're playing a game and a family member tells you it's time to do a chore. Or you're having a great time at recess or in the gym and then it's time to go back and do some work in the classroom. How do you feel when that happens? If you could, would you keep on doing the thing you enjoy? Is it important to do those other things?*

Ask, *How many of you have seen a play? What's a play like? How is it different from a regular story?* Encourage students to discuss their experiences, leading them to see that a play is a story told by various people called the characters.

ESL Note:

Discuss the meanings of *play* (e.g., play a game, perform a play). ESL students may need clarification of these homonyms.

Predicting

Show students the front cover, and ask, *What do you think is happening in this picture? What are these insects doing? What do you think the story might be about?* Read the title and then invite students to read it again with you, pointing to each word as you do so. Invite students to identify the ant and the grasshopper. Say, *So who is this story going to be about?* Ask, *Where else might I find more information about the story before I open the book?* Turn to the back cover and ask, *Who do we see here? What is he doing? How do you know?* (You can tell that he's singing/playing because musical notes are flowing out of him.) Read the text on the back cover. Ask, *Does the information that the grasshopper sings while the ant works change what you thought when you looked at the picture on the front cover?* Ask, *What do you think the author means when she asks, "Now who is the wiser one?" What do you think might happen in this story?* Write students' predictions on the board.

ESL Note:

Simplify vocabulary, point to relevant story pictures, rephrase key messages, and offer more clues to help engage ESL students in the discussion. For example, ask, *Who is the wiser one?* and then rephrase by asking, *Who is the smarter or the more careful one?*

Predicting**Setting a Purpose**

Let's read together to find out if we're right about what happens to the ant and the grasshopper.



DURING READING

Tracking print/ print concepts

Track most pages smoothly across the line of text. Point to each word for some phrases or sentences to emphasize that print is read left to right and to model one-to-one correspondence. For example, point to each word in grasshopper’s repeated song, “Tra-la-la, tra-la-lee, summertime is fun for me.”

Text features

Show students page 2. Say, *Look at the pictures on this page. This is the list of characters. Which characters have we seen before? Which characters are new? Say, The ladybug is the Narrator. The Narrator tells important parts of the story not told by the characters themselves.* Verify insect name predictions using initial consonants if students recognize letters.

Say, *When you read a play, you begin at the same place you do when you read any book.* Point to the top left-hand corner of page 3. Say, *First you read who is speaking. I see that the ladybug Narrator begins the story by saying . . .* (read her lines, sweeping finger or pointer under the words and vocalizing the return sweep). Point to the grasshopper. *Next I see that Grasshopper speaks, saying . . .* (sing his lines, sweeping finger or pointer under the words and vocalizing the return sweep; you can make up your own tune or listen to the song online). Point to the ladybug and ask, *Who is speaking next?* Read the Narrator’s lines, sweeping finger or pointer under the words. Continue until students show understanding of how a play is formatted.

Building confidence

When you come to the grasshopper’s song again (page 4), invite students to join in. Echo “sing” the song, pointing to each word. Break it up into manageable chunks until students can sing along without echoing.

Language predictability

Pause at challenging vocabulary and ask questions to explore meanings, e.g., *insects, sing along, rest, zest, mood, year, fall, snug, spare.* Prompt students to use prior knowledge, context clues, illustrations, and actions to show what unfamiliar words mean.



AFTER READING

Predicting

Ask, *What happened to the ant and the grasshopper? What did the ant do? What did the grasshopper do? What problem did the grasshopper have? Let’s look at our predictions. Were we right about what we thought might happen?*

Making connections: text to self

Say, *The grasshopper found himself in a bit of trouble, didn’t he, because he sang all summer instead of working. Did you ever find yourself in any trouble because you kept on playing instead of doing the work you were supposed to do? What happened?*

Building confidence

End this session by substituting the next activity of the day into grasshopper’s little song. Sing it to make the transition. Invite students to join in, e.g.,

Tra-la-la, tra-la-lee

Recess time is fun for me.

This can be used throughout the day for transitioning from one activity to another.

Second Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ evaluating

Working with Words

- ▶ attending to print (punctuation, words, spaces between words, tracking across lines and down page)
- ▶ uses the cueing systems (looks right, sounds right, makes sense)

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ join in with predictable and familiar language patterns
- ▶ analyze words and pictures to understand story events
- ▶ evaluate: express opinions about story events and characters' actions
- ▶ recognize a variety of punctuation



BEFORE READING

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Begin the session with Grasshopper's song, substituting *reading plays* for *summertime*:

Tra-la-la, tra-la-lee

Reading plays is fun for me.

Evaluating

Ask, *We found out what happened to the ant and the grasshopper, didn't we? Why did those things happen? These insects behave like people, in this play, don't they? What kinds of "people" were they? What can we figure out about them from reading the play?*

Evaluating

Setting a Purpose

Say, *Let's read The Grasshopper and the Ant again. We know what happened to them, but let's see if we can find out what they were like this time and why things happened as they did.*



DURING READING

Print concepts

Refer again to pages 2 and 3, and ask students, *What do authors do in stories and plays to tell readers how to read their words? How do I know where to start reading? How do I know when to stop reading?* Once it's established that authors use punctuation to tell us how to read their words, show some examples from the play, e.g., periods on page 3 and exclamation marks on page 6.

Track most pages smoothly across the line of text and point to periods and exclamation marks while emphasizing their purpose with your voice. Occasionally ask students how successfully you are reading as the author intended. You can also ask students to notice what kind of letter always follows a period and exclamation mark.

Building confidence/ language predictability

Occasionally employ the cloze strategy while reading: pause before supplying the highly predictable word at the end of a sentence. Encourage students to chime in with a word that makes sense, sounds right, and looks right.

Language predictability

Have students act out new vocabulary from the first reading as it occurs, e.g., *zest* (page 6). After reading, “He worked with *zest*,” ask students to quickly show working with *zest* and then move on.

Evaluating/analyzing

Whenever you come to an indicator of character, pause in your reading, and ask students what this tells them about the kind of individual either the ant or the grasshopper is. Write “Ant” and “Grasshopper” on the board or chart paper and write any character traits for each under the appropriate name. For example, on page 6, ask, *What does Ant say about himself on this page? How does the Narrator describe him?* (The Narrator says he works with *zest* and that he did it all summer long. Ant says he’s always in a busy mood.)



AFTER READING

Evaluating/analyzing

Ask, *What did we find out about Ant?* (busy, hard-working, worked with *zest*, careful, generous because he shared with Grasshopper) *What did we learn about Grasshopper?* (didn’t work, liked to have fun, didn’t plan or think about the future, thought he had lots of time to find food before winter) *What did Grasshopper have to offer Ant in return for food? Do you think they both learned something that they might remember next year? What did Grasshopper mean when he said, “We’ll have the best of everything!” What did they each decide was best for them?*

What if Grasshopper had been hard-working, or if he had even spent some of his time working—how would the story have been different? What if Ant hadn’t been so hard-working? Do you think he might not have had enough food to share with Grasshopper?

Third Reading

Reading Strategies

Comprehension

- ▶ synthesizing
- ▶ inferring

Working with Words

- ▶ language predictability: substituting actions for highly predictable words
- ▶ using key words to teach letter sounds

Assessment Opportunities

Note each student’s ability to:

- ▶ state the main idea of the play
- ▶ provide information not directly stated in the play
- ▶ join in by substituting actions for highly predictable words
- ▶ connect letters and letter sounds



BEFORE READING

Activating and Building Prior Knowledge

Begin the session again with Grasshopper’s song, substituting *reading plays* for *summertime*:

Tra-la-la, tra-la-lee

Reading plays is fun for me.

Inferring

Say, *Sometimes*, authors let us know that their characters have certain feelings, even though they don't actually say what the feeling is. We all do that. When we're sad or angry, we sometimes do things that show how we feel without our having to say so. Invite students to talk about experiences around the classroom when they have understood someone's feelings without having to be told how that person felt.

ESL Note: Invite students to provide examples of communicating feelings by pantomiming a feeling using facial expressions and body language.

Setting a Purpose

Inferring

Let's read *The Grasshopper and the Ant* again. Let's see what we can figure out about the characters that the author didn't tell us in the play.



DURING READING

Language predictability

Say, *Let's have some fun with Grasshopper's song. Instead of reading/singing fun, let's make an action that shows fun.* Take suggestions from the class, selecting one such as waving hands in air. *Instead of reading/singing me, let's point to ourselves with both thumbs.* Practise this new way of singing Grasshopper's song using actions for *fun* and *me* every time they appear.

Tracking print/ building confidence

Reread the play with students, tracking print and substituting actions for the words *fun* and *me*. Invite students to join in whenever they are able.

Inferring

Reread the play, but pause whenever there is an opportunity to make an inference. You can start with the back cover text. Ask, *Who is the wiser one? Does the author tell you that? How do you know?* Ask, *How do we know that Grasshopper won't be able to find any food in winter? When does Grasshopper realize the trouble he's in? Can you show me the page? What were the other bugs like? Did they care what happened to Grasshopper? How do you know? What did Grasshopper try to do with his musical instrument? Why do you think he did that?*



AFTER READING

Synthesizing

Say, *So do you think the author wanted you to learn something from this story? Let's think about what happened.* Lead students to summarize the story. *What kinds of things might the author have wanted you to learn?* Lead students to discuss the idea that work and play need to be equally balanced, and that sharing adds to the enjoyment of what a person has, whether it's a possession, such as food, or a skill, such as music-making.

Phonological and phonemic awareness

The letters "f" and "m" are clear initial sounds on which students have focused during the readings with both words and actions. Say, *When you say fun, notice where your tongue and teeth are.* Repeat for *me*. Say several words that begin with "f" and "m" (*food, more, fall, flew, mood, much, friends, must, felt*). Have students echo them after you. Tell them to notice where their tongue and teeth are for each word.

Letter knowledge

Print the keywords *fun* and *me* side by side on chart paper. Print the letter “f” above *fun* and “m” above *me*. Repeat the previous activity adding the “f” and “m” words under the matching initial consonant until students show an understanding of the difference in the letter-sounds. This key word chart can be added to with another sound once students show they can differentiate “f” and “m” by adding more words in the appropriate column.



FURTHER READINGS

Many texts benefit from being reread with students. The three readings suggested in this plan can be expanded to include further readings.

Participation will increase when a book becomes familiar and students will become more comfortable in taking turns and using a pointer to track print.

For each rereading, we recommend that you select a balance of Print Concepts, Comprehension, and Working with Words strategies from the following suggestions. Make your selections based on the needs of students in your class.

Print Concepts, Book Handling, and Text Features

Text features/ print concepts

Review the title, author and illustrator, back cover text, play format, and “List of Characters” page.

Tracking print

Continue to track print but invite individual students to practise one-to-one correspondence by print tracking the different insect roles during rereadings. Offer as much support as necessary (e.g., guiding the pointer with students who need assistance).

Add concepts that offer learning opportunities for the range of students in the classroom, e.g., *Where do I go when a line ends? Can you show the first word (last word, two words the same) on the page?*

Focusing on Comprehension

Evaluating

Once the meaning of the word *wise* is established, invite students to answer the following questions orally or in a drawn/written form: *Who is wiser, the grasshopper or the ant?* Lead students to consider the fact that an argument could be made for either the grasshopper or the ant, and that is probably why the author didn’t answer the question.

Inferring

Ask, *What might have happened to Grasshopper if Ant hadn’t shared?* Students can respond to this question orally or by drawing/writing.

Making connections: text to self

Have students generate a list of other stories this play reminds them of. The similarities and differences between the stories can be orally discussed or written on a chart. Some stories with similar plots are *The Tortoise and the Hare*, other fables, some *Winnie the Pooh* stories.

Self-monitoring

Ask, *What is one new thing you noticed about your reading today?* Provide some models to get students started such as, *I noticed that I read more smoothly today because I knew the story; I noticed that this story has lots of rhymes in it.*

Teaching Tip: This discussion helps students understand that they should be monitoring their own reading and gives them an opportunity to hear a variety of reading strategies repeated.

Phonological and phonemic awareness

Working with Words

There are many opportunities to practise rhyming and to create word families from the rhymes in this play. For example, on page 3, read the Narrator's lines and ask, *What two words sound the same?* (sing, anything) *How are they the same/different?* Encourage students to develop a list of "ing" words with you, underlining the "ing" in each word.

Letter knowledge

Frame letters in words for students who need practice with letter recognition. This play has many key repeated words that students will connect to more effectively because they are familiar (e.g., "b"—*butterfly, bee, busy, bugs, best, better*; "g"—*grasshopper, grew*; "n"—*narrator, near, not*; "s"—*summer, sing, sound, song, sun, sometimes, snug, sorry, so*).

High-frequency words

Frame a selection of high-frequency words to introduce or review the words. (See list of high-frequency words recommended for kindergarten in the Working with Words Guides.)



RESOURCE LINKS

Home Links

Have students tell their families the story of the grasshopper and the ant. Encourage them to act out the story with their families.

Writing

As a class, write a story to answer the question, What will Grasshopper and Ant do next summer? See the Narrative text-type study in the Writing Guide.

Independent Reading

Make the six small versions of *The Grasshopper and the Ant* and the online audio available for students. Invite students to use these materials to read the book independently.

Teaching Tip: The online audio for this book includes a cloze reading of the text. In the cloze reading, selected words have been omitted. Students listening to the cloze reading have the opportunity to chime in with the missing words.

Gather a selection of other short plays or Reader's Theatre plays for individual or partner reading. Gather information texts about grasshoppers and ants for individual or group reading.

Working with Words

Once concepts have been introduced in context, see the focused lessons in the Working with Words Guide for more direct instruction for those students who need it.

See also the Building Words lesson ("Winter") in the Working with Words Guide.

Read Aloud

Read to the class other examples of plays or fables.