

**A READING LESSON PLAN USING  
THE FIVE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF READING**

**Developed by:** Stephanie Berry

**DOT & JABBER AND THE GREAT ACORN MYSTERY**

**Author :** Ellen Stoll Walsh

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**TEACHING READING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL I  
EDUCATION 320-01**

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**WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
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## **Overview**

Dot & Jabber and the Great Acorn Mystery was written and illustrated by Ellen Stoll Walsh. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability of this book is 1.5. This short children's story is about two mice that discover and solve a mystery. One day they find a little oak tree in the middle of a meadow and are faced with the challenge of determining how it came to be there. Then they work together, finding the clues they need to solve the mystery. In the end, they discover that a squirrel had carried the acorn and planted it in the middle of the meadow.

I selected this book with the help of my cooperating teacher because it was the designated reading selection for the weekly reading unit. This lesson was taught on the fourth day of the unit. The Scott Foresman curriculum is designed to teach phonemic awareness only on the first three days of the unit, so my cooperating teacher did not have me complete any phonemic awareness activities. I was able to adapt the phonics and high frequency word portions to allow students a minimal exposure to phonemic awareness by blending the words that were used in those activities. I developed and included vocabulary and comprehension activities that were not in the story that will help students to study vocabulary and test their comprehension. Students will also reread the story for fluency.

## **West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives**

- RLA.O.1.1.4 use basic elements of phonetic analysis to decode unknown words: sound-symbol relationships, beginning/ending consonants, short and long vowel sounds, blends, digraphs, diphthongs.
- RLA.O.1.1.6 use a variety of context clues to confirm unknown words (e.g., prior knowledge, reading ahead, reread).
- RLA.O.1.1.7 understand level appropriate sight words and vocabulary (e.g., high frequency words, antonyms, synonyms, multiple meaning words).
- RLA.O.1.1.12 use meaning clues to aid comprehension and make predictions about content (e.g., pictures, title, cover, story sequence).
- RLA.O.1.1.13 read first grade instructional level texts and use self-correction strategies (e.g., decoding, searching for cues, rereading).
- RLA.O.1.1.14 use basic comprehension concepts to understand literary and informational texts (e.g., story elements, main idea, sequence, cause and effect, prediction, retelling).
- RLA.O.1.1.16 construct responses to both literal and interpretive comprehension questions after reading informational or literary text.

## Vocabulary

The following words were key words in the story:

- detective - people who try to find out things
- mystery - a puzzle about something
- solve - to find the answer to a mystery
- clue - something that helps solve a mystery
- acorn - oak tree seeds
- meadow - land covered in grass or hay
- clever - quick to learn

I used a flip-flap book activity to introduce each of the words. (*See Procedures for a more detailed explanation of this activity.*)

## Procedures

1. I opened the lesson with a phonics review. I had taught a 30-minute Saxon lesson reviewing trigraphs before this lesson, so I was able to easily transition from the Saxon phonics to the reading lesson phonics.

The curriculum called for the review of *ou* words and VCV words. I first listed examples of each type on the board and coded the example with students' help. I then drew a chart on the board and read words from each category aloud. **(PK/PH)**

We segmented the sounds in each word to help students determine how each word should be categorized. Students then determined whether each word was a long VCV word, a short VCV word, or an *ou* word. **(PK/PA)**

long vowel	short vowel	<i>ou</i>
music	lemon	grouch
human	wagon	hour
lazy	finish	round

To assess students understanding during this activity, I used two Guided Practice sheets: *Vowel Diphthong ou/ou/ Review* and *Syllables VCV Review*. (*See Attachments for a copy of these Guided Practice Sheets.*)

To review Vowel Diphthong *ou*, students were given a word bank and a group of pictures. They were instructed to say the word and match it with the correct picture. I had to explain what a *blouse* was, but students completed this activity very easily otherwise.

To review VCV Syllables, students were given a sentence. Students had two spellings of a VCV word to choose from. They circled the correct spelling, wrote it on the given lines, and then gave it the correct VCV coding underneath.

2. We then reviewed the high-frequency words for the week. I gave students *clues* and told them they were going to be *detectives*, which established a connection to the story and exposed students to the vocabulary we would be using. Students were to use the *clues* to *solve* the *mystery* and determine which word I was talking about. **(PK)**

This word begins with *i* and makes sense in this sentence:

May I have an apple \_\_\_\_\_ of an orange? (*instead*)

This word begins with *a* and makes sense in this sentence:

I lost my pencil, so I need \_\_\_\_\_ one. (*another*)

This word begins with *n* and makes sense in this sentence:

\_\_\_\_\_ of us knew the answer. (*None*)

This word begins with *a* and makes sense in this sentence:

Butterflies flew \_\_\_\_\_ the flowers. (*among*)

This drew from students' prior knowledge because they had been learning about and reviewing these words all week.

3. The next activity was the vocabulary flip-flap book. (*See the Vocabulary section for a list of the key words used for this activity.*) The definitions were printed on one side. Students folded the paper in half and cut along the dotted lines to make a flap that flipped open over each definition. On each flap, students wrote the word that matched the definition on the inside. (*See Attachments for an example of this activity.*) **(V)** This activity was intended to help students study vocabulary that may have been included in the selection test on the following day.
4. To introduce the story for the day, I passed out a Dot & Jabber Tri-fold. *Tri-fold* was a new term for students, so I explained why it was called a tri-fold and I had students to use the term repeatedly throughout this activity. During this part of the activity, I went over each question with students to establish prior knowledge and prepare students for the story. Students were to keep these questions in mind during the reading, and return to answer them when they were finished. **(PK, C-IA)**
5. My cooperating teacher suggested partner reading for this lessons, so we used a group generator on the SMARTboard to group students. She helped with this so that students who struggle would be partnered with students who were more advanced, but would work nicely with them. Students went to their designated areas (various student tables, the reading rug, by the backpacks, at the back table, under the whiteboard) to read the story together. Each

student read a page, alternating until they finished the story. This was the third time students had read the story, so this reading activity was to develop fluency. **(F)** To assess and monitor students during this time, I moved around the room from group to group, ensuring that students were reading and working well together. This activity was beneficial for students, but from the teaching standpoint, I found it difficult to monitor students because they were so scattered. If I were to teach again, I would avoid this type of fluency activity.

6. I used the tri-fold activity to help develop students understanding of the story. Students began this activity with their reading partner. After reading, students began answer questions about the story. The questions and answers came directly from the story, so there were no surprises. After it was clear that all students had finished reading and at least started this activity, I brought all students back to their seats. We then answered each question together. I read the questioned and took answers from volunteers. This was productive because students had answered the questions differently. While answers were technically all the same, students had written or phrased them differently, so that allowed students to see how different readers can develop different interpretations or conclusions about the story. **(C-DI)**
7. To conclude the lesson, I developed a four-block activity sheet that would allow students to respond to the following:

What I liked about this story...

What I did not like about this story...

What I would change about this story...

Why this story is important...

Students would have the choice of writing or illustrating a response. Students' had to be able to explain illustrations if asked. **(C-PR, C-CS)** Unfortunately, we ran out of time and students had to go to lunch. Because we did not have time to complete this activity, I concluded the lesson with the tri-fold activity.

## **Reflection**

Overall, I'm very pleased with the results of my 90-minute reading lesson. I feel that I managed the classroom very well. Students responded well and class participation and cooperation was excellent. At times, we struggled with blurt-outs, but I think that's common with most first-graders. I feel confident that I managed students' behaviors, and misbehaviors, very well. We had a table contest, which is something my cooperating teacher uses to promote and maintain good behavior. When a table, which consists of four students, is caught practicing good classroom behavior, that group gets a point. The group with the most points got to line up first for lunch. Although it seems simple, it's very effective.

I feel that the vocabulary flip-flap book activity was very successful. This activity involved the use of scissors, which is always risky (especially since one student in this class almost cut my

hair one day), but it went very smoothly. I feel like this gave students a useful method of studying vocabulary, during this lesson and in the future.

I really enjoyed the Dot & Jabber Tri-fold activity. Because we went over the questions before reading, this gave students something to guide their reading. When we came back after reading, students were able to refer back to the content of the story and answer the questions. I really liked that student had different interpretations of what some of the answers were. Students were able to discuss how their answers weren't worded the same, but they still had the same meanings. This also gave students something to take home and review before they were tested on the story the following day.

Given the chance to teach this lesson again, I would first change the format of the vocabulary flip-flap book. For this activity, I would put the definitions on the outside flap and have students write the word on the inside. After doing the activity, I realized that first-grade students would most likely study vocabulary by first reading the definition and saying the word rather than reading the word and giving a definition. I would also designate a place somewhere on the flip-flap book for students to put their names. We had some confusion when students misplaced their books and couldn't find them because I hadn't told them to write their names on the book somewhere.

I would also change the fluency reading method. Partner reading can be very useful, but with my limited experience in the classroom, I felt overwhelmed. I didn't feel like I was able to monitor students adequately during this time. Instead, I might have students read the story aloud by groups, using each table as one group.

Finally, I would monitor my time more closely to ensure that I had an adequate amount of time to complete each activity. I felt that I did fairly well, but we did not have time to complete the Comprehension activity that I created for the end. Because students had lunch directly after reading, we were not able to complete this activity. Had this not been the schedule, my cooperating teacher would have allowed more time, but you can't keep students from their lunch period. I don't feel that students' learning suffered with the loss of this activity, but I still would have lived to see their responses.

**Appendix A:**

**Guided Practice Sheets and Activities**

people who try to  
find out things

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a puzzle about  
something

---

to find the answer to  
a mystery

---

oak tree seeds

---

land covered in grass  
or hay

---

quick to learn



detective

---

mystery

---

solve

---

acorn

---

meadow

---

clever

Where does Mole tell  
them to look?

---

---

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How did the acorn get from  
*here to there?*

(Circle the correct answer.)

- it was carried
- it walked
- it twirled

What did the squirrel do  
with the acorn?

(Put the answers in order.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ planted the acorn
- \_\_\_\_\_ put it in his mouth
- \_\_\_\_\_ dug a hole

How do Dot & Jabber solve

the mystery?

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Solution:

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An acorn was planted and an oak tree grew.

What was the mystery?

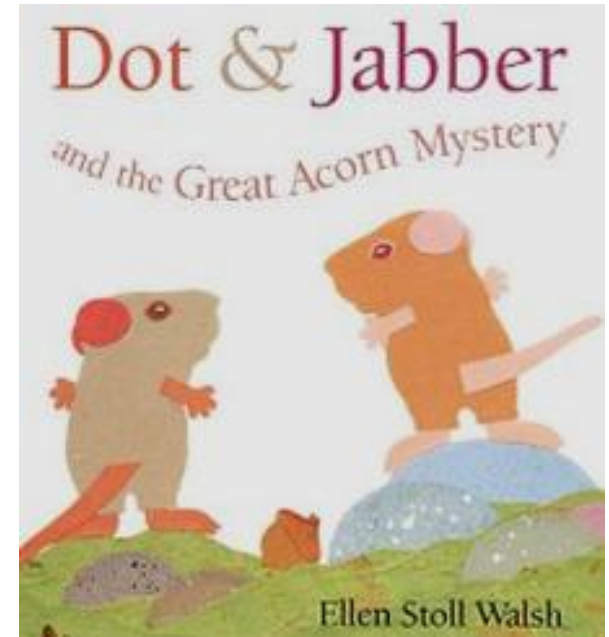
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Where does Mole tell  
them to look?

on the other side of the  
meadow

How did the acorn get from  
*here to there?*

(Circle the correct answer.)

it was carried

it walked

it twirled

What did the squirrel do  
with the acorn?

(Put the answers in order.)

3 planted the acorn

1 put it in his mouth

2 dug a hole

An acorn was planted in the  
and an oak tree grew.

So, what was the mystery?

How did the acorn get there?

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How do Dot & Jabber solve  
the mystery?

By following the clues

By going across the meadow

By following the squirrel

*ANSWERS WILL VARY*

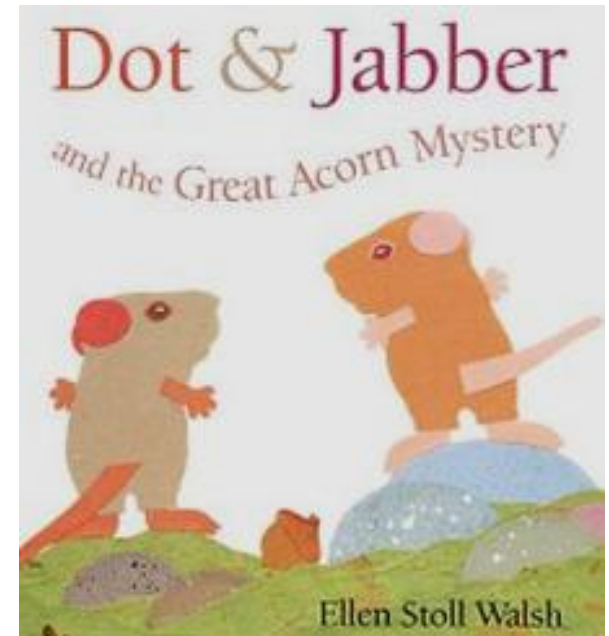
Mystery Solution:

An acorn was planted there

by

a squirrel

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Name: Answer Key

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What I liked about this story...

What I did not like about this story...

**Dot & Jabber  
and the  
Great Acorn Mystery**

What I would change about this story...

Why this story is important...