And Then It’s Spring
How Do You Know It’s Spring?

Subject(s): Science, Language Arts
Grade Level(s): preK-1

Learning Objectives

- Students will make and verify predictions based on background knowledge.
- Students will identify the four seasons and their characteristics.
- Students will observe and record information about the changes in nature in the spring.
- Students will engage in a text-dependent discussion.
- Students will differentiate between real and make-believe.

Fiction Resource

And Then It’s Spring
By Julie Fogliano
Illustrated by Erin E. Stead
Grades: preK-1; Ages: 3-6
Lexile Level: AD410; Guided Reading Level: F
Themes: science and nature; growth and changes
Running Time: 7:36
Plot Summary: Winter is over, and everything is brown. All around you have brown. A boy and his dog decide to plant a garden, in hopes that spring will come. They wait and worry on their seeds, anxiously watching for glimpses of green. As time drags on, and the brown remains, small signs of spring begin to appear. And then there is a sunny day, after a rainy day. . . .

Nonfiction Resource

How Do You Know It’s Spring?
By Lisa M. Herrington
Grades: preK-1; Ages: 3-6
Lexile Level: 500L; Guided Reading Level: I
Description: Introduces readers to the climate, animals’ behavior, and people’s behavior in the spring.

Before Viewing the Video

1. Review the four seasons with students. Use a 4-column chart to record the students’ ideas. Draw pictures to express students’ ideas when possible. Guiding questions:
   - What are the names of the four seasons?
   - What is the weather like in fall (autumn)/winter/spring/summer?
   - What happens to plants in fall (autumn)/winter/spring/summer?
   - What do animals do in fall (autumn)/winter/spring/summer?
2. Tell students that they are going to watch a video about a young boy and his dog who are tired of the winter and excited...
to greet the spring. Using the seasons chart completed in the previous activity, ask:
- What do you think the land looks like at the end of winter?
- What will happen when the boy plants some seeds? What will they need to grow? Then, review making predictions with the students. Remind students that they can use picture clues and the text to make predictions. Read aloud the first few pages of the book, or show the beginning of the video. Stop at the part that says, "And then you worry about those little seeds." Ask:
  - Do you think the seeds are going to grow? Why or why not?
  - What in the text or pictures helped you with your prediction?
  - What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that?
Encourage students to watch and listen to see if their predictions are correct.
3. Preview these important vocabulary words:
  - **hopeful**: to be optimistic about something
  - **possible**: able to happen
  - **stomp**: to pound your feet on the ground

Consider using the following activity to develop all or some of the words more deeply:

1. Fold a piece of paper into thirds (one piece for each word).
2. Write the word in the left-hand column. Read the word aloud.
3. Tell a story, dramatize, or give an example or sentence to explain the meaning of the word.
4. Ask students, *What do you think this word means, based on the story/dramatization/example/sentence?*
5. Give students time to discuss their ideas with partners. Then, have students share out ideas.
6. Write students’ ideas in the middle column.
7. Using students’ ideas, craft a definition of the word. Write that in the middle column also.
8. Ask students what kind of drawing could be used to represent the meaning of the word. Draw one or two of their ideas in the right-hand column.

Depending on students’ independent writing ability, they can make their own 3-fold definition papers, or simply write the word and draw a picture.

**After-Viewing Activities**

1. Remind students of the predictions that they made before viewing the video. Ask:
   - Were we correct about what we thought would happen to the seeds?
   - What caused them to finally grow?
   - What pictures or words helped us with our predictions?
   - What do you think will happen when the spring turns into summer?
   - What activities will the boy do? What do you do in the summertime?

Using children’s ideas, extend the story into the summer. Encourage students to use their own experiences to imagine things that the boy might like to do. Have students contribute ideas that you add to the story. Write the story on a large chart paper. When you are finished, read the whole story aloud to the students. Then, copy it onto blank paper, photocopy, and
give to students to illustrate. Read the big story aloud daily as students follow in their individual books to encourage whole language development and fluency.

2. Did they hear the new vocabulary words? Did it help them to know what those words meant before they watched the video?

3. Plant vegetable seeds in cups in the classroom, or in an outdoor garden. Review with students what plants need to grow: sunlight/warmth, water, soil, and air. Give students time each day to tend to their garden. As an extension, they can keep a picture journal of the growth of their plants.

4. Create a monthly “Season Watch” observation chart. Choose a day each week that the class will go out and observe and record information about the weather, temperature, and changes in plants and animals. Provide students with crayons and a sketch of the playground, including any trees in the area. Give them time to look around and observe their surroundings. Then, have them color what the trees look like, the sky, the grass, and any other observable changes in nature, such as flowers, clouds, bright sun, precipitation, etc. Once inside, discuss their observations and complete the class chart. Continue this through autumn so that students can experience and record the change of the season. If you live in an area where the season doesn’t change drastically, use pictures from magazines and newspapers to show students how the seasons change in more northern areas.

**Paired-Text Activities**

1. Review with students the difference between fiction and nonfiction. Explain that fiction tells about things that are imaginary, or make-believe, while nonfiction tells about things that happen in real life. Compare and contrast *And Then It’s Spring* with *How Do You Know It’s Spring?* Ask students to identify characteristics of each genre. Guiding questions:
   - How are the pictures in *And Then It’s Spring* different from the pictures in *How Do You Know It’s Spring*? How do the pictures give us clues about whether the text is fiction or nonfiction?
   - Which text teaches us facts? Which text tells us a story?
   - Which text is fiction? Which text is nonfiction?

2. Teach the life cycle of a plant. Begin with guiding questions:
   - Where do seeds come from?
   - What do seeds make?
   - What happens to seeds when they are given the things that plants need to live?
   - How do seeds grow?

Next, make a poster with the students that shows the life cycle of a plant. Beans are a good example because most students have seen green beans and the seeds inside of the pods. The poster should list the steps of the life cycle and have an illustration accompanying each step. The steps for a bean plant are:

1. A plant begins as a seed.
2. The seed sprouts.
3. The seed grows roots.
4. The sprout grows into a plant.
5. The plant grows a fruit.
6. The fruit holds the new seeds inside.
7. The seeds are dropped and the cycle starts over.
This poster can be reproduced into cards that the students can color, cut out, and glue onto their own poster.

3. Use the two texts, *And Then It’s Spring* and *How Do You Know It’s Spring?*, to lead a text-dependent discussion. Focus the discussion around the following question: **Both texts, *And Then It’s Spring* and *How Do You Know It’s Spring?*, deal with the topic of planting seeds in spring. According to the texts, why is spring a good time to plant seeds? How does each text address this topic differently?**

Foster discussion with the following questions:

- Do you agree with _____’s response? Why or why not?
- What does _____’s response tell you about __________?

Encourage students to actively listen to each other and build on each other’s answers. The following discussion frames may be helpful:

- I agree/disagree with ______ because. . .
- I’d like to elaborate on ______’s comment. . .
- I understand what _____ is saying, however. . .
- ______’s comment supports the idea that. . .

**Further Research**

Explore with the class the related Web links about spring that accompany this selection.

**Assessment**

Have the students play the Puzzlers educational games about *And Then It’s Spring* and *How Do You Know It’s Spring?* Review their results to assess their comprehension of the words and events in the story, as well as their ability to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction.

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