

# Storytelling with Sound Effects

Developed by Wolf Trap Teaching Artists

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## Objective/Goal:

This is a main experience that expands on children's literature to help children become involved in comprehending and telling a story by adding sound effects. At the outcome of this experience, children will be able to discriminate among some sounds, create sound effects, and associate sounds with specific objects.

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## Educational Impact:

- ✓ Auditory discrimination
  - ✓ Phonological awareness
  - ✓ Critical thinking
  - ✓ Comprehension
  - ✓ Recall
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## Suggestions for use with the *Songs for Singing and Learning* CDs:

- ✓ "Howling Wind Soundscape"
  - ✓ "Barnyard Sounds"
  - ✓ "Household Sounds"
  - ✓ "Vehicle Sounds"
  - ✓ "Boing Boing Rhythm Sound"
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## Materials Needed:

- ✓ A story book with potential sound effects, such as *Peace at Last* by Jill Murphy (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1982)
  - ✓ Optional: recorded sound effects
  - ✓ For variations: blanket prop
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## Procedure and Process:

Read the story to the children. Stop and discuss the pictures as you go along. In *Peace at Last*, the Bear family goes to bed for the night, but Mr. Bear can't sleep. Every time he tries to fall asleep, he is distracted by noises. In his own room, his wife's snoring keeps him awake. He moves to his son's room, where Baby Bear is making airplane sounds. The process continues from the living room, to kitchen, to backyard, to car, and then back to the house.

*Peace at Last* is an excellent introduction to sound effects stories, because the sounds are the focal point of the narrative. Once you have read the story to the children, discuss the various sounds in the text. Talk about noises they hear at night that keep them awake. How does a refrigerator hum? Do their refrigerators hum? For hearing impaired children, use gestures to symbolize the sounds or have them feel vibrations.

*What noises do you hear at night, when you're lying in bed?  
Do noises keep you awake sometimes?*

Practice doing the sounds with the children. Then read the story again, with you playing the role of Mr. Bear. Have the children do the sounds, as Mr. Bear travels from place to place being rudely awakened or kept awake by the noises.

*Here's Mr. Bear in the living room trying to sleep.  
Can you make the sound of the clock? How does it go?  
Tick, tock, tick, tock.  
And the cuckoo? Say, "Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"*

You, as Mr. Bear: *I just can't seem to get to sleep.*  
[Mrs. Bear snores loudly]  
*That's too much noise for me.  
I don't believe it. There are cats in this yard, meowing!!  
I've got to get some sleep.*

## Variations:

Using a blanket as a prop, actually travel around the room as Mr. Bear. Decide with the children where the bedrooms, the living room, the kitchen, the backyard and the car will be in the classroom. Divide the children into small groups, and have each group do the sounds of a particular location. Then do the story, narrating as you move from space to space being awakened by the children making noises.

If dividing them into smaller groups is not feasible, have the children do all the sounds as one group. Stay in one place, which will serve as all the story locations. Get up each time Mr. Bear does, and say, "Oh, no! That's too much noise for me," as Mr. Bear does, and move around the children, always coming back to the same location.

*I'll just go sleep in the car.  
Well, it is a little crowded and cold. But I don't care. I have got to get some sleep.*

*I don't believe it. The birds are singing! The sun is shining!*  
*OH NO, I don't like this!*

Select one of the children to be Mr. Bear. Act out the story with that child moving from location to location. Pick other children for the roles of Mrs. Bear and Baby Bear. They will do the sounds of snoring and the airplane while the rest of the class does the room sounds and the outdoor noises.

*I'll need someone to be Mr. Bear.*

*Who remembers what Mr. Bear says in the story?*

*And where does he go first when his wife is making so much noise?*

*So he went to sleep in Baby Bear's room.*

*But Baby Bear was pretending to be an airplane.*

[airplane sound from the children]

*And Mr. Bear said, "OH, NO! I DON'T LIKE THIS!"*

*And after Baby Bear's room, where does he go?*

*I'll need someone to be Baby Bear. How does the airplane noise go?*

*Who wants to be Baby Bear?*

When Mr. Bear goes to sleep in the car, the sun comes out and begins to shine. The children can say the words "shine, shine," even though they are not really sounds. Saying the words while doing a sun-rising movement will be effective in the context of the story.

Record a radio version of the story. The children can do all the dialogue as well as the sound effects, while you function as the narrator; or, make a mime version using gestures and facial expressions.

**New Vocabulary Words:**

- Sound effects
- Snoring

*Adapting Stories to Tell with Sound Effects:* Many stories lend themselves to the use of sound effects. Remember to read the story to the children before inserting the sound effects. Here are some stories you might adapt:

- *Ask Mr. Bear* by Marjorie Flack (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971)
- *Henny Penny* by Paul Galdoni (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1968)
- *Little Old Lady and the Pig* Traditional folk tale
- *The Rooster Who Set Out To See the World* by Eric Carle (New York: Franklin Watts, 1971)
- *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* Use your favorite edition.
- *Too Much Noise* by Ann McGovern (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1967)
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (New York: Harper's Inc., 1980)
- *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* by Verna Aardema (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1978)