

Read-Aloud Activity



Big Chickens

Written by Leslie Helakoski
Illustrated by Henry Cole

Reader Notes and Book Summary

- ✧ This funny story tells the adventures and series of mishaps of four silly chickens who see a wolf near their chicken coop and panic. In an effort to escape the wolf, they end up experiencing far worse dangers than if they had just stood their ground. The story is filled with alliteration and rhyme, and the illustrations are great at portraying these comical big chickens.
- ✧ Read the story in advance so you are familiar with the rhyming and sometimes silly words that are fun to emphasize in the read-aloud. To enhance the telling of the story, be ready to give your best squawky voice to each of these crazy characters!



Keeping Your Audience Connected With Books and Reading

Connecting

Connecting story events to kids' own experiences helps them understand and relate personally to the characters and events in the story.

Listening

Help kids listen and join in with predictable words and phrases to actively engage them in the story.

Retelling

Retelling the sequence of story events strengthens comprehension.

Set Read-Aloud Stage

- ✧ Before showing the book's cover, ask the children if they've ever heard someone called a big chicken. What does that mean?
- ✧ Show the cover and explain that this book is about some big chickens (point to the title) who are...chickens. Have children tell what they think these chickens are so afraid of—they'll be able to check out their answers on the first page. Preparing children to look for specific things in a story encourages them to be more attentive and engaged listeners.

During Read-Aloud!

- ✧ Page by page these chickens go from one mishap to another in their frightful flight. As you read this story, ask children to explain why the chickens' choices are foolish. Why is it not such a good idea for the chickens to hide in the woods? Before turning pages, invite children to predict what might happen next. Involving children in the story promotes listening and oral language skills.
- ✧ Involve your listeners further by pausing for them to repeat with you the chickens responses as they face each dilemma—"Ohh..." "Me too." "Me three." "Me four."
- ✧ This story incorporates wonderfully expressive rhyme and alliteration. Emphasize these groups of words to build phonological awareness:
 - ◆ pwocked, flocked, rocked, knocked
 - ◆ cautious, careful, cowardly
 - ◆ tutted, putted, fluted, butted
 - ◆ plucked up, sucked down, sank in, stretched out
 - ◆ squeaked, squirmed, squealed, squawked
 - ◆ stomped down, fluttered up, dipped under, leaped over, hung out, squished in
 - ◆ sputtered, shuddered, muttered, fluttered
 - ◆ down, up, bobbed under, swept over, sucked in, squirted out
 - ◆ flurried, hurried, worried, scurried
 - ◆ rolled over, crunched under, flew down, swatted up, closed in, bulged out
 - ◆ picked, peeked, pocked
 - ◆ ruffled, puffed, shuffled
 - ◆ shrieked, squeaked, freaked
 - ◆ dirty, dusty, drippy, dazed, daring

Read-Aloud Activity

(Continued)

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- ✧ In the last few pages of the book, the chickens frighten away the wolf and they're not frightened anymore. Before reading the text, show the pictures and ask children to describe how they think the chickens feel now. Discussing the story's resolution is a good way to support overall comprehension.

Read-Aloud Discussion and Wrap-Up

Take no more than five minutes to wrap up.

- ✧ Ask children to name in order each mishap the chickens faced. As they recall the sequence of events, encourage them to use some of the rhyme and alliteration. Show the illustrations to help children remember story details.
- ✧ Recalling the sequence of events strengthens understanding. Giving children an opportunity to use newly learned words helps them become more competent in using language and more likely to incorporate those words into their working vocabularies.
- ✧ Encourage families to get this book and read it together many times. Before long, this will be a story children will enjoy reading aloud to others.



Produced in
partnership with the
National Center for
Family Literacy