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The Tug of the Plug Teaching Notes

Author: Sarah Jancevski
Illustrator: Nicole Allin

Synopsis:

Join Wiley the crocodile on a wild adventure that starts with a belly flop and ends with a daring escape. Wiley loves bathtime but does not expect to get sucked into an underground lair with a hideous creature, become a potential meal for granny in a bustling city, and a daring circus performer for a cunning ring master. Will the help of some new friends ensure that Wiley returns to his beloved bath? A hilarious and exciting rhyming story, with expressive illustrations that perfectly depict the danger, thrills and fun of this wonderful story.



Teaching Notes – The Tug of the Plug

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Themes:

- Courage
- Adventure
- Friendship
- Overcoming challenges
- Resilience

The Tug of the Plug is a fun and playful story that shows how stepping out of your comfort zone can lead to unexpected and exciting adventures. Through the humorous story of Wiley, the story explores themes such as problem-solving, creativity and adventure, and includes a subtle introduction to environmental awareness.

Wiley thrives on the simplicity of his predictable daily routine, but his world turns upside down when a tug on tail sweeps him down the drain and into a series of wild and unexpected adventures. Along the way, he encounters a number of challenges that test his courage and resourcefulness. Beneath the lively narrative lies a deeper message about bravery, overcoming obstacles and the importance of friendship.

About the author:

Sarah Jancevski is an Australian children's book author and paediatric occupational therapist. She spends her workdays rolling in ball pits, blowing bubbles and covered in paint, and her evenings thinking up wacky characters who embark on wonderful adventures. She hopes to create stories that instil a love of reading in future generations. Sarah lives in Carwoola, NSW, with her husband and two daughters.

About the illustrator:

Nicole Allin is an illustrator originally from Ontario, Canada, a place far too cold for crocodiles, even when they wear sweaters. She loves painting animals of all types, and her favourite type of crocodilian is the Osborn's dwarf crocodile. Nicole lives in Washington, U.S.A with her husband, five houseplants and a stuffed toy shark named Bruce.

Australian Curriculum V9.0**Key Curriculum Areas:**Learning areas:

- English
- Health and Physical Education

General Capabilities:

Foundation:

- AC9EFLY12 - write consonant–vowel–consonant (CVC) words by representing sounds with the appropriate letters, and blendsounds associated with letters when reading CVC words

- AC9EFLY08 - form most lower-case and upper-case letters using learnt letter formations / functional pencil grasp
- AC9EFLE02 - respond to stories and share feelings and thoughts about their events and characters
- AC9HPFP03 - express and describe emotions they experience
- AC9HPFM01 - practise fundamental movement skills in minor game and play situations

Grade 1:

- AC9E1LA01- understand how language, facial expressions and gestures are used to interact with others when asking for and providing information, making offers, exclaiming, requesting and giving commands
- AC9E1LA04 - explore how repetition, rhyme and rhythm create cohesion in simple poems, chants and songs
- AC9E1LE02 - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences
- AC9E1LY10 - orally manipulate phonemes in spoken words by addition, deletion and substitution of initial, medial and final phonemes to generate new words (phonological awareness)
- AC9E1LY08 - write words using unjoined lower-case and upper-case letters
- AC9HP2P03 - identify how different situations influence emotional responses
- AC9HP2P02 - identify and explore skills and strategies to develop respectful relationships
- AC9HP2M01 - practise fundamental movement skills and apply them in a variety of movement situations

Grade 2:

- AC9E2LE04 - identify, reproduce and experiment with rhythmic sound and word patterns in poems, chants, rhymes or songs
- AC9E2LE02 - identify features of literary texts, such as characters and settings, and give reasons for personal preferences
- AC9E2LY08 - write words legibly and with growing fluency using unjoined upper-case and lower-case letters
- AC9HP2P03 - identify how different situations influence emotional responses
- AC9HP2P02 - identify and explore skills and strategies to develop respectful relationships
- AC9HP2M01 - practise fundamental movement skills and apply them in a variety of movement situations

ACTIVITIES

1. Fine and gross motor (AC9EFLY08, AC9E1LY08, AC9E2LY08) (AC9HPFM01)

Full body warm-up - animal walks:

- Crocodile walk – walk on your hands and feet while wiggling your hips and snapping your teeth.
- Slither like a snake – using your forearms, pull yourself along the floor.
- Crawl on hands and knees like a horse – add some difficulty by placing a bean bag on your back and try to balance it as you crawl.
- Wheelbarrow walk – with a partner holding your legs, take 10 steps on your hands. To make the task easier – partner holds thighs or knees, to make the task more difficult – partner to hold ankles.
- Throw a ball or hit a balloon through a hoop. Option of partner on the other side to catch the ball.
- Walk along a 'tightrope' – using a balance beam, tree log, or a line of masking tape on the ground, walk heel-toe along the equipment.
- Hopping – continuously hop between hoops on the ground. Level 1: 2-legged jump between hoops stopping in-between jumps; level 2: consecutive 2-legged jumps between hoops; level 3: single leg hops consecutively between hoops.

These movements work on core strength, shoulder stability and wrist extension, which are all fundamental for the development of a functional pencil grasp whilst handwriting. “Proximal stability for distal mobility” refers to the fact that we must have a strong base (good mobility and core strength) in order to effectively use our distal regions (hands and feet). These body exercises are a great way to strengthen these core muscles to help support a strong, stable base, and create a strong foundation for handwriting and other fine motor tasks.

These exercises help children to learn and use fundamental movement skills in play-based ways. The gross motor skills are the building blocks for more complex skills that children will learn throughout their lives.

Fine motor warm-up - playdough:

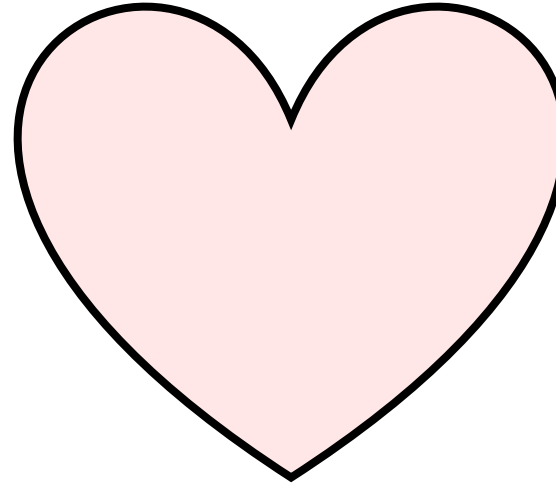
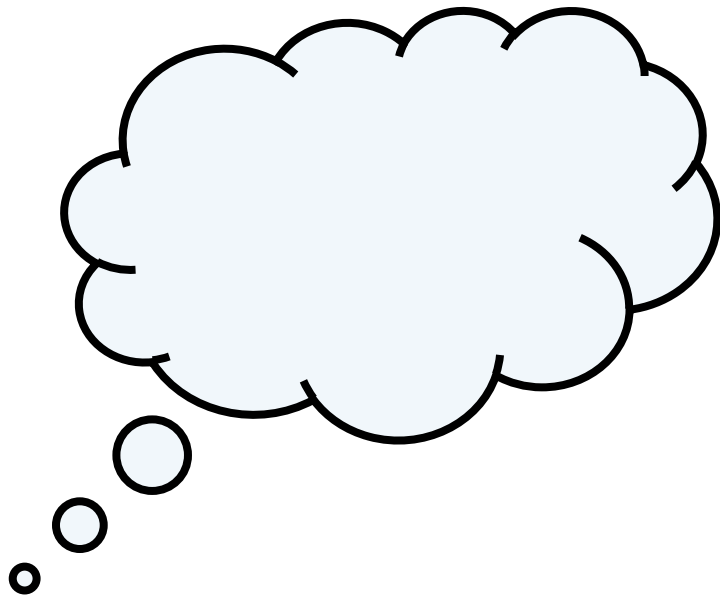
- Roll pieces of playdough into long sausage shapes. Use these to create different shapes, letters or words.
- Squish the playdough together and place items (buttons, crayons, pegs, toothpicks) into the dough, can you make an echidna? A rabbit? A crocodile?
- Roll the playdough into a ball and 'snap' it flat using your hands as a crocodile's mouth.
- Roll the dough into a long sausage and 'stomp' your fingers along it like elephant's feet.
- Cut playdough sausages into smaller pieces and then roll these into 'crocodile eggs'.

This activity works on manual dexterity and strengthening the smaller muscles located in the hands and fingers. This is essential for the development of foundational fine motor skills required for handwriting and other fine motor activities that children participate in every day.

2. Thoughts and feelings (AC9E1LA01) (AC9HPFP03, AC9HP2P02, AC9HP2P03)

- Print off the visuals below and read through The Tug of the Plug using the visuals with different characters. The thought bubble helps children consider what the character is thinking about, and the heart helps to identify how they are feeling about it. Children can discuss, draw or write inside the visuals depending on their age/abilities. For example, when Wiley falls into the sewer and sees the creatures, you can hold the thought bubble to his head and discuss what Wiley is thinking. Use the heart visual to consider how he is feeling in this situation – scared? Terrified? Panicked?

Understanding the perspectives of others is a crucial part of children's social and emotional development. Using visuals is a great way to help children explore and understand what others are thinking and feeling.



3. Writing activity (AC9EFLY12, AC9E1LY10) (AC9EFLE04, AC9E1LE04, AC9E2LE04) (AC9E1LA04) (AC9E1LY08, AC9E2LY08)

The _____ of the _____

- Have children come up with their own title using two rhyming words (for example, The Jump of the Stump; The Bake of the Cake; The Hop of the Mop; The Hug of the Bug, The Shrug of the Slug; The Flight of the Kite, The Ring of the King).
- Students can consider what their story would be about (settings, characters, events) by drawing a scene in their book, or mapping out the beginning, middle and end of the story, and writing or discussing the main events of the storyline.

Foundation level – say rhyming words out loud; consider the relation between rhyming words in regard to CVC words. E.g. Substituting the first letter of ‘tug’ to make other rhyming words.

Grades 1 and 2 – develop your own ‘The _____ of the _____’ title and draw out a beginning, middle and end to the story. Consider the characters, setting and events of the story. Write your own short story!

4. Discussion Questions (AC9EFLE02, AC9E1LE02, AC9E2LE02)

Before Reading

1. Look at the cover and title. What do you think the story will be about?
2. Does this book remind you of any other books you’ve read?
3. What word comes to mind when you see the cover?

After Reading

1. What lessons did Wiley learn during his adventure?
2. What are some different ways Wiley could have faced the obstacles in the story?
3. What was the biggest obstacle Wiley faced? Why?
4. Do you think Wiley enjoyed the adventure and being put outside of his comfort zone?
5. How do the illustrations add to the story?
6. How do you think Wiley feels when he’s taking a bath at the end of the book?
7. If you could give Wiley some advice, what would you tell him?