

Bringing the world to the classroom and the classroom to life

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# Engaging Young Learners with Projects

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# Poll

**How would you describe your  
young learners? (YLS)?**

# Some Characteristics of YLs

- **Active**
- **Curious**
- **Creative**
- **Easily bored (short attention spans)**
- **Challenging to teach – especially when you have large classes**
- **Fun**

# Activities that help children learn language :

- **Involve lots of practice: repetition**
- **Use language to do things: purposeful**
- **Are understandable: meaningful**
- **Lead to success: enjoyable**
- **Involve interaction: social**

(Adapted from C. Read, 1998, p. 1)



**What are some activities  
young learners DO NOT like  
to do in class?**

# Students usually don't like to:

- Memorize lists of vocabulary
- Focus on grammar rules
- Read about things they aren't interested in
- Be told to be quiet and stop talking to friends
- Be passive
- Never be asked what they know about a topic
- Never be asked for their opinions
- Have an activity last for a very long time
- Be asked to sit while others finish

# Now, let's compare this with project work:

- Instead of memorizing vocabulary or grammar rules, they are using them
- Instead of being told to be quiet, they can work together on a project, help each other – and talk
- Instead of being passive, they are active
- Instead of not being asked what they know or their opinions, they can share these while doing the project
- And, they can work until they finish, and if they are done early, they can share their project with others who are also done or help others



# Projects: Experiential Learning

**Projects are *“knowledge in action.”***

(Wrigley, 1998)

***“Learning through projects” or “experiential learning” “is a tried and tested way of motivating children – by doing what they naturally like doing and avoiding what they don’t like.”***

(Project work with young learners)

# What makes projects so engaging?

## Learners get to:

- Use their imagination; their creativity
- Make things – and draw, color, use multimedia
- Do their own research and demonstrate what they have learned
- Write and talk about themselves, their families, friends, pets, and interests
- Share what they have made with their peers & their families – or sometimes, an entire school
- Be proud of “their” work – of being an artist, an author, an inventor, etc.

# Poll

**What are some successful projects you have asked your students to do?**

**OR**

**ones you have seen other teachers use?**



# Projects for Young Learners

**Drawings, Collages, Posters, Murals**

**Booklets, Scrapbooks**

**Greeting Cards, Poems, Brochures, Ads**

**Puppets, Masks, Mobiles, Costumes**

**Interviews, Surveys, News Shows**

**Timelines, Graphs, Charts**

**Experiments, Inventions**

**Role Plays, Drama, Performances**

**Autobiographies, Photo-autobiographies, Biographies**

**THE LIST IS ENDLESS!**

# Characteristics of Successful Projects

While projects vary a great deal in form and language expectations, all projects share the following. They:

- **Have a real or authentic audience**
- **Result in new information for the learners**
- **Involve an exchange of information among learners**
- **Require a specific product to be developed and shared in English**
- **Involve multiple ways of obtaining and sharing results (Internet research, interviews, field trips, etc.)**

**NOTE: Projects can be short or long,  
simple or complex.**

# Successful Projects for YLs Can Take a Little or Long Time

- Create a mural, a poster, an accordion book, etc. (Short term)
- Create a shoebox/pizza box diorama (house, park, habitat) (Short term)
- Do research on plants, animals, places, and create a poster or object to present (Medium term)
- Make masks or costumes and present a play or Reader's Theater (Medium term)
- Plant seeds in cups/glasses; put some in sun and some not; Water some and not others – Describe what happens. Measure growth (Longer term)

# Some Interesting Projects

- Making creative things
- Using your hands
- Writing poetry
- Making class books
- Connecting class with home
- Linking language to math, science, etc.
- Developing caring learners
- Encouraging research
- Developing visual literacy skills
- Developing critical literacy skills

# Puppets

## 22 Make a paper bag puppet.



Use a folded paper bag.



Draw a face. Glue shapes.



Glue on hair.



Decorate the clothes.

This is my puppet. His name is Sam. He's sad.



### Now I can . . .

- say how people look.
- talk about how people feel.
- talk about what people are doing.



# Mobiles

## 22 Make a weather mobile.



Draw and cut out weather pictures.



Cut out clothes pictures.



Put ribbon on a hanger.  
Add the weather pictures.



Add the clothes pictures.

It's cold in winter. I wear my boots, my coat, and my gloves.

Now I can . . .

- talk about the weather.
- talk about my clothes.
- say when it is hot or cold.



# Mobiles

22 **Make a mobile.** Choose a habitat and animals.



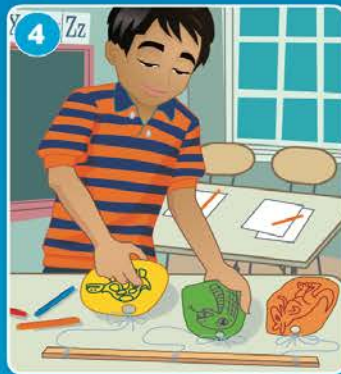
Choose an animal and draw it.



Research your animal's habitat. What other animals and plants live there?



Draw these animals and plants.



Hang the pictures on your mobile.



Now I can ...

- name animal habitats.
- say what animals look like.
- talk about animal homes.

# Parade Masks

## 22 Make a parade mask.

Decorate it and describe it to the class.



1 Choose a celebration.



2 Do research.



3 Collect materials.



4 Decorate your mask.



### Now I can . . .

- talk about celebrations and festivals.
- tell what happened in the past.
- talk about cultural traditions.

# Art from Trash

## 21 Make art from things you throw away.

1. Work in a small group. Collect different types of junk.
2. Look at your collected junk, and decide what to make.
3. Make your work of art.

We made a robot sculpture. Our sculpture is made with recycled cardboard and reused plastic utensils and ornaments. Your junk can be made into art, too!

### Now I can . . .

- discuss the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling.
- discuss art from recycled materials.
- talk about what I can do to help the environment.
- write a biographical paragraph.

# Musical Instruments

## 20 Make an instrument.

1. Work in small groups and research homemade musical instruments.
2. Collect trash and junk, and make a musical instrument.
3. Join other groups with instruments and practice.
4. Have a concert!

We made percussion and wind instruments. They sound awesome!



### Now I can . . .

- identify musical instruments.
- talk about musical styles.
- express preferences.
- write a paragraph of contrast.

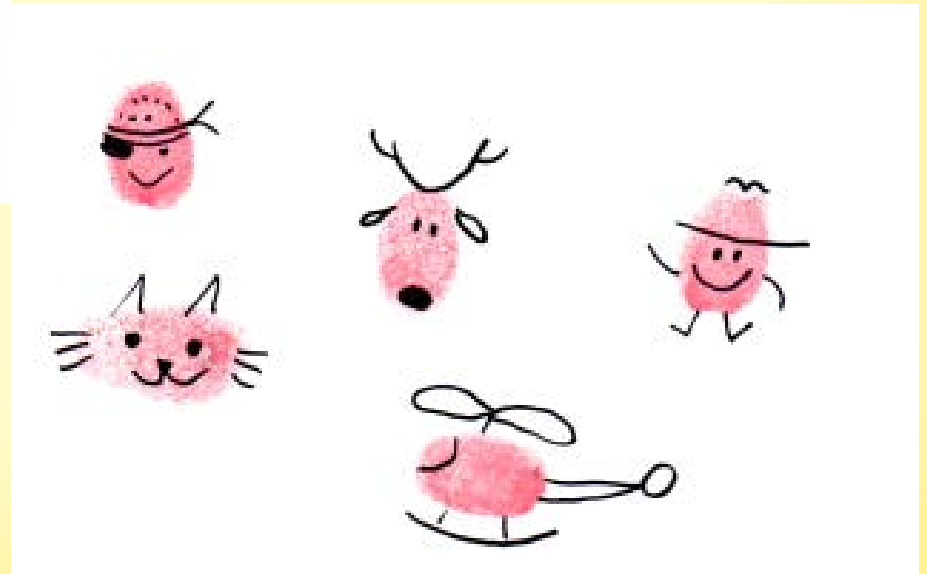
# Getting to Know Classmates

- Children trace their hands on a card.
- They write sentences on each finger about what they like, with a word on each finger. ("I like \_\_\_\_.")
- They turn the card over and write their name.
- Then in small groups, the cards are shuffled and learners have to guess who likes all these things.



# Fingerprint and Thumbprint Animals

(A, Musielak)



# My Name Acrostics

**J** oyful

**A** thletic

**I** ntelligent

**M** arvelous

**E** nergetic

**S** mart

**O** utgoing

**F** abulous

**I** nteresting

**A** mazing



# Negative Adjectives?

## Witch or Monster Acrostics

**W** icked  
**I** cky  
**T** errible  
**C** ruel  
**H** orrible



**M** ean  
**O** ld  
**N** asty  
**S** cary  
**T** errible  
**E** vil  
**R** otten



# More Complex Name Acrostic

My dog's name is **J**unior.

He has a black n**O**se.

He's 10 years ol**D**.

He's a b-----**I**----g dog.



# Shape Poem



# Class Book of 5 Senses Poems

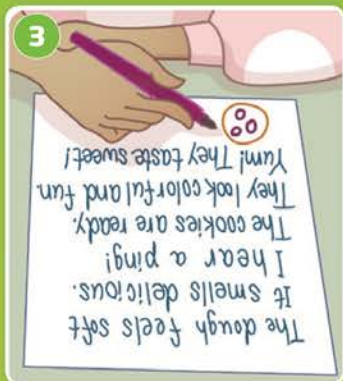
**21** Make a class book of Five Senses poems. Think of an experience when you used your five senses. Write about it.



Use paper to plan your work for each of the senses.



Write sentences.



Draw pictures.



Write your name.



## Now I can . . .

- talk about the senses.
- talk about how things look, feel, taste, sound, and smell.
- talk about the past.

# Class Scrapbook

## 22 Make a class scrapbook.

Show and tell your favorite activities. Present your work.



Take photos or draw pictures of five weekend activities you like.



Make a collage of your photos and drawings.



Write about your weekend activities.



Add your page to the class scrapbook.

I love picnics. Last weekend, I went on a picnic with my family and some friends.



### Now I can ...

- talk about free-time activities.
- talk about the past.
- talk about hobbies.

# Linking Class with Home: Families Big Book

## 20 Make a class Big Book on family features.

1. Find a photo of your family, and talk to your family about physical characteristics you share.
  - Who in your family has eyes like yours?
  - Who has hair like you?
  - Who has the same mouth as you?
  - Who has the same nose as you?
2. Work in groups of four to make a Big Book page.
3. Divide the page into four parts.
4. Paste your picture in one of the four parts.
5. Write the names of relatives that you look like.

### Now I can . . .

- describe physical appearance.
- describe emotions.
- talk about plans.
- write a journal entry.

Here I am. I get my brown eyes from my dad.



# Bringing the World into the Classroom: My World Circles

## 22 Make *My World* circles.



Cut out six circles of different sizes.



On the smallest circle, draw a picture of your house and write *My House*.



On the other circles, do the same for *My Neighborhood*, *My Town*, *My Country*, *My Continent*, and *My World*.



Taking care, join the circles together with a brad.

I live in South America.



### Now I can . . .

- ask for help.
- give directions.
- talk about my town.

# My place in the world project

ow I can ask for help, give  
rection, and talk about my town





# Celebrating Culture!

## 21 Make a time capsule of things that show your culture.

1. Work in small groups.
2. Talk about things that show your culture.
3. Choose the best things to include.
4. Put objects in your time capsule.

### Now I can . . .

- talk about why it's good to save traditions.
- explain how the past makes me who I am.
- write a blog.

We put in a smartphone as something new. But we also put in my grandmother's embroidered handkerchief because it's old and traditional.

# Greeting Card Acrostic

(Shin & Crandall, Teaching Young Learners English, 2014)



# Balloon Projects

- **Make faces on balloons to represent feelings: sad, happy, tired, bored – then share them with the class and have them guess how the balloon is feeling**
- **Draw Monsters: in small groups, children give each other directions on how many noses, eyes, ears, etc. to draw on the balloon**

**(A. Musielak)**

# Bringing the World Into the Classroom: Connecting with Other Classes

## 20 Make a classroom mural.

1. Work in small groups. Choose a habitat such as an ocean, a forest, or a desert.
2. Discuss how animals protect themselves in that place.
3. In your part of the mural, show some animals that use camouflage and some that survive in other ways.

There is a leaf-tailed gecko on a tree trunk in the rain forest. It uses camouflage to survive. Can you see it?



### Now I can ...

- describe animal features.
- describe how animals protect themselves.
- talk about ways animals imitate others.
- write a paragraph of classification.

**22** Research and make a model of a type of place where you think we could find life.

1. Choose a type of place you think might have life.
2. Research information.
3. Use the information you find and your imagination to re-create the surface of the type of planet or moon you choose. Use cardboard, paper, and other materials.
4. Draw different life forms as you imagine them.



I think there might be life on a place like this.

**Now I can . . .**

- discuss life in space.
- discuss space exploration.
- express my opinion.
- write a persuasive paragraph.

# Experimenting: Make a Volcano

## 20 Make a model of an erupting volcano.

1. Get a cardboard tube about 4 cm wide and 20 cm long.
2. Cover the bottom of the tube with clay. Stick the tube up on cardboard.
3. Crush balls of newspaper. Tape them to the tube to make a cone.
4. Cover the cone with aluminum foil. Paint or glue sand on it.
5. Fill half the tube with baking soda.
6. Add red food color to vinegar. Pour it in the tube and watch it erupt!

If you put vinegar in the volcano, it will erupt! The flow looks like lava because of the food coloring. It's so cool!



### Now I can . . .

- discuss volcanoes.
- describe how a volcano erupts.
- make predictions.
- write a process paragraph.

# Supporting Learning in Other Classes

## 20 Make a counting book.



Cut out the pictures on page 159.



Decide how many.



Color and glue the pictures.



Draw more pictures and write the number.

### Now I can . . .

- name classroom objects.
- count classroom objects.
- name colors of objects.



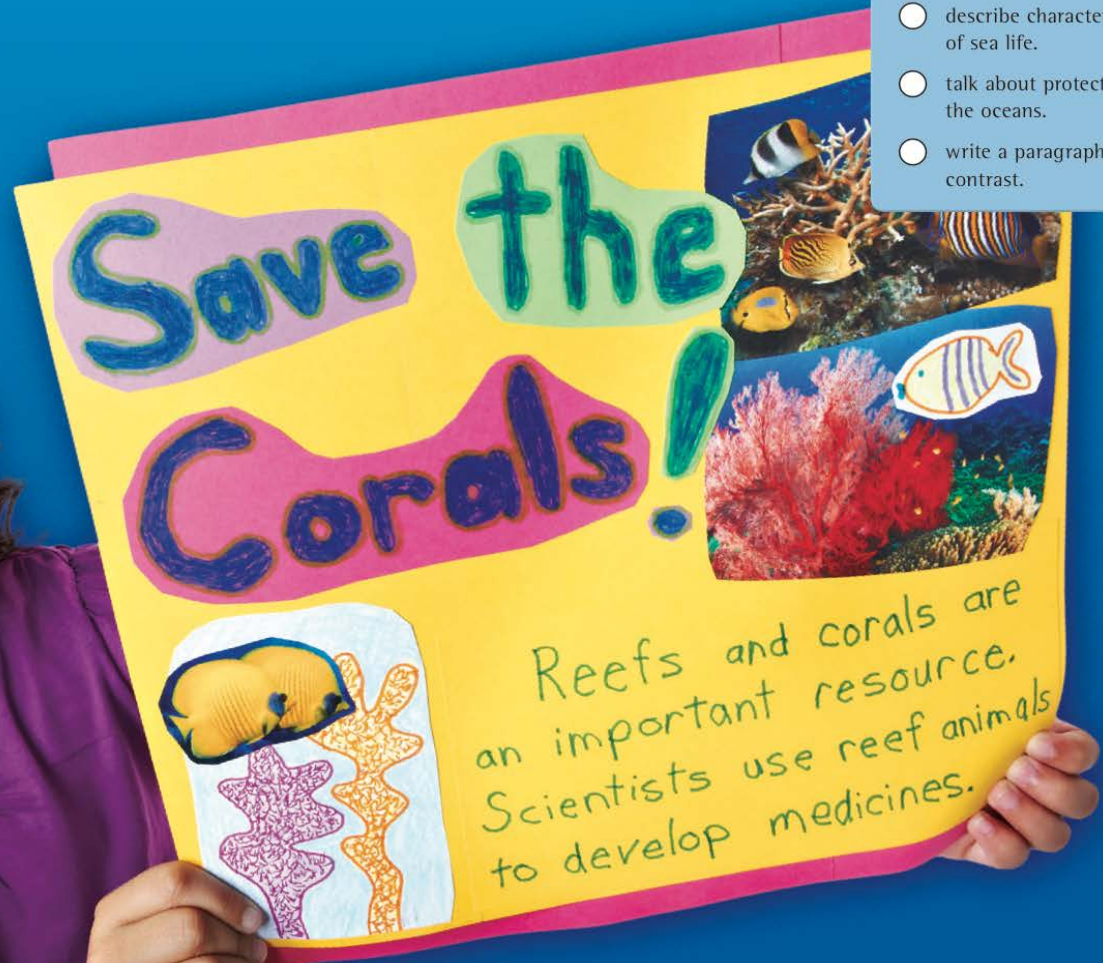
# Helping Save Sea Animals

## 21 Make posters and cards about ways to help sea animals.

1. Research information.
2. Make posters.
3. Make cards to hand out.
4. Invite people to a community clean-up.
5. At your event, take photos for a school newspaper article.

### Now I can . . .

- identify sea life.
- describe characteristics of sea life.
- talk about protecting the oceans.
- write a paragraph of contrast.



Our poster is about why it's important to protect coral reefs.



# Encouraging Positive Behavior

22 **Make a collage.** Show ways people care.



Cut out a big circle.



Collect and draw pictures that show caring.

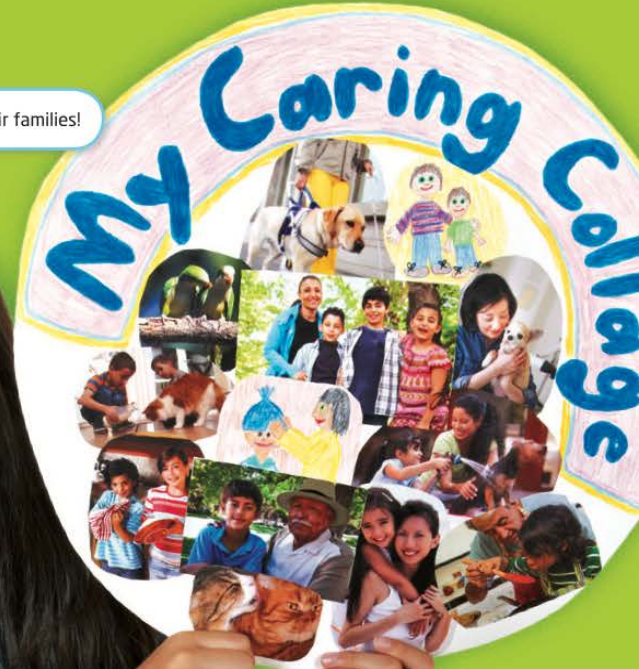


Glue the pictures to cover the circle.



Tell the class about your collage.

They care for their families!



**Now I can . . .**

- talk about caring for others.
- describe daily routines.
- talk about how many times people do things.

**Plant a Seed & Watch It Grow**  
**Measure Growth Over Time**  
**Vary Conditions (sun, water, etc.)**



# Encouraging Research

## 20 Make a poster about life in the past and life now.

1. Choose a topic such as clothing, toys, sports, food, houses, or games.
2. Research information about your topic in the past and now.
3. Compare and contrast details related to your topic.
4. Cut out or draw pictures to support your writing.
5. Create a poster with your pictures and information.
6. Sign your poster.

Kites are my favorite toy. But they weren't always toys!



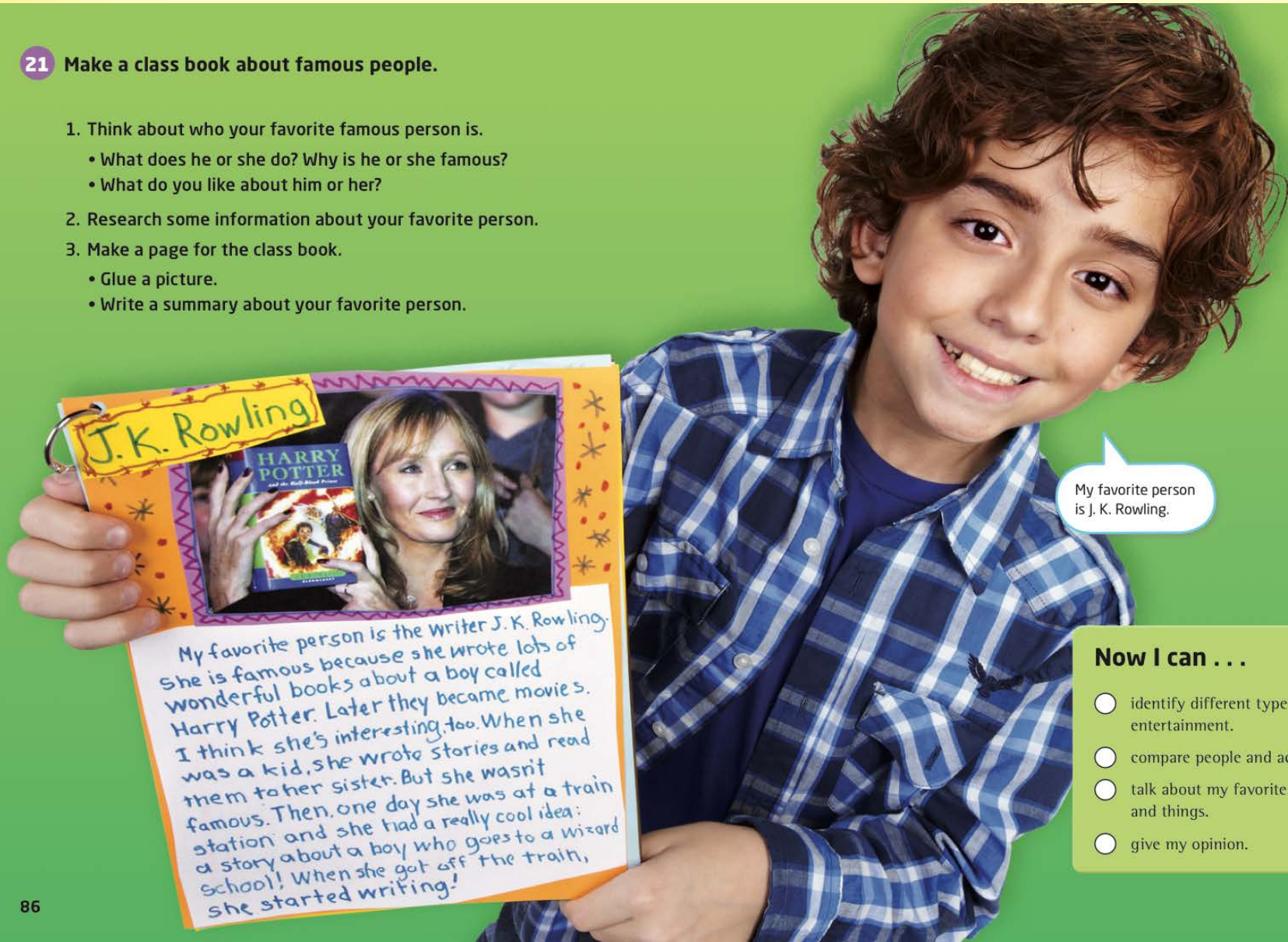
### Now I can . . .

- describe what people did in the past.
- talk about what the past was like.
- compare the past and the present.
- write a unified paragraph.

# Encouraging Research

## 21 Make a class book about famous people.

1. Think about who your favorite famous person is.
  - What does he or she do? Why is he or she famous?
  - What do you like about him or her?
2. Research some information about your favorite person.
3. Make a page for the class book.
  - Glue a picture.
  - Write a summary about your favorite person.



My favorite person is J. K. Rowling.

### Now I can . . .

- identify different types of entertainment.
- compare people and activities.
- talk about my favorite people and things.
- give my opinion.

# Encouraging Research

## 20 Research a mystery.

1. Choose a mystery that you are interested in.
2. Find pictures and information to use in a poster.
3. Include a brief report as part of your poster presentation.

### Now I can ...

- talk about famous discoveries.
- discuss historical mysteries.
- speculate about the past.
- use examples to support my writing.

Some people think these mysterious lines were made by aliens.

The Nasca lines are very big drawings in the South of Peru. The Nasca people lived there 2,000 years ago. The lines were discovered in the 1920s. The drawings show huge animals, people, shapes and lines.

# Old MacDonald's Farm with Familiar Animal Sounds

- Small project for you and your children: Insert the sounds animals make in their own language

Old MacDonald had a farm  
E-I-E-I-O  
And on his farm he had a cow  
E-I-E-I-O  
With a moo moo here  
And a moo moo there  
Here a moo, there a moo  
Everywhere a moo moo  
Old MacDonald had a farm  
E-I-E-I-O



How do cows sound in your language? Pigs? Ducks? Horses?  
Lambs? Chickens?

Are there other animals they can add?

Can they find out how these animals sound in other languages?

# Story-retelling with Drawings

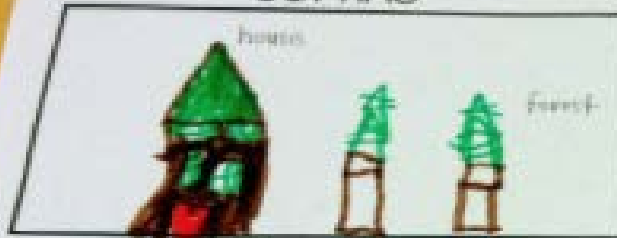
Mrs. Byrd's Learning Tree

Name A.P.

## Story Map

 Goldilocks and the Three Bears

### Setting

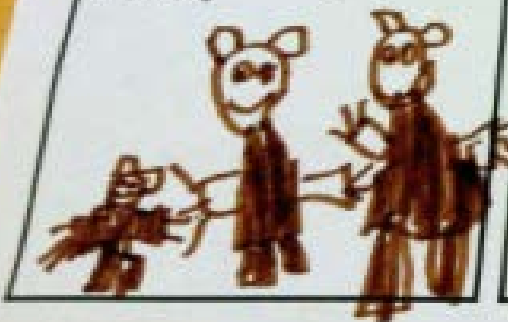


### Characters



### Beginning

The bears are going on a walk.



### Middle

Goldilocks is sitting in Baby Bear's chair.



### End

The bears are finding Goldilocks in the bed.



# Integrate Math with a Story

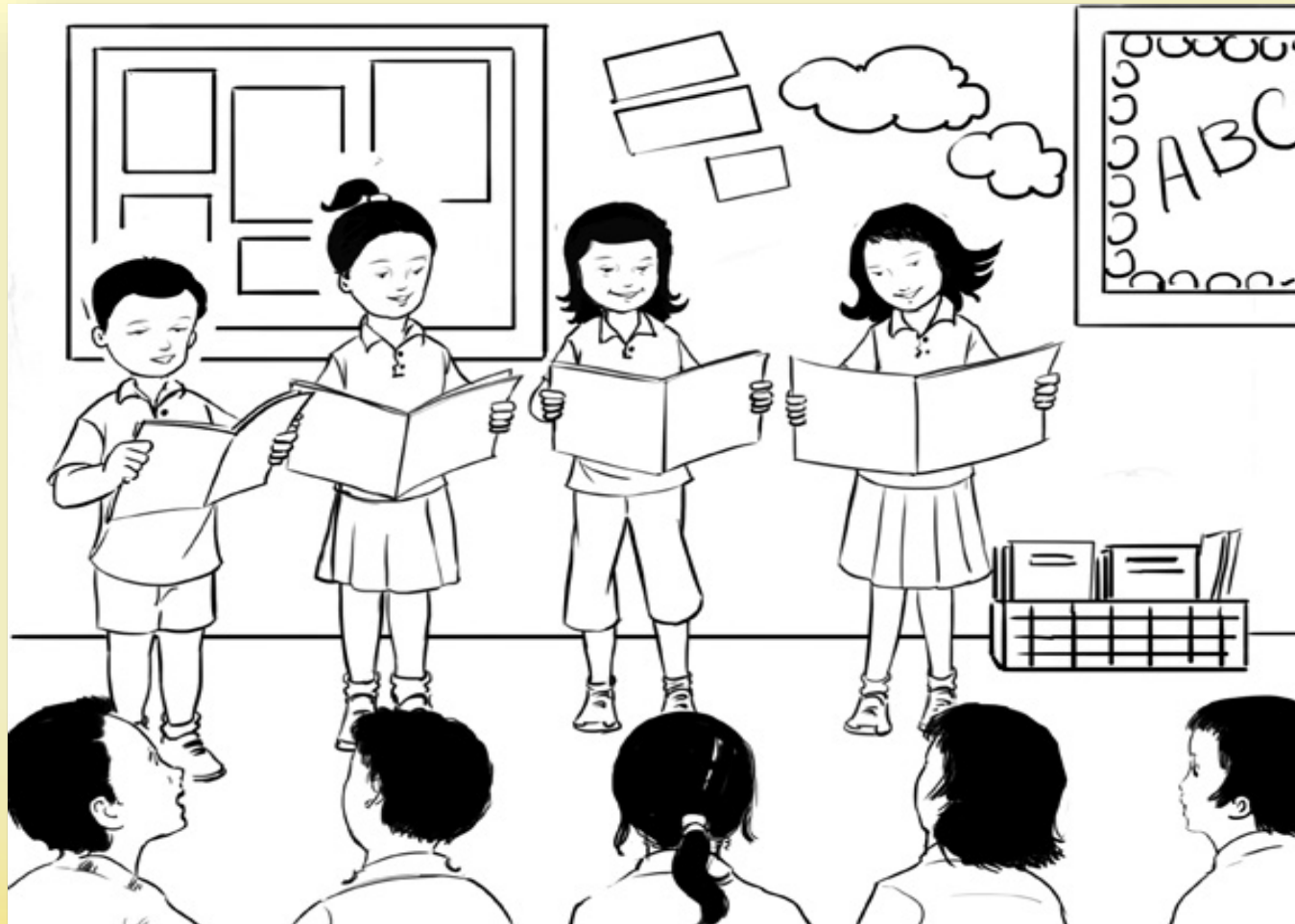




# Acting Out a Story (The Very Hungry Caterpillar)



# Reader's Theater



# Developing Visual Literacy Skills

**23** Make a class bar graph about favorite types of transportation.



Cut out a 10 cm (4 in.) square piece of paper.



Write your name and draw your favorite type of transportation.



With your class, make a bar graph for your pictures.



Glue your pictures in place.



**Now I can . . .**

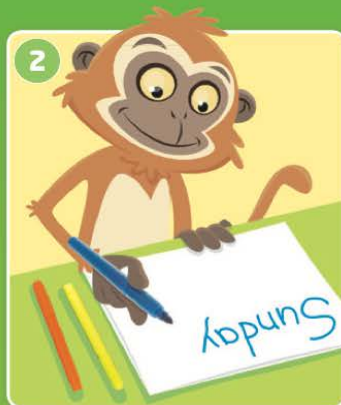
- identify different kinds of transportation.
- describe ways of traveling.
- compare and contrast.

# Daily Schedule

## 22 Make an accordion book.



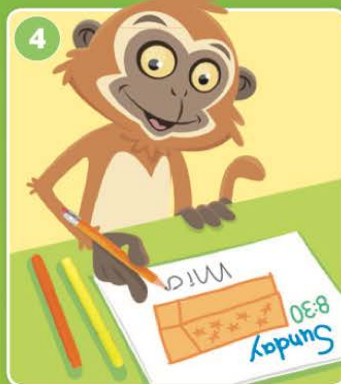
Fold.



Write the day on the cover.



Write and draw on the pages.



Write your name.



### Now I can . . .

- talk about what I do every day.
- talk about when I do things.
- name parts of the day.

# Using Graphic Organizers to Plan an Extreme Sports Camp

## 20 Plan an extreme sports camp.

1. Work in groups. Use the graphic organizer to help you describe your camp.



2. Make a brochure or a web page about the camp.

a. Write a short summary about the camp.

Why is it a great place for visitors or for people to spend their vacation?

b. Add photos, pictures, and a map.



Our summer camp is super fun! You can try all kinds of extreme sports, and you'll be near the mountains and the ocean!

### Now I can . . .

- discuss extreme sports.
- discuss safety in sports.
- describe people and actions.
- write a biographical paragraph.

# Developing Critical Literacy Skills

## 20 Make a collage of ads.

1. Choose a product. Cut out advertisements that sell your product.
2. Analyze the ads.
  - a. Who is responsible for the ad? What are they advertising?
  - b. Who is the advertiser selling the product to?
  - c. What techniques does the ad use?
  - d. What does the ad say or suggest about the product?
3. Make a collage using the ads.

I chose cell phone ads.  
This is an ad for adults.



### Now I can . . .

- talk about products and their characteristics.
- talk about preferences.
- report commands and questions.
- write a product review.

# Why Use Projects?

## Poll

**What are some benefits of using projects in your classes?**

# Benefits of Projects for YLs

## Projects:

- Encourage learner independence
- Provide ways for children to apply what they learning (vocabulary, grammar, etc.)
- Help link school with home and community
- Support learning in other classes
- Encourage creativity and communication
- Make learning more enjoyable
- Appeal to different learning styles
- Bring the classroom to life

**...And They Are Fun!**



# Projects Also Develop 21st Century Skills

- **The 4 C's of:**
  - **Creativity**
  - **Communication**
  - **Collaboration**
  - **Critical Thinking**

**(Partnership for 21st Century Skills)**

# Benefits of Projects for Language Learning

- **Build on previous language activities**
- **Require authentic use of English**
- **Integrate skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)**
- **Connect classroom with the wider world**
  - Bring the world into the classroom**
  - Take learners outside the classroom to the world**
- **Make learning meaningful and purposeful**
- **Challenge learners to use English in new ways**

# Projects for Different Learning Styles

**Linguistic/Verbal:** five senses poetry, daily schedule

**Mathematical/Logical:** transportation chart, extreme sports camp

**Interpersonal/Social:** class scrapbook, culture capsule

**Personal:** my world circles, family features

**Kinesthetic;** mobile; art from trash

**Musical:** create and play an instrument

**Naturalist:** mural of plant and animal habitat, poster to help sea animals

# Guidelines for YL Projects

- **Give very clear directions. Show children a model of what you want them to produce.**
- **Be sure all needed supplies and resources are available.**
- **Provide opportunity for children to use what they know and are learning.**
- **Engage their imagination.**
- **Connect to their lives inside and outside of school.**

# Challenges for YL Projects

- **Children need lots of monitoring. Check on their progress often.**
- **Allow enough time (including some time at home and time to clean up the room at the end of class).**
- **Expect noise! (Noise is good for learning, but maybe not for relations with other teachers!)  
Explain to other teachers what you are doing and close the door!**

**Whatever the challenges . . .  
Projects are worth the effort!**



**Projects:  
Knowledge in Action!**

**Less Teaching:  
More Learning!**



**Thank  
You!**

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